

MINUTES OF THE YOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM MEETINGS ON THURSDAY 1st APRIL 2021 AT 7:00 PM

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr. Russell Pearce – Chair
Cllr. Paul Ashton – Vice Chair
Cllr. David Tower
Cllr. Ian Shaw
Cllr. Stephen Siddall
Cllr. David Childs
Cllr. Nicol McCallum
Cllr. John Sutherell

Apologies for absence:

County Cllr. Richard Smith
Cllr. Kara Cowie – written and accepted
Cllr. Sarah Barrett – written and accepted

In Attendance:

District Cllr. Stephen Burroughes
Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO
Two members of the public

2. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations

None.

3. Public Forum

A resident presented a proposal to the Council offering to project manage the renovation of the Village Hall and she gave a summary of her skills and experience. The resident said the Council have not undertaken any work for two years and many residents in the parish do not think any work will be done but would like the hall to be restored. The resident said she would ask the community for help with time, skills and equipment. Important jobs could be undertaken immediately with the funds raised and then topped up by fund-raising events. Cllr. Russell Pearce said that he appreciated the resident's enthusiasm but it was not true to say the Council had done nothing for two years. Cllr. Pearce explained that work has been ongoing to change the Trusteeship as the previous Trustees could not enter into contracts without incurring personal liability, therefore it was deemed necessary to appoint the Council as Sole Corporate Trustee. Cllr. Pearce also explained that the renovation has been delayed due to COVID as, in order to keep labour and material costs down, it was agreed that the renovation would be a community project. This has not been possible due to the restrictions on social gatherings and the work has been further limited by the unavailability of building materials. Cllr. Nicol McCallum asked the resident what her first priority would be. The resident replied that she would fix the fence, take the roof off and look at the structure to identify the cause of the water leaks. Cllr. David Tower asked the resident what is the difference between her and the Council project managing the renovation. The resident replied that she would begin the work as soon as possible, she has previous experience from renovating houses, that she knows a lot of tradespeople and that she will use social media to involve the community. Cllr. Pearce said that the fence was not a priority and the footings of the hall needed to be fixed before looking at the roof structure. Cllr. Pearce said he was grateful for the resident's offer of help but the whole project needed to be considered objectively and methodically. Cllr. Ian Shaw said he was all for enthusiasm but there are two pressing issues; the supporting side exposed by the trench needs to be repaired and the roof needs to be made watertight even if it is a temporary fix. Cllr. Pearce said the supporting structure was the key priority and the Council has just opened an account with Ridgeons to order materials. He said there were no opportunities to apply for funding to rebuild the hall in its entirety therefore it will be easier to apply for funding for individual works. The resident asked if a local landowner had been approached for funding. Cllr. David Tower replied that he had and the answer was no however he had offered to donate the industrial kitchen equipment from the Griffin Inn when it is renovated. Cllr. John Sutherell applauded the resident's interest but asked how she saw the relationship with the Council going forward and how would costs be managed. The resident said she had applied for the Councillor vacancy and that she was offering her time and skills. Cllr. Sutherell said it was

important to move forward in a joined up way. Cllr. Pearce thanked the resident for her offer but no decision was taken.

4. Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr. David Tower, seconded by Cllr. John Sutherell, and agreed that the minutes for the meeting held on 4th March 2021 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

