

# **RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

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## **Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 23 February 2016 at 7.30pm in Rattlesden Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr Esther Jewson (Acting Chairman), Cllr Russell Morley and Cllr Julie Rayner.

**In Attendance:** County and District Cllr Penny Otton;  
Three members of the public; and  
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed.

**2015/130 Meeting Chairman**

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman it was proposed by Cllr Morley, seconded by Cllr Rayner, that Cllr Jewson be elected Chairman for the meeting. There being no other nominations, the proposal was carried.

**2015/131 Election of Chairman 2015-2016**

It was proposed by Cllr Morley, seconded by Cllr Rayner, that Cllr Burn be elected Chairman for the period up to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. The proposal was carried.

**2015/132 Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

In the absence of Cllr Burn it was necessarily resolved that the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman be deferred until the next meeting.

**2015/133 Election of Vice-Chairman 2015-2016**

Given that Cllr Burn was previously Vice-Chairman and that her election as Chairman had created a vacancy it was proposed by Cllr Jewson, seconded by Cllr Morley, that Cllr Rayner be elected Vice-Chairman for the period up to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. The proposal was carried.

**2015/134 Apologies for Absence**

Accepted from Cllr Kerry Burn who was ill, Cllr Bridget Goodchild who