

## LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING IN THE VILLAGE HALL HELD ON

Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 at 7.15 pm

#### **Present:**

Cllr John Ross (Chairman)  
Cllr Sarah Gregory  
Cllr Derek Dickerson  
Cllr Ole Henriksen  
Cllr Chris Yeo  
Cllr Cate Last  
Cllr John Parrish  
Parish Clerk Angie Buggs  
Cllr Lee Reeves East Suffolk Council  
4 members of the public

#### **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Cllr Patti Mulcahy Suffolk County Council – no report.

#### **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT**

Cllr Mike Ninnmey East Suffolk Council – joint written report.  
Cllr Lee Reeves East Suffolk Council – joint written 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.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Lee Reeves for attending the meeting and for providing the Parish Council with a joint written report with Cllr Mike Minnmey. Cllr Lee Reeves particularly highlighted the funding available for Affordable School Uniform. More information is available at:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/community-grants-and-funding/uniform-bank-grant-scheme/>

A member of the public highlighted that there is a problem with residents collecting bags of litter which is on private land. Litter had been collected from several spots on the Felixstowe Road in land adjacent to the laybys but East Suffolk Council had refused to dispose of the rubbish. Cllr Lee Reeves agreed to investigate this and report back. **Action: Clerk**

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

#### **61.23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mike Ninnmey East Suffolk Council.

## 62.23 CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

## 63.23 TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2023

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023, which had previously been circulated, were approved and signed as a true record by Cllr J Ross (Chairman).

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

### 38.23 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

#### a. Tree and Church Field Warden

The obsolete post on which the old dog bin was fixed in Pilots Way has not been removed as the area is so overgrown it cannot be located.

Cllr D Dickerson reported that he had spoken to the resident who lives closest to the obsolete post, and it had been agreed that the resident will help him to remove the post later in the year. This item was deferred until the November 2023 meeting. **Action: Clerk**

## 56.23 TO DISCUSS THE BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF THE EAST SUFFOLK PLANNING ALLIANCE (ESPA)

Cllr J Ross stated that a decision had been made at the last meeting to participate in ESPA. Cllr C Last reported that the alliance had held a couple of meetings which she had not been invited to attend but was hoping to attend the next meeting and report back to the September Parish Council Meeting. **Action: Cllr C Last / Clerk**

## 65.23 FINANCE

### a. Income since last meeting

None

### b. Expenditure to be agreed at this meeting

Mrs A J Buggs – Salary and Expenses	£996.43
HMRC – Tax/NI	£483.39
SALC – Councillor Training Costs (invoices received to date)	£504.00
Tuddenham Press – Newsletter	£109.00
Trevor Brown – Audit Fee	£170.00
ICO - Data Protection Fee	£40.00

Cllr O Henriksen proposed, seconded Cllr C Yeo that the above expenditure is approved – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

### c. Bank balances as at the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

Current Account	£28,394.73
Deposit Account	£8,372.40

The Parish Council noted the balances as at the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 for both the Community Account and the Premium Account.

### d. To discuss the temporary increase in Clerk's hours

Cllr J Ross reported at the last meeting that the Clerk's hours had seen a notable increase due to the support of the transition from one council to another. He was pleased to report that the Clerk had been able to manage her workload with far fewer hours worked in June, bringing the average over the 4 months since March to be comparable with the same 4-month period last year. This is reassuring and he thanked the Clerk for her active management of this.

Cllr J Ross informed that this item should be placed on our September agenda to satisfy ourselves that the operation of the Parish Council is within the Clerk's contracted hours. Cllr J Ross stated that he was not prepared to give specific detail on this item in the open meeting as the contractual arrangements between the Clerk and the Parish Council are confidential and we would need to have a closed session if we were to do this.

As a Parish Council we needed to be satisfied that a new state of "normal" was not being created. It is not and through the Clerk's self-management we are back within the terms of our contracts when an average over the 4 months is taken. **Action: Clerk / Cllr J Ross (Chairman)**

**e. Update on cheque signatories for Barclays Bank**

The Clerk reported that notification has been received from Barclays Bank that the two new cheque signatories have now been approved. Following discussion, it was agreed that a Mandate Change Form should be completed for Cllr C Yeo and Cllr J Parrish and submitted to Barclays Bank. **Action: Clerk / Cllr C Yeo / Cllr J Parrish**

**66.23 AUDIT REPORT 2022/2024**

**a. To discuss and accept the contents of the Internal Audit Report**

The Clerk had previously circulated the Internal Audit Report 2022/2023 to all councillors. The Internal Auditor Trevor Brown had not highlighted any areas of the audit which required the Parish Council to take action. Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Internal Audit Report 2022/2023 be accepted, seconded Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour.