5. Matters Arising

a) Cllr. Ian Shaw said he drafted a letter to send to the Public Rights of Way Officer about the poor condition of the footpath but this was not sent as Cllr. Russell Pearce informed him that the landowner had restored the footpath. Cllr. Shaw said, in his opinion, a rough attempt had been made to reinstate it but it was inadequate and would require further work, however it could be argued that it had been reinstated and with further dry weather it might be acceptable. Cllr. Shaw said that further down the footpath the ditch was overflowing and a shallow stream is running over the footpath. Cllr. John Sutherell said another footpath was in a similar condition and that the hedgerows were also not being cared for. Cllr. Sutherell suggested that the Council monitors the situation and perhaps sends an amended letter. Cllr. Nicol McCallum said it was in the Council's interest to express its concern about maintenance and upkeep as this issue may need to be raised again next autumn after the fields are ploughed. Cllr. Shaw said that walkers often reinstate the footpaths by walking them but the Council owes it to less able residents to ensure they are properly reinstated. Cllr. Pearce said running a tractor over them complies with the reinstatement rules. Cllr. Paul Ashton proposed that the Council writes to the Public Rights of Way Officer to record that the reinstatement of the footpath is not acceptable. If they reply that the reinstatement is adequate then the Council will have on record that it is not happy. Cllr. Ian Shaw seconded. All in favour. Cllr. Ashton also asked if a request could be sent to the local rambling group to walk the footpaths to reinstate them.

ACTION: Cllr. Ian Shaw to draft a letter and Clerk to send. Cllr. Shaw to contact the Yoxford Yompers.

b) Cllr. Russell Pearce reported that he and Cllr. Stephen Siddall measured the ground at the Village Hall for a petanque piste. Cllr. Pearce said there was plenty of space for a 3 m x 24 m strip which would create two pistes. He does not have costings yet. Materials could be ordered through the new Ridgeons account and a digger hired. The Clerk said that the Village Hall is eligible to apply for a Restart Grant for £2,667 from ESC and suggested this could be used to fund this project and Cllr. Sarah Barrett's COVID recovery project for children.

ACTION: Cllr. Russell Pearce to order materials and Clerk to apply for Restart Grant.

6. Public Forum Resumed

District Cllr. Stephen Burroughes explained he was under purdah arrangements due to the County Council elections. He said the Restart Grant scheme was important to support communities to get back to normality and he was supporting the Yoxford Cricket Club's application for funds from his Enabling Communities Budget. Cllr. Burroughes said 17,800 payments had been made to small businesses struggling during the COVID pandemic totalling £32 million. The government has been generously providing funds to enable this. He said the District Council had agreed not to increase its element of Council Tax this year as families are financially under pressure. Cllr. Burroughes said the legislation to allow for remote meeting will be rescinded on 7th May which will create difficulties for Councils to come together to make decisions in a socially distanced way. The District Council put pressure on the government to renew the legislation until 21st June but this was unsuccessful. Cllr. Burroughes agreed that a hybrid arrangement to remote meeting would be useful. He said the District Council has invested heavily in Digital Transformation and it would be a shame to lose new ways of working and they could mould society for the benefit of all. The District Council has lobbied for this but the government does not seem receptive.

7. Casual Vacancy

The Council noted the resignation of Cllr. Ann Lambert. The Clerk said the period for a by-election to fill the vacancy expires on 1st April 2021 and, if no election is called, the Council may then co-opt an applicant.

ACTION: Clerk to add vacancy to next month's agenda for further consideration.

8. Grass Cutting

The Council considered the quotations received for the grass cutting season 2021-2022. Cllr. Russell Pearce said the Council was not obligated to accept the lowest quote and that resilience in terms of staffing and equipment needed to be considered along with costs. Cllr. Ian Shaw asked if it was therefore the Council's policy to only appoint companies and Cllr. Pearce replied in the affirmative. Following a discussion, the Council agreed to appoint RSC Landscapes Ltd to cut the grass in the cemetery, Mulberry Park, the Village Hall and Little Street play area.

ACTION: Clerk to inform quotation providers.

9. Highways

a) Following a request from a resident, the Council agreed to ask SCC Highways for permission to site the Speed Indicator Device on the B1122 between the junction with the A12 and the level crossing. Cllr. Paul Ashton said that a pole for the device had been sited on the wrong side of the road and permission would need to be obtained to move it. Cllr. Ian Shaw reminded the Council about the nearby Roadside Nature Reserve but this is not close to the proposed site.

