

STRADISHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th March 2019

Councillors present: Adrian Lee (Vice-Chairman), Jonathan Masefield, Robert Deeks and Debbie Gates

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk) and two members of the public

In the absence of the Chairman, Adrian Lee chaired the meeting

Open Forum

The following issues were raised during the Open Forum:

- The problem of speeding on Edmunds Hill and the possibility of moving the 30mph sign.
- 1. Acceptance of apologies for absence**
 Ady Swift, Ian Hutchinson and Martin Hurst sent their apologies. County and Borough Councillor Mary Evans also sent her apologies.
 - 2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda**
 Jonathan Masefield declared an interest in item 9a on the agenda, planning application DC/19/0205/HH
 - 3. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th January 2019 and the planning meeting held on Wednesday 6th February 2019**
 It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.
 - 4. Borough Councillor's report**
 Borough Councillor Mary Evans sent a written report.
 - St Edmundsbury Borough Council has set a neutral budget with no increase in council tax this year.
 - Elections for the new West Suffolk Council will be held on 2nd May. Stradishall and Hundon will be in a new very large ward comprising Clare, Cavendish, Poslingford, Stoke by Clare, Wixoe, Kedington and Barnardiston which will have 3 councillors.
 - 5. County Councillor's Report**
 Mary Evans sent a written report.
 - Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is asking the public for views on how it manages the service on issues ranging from how it responds to automatic fire alarms, to firefighters' shift patterns. The consultation runs from Monday 11th February to Sunday 7th April 2019.
 - Bury Leisure Centre has become the first Exercise Referral Scheme in Suffolk to be awarded a new county-wide quality standard. Exercise referral schemes enable GPs and health professionals to refer patients with long term health conditions to a fitness programme based within the community, to increase their physical activity levels as part of a healthy lifestyle.
 - Suffolk County Council has now set its budget for the year at £520m. Council tax will increase by 2.99% and there will also be social care levy of 1% - the total increase is 1% less than last year. The budget for adult social care is £243m and Suffolk County Council is spending £111m on children's services.
 - SCC highways won a grant of £4.4m from the Government for a pioneering project to develop "smart" streetlighting. The project will see the introduction of streetlights equipped with wind vanes and solar panels so they generate rather than consume energy.
 - 6. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting**
 There were no outstanding councillor actions.
 - 7. Police issues**
 There were no police issues to report.
 - 8. Finance**
 - a) Approval of payments and signing of the Schedule of Payments**
 It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:
 - LCPAS - annual subscription - LGA 1972, s11 - **£90.00**
 - HMRC - PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 - **£133.20**
 - J P Kirk - expenses - LGA 1972, s111 - **£26.10**

Jonathan Masefield and Debbie Gates checked the invoices and signed the Schedule of Payments. The chairman then countersigned it.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings

No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting (including online payments)

Receipts		Details		Amount
Payments	Minute reference	Details	Method	Amount
08/01/19	191/6a	J P Kirk - expenses	Online	£32.84
08/01/19	191/6a	Risby Parish Council - 1/6 of cost of print cartridge	Online	£5.82
08/01/19	191/6a	HMRC - PAYE	Online	£133.40
10/01/19	168/8f	Fidelity Funds Network	D/D	£15.00
30/01/19	168/8h	Staff costs	Online	
11/02/19	192/6g	Risby Parish Council - to reimburse pension payment	Online	£15.00
28/02/19	168/8h	Staff costs	Online	

d) Checklist of Internal Controls

Jonathan Masefield completed the checklist of internal controls.

e) Review of all regular payments including the clerk's salary and approval of payments relating to these services for 2019-20

It was resolved the following regular payments would continue to be paid in 2019 - 20:

Payment	2018/19	2019/20	Notes
Community Action Suffolk - Insurance	£527	£527	
Subscriptions:			
LCPAS	£80	£90	
Risby Parish Council - phone costs	£21	£21	
CAS Ltd - website hosting fee	£60	£60	
Grass and hedge cutting	£1,100	£1,100	Variable amount depending on weather conditions
HMRC - PAYE	£531	£531	Quarterly payment, amount may vary slightly
Clerk's salary	£2,666	£2,845	
Fidelity Funds Network - contribution to clerk's workplace pension (this will be replaced by a monthly payment to Risby PC from February 2019)	£180	£180	

f) To approved the revised contract of employment for the clerk and job description

It was resolved that the revised contract and job description would be approved. The Chairman and clerk then signed it.

g) PAYE details and tax code for the clerk's salary

Jonathan Masefield reviewed the clerk's Confidential Cashbook and confirmed that the PAYE details and tax code were correct.

h) Review of the income and expenditure for 2018/19 against the budget and the level of reserves for general and earmarked expenditure

Councillors reviewed the income and expenditure or 2018/19 against the budget. At year-end Stradishall Parish Council will have a budget deficit of approximately **£20**.

The estimated reserve as of 31/03/19: **£8,496** which includes allocated funds of **£2,539**. The general reserve is within the guidelines of no more than one year's annual precept.

i) Review the register of fixed assets and insurance values

Councillors reviewed the assets register. The following new assets were added in 2018/19: a grit bin.

j) Review of the Council's Risk Assessment

It was resolved that no amendments were necessary. The Chairman then signed it.

k) Liability insurance

The Council has the following levels of liability cover:

- Public liability cover: £10,000,000
- Personal accident: £25,000
- Employee dishonesty: £25,000
- Employer's liability (clerk only) £10,000,000

l) Appointment of an internal auditor to complete the Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19 and review of the effectiveness of the internal audit

It was resolved that Cathy Whitaker, clerk to Exning Parish Council, would be appointed as internal auditor this year and that a fee of £65 would be paid. The Council reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit. It was resolved that the internal audit was effective and that audit regulations would be met for the following reasons:

- Does the internal audit sufficiently cover all aspects of the financial controls relevant to the council (for example risk management, detection of fraud, internal controls) and are terms of reference in place and approved? Yes. New Financial Regulations were adopted on 1st May 2014 to introduce procedures to detect fraud when using electronic banking. A checklist of internal controls is completed by a councillor at every meeting to verify payments on bank statements against actual payments as listed in the accounts to ensure that there are no discrepancies.
- Is the internal auditor independent (i.e. does not have any role within the Council)? Yes. The internal auditor does not have a role within the Council.
- Is the internal auditor competent to carry out their work ethically, with integrity and objectivity? Is there any evidence to suggest that this may not be the case? Yes, she is a parish council clerk and RFO for Newmarket Town Council. There is no evidence to suggest that she will not carry out the work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.
- Is the Responsible Officer consulted in the internal audit plan? Yes.
- Are the responsibilities of members of the Council understood and has the necessary training been undertaken? Yes
- Is there a plan in place for when the internal audit will be undertaken and does the plan properly take account of corporate risk? The internal audit will take place in April 2019 prior to the accounts being approved at the Annual Meeting on 13th May 2019. The internal auditor's report will be presented to the Parish Council at this meeting and any issues raised by the internal auditor will be discussed at the meeting and an action plan produced.

m) To review the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls

The following internal controls are in place:

- At each meeting a councillor checks bank statements against the Parish Council's accounts to ensure that transactions correspond and that the bank reconciliation agrees with the bank statement
- Where possible payments are approved at meetings and a Schedule of Payments is prepared which is checked by two councillors. Corresponding invoices are checked and signed by two councillors at the same time.
- Regular payments are approved at the March meeting and the invoices paid when they are received. These invoices are checked and signed by two councillors at the next meeting after they have been paid.
- The chairman rules off and signs the Schedule of Payments so that no amendments can be made after the meeting.
- Cheques must be signed by two signatories along with the corresponding invoice.
- A record of online payments is kept and checked at each meeting.
- If a supplier changes their bank details, the supplier must supply a written hard copy notifying the change.

It was resolved that these controls are adequate and are working well.

