

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING IN THE VILLAGE HALL HELD ON

Wednesday, 18th January 2023 at 7.15 pm

Present:

Cllr David Long (Chairman)
Cllr Julian Mann
Cllr Sarah Gregory
Cllr David Pryke
Cllr John Ross
Parish Clerk Angie Buggs
4 members of the public

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Patti Mulcahy Suffolk County Council – written report.

The Clerk had circulated the report before the meeting.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr Michael Richardson East Suffolk Council – no report.

Cllr Richard Kerry East Suffolk Council – no report.

VILLAGE FORUM

An opportunity for residents to give comments on any issues on the agenda. (as per standing orders max 15 minutes unless otherwise directed by the Chairman, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.

Ian Angus reported that, following support given by the Parish Council between meetings due to the urgency of repair work, he had purchased flutter tape to repair the flags and would send an invoice to cover the cost. **Action: Clerk**

The formal meeting of the Parish Council started at 7.30 pm.

01.23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr John Bailey, Cllr Andrew Abram and Cllr Mick Richardson East Suffolk Council.

02.23 CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

03.23 TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 2ND NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 2nd November 2022, which had previously been circulated, were approved, and signed as a true record by Cllr D Long (Chairman).

04.23 MATTERS TO REPORT FROM THE LATEST MINUTES (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

a. Update on the purchase of a dog bag dispenser

The dog bag dispenser has now been installed and Louise Overbury has filled it with bags.

b. Picture / Certificate Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Village Hall

Cllr D Long reported that he had spoken to the Trustees at their recent meeting and they have agreed to a framed picture and certificate of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee being placed on the wall in the Village Hall. **Action: Cllr D Long**

c. Sewerage Works

Cllr D Pryke reported that he has noticed work was being carried out at the sewerage plant. The brick wall of the settlement tank has two large cracks (one on the left and one in the middle). There is also fencing which suggests some danger and if the wall fails it would likely cause pollution. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Anglian Water expressing the concerns of the Parish Council. **Action: Clerk**

05.23 FINANCE

a. Income since last meeting

District Council Community Enabling Budget – Newsletter

Cllr Richardson was thanked for his support £500.00

b. Expenditure to be agreed at this meeting

Mrs A J Buggs Salary and Expenses £757.79

HMRC Tax/NI £368.91

Caroline Young – Planters £133.12

Tuddenham Press – Newsletters £104.00

Village Hall – Hire £400.00

Village Hall – Warm Room November 2023 £450.00

John Ross – Printer Cartridge £20.89

Printerland – Canon Printer £584.90

Suffolk County Council – Quiet Lanes £100.00

Louise Overbury – Dog Bags £11.92

Village Hall – Warm Room December 2022 £450.00

Village Hall – Warm Room January 2023 £450.00

Ian Angus – Flag Repairs £82.90

c. Bank balances as at the 31st December 2022

Current Account £26,497.50

Deposit Account £8,237.15

The Parish Council noted the balances as at the 31st December 2022 for both the Community Account and the Premium Account.

Cllr D Pryke proposed, seconded Cllr J Ross that the above expenditure is approved – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

d. To approve the Budget / Precept 2023/2024

Cllr D Long reported that councillors had previously been sent a copy of the Budget for 2023/2024. The Parish Council had held a Finance Advisory Committee Meeting and is recommending the precept is set at £9,200.00 for the financial year 2023/2024 which is approximately a 3.7% increase. Cllr S Gregory proposed, seconded Cllr J Mann that the budget be accepted and that the Parish Council should precept for £9,200.00 for the year 2023/2024 – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

e. To discuss the adoption of the Local Government Pay Award for Clerk

Cllr D Long stated that a National Pay Award had been negotiated for Parish Clerks from 1st April 2022 for the year 2022/2023. The Clerk is currently on Pay Scale 13 £11.97 which will increase to £12.97 per hour.