ACTION: Cllr. Paul Ashton to progress.

b) Following a request from a resident, the Council decided not to ask SCC Highways for permission to replace the tree at the junction of the B1122 and the A12. Permission is unlikely to be granted at this time due to the proposed Sizewell C roundabout which will relandscape the area.

c) Cllr. Russell Pearce reported that he had a good and useful meeting with the Project Director of the Wilderness Reserve who is keen to work with the parish. They plan to keep in touch regularly. Cllr. Pearce said the milestone from outside Cockfield Hall had been sent for repair as the cast iron plate was cracked however it has gone missing. The Project Director intends to have a new one moulded, taken from a cast of an identical milestone in Kelsale, but permission to do so is required from SCC Highways. He said the usual approach is for the Parish Council to obtain this. All agreed to seek permission from Highways.

ACTION: Clerk to contact SCC Highways.

10. Planning

Cllr. Ian Shaw proposed that the Council has no objections to planning application DC/21/1428/TCA – cherry tree in rear garden to be felled – Magnolia House, High Street. Seconded by Cllr. Russell Pearce. All in favour.

ACTION: Clerk to inform ESC planning.

11. Yoxwood

The Council noted the annual accounts for the year ended 28th February 2021.

12. Flagship Homes

Cllr. John Sutherell reported that Cllr. Stephen Siddall is taking forward the legal negotiations to transfer ownership and responsibility for the Yoxwood View play area from Flagship to the Council.

Cllr. Siddall explained that Birketts are acting for Flagship and he proposed the Council appoints Birketts to also act on its behalf. Cllr. Siddall said the terms of the transfer agreed with Flagship in 2014 still apply. Cllr. Paul Ashton asked for details of the terms including the basis for the calculation of the commuted sum. Cllr. Siddall said he will circulate a note detailing the terms of the transfer before the next meeting when the Council will formally consider a resolution to take over responsibility. Cllr. John Sutherell said that when the Council takes over it will be important to establish a good, mutually supportive relationship with the community to maintain the condition of the playing area. Cllr. Russell Pearce agreed and said the takeover was a positive outcome for the village and suggested a meeting is arranged with the residents to involve them when the paperwork is complete.

ACTION: Clerk to add to next month's agenda.

13. Church

Cllr. John Sutherell reported that services have resumed beginning with Palm Sunday and then Easter Sunday. The Church will remain open after the Easter service to allow residents to view the flower arrangements. Cllr. Sutherell said the Wilderness Retreat had contacted the Vicar to enquire about using the Church for wedding services with receptions held at the Retreat. This idea is being taken forward but Cllr. Sutherell acknowledged there may be issues with parking therefore linkages with the Village Hall will be necessary. Cllr. Sutherell said the Church were also keen to link in with Cllr. Sarah Barrett's COVID recovery project for children.

14. Police

Cllr. John Sutherell said three crimes were reported in the parish in February. There was one public order offence and one violence/sexual offence in Elmsley Way and one violence/sexual offence on the A12 near Darsham. Cllr. Sutherell referred to a fake news story circulating on social media about Yoxford residents being violently robbed in the street which was forwarded to him by Cllr. David Tower. Cllr. Tower said it was causing consternation in the village and residents were afraid to leave their homes therefore it was important to ascertain whether there was any truth to the news. Cllr. Sutherell contacted the police and they explained that, to their knowledge, neither of the alleged incidents had taken place. The police were unable to take any corrective action but said they would feed the report into their intelligence team in case a pattern was developing. Cllr. Sutherell said he was happy to report these incidents but it would be helpful if those concerned could report the matter to the police directly, using the Suffolk Constabulary reporting tool, not least because they could provide helpful details to enable corrective action to be taken. Cllr. Sutherell said these incidents not only cause distress but can provoke anti-social reactions.