**b. Confirmation of Exemption of External Audit 2022/2023**

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had received formal notification of its exemption status for an External Audit for the year ended 31st March 2023. It was noted that the Parish Council's income or expenditure was required to be less than £25,000 to be exempt from an External Audit. **Action: Clerk**

**67.23 PLANNING**

**a. General – Updated Planning List**

Noted.

**b. Business Park site at the Land at Felixstowe Road (Local Plan Policy SCLP12.20) Meeting with agents 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

Meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023 was cancelled. Rearranged for Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 10.30 am. There were no councillors able to volunteer to attend the meeting. Cllr L Reeve said that he would be attending on behalf of East Suffolk District Council and would report back to the Parish Council. **Action: Cllr L Reeve**

**c. DC/23/0756/FUL Site of SZC Freight Management Facility Felixstowe Road Levington Suffolk Development of a temporary "Water Sourcing Facility" for Sizewell C comprising a pipeline connection to a main water supply, three water tanks and pumping infrastructure, HGV and**

**car parking, mobile welfare building and security kiosk, site access and internal road layout, construction compound, landscaping, infrastructure and security features (fencing, CCTV, lighting, gates and barriers)**

Discussed by the Parish Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> June and comments submitted.

ESC: Pending

- d. **DC/23/1138/OUT Red House Farm Levington IP10 0LZ Phase development comprising 18 x No dwellings (including 6 affordables and up to 6 self-building) with garaging and parking accesses and landscaping.**

A new Planning Application has been submitted by the applicant. It was agreed that the Clerk should request an extension of 2 weeks to enable the Parish Council to comment on the new application. **Action: Cllr S Gregory / Clerk**

ESC: Pending

- e. **DC/23/1370/FUL Suffolk Yacht Harbour Access to Levington Marina Stratton Hall IP10 0N Extension to café building at Suffolk Yacht Harbour**

ESC: Approved

- f. **DC/23/1321/FUL 1 New Cottages Nacton Road Levington IP10 0LE Single storey part rear/part side extension and alterations**

ESC: Approved

- g. **DC/23/1307/FUL 3 Barrack Row Church Lane Levington IP10 0LG Retrospective Application – Removal of existing summerhouse and shed, this has been replaced with a new summerhouse and shed which have been combined**

ESC: Approved

#### **68.23 TO DISCUSS THE AMPLICATION IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Cllr J Ross reported that Ian Angus was working on this item on behalf of the Church, and that at present there wasn't an update to discuss. It was agreed to defer this item until an update was available. **Action: Clerk / Ian Angus**

#### **69.23 TO DISUSS THE MEETING HELD BETWEEN THE PARISH COUNCIL AND THE SIZEWELL COMMUNITY RELATIONS TEAM**

Cllr J Ross reported that a meeting had been held with the Sizewell C Engagement Team on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023. Councillors from both Bucklesham and Kirton & Falkenham Parish Councils had attended. Five areas of concern had been discussed which had been highlighted in Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council's submission regarding the latest Planning Application to East Suffolk Council.

##### **1. Water**

Anglian Water has conducted detailed feasibility studies and are able to supply the Sizewell C need in the short term. There is spare capacity vs the existing demand on the peninsular, including that which is coming online soon. Anglian Water cannot supply water to Sizewell C to the detriment of existing customers.

One of the first actions for Sizewell C once given the go-ahead is to build their own desalination plant. This will provide the water needs for further construction, and once built the need to take water from the Water Management Facility at Felixstowe Road will end. It is anticipated the desalination plant will take 12-18 months to build.

Sizewell C will look at minimising the number of tankers on the road; the planning application outlines the worst-case scenario. The intention is to have storage at Sizewell C which is fed by a daily flow of tankers lower than that in the application. Only if this runs dry due to significant increase in demand for water or interference with the tanker supply will the rate of tanker journeys increase. The flow of tankers will be controlled via a centre operating during the hours of the WMF. Tankers will be dispatched taking account of road congestion and waiting times at Sizewell C. This will be GPS informed.

