

MINUTES OF THE ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 11 MARCH 2024 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL.

Present: Cllrs Copping (Chair), Boulter, Nutman, Leek, Crissell and Corker.

In attendance: County Cllr Otton (in part), District Cllr Matthissen (in part), Mrs Fuller, Clerk and 3 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

2. To confirm and approve the minutes of the meetings 19 February and 1 March 2024.

Both sets of minutes were approved and signed.

3. To receive members Declarations of Interest on agenda items.

There were none.

4. Public comment. There was none.

5. Report from County Cllr Otton.

At Council on 15 February, Suffolk councillors met to discuss and vote on the administration's budget proposals. The council is borrowing heavily from its reserves to meet the growing demand for social care for adults and children, and council tax is due to rise by £74 annually for Band D properties from April this year. There will also be cuts to Family Hubs (children's centres) and Housing Related Support, which supports vulnerable people like care leavers to find accommodation. Funding for arts and museums will be maintained for 2024-25 but not from SCC core funding, and subject to a bidding process for grants from April 2025. The Bury St Edmunds local archives will be moved to The Hold in Ipswich, which like the arts funding cuts has been controversial locally. The opposition group were concerned about the lack of core funding from Suffolk County Council to arts and museums and proposed an amendment and suggestin that some of the council's remaining Covid funding from the government be used to support young people not in education, employment or training, as this cohort had suffered a lot of upheaval in their final years of schooling and exams. Our area was yet again severely hit by yet another storm and heavy rain. Cllr Otton attended the meeting in Gt Finborough where parishes got together, it was obvious that the main problem is that the various authorities don't work together to get things sorted out. Details have sent to the scrutiny committee meeting 12 March which will be discussing flooding across the county. The chair was beyond brave putting signs out. Cllr Otton has sent in photos of the flooding on Lower Road and have asked for the junction at Cutlers Lane to be sorted, although it is known the land owner has also done some clearing of the ditch. The final report requesting 40 mph on Lower Road is now with the cabinet member for determination. The report for replacing road signs has been sent to the Clerk and Cllr Otton is asking if OPC can make a small contribution to the cost as her £3000 budget will be depleted. Cllr Otton has agreed £1,000 from locality budget towards the memorial names. I have asked for an update on two local schools; Stowmarket and Stowupland High schools following a report that Stowupland now has a "super head to try to improve standards. However, the special school is performing fine. Due to RAAC this will be rebuilt. Stowmarket; with a change to the CEO of the trust a new head has been engaged at Stowmarket to make improvements. As you may have read in the local press,

Ofsted and CQC published their joint report into SEND services in Suffolk at the beginning of the month. The report was scathing. Opposition Cllrs were disappointed and concerned that the services are yet to get to grips with this and offered our assistance to the Local Area Partnership (Suffolk County Council and NHS teams) in preparing the Priority Action Plan they now need to submit to Ofsted and CQC by 7 March. The poor report led to the resignation of the Cabinet members for SEND, Education and Children's Services and prompted a reshuffle of the political leadership at the council. Devolution is something there has been a lot of talk about in Suffolk in recent years, and it looks like it may be happening from 2025. The deal the government is offering Suffolk is the same as the one for Norfolk and would give the county more freedom on decisions and funding for transport, skills and adult education, regenerating brownfield sites and retrofitting homes to make them more energy-efficient. If the deal is approved, the leader of Suffolk County Council would be directly elected by the people of Suffolk - every four years, residents will be given two votes, to elect their local county councillor AND the leader (mayor) of the county council. However, the new leader cannot also be a county councillor. The first election would take place in May 2025. The council will be consulting on the deal soon and residents will be able to give their opinions on the changes proposed. This will not be a referendum but the findings will be presented to SCC cabinet then for a decision at full council in June/July. Following the recent controversial proposal in the county council's budget to move local records from Bury St Edmunds to The Hold in Ipswich, the council have announced that they will be inviting community representatives from both Lowestoft and Bury St Edmund's to form two new Working Parties to consider local access to historical material. This could allow relevant collections to remain in the local area, but any proposals would need to be funded locally rather than by Suffolk County Council. This is not a reversal of the council's decision, and the majority of the records are still planned to move to The Hold, with the North-East and West Suffolk branches of the archive service to close.

6. Report from District Cllr Matthissen

The first Green Administration budget was agreed by Council in February. There will be a 2% increase in Council Tax (lower than most authorities). The cost of services to residents and communities is expected to rise by £1.8M, and Core Government funding is not matching the inflationary pressures, so the modest council tax increase should help protect services and build on the new priorities of the Council. The Green Administration is putting environmental sustainability and social justice at the heart of all its activities. The housing revenue budget will have financial challenges ahead, most notably an increase of £1.1M in the cost to run the housing service. The housing revenue account and council general fund account are completely separate so there is no way to cross subsidise from one account to the other. There will be a 7.7% increase in housing rents this year just to keep pace with rising costs. There will also be increases in both service and utility charges for sheltered housing tenants. Advice and help for those struggling with finances is available from the Council. A new rural transport grants scheme has just been launched to help provide passenger transport options across the district. Existing community transport operators can apply for funding before 15 April. All parish and town councils across both districts have all been invited to complete a questionnaire about the services and facilities present in each area. This information is needed to prepare the next phase of the Joint Local Plan. Funding is available to help residents with the cost of installing loft