Cllr D Long proposed, seconded Cllr J Ross that the Parish Council agree to the new pay scale – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

f. Notification of external auditor appointment for the 2022/2023 financial year for the 5 year period until 2026/2027

The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all opted in smaller authorities, for setting the terms of appointment for limited assurance reviews and for managing the contracts with the appointed audit firms. The Parish Council has been notified that SAAA has appointed PKF Littlejohn as the external auditor for a period of 5 years until 2026/2027. The Parish Council noted the appointment. **Action: Clerk**

06.23 PLANNING

a. To approve the Planning List

The Parish Council noted the updated Planning List as at 18th January 2023. **Action: Clerk**

b. Eastern Structures Update DC/21/4413/FUL

Planning Permission for application DC/21/4413/FUL has not been granted by East Suffolk Council but no further information about whether Eastern Structures will put in an appeal has been received. **Action: Clerk**

c. DC/22/2929/TPO High Trees Bridge Road Levington 2no. Sycamore (T1 and T2 on plan) – Overall crown reduction by up to 30% in crown height and radial spread – Approved by ESC

d. DC/22/3761/FUL St Ambrose The Drift Levington Outbuildings and repositioning of existing sheds – Approved by ESC

e. DC/22/3762/FUL St Ambrose The Drift Levington Extensions and alterations including replacement of roof tiles to existing house – Approved by ESC

f. DC/22/4989/FUL Bridge Road Levington – Retention of replacement stables and proposed creation of wildlife pond

Cllr D Long had been appointed as Lead Councillor for this Planning Application. Cllr D Long said that plans were available in the Village Hall. He said he had been in touch with the residents of Bridge Farm and they have no objection to the application. It was noted that Environment Protection have commented on the application stating that before the commencement of the development, a scheme for the storage and disposal of manure created on site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and only an approved scheme shall be implemented. This Planning Application is a retrospective application with the addition of the toilet and pond.

Following discussion Cllr J Ross proposed, seconded Cllr S Gregory the Parish Council submit "No Objection" response to East Suffolk Council – all in favour.

07.23 TO DISCUSS THE COST OF LIVING CAMPAIGN (EASE THE SQUEEZE) WARM ROOM

Cllr J Ross said that a Warm Room was being held for residents on every Tuesday and Thursday which will continue until the end of March 2023. The Warm Room is being supervised by volunteers which fulfils the requirements of the Village Hall Trustees. The Parish Council have provided information and support to access the Winter Warm Packs. Cllr S Gregory asked whether Nacton village could be included in using the Warm Room however volunteers feel this is a safe-guarding issue. Helen Kingston-Ross and Sally Long have been asking Warm Room users to sign the attendance form and the returns for November and December 2022 will be sent to East Suffolk Council shortly. Cllr D Long reported that residents had been supported to buy wood which had been a big help to the community.

Action: Cllr J Ross

08.23 TO DISCUSS CELEBRATIONS FOR THE CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

The Parish Council has received guidance from Bruno Peek the Pageant Master that Beacons will not be lit for the Coronation of King Charles III. However, Beacons will be lit in 2024 in commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy.

The meeting was adjourned to enable members of the public to speak.

Helen Kingston-Ross said that it has been suggested that the village hold a picnic on Church Field to mark the occasion on Bank Holiday Monday 8th May 1 pm – 4 pm. This is very dependent on the weather and if it rains it can easily be cancelled. Ian Angus said that the Church is planning to mark the occasion but no decision has been made as to what form this celebration will take.

The meeting was reconvened.

Cllr D Long said that the proposal is that the village hold a picnic on Church Field – all in favour.

09.23 LORRY PARK PROPOSAL – LAND SOUTH OF THE FELIXSTOWE ROAD

A local logistics operator based in Felixstowe contacted Thérèse Coffey MP in November 2022 requesting support for a proposed application to build a lorry park on the land south of Felixstowe Road adjacent to the railway crossing. Thérèse Coffey contacted our District Councillors for more information who in turn approached the Parish Council. This proposal appears to be suspiciously like Planning Application DC/20/0815/FUL. When DC/20/0815/FUL was submitted the Parish Council held a Village Meeting and sent a response to the planning application which was subsequently withdrawn. The Parish Council has objected strongly to our District Councillors on what we think are underhand approaches to our MP and Senior Planning Officer at East Suffolk Council seeking support before another planning application is submitted and subject to public comment. **Action: Clerk**