- n) **Appointment of a councillor to inspect the Council's property for damage or defects by 30th April 2019 and complete the inspection checklist.**

It was resolved that Adrian Lee would inspect the Council's property.

9. Planning

- a) **DC/19/0205/HH - The Coppers, St Margaret's Place, Stradishall – (i) Single storey rear extension and skylights to rear elevation (ii) Single storey side extension (following demolition of existing garage) (iii) New front porch and two bay windows (iv) Cladding and render (v) Replace roof and associated alterations (previous application DC/18/2263/HH)**

It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application.

- b) **Planning update from West Suffolk**

From 1st May paper copies will no longer be sent to parish councils. It was resolved that the clerk would investigate the cost of purchasing a projector for viewing applications.

- c) **Submitting responses to planning applications online**

It was resolved that the clerk would register with West Suffolk and that all future responses to planning applications would be submitted online.

10. Highways/Rights of Way issues/tree/transport issues

- a) **Procedure for applying for a VAS (or a temporary one)**

It was resolved that Debbie Gates would complete the VAS assessment form.

- b) **Email from Suffolk County Council re changes to school transport and the need for families to opt-in by 31st May 2019 if they require school transport.**

It was resolved that details of these changes would be included in the next newsletter.

- c) **Email from Connecting Communities confirming that from 1 April 2019 all Connecting Communities passengers will be charged fares, and free bus passes will no longer to be accepted.**

It was resolved that details of these changes would be included in the next newsletter.

11. Parish Elections on 2nd May 2019

- a) **Nomination forms**

The councillors present completed nomination forms for the forthcoming elections on 2nd May 2019.

- b) **Letter from West Suffolk re cost of an uncontested in May 2019 and from 2020.**

The cost of an uncontested election will remain the same as in 2015 at **£21.34**, however from 2020 the cost will increase to **£64.70**

- c) **Pre-election Purdah**

Purdah relates to the period leading up to an election, when councils must take extra care when considering their publishing obligations. Parish councils must not publish, arrange for or give financial support to the publication of any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. The period begins with the notice of election on 22nd March and ends on election day (10 pm on 2nd May).

12. Playing Field issues

- a) **Play inspection report**

No new issues were raised.

- b) **Update on the Deed of Dedication**

The Deed of Dedication has now been registered with the land registry and returned to Fields in Trust. Once the Active Spaces grant is required, the clerk will need to submit a form to claim the money. It was resolved that the clerk would be authorised to submit the form when the money is needed.

- c) **Update on grant applications for the playing field project and installation of new equipment**

The Parish council is still waiting to hear if the Awards for All grant has been successful. It should find out by mid-April. As the grant from West Suffolk cannot be claimed until after 1st April it was resolved that the Council would wait until the outcome of this application is known before starting the project. If the Awards for All application is unsuccessful it was resolved that the Community Chest grant and the Active Spaces Grant would be used to fund the new gym equipment and to replace the multiplay as this is the piece of play equipment most in need of updating. It was resolved that the clerk and Jonathan Masfield would be authorised to make the final decision as to which equipment would be included in

phase one. Mary Evans has offered locality funding of £1,000 for fencing around the parking area. It was resolved that the clerk would contact her as soon as possible to accept the offer.

d) Play Area Inspections - Service Level Agreement from West Suffolk

With the merger of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, the new West Suffolk Council will need to align its procedures for play inspections. Currently parish councils in Forest Heath are charged for monthly inspections and one annual inspection but parish councils in St Edmundsbury do not pay.

The Service Level Agreement is until the end of 2021 and during this period there will not be any charge for play inspections. It was resolved that the Parish Council would sign the agreement for West Suffolk to continue with free play area inspections until 2021.

11. Change of September meeting date

It was resolved that the date of the September meeting would be changed to Monday 9th September.

12. Village issues

a) Affordable/social/shared ownership housing

It was resolved that this item would be deferred until after the parish council elections.

14. Correspondence

a) Letter from Suffolk Accident Rescue Service requesting a donation

It was resolved that this item would be deferred until after the parish council elections.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.38pm

Signed (Chairman) Dated