insulation, in partnership with Travis Perkins. There are four product options available and residents will receive a 50% discount off their purchase (up to £200), with free delivery. According to The Energy Saving Trust, it is estimated that an uninsulated home loses a quarter of its heat through its roof. Correctly installed insulation should pay for itself many times over in its 40-year lifetime. SCC has secured over £200K from the Government's local authority Treescapes Fund for over 1500 new trees in a bid on behalf of all Suffolk councils, including MSDC. The funding will go toward planting as well as maintaining the trees. The initial meeting of parishes and landowners focused on the River Rat catchment was well-attended, and there is scope for coordinated work to slow the flow into the river, and thus lessen the frequency of road closures at Burford Bridge. The councils of Mid Suffolk, with a Green Party administration, and Babergh, that is Independently led, have just been jointly awarded *Council of the Year* for their collaboration and focus on their communities. This was awarded by the iESE, a not-for-profit organisation created by local authorities as a shared resource to transform public services and retain experience within the sector.

The Clerk asked when a decision would be made on the Local Governance Review. Cllr Matthissen advised that it is to go back to full council 20 March to agree to run the consultation again. OPC members are incredulous that this would even be considered and it was agreed to send a representative to the meeting to make a statement.

7. Planning Matters

a) To discuss and make recommendation to MSDC on any applications received prior to this meeting.

There were none.

b) To receive MSDC decisions on previously considered applications.

24/00137 Erection of front and side extensions (following demolition of existing lobby, conservatory and garage). Re-siting of oil tank. 9 Stearn Drive - granted.

The Clerk reported on the meeting with MSDC infrastructure regarding the outstanding CIL for application 17/02686 Riverside, Wash Lane. MSDC has passed the six year limit to take legal action to recover the CIL. However, MSDC will pay OPC the neighbourhood proportion of £5,295.12 from their CIL administration fees.

8. Finances

To approve payment of the following invoices:

a) 23/074 £332.00 Gipping Press March OHSMag

b) 23/075 £260.00 J E Reynolds hedge and grass cutting playing field

c) 23/076 £114.20 Laura Cross editing March OHSMag

d) 23/077 £157.58 Suffolk County Council pension payment March to be posted 5 April

Items a) – d) were approved and cheques issued

To approve payments under Section 137

e) 23/078 £220.00 Suffolk Accident Rescue Service

f) 23/079 £400.00 East Anglian Air Ambulance

g) 23/080 £120.00 East Suffolk Headway

h) 23/081 £770.00 Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau

Items e) – h) + j) were approved and cheques issued.

i) to receive monthly financial report from the Clerk

The balance of the Community Account at the end of January was £26,115.92. Less this month's cheques totalling £2,373.78 and adjustments of £150.00 for insurance and £175.00 for adverts, the corrected figure is £24067.14.

j)23/082 £31.60 Mr D Boulter reimbursement for post mix for new notice board
Cllrs considered the request from County Cllr Otton for a contribution towards cost of replacement signage. SCC has advised that the cost is estimated at £3,314.93. Councillors would like a breakdown of the cost of each sign and cost of fitting each sign so they can consider again at the next meeting.

Action: the Clerk

9. To consider the potential to close Wash Lane to vehicles and take any necessary action.

Due to recent flooding and the number of cars that have got stuck in the water, Cllrs agreed to write to SCC Highways to look at closing the road except for residents.

Action: The Clerk

10. To receive an update on the production a People and Places Plan and take any necessary action.

It was agreed to have a further meeting on 27 March.

11. To receive an update on the new noticeboards in Forest Road and Mill Grove and take any necessary action.

Cllr Boulter started to remove the current board and realised there was a gas pipe below the leg and therefore has stopped for the time being. The new noticeboard will be sited a foot further back to avoid the gas pipe. It is hoped to have in situ mid April. Until the boundary review has been decided, no further action will be taken on the noticeboard for Mill Grove.

12. To receive an update regarding the extension of the footway from 22 Forest Road to Chilton Leys and take any necessary action.

SCC are still awaiting the design and costing from Milestone.

13. To consider restarting Community Speedwatch and take any necessary action.

Speeding is getting worse although most is between 6.15 – 8.30 a.m. and 3.30 – 6.00 p.m. This is mostly due to the roads being used as a rat run to avoid the A14 roadworks. There was also concern regarding the safety of volunteers. No further action to be taken at this time.

14. To consider funding an increase in the cost of grass cutting at the playing field and take any necessary action.

The contractor is increasing the cost to £150.00 per cut to cover increased costs. It was unanimously agreed to fund the increase.

15. Environmental issues.

a)To discuss the Suffolk County Council self help scheme and take any necessary action.

The Clerk was asked to find out dates and times of training as Cllrs Boulter and Copping are considering attending.