10.23 TO DISCUSS THE AMPLIFICATION IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Cllr D Long reported that Ian Angus had been gathering information for the Church and also the Village Hall on amplification however he has not completed his research. It was agreed to defer this item until the March 2023 Parish Council meeting. **Action: Clerk**

11.23 TO DISCUSS/UPDATE ON SPEEDING IN THE VILLAGE

Cllr J Ross that he had met with the Police to discuss the three possible sites for speed monitoring in Levington and Stratton Hall; outside the Church, Bridge Road and the Drift (which is not applicable to monitoring as it is private land). He said that the Parish Council could invest a significant amount of money in speed deterrents which would most likely not produce a reduction in speeding in the village. Cllr J Ross presented three proposals:

Site 1 – Church Lane, the bend alongside the Church

A 30 mph road with an advisable 20 mph displayed on the triangular warning sign located at Trickers Wood. The issue defined as an inappropriate use of speed rather than an excessive use of speed.

Proposal 1: The Parish Council does NOT proceed with seeking a 20 mph limit for Site 1.

Proposal 2: The speeding issue at Site 1 is exceptional rather than frequent. The deployment of public funds to progress further with the installation of a 20 mph zone is NOT justified.

Site 2 – Bridge Road, the straight piece of road from Red House Walk to the right-hand bend heading north

A 30 mph road with it being derestricted (60 mph) road after/before the village. The issue is defined as an excessive use of speed – more than 30 mph in both directions.

The Police has conducted a speed survey to evidence the extent of the issue. As we predicted, we do experience speeding vehicles, but to such a low volume as to not meet thresholds for enforcement – a 98% compliance level. Traffic calming options are likely to be challenged as this section of the road is a bus route and the major road into the village for emergency vehicles.

Proposal 3 – The speeding issue is defined as 98% compliant which is exceptional rather than frequent and does NOT justify the deployment of the public funds required to further consider traffic calming measures.

Proposal 4 – The existence of SIDS installed in a neighbouring parish has not prove to reduce the occurrence of speeding to an acceptable level, thus the installation of SIDs at Parish Council expense is NOT good value for money.

Proposal 5 – In the whole context of the speeding issue in our Parish, the expenditure of public funds to progress the speeding concern further is NOT justified.

Cllr S Gregory stated that she has major concerns regarding speeding through the village and proposed that the Parish Council continue to monitor speeding particularly in the summer.

Cllr D Pryke proposed that the Parish Council adopt Cllr J Ross' report, seconded Cllr J Mann – all in favour.

12.23 TO DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF A THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA

Cllr J Ross reported that there is strong evidence that insulating our homes is a significant factor in reducing energy usage. Britain's poorly insulated homes mean that heat dissipates through walls,

windows and doors. The Parish Council has been proactive in ensuring support exists for our community during this phase of the cost of living crisis; the Warm Room being the most obvious element and the costs of which are being funded by East Suffolk Council.

The Creating Greenest County – Suffolk operates a Community Thermal Imaging Project. It provides the loan of a FLIR One Pro device to allow homes to be assessed by the homeowner. Although we could request to loan this device, it is fully booked until April 2023 which will unfortunately miss the key time of the year.

Cllr J Ross proposed the purchase of the device by the Parish Council at a cost of £399 excluding VAT which would be loaned to residents for a fixed term, a day or so, to enable them to survey their property and make informed decisions as to whether and where to invest in better insulation.

The FLIR One Pro can only operate on either an I-phone or Android device. Cllr J Ross said that he had a spare I-phone which the device could be loaded onto. It was recognised that some residents would need support to carry out the imaging.

Cllr J Mann proposed that the Parish Council purchase a FLIR One Pro device, seconded Cllr D Pryke – all in favour. **Action: Clerk / Cllr J Ross**

13.23 TO DISCUSS THE ELECTIONS MAY 2023 AS A RESULT OF ELECTION BRIEFING 17TH JANUARY 2023

The Parish Council discussed preparation for the election of the Parish Council and also District Council. It was suggested that the Parish Council hold open events in the Village Hall so that residents could come and discuss what it means to become a Parish Councillor and how they can apply. It was noted that the nomination papers will be received by the Clerk on Friday, 17th March and must be returned to East Suffolk Council by 4 pm on Tuesday, 4th April 2023. It was agreed to hold an event on Monday, 20th March at 11 am (following coffee morning) and Tuesday, 21st March at 7 pm and an article to be posted in the next copy of the Parish Newsletter.