It was agreed that Sizewell would support our concerns by arranging a meeting between Anglian Water and the local parishes. **Action: Sizewell C Engagement Team / Clerk**

## **2. Traffic Management**

Sizewell C confirmed that when leaving the site, water tankers and lorries would not be allowed to travel eastwards along Felixstowe Road and attempt to join the A14/Stratton Hall junction. They will however turn right on to Felixstowe Road to join the trunk network at Seven Hills.

It is not considered there will be any interference with Operation Stack, should this be deployed.

Tanker movements will be controlled by a GPS tracker system. It is anticipated that there will be 80 lorry movements (40 in / 40 out) in any 12-hour period which equates to approximately 6 movements per hour. The construction management plan has been submitted to East Suffolk Council as part of the Planning Application.

## **3. Noise Pollution**

A comprehensive assessment has been undertaken to determine the amount of noise which may be created by the water pumps and lorry movements. The view is that the noise which will be generated by the site will be commensurate with the ambient road noise, there will be no discernible noise to that presently experienced in the area. There will not be a tanoy system.

The site will operate for 12 hours a day from 7 am until 7 pm, M-F and 8 am – midday on Saturdays.

## **4. Planting and Bunds**

Sizewell C informed that the bunds are not designed as a screening measure, but as soil management tactic. It was acknowledged that the planting intended to provide screening would take time to realise its purpose. Planting cannot happen on the bunds as the bunds are temporary, and any such planting would be lost when the site is restored.

Sizewell C has worked hard with the Environment Agency and now more trees will be left in situ than initially informed in the plan.

It was confirmed that security lighting will be in place at night but Sizewell confirmed that this will not interfere with even those residents living the closest.

## **5. Returning the Site to Original Use at the end of the Sizewell Project**

Returning the site of the FMF/Water Sourcing Facility to its original use at the end of the Sizewell C Project is a legal obligation and is written in the commitments for the project. The

timing is not able to be defined at this time, it will be upon completion of the building of Sizewell C, approximately 10 years hence.

### **Future Engagement**

Sizewell C has employed individuals specifically with the responsibility to engage with local communities. The Parish Council connected with these at the Suffolk Show, a connection which led to the meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

Levington and Stratton Hall PC extended the meeting invitation to our neighbouring PCs; Councillors from Bucklesham and Kirton & Falkenham attended.

The meeting established the contact; Sizewell C understand our concerns and were able to provide a lot of detail by way of update – none are issues they had not been thinking about for some time.

Whether we agree on each point relating to the impact of Sizewell on our community or not, we all agreed the communication channel is a very positive development, and committed to keeping it open.

Cllr J Ross stated that Bucklesham raised the concern of the impact of lorries around Seven Hills, and Sizewell C had explained how lorry movements are controlled by GPS monitors. Drivers will be told when to leave and if there is an accident on the A14 at Martlesham, lorries will be diverted into the holding points until the traffic has dispersed.

Cllr O Henriksen stated that he was concerned about the water pressure and traffic. Cllr O Henriksen suggested that the Parish Council should be carrying out their own monitoring of the facts regarding the water and traffic so that they should be able to go back to Anglian Water and Highways and express their views. Cllr J Ross said a meeting would be set up with Anglian Water to gain reassurances concerning the water supply. Cllr J Ross stated that the Parish Council would write to Suffolk County Council Highways expressing their concerns and asking them to meet with the Parish Council to discuss those concerns. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr O Henriksen said that Sizewell had promised to provide us with data links which had not been received. The Clerk was requested to email Sizewell C Communication Team. **Action: Clerk**

### **70.23 TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF DOGS EXCRETA IN THE VILLAGE**

- a. Church Field (land managed by the PC)**
- b. Footpaths (land owned by other entities)**

Cllr J Parrish reported that concern had been raised at the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2023 by residents with regard to dog excreta with the request that the Parish Council consider whether they can help resolve this issue.

The concern is the volume of dog excrete on both our local footpaths and Church Field.

Cllr J Parrish stated that as he was the Footpath Warden for the village and Cllr D Dickerson was the Church Field Warden they would be working together on this project.