Action: The Clerk

b)To receive an update on the flooding in Forest Road and the ditch a beside Footpath 28 towards Forest Road and take any necessary action.

Cllr Leek has put a report in to the Environment Agency as an individual. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to Anglian Water and copied to County Cllr Otton.

Action: Cllr Leek/the Clerk

c) To consider tree work between Church Walk and Harleston in conjunction with Harleston Parish meeting and take any necessary action

There has been no meeting with Harleston PC, however Cllrs have looked at the area and there doesn't appear to be a problem.

d) To consider the purchase of temporary flood signs for Burford Bridge area and Wash Lane and take any necessary action.

It was agreed to purchase 5 signs and weights at a cost of approx. £150.00.

16. To consider training opportunities for Councillors and take any necessary action.

Cllr Leek would like to attend Councillors Basic sessions in May and Cllr Copping would like to attend Charing Meetings Effectively on 26 March. *Action: The Clerk*

17. To receive an update on the Paupers Graves and take any necessary action.

Working parties have been unable to take place due to water logging but work will start on clearing the area near to the pond when possible.

18. To discuss OHSMag content for new Onehouse website with Suffolk.cloud, old website, Facebook page and take any necessary action.

OHSMag – complaints have been received from Harleston regarding the amount of photos being published by one contributor. Harleston residents have sent some photos but they have not been used as the size and resolution wasn't suitable for OHSMag but they have been put on the Facebook page. There will be a considerable deficit this year and a chilli night will be arranged to raise funds in July in conjunction with OHS Community Centre. An advertising leaflet has been produced and 1000 printed at a cost of £85.00. 600 will go out with OHSMag and the other 400 will be distributed to businesses in the surrounding area. The deficit for 2023/4 is £1173.47 if all advertisers pay, currently there are 2 outstanding totalling £304.00. Onehouse proportion will be between £956.38 and £1204.14, Harleston £158.42 and £199.46, Shelland £58.67 and £73.87.

New website – Cllr Copping has listed items to send to Suffolk.cloud to add to the website.

Facebook – the page with new password has not been set up yet.

19. To discuss development of land around the parish and take any necessary action.

MSDC has confirmed that they will empty the dog bins that have been installed on the Mill Grove development.

20. To consider a response to SALC members survey 2024 and take any necessary action (consultation ends 29 March 2024)

It was agreed that the Clerk would complete this on behalf of OPC.

Action: the Clerk

21. To receive correspondence/communications and to deal with any matters.

The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: Rural Services Network

Rural bulletin 20, 27 February, 5 March, funding digest March. **SALC** News bulletin 26 February, 9, 11 March, training bulletin 20, 27 February, 5 March, Local Councillor magazine February. **SCC** Trading Standards news 22, 29 February,

EP Passenger Group meeting date changed to 19 March. **MSDC** Town & Parish update March. **Suffolk Police** improvement to call handling performance, operation to tackle drug dealing in Mid Suffolk. **National Highways** A14 Highway Project. **County Cllr Otton** more of Suffolk tree cover and orchards to be restored, share your views on new recycling centre for Ipswich. **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** Community Wildlife courses 2024. **SARS** grant request. **Finborough PC** notes from the flood meeting 19 February.

22. To receive reports

a)Report from the Clerk

Memorial funding – notification of Locality grants of £1000.00 from County Cllr Otton and £500.00 from District Cllr Willshere (Rattlesden Ward) have been received.

40 mph Lower Road – has been submitted to Richard Smith and Graeme Mateer for consideration and decision.

b)Report from the Flooding Working Group meeting 19 February 2024

Cllr Leek attended a meeting at Finborough of the Flooding Working Group which comprises of representatives from 5 parish councils, local farmers, The Food Museum, Stowmarket Golf Club, Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub Committee and Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit. The Environment Agency, Stowmarket Town Council, SCC Flood & Water Management and SCC Environment Strategy declined the invitation to attend. The criteria for S19 help from SCC was confirmed as 5 houses flooded or 1 house flooded more than once but there is also infrastructure out of action for more than 10 hours which is what happens in the 5 parishes with the closure of roads however it seems that SCC are not looking at putting parishes in the “queue” who fit this criteria. It was noted that even if they did we would be No.100 plus in the line. Discussion took place around the possibility of creating a holding lake at The Forge and it was confirmed that discussions were already underway with professional consultants on the viability of this project. Concerns expressed that this was an old anthrax cattle burial site will be investigated. Other potential issues discussed were planting trees in the river, how the sluice gate is working and whether it should be removed, what MSDC planning officers do to monitor water on development sites. No further meeting has been arranged yet.

23. Questions to the Chairman. There were none.

24. Items for next agenda

Digger hire for Paupers graves work, People and Places Plan, noticeboards, footpath to Chilton Leys, OHSMag, new website and Facebook, development around the parish, Pauper’s Graves, Clerk vacancy, Councillor vacancy, Self-Help scheme and issues near Footpath 28.

25. To confirm date and time of the next meeting as Monday 8 April 2024 at 7.30 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....