It was agreed to change the date of Annual Parish Council Meeting to Wednesday, 23rd May 2023 due to the elections and the Coronation. **Action: Clerk / Cllr John Ross / Cllr David Long**

14.23 THE GREEN – REPLACEMENT FLOWER TUBS AND DAMAGED WALL

Cllr D Long reported that flower tubs had been purchased and planted and thanked both Caroline Barry Young and Helen Kingston Ross for all their work. The wall has been damaged and Cllr D Long said he was seeking advice for a resident who is a builder and report back. **Action: Clerk / Cllr D Long**

15.23 HEADWAY SUFFOLK – MOBILE SHOP

Headway Suffolk which is a local charity that supports people with neurological conditions has written to the Parish Council concerning the possibility of providing a mobile charity shop. The mobile charity shop would consist of goods which people can buy, refreshments and advice on neurological problems and how to access services. Clients of Headway who have made a good recovery will work in the mobile shop as part of their rehabilitation.

Following discussion councillors agreed they would like the mobile shop to be available on a monthly trial basis and park in the layby Bridge Road which is outside properties 2-5 Bridge Road. **Action: Clerk**

16.23 WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Cllr J Ross is Lead Councillor for the development of the website. Cllr J Ross reported that the Parish Council had agreed a number of proposals/deadlines for Phase 1 of the development for the populating of the new website and the programme for launching the website is on schedule. When the site is launched it will be a multi login site which will enable village organisations to manage their own area of the site. Our Parish Clerk was warmly thanked for all the work she has been doing under Phase 1 of the website development. **Action: Clerk / Cllr John Ross / Cllr D Pryke**

17.23 FOOTPATHS

Cllr D Pryke reported that he has been installing the various “No Cycling” signs. He said he had looked at the post that Louise Overbury had reported as being loose and leaning. It appears that the post has become loose due to a deliberate attack on the existing “No Cycling” sign. It was noted that the sign on the same footpath in the opposite direction was destroyed some time ago. He said that he had wedged the post and it appears to be reasonably firm. Before the new signs are attached to both posts the Parish Council will wait until Martin Williams Suffolk County Council Environment and Transport has responded to the Parish Council’s email. **Action: Cllr D Pryke / Clerk**

18.23 FLOODING IN THE LOCAL AREA – TO DISCUSS REPORT FROM CLLR D PRYKE AND RESPONSE FROM SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllr D Pryke had circulated a report which has been sent to Suffolk County Council Highways for comment/action. The following locations were highlighted to have particularly bad flooding problems.

Location 1 High Trees, Bridge Road

Under the standing water are two large drains, connected to relatively new very large soak-aways – the result of a major project in 2018 to cure a serious recurring flooding problem at this location (properties flooded). This work cured the problem until recently when the drains appear to have stopped working.

During recent major building work at High Trees, a ready-mix cement lorry was observed ‘washing out’ into these drains and it is possible they have become ‘blocked’ as a result.

An urgent clean out of the drains is required.

Location 2 White House Farm, Bridge Road

Flooding here is often much worse than this and causes problems for pedestrians as well as vehicles.

Location 3 Entrance to OOCL

Floods frequently – **just needs channel into ditch cleared**

Location 4 Old A45 opposite layby

This is a persistent and very dangerous area of flooding on a fast road. Vehicles come upon it suddenly, often meeting other vehicles in the middle of the road. The danger is greatly increased at night.

This needs immediate attention to prevent a serious accident.

Location 5 Eastbound dual carriageway section of old A45 just beyond the Levington Junction.

Location 6 North side of old A45 going East just beyond Heath Cottages.

Both these are hazardous on the fast road, but are easily remedied by a gully into the bank which slopes away from the road.

Location 7 At the Stratton Hall Drift level crossing.

Often much deeper and encroaching into the adjacent cottage.