Cllr J Parrish said he recognises the health implications this may have for some residents, particularly young children. He said that he had contacted a neighbouring area who have a recreation/sports ground and the same issue exists there and numerous tactics have been tried with varying degrees of success. It is believed that this issue could be impacted on by some co-ordination/leadership and the relocation of dog bag dispensers, signage etc.

Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Parish Council decides to adopt the issue of dog excreta on local footpaths and Church Field and for discussion to take place at the September meeting as to what actions can be taken, seconded Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour. **Action: Cllr J Parrish / Cllr D Dickerson / Clerk**

### **71.23 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE TO THE PARISH COUNCIL ADOPTING THE TERMS OF THE CIVILITY AND RESPECT PROJECT**

Cllr J Ross said at the recent SALC new councillor training session, the Civility and Respect Project was discussed, and Parish Councils are encouraged to adopt. There are seven parts to the pledge and the implications of each should be considered carefully:

1. Has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff.
2. Has signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors.
3. Has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy.
4. Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
5. Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens.
6. Will commit to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion council through for example the Local Council Award Scheme.
7. Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

The Parish Council has already signed up to the Good Conduct Policy. Cllr J Ross proposed that the Parish Council defer this item until the September 2023 meeting to enable them to gather more information. Cllr C Yeo agreed to act as Lead Councillor for this project. **Action: Clerk / Cllr C Yeo**

### **72.23 TO DISCUSS THE COMMEMORATION OF THE D-DAY 80 YEAR LANDINGS ON THE 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2024**

Cllr J Ross stated that it is not envisaged the village holds an event such as it did for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee but to light the Beacon and make it a simple occasion. Cllr S Gregory agreed to act as Lead Councillor for this event. It was noted that Cllr J Parrish is the Village Beacon Lead Councillor. **Action: Cllr S Gregory / Cllr J Parrish**

### **73.23 TO DISCUSS THE PARISH COUNCIL'S FOUR-YEAR PLAN – CONSULTATION WITH VILLAGE RESIDENTS**

Cllr J Ross reported on the Parish Council's 4-year plan.

Following the elections in May 2023 our Parish Council has a 4-year-term. Alongside the usual responsibilities of the Parish Council, there is opportunity to lead on other themes to the benefit of our parishes. These themes can be recorded in a plan and tracked via an action plan.

This poses the question of how such themes are identified and what position the Parish Council should take on their progress.

The Good Councillor Guide informs (Your Community, pg12):

*The job of your council is to represent the interests of the whole community.*

*Understanding the needs of different groups in the community (such as young and elderly people) is an important part of your role as a councillor.*

*As a councillor you have a responsibility to be well informed, especially about diverse local views. You cannot assume that you represent the interests of all your electors without consulting them.*

The Guide goes on to provide a list of tools to engage with residents. In relation to surveys it says:

*Give residents, including children, an opportunity to express their views about where they live. The response rate from households can be impressive – usually over 50% - and in smaller communities, with personal delivery and collection, it can reach 90%.*

### **What does this look like?**

The detail can be shaped once a decision to consult is made; perhaps a survey to residents, provided via the newsletter is a good first step. It can be returned via the PC post box at the Village Hall. This proved very effective in the Warm Room survey last year.

Cllr J Ross suggested one of the questions asked in the consultation relates to how the residents want us to engage with them, by what mechanisms.

The list of themes identified via the consultation would need to be ordered by popularity and consideration given to whether they are within the remit of the Parish Council. Perhaps identifying the top 3 or 4 most popular themes provides a strong mandate for adoption into the plan.

Each theme, perhaps progressed one per year, would have a working group to shape development. A working group provides for individuals from beyond the Parish Council to participate.

### **Timescales**

Conducting the consultation, collating the findings and deciding the priorities will likely take the rest of this calendar year. This would provide an evidence-based platform for this workstream and provide a direction for the Parish Council for the duration of its term.

### **Proposal**

The Parish Council decides to consult with residents to ascertain the priority issues they wish the Parish Council to provide leadership to during this 4-year term.

Cllr J Ross proposed that the residents are surveyed through the media of the Parish Newsletter and surveys should be returned to the Post Box (outside the Village Hall) on how residents would like the Parish Council to engage with them. Once the initial survey has been completed the order of popularity could be determined and a second round of consultation could take place – all in favour.