15. Sizewell C

Cllr. Paul Ashton referred to the recent meeting with EDF to discuss the Council's Relevant Representation and response to the proposed changes to the DCO. Cllr. Ashton is working through the circulated list of actions to ascertain whether they answer the concerns he raised. Cllr. John Sutherell reported that he attended the Planning Inspectorate's Preliminary Meeting Part 1 which was well attended by individuals and Town and Parish Councils. Cllr. Sutherell said the consensus of opinion seems to be wary of EDF's legal counsel even though this first meeting was preliminary and procedural. The Local Authorities were also represented by lawyers. Cllr. Sutherell said EDF appear to be gaming the system as they have learned the rules from Hinkley Point C. He explained that EDF were hiding behind a Rochdale Envelope which is an acknowledged way of dealing with an application comprising NSIP development where details of the project have not been resolved at the time when the application is submitted. This allows big projects to establish plans in principle by outlining the worst case scenario which effectively enables EDF to avoid giving details about their proposals. Cllr. Sutherell said his impression was that they are desperate to go ahead in a tight time frame and they will drive through the process despite the fact that the government has not reviewed its energy policy. EDF may receive

clearance to start construction without securing funding to see it through and the project will run overbudget and overtime. Cllr. Sutherell said he would try to attend the Joint Local Authorities Group meeting which Cllr. David Tower confirmed was on 20th April.

16. Cemetery

The Clerk reported that she had received an enquiry from a stonemason for a double kerb surround and headstone. Cllr. Russell Pearce reported he has repaired the hole in the fence.

17. Work Party

Cllr. Russell Pearce reported that he undertook minor maintenance at the Village Hall. Cllr. John Sutherell mentioned that the village sign needs to be cleaned.

18. Finance

- a) The Council noted the latest financial position, attached as Appendix I.
- b) It was proposed by Cllr. Stephen Siddall, seconded by Cllr. David Tower and agreed to authorise the payments:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary	Sharon Smith	£346.33	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's PAYE	HM Revenue and Customs	£102.47	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	£4.80	LGA 1972 s.111
Litter Pickers	Ian Shaw	£42.67	Litter Act 1983
Clerk's Training - Cemetery	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£30.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Councillor Training	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£60.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Clerks and Councils Direct Magazine	CommuniCorp	£12.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Website Domain Name	Zen Internet	£9.59	LGA 1972 s.111
Information Commissioner's Office	Data Protection Registration	£35.00	GDPR 2018
Birketts LLP	Village Hall Legal Fees	£660.00	LGA 1972 s.19

19. Correspondence

- a) The Council reviewed the correspondence received between 28th February 2021 and 26th March 2021.
- b) The Clerk summarised the correspondence received from Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council regarding the potential for property blight in the parish due to the proposed Sizewell C development and the report and survey about ESC's planning protocol.
ACTION: Cllr. Stephen Siddall to review and complete the survey about ESC's planning protocol.

20. Questions to the Chair

None.

21. Next Meeting

The Council confirmed the date and time of the virtual Annual Parish Meeting and the virtual Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for Thursday 6th May 2021 at 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm respectively.

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm.

Appendix I – Financial Position

Bank Balances

HSBC Community Account as at 5 March 2021	£21,211.83
N S & I Investment Account as at 1 January 2021	£11,042.80
United Trust Bank Business Bond as at 31 July 2020	£7,281.04
United Trust Bank Business Bond as at 19 December 2020	£5,366.82
	<u>£44,902.49</u>

Earmarked Reserves

SMH Play Area	£1,170.85
Garden of Suffolk Map	£1,500.00
Mulberry Park	£5,000.00
Village Hall Refurbishment Project	£5,624.79
	<u>£13,295.64</u>

Bank Balances less Reserves

£31,606.85

Income – March 2021

Allotments Association – Annual Rent	£200.00
HMRC – Vat Reclaim	£979.77
	<u>£1,179.99</u>

Payments – April 2021

Sharon Smith - Clerk's Salary	£346.33
HMRC – Clerk's PAYE	£102.47
Sharon Smith – Clerk's Expenses	£4.80
Ian Shaw – Litter Pickers	£42.67
SALC – Clerk's Training	£30.00
SALC – Councillors' Training	£60.00
CommuniCorp – Magazine Subscription	£12.00
Zen Internet – Website Domain Name	£9.59
ICO – Data Protection Registration	£35.00
	<u>£642.86</u>

Net Balance

£32,143.98