Location 8 Stratton Hall Drift

Constant deep flooding in this dip in the road. Very dangerous especially for cyclists (National Cycle Route). **NB a deep pothole covered by the water.**

This needs urgent action.

As Suffolk County Council had only agreed to work at Location 8, it was agreed that the report should be sent to the Suffolk County Councillor Patti Mulcahy requesting that she follows up our report with Highways. **Action: Clerk**

19.23 SUFFOLK AWARD – SUBMISSION BY CLLR S GREGORY

Cllr D Long announced that the submission for Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council by Cllr S Gregory for the East Suffolk Council for Community of the Year Award 2023 had been shortlisted. The ceremony will be held at Snape Maltings on Tuesday, 28th February 2023 and 4 members of the community have been invited to attend. The Parish Council asked Cllr S Gregory to select 3 residents to accompany her to the ceremony. Cllr D Long congratulated Cllr S Gregory on enabling the village to be selected as a finalist and all councillors agreed it was a great achievement. **Action: Clerk / Cllr S Gregory**

20.23 CORRESPONDENCE

All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to councillors.

21.23 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

a. Tree and Church Field Warden

Cllr S Gregory and Chris had planted 800+ bulbs in the Church Field.

Cllr D Long reported that there had been another incident of anti-social behaviour in the entrance to Trickers Wood. Consideration would be given at the next meeting on options to avoid recurrence of anti-social behaviour at this location. **Action: Clerk**

b. Village Hall

The Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall Trustees was held in November 2022. The trustees have agreed not to increase the Village Hall hire charges. The energy costs for the Village Hall are fixed until April 2023. The hiring fee for the Warm Room is helping the Village Hall with their costs.

c. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses

Written report from Ian Angus.

New PIR outside lighting has been installed and small repairs completed in response to residents' requests.

The Trustees are working with the Charity Commissioners to bring the governing

document up to date. The Trustees will be consulting with Levington and Nacton Parish Councils and with the residents of the villages to ensure that they have a voice in the decision-making process. The Trustees do not envisage any major changes to current practice.

d. Public Transport

Report from Cllr J Mann.

Cllr J Mann reported that Bridge Road had been blocked due to Anglian Water excavating the road for emergency work. Unfortunately, the bus was unable to get through and apparently it only served the village of Nacton. Cllr J Mann said that he had contacted Anglian Water but they are unable to give a timescale for completing the work as they haven't located the problem. To date I have been unable to contact Eastern County Buses but I have made residents who normally use the bus aware of the situation.

If a resident has a bus pass it cannot be used before 9.30 am. If residents with bus passes want to travel before 9.30 am the cost is £2 a trip to Ipswich. **Action: Cllr J Mann**

e. Coast & Heaths and Footpaths (CHF)

No report.

f. Nacton School

It was noted that reports had been received from the school which had been circulated to all councillors.

g. SALC

No report.

h. Port Liaison Group

Report by Cllr J Bailey

The most interesting point raised by a retired Felixstowe councillor was that if the union understood the history of the Port better, they would not strike. He suggested compulsory education about the port's history for all its employees.

The second section of the meeting had the view represented to it by Bidwell's representative, that the non-approval by the planning authority via the inspectorate was that the failure to develop more land for port use, and I think they were referring here to Innocence Farm, would damage the Port's interests.

Another point to note is that they reported that housing development was being carried out without the provision of necessary infrastructure/amenities. The Bidwell representative said that this was a very complex issue which it would be difficult for the Port Liaison Representatives to grasp. Bidwell's solution was for a subset of the Port Liaison group to meet together to deal with this issue. They felt it would be too demanding for most of the committee members!!

i. Police/SNT

No report.

22.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY, WEDNESDAY, 1ST MARCH 2023 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.14 pm

VILLAGE FORUM (Opportunity to raise issues not necessarily on this agenda)

Ian Angus said that when the thermal imaging camera is purchased he would like to use it and, like the Parish Council, felt confident it could be put to good use by other residents to reduce domestic energy consumption.

Ian Angus said that, in his experience of signs, if you replace the signs as soon as they are vandalised the vandals lose interest in destroying them.

Signed..... Date

Angie Buggs
Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council