Cllr O Henriksen volunteered to lead on this with the support of others. **Action: Cllr O Henriksen / Clerk**

### **74.23 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2023 AND CONSIDER CHANGING THE DAY OF MEETINGS**

Parish Council meetings are presently scheduled to occur on the first Wednesday of every other month (January, March, May, July, September and November). Following discussion with councillors it has been identified that a Wednesday is always a challenge for some councillors with competing work demands. A review of other days, including consideration of the Village Hall availability, has taken place and a Monday has been identified as the most viable day.

Cllr J Ross proposed that the Parish Council agrees to hold its regular meetings on the first Monday of the month.



The meeting dates for the remainder of the calendar year would be:

Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (Note: This date has been changed due to holiday commitments and the need to comply with setting the annual budget and the precept.)

When setting the date of the Parish Council's January 2024 meeting it was agreed that it should be held towards the end of January 2024 to avoid Christmas/New Year, seconded Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour. **Action: Clerk / Chairman / All Councillors.**

### **75.23 TO DISCUSS THE VANDALISED 'NO CYCLING' SIGNS**

Cllr D Dickerson reported that three footpath signs had been vandalised; entrance of Nacton Picnic Site, the Creek and Levington Lagoon. Cllr D Dickerson proposed that the Parish Council purchase new signs and try to make them more secure with new bolts and glue. Cllr J Ross suggested the Council should consider at what point do the Parish Council decide not to fund any more signs due to the significant expenditure of public money.

Some Parish Councillors commented on the safety of walkers; Cllr J Ross stated that safety on footpaths is the responsibility of the County Council rather than Parish Council. Following discussion Cllr D Dickerson proposed that the Parish Council support a one-off cost of up to £300 for a set of new signs, seconded Cllr C Yeo – all in favour. **Action: Cllr D Dickerson / Clerk**

### **76.23 CORRESPONDENCE**

All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to councillors.

### **77.23 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **a. Tree and Church Field Warden**

Report from Cllr Derek Dickerson

Cllr D Dickerson reported that he had witnessed unauthorised use of Church Field for a wake and was concerned about the insurance implications as there is no signage erected regarding public liability. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the insurance company to confirm whether signage is necessary on the field. **Action: Clerk**

The grass on Church Field is quite long however it was confirmed that Stephen Rackham cuts the grass once the birds have finished nesting.

#### **b. Village Hall**

Report from Cllr John Parrish

Cllr J Parrish said he had spoken to David Pryke about the transfer of keys. Philomena has now taken over the Village Hall diary bookings. Cllr J Ross requested that another key be made available for the Parish Council to use. **Action: Cllr J Parrish**

#### **c. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses**

Report by Cllr S Gregory

The Trustees are still waiting for the Charity Commission's acceptance of the new 'scheme' under which the Almshouses will, in future, be administered (very little change).

An in-depth appraisal of the paperwork under which the charity is governed, is now being undertaken and will be completed by the Annual General Meeting in the Autumn.

The hedges at the Almshouses will be cut in July.

**d. Public Transport**

Report by Mrs Marian Rose Transport Lead

Cllr J Ross read out a story about how a resident from Levington who had gone on the 78 in the morning had not returned to the bus depot to catch the bus in the afternoon. The bus driver had gone to considerable lengths to find the lady and to see whether she was okay. The lady had been able to secure a lift to get her home which was the reason she was not on the bus.

**e. Nacton School**

No report.

**f. Footpaths**

Cllr John Parrish

Cllr J Parrish reported that he had spoken to Louise Overbury who is prepared to continue to replenish the dog bags in the dispenser. He had been spoken with by Mark Stennett who was concerned about the footpath erosion. They have agreed to meet in August to discuss further.

**Action: Cllr J Parrish**

**g. SALC**

No report.

**h. Port Liaison Group**

No report.

**i. Police/SNT/ASB**

No report.

**j. ESPA**

Report by Cllr Cate Last

Please see Minute 56.23.

**78.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50 pm**

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

A resident mentioned the problems concerning the destroying of the footpath signs in the village. The Chairman, in answer to the query, said that the Parish Council would purchase new signs and would endeavour to secure the signs.

A resident expressed concern about the amount of dog excreta in the village. As highlighted during the Parish Council meeting this issue will be addressed.

A boat has been left abandoned in the water close to the Marina. The Clerk reported that this boat had been reported several times but that she would take this up with the Marina again. **Action:**  
**Clerk**

Signed..... Date .....

Angie Buggs  
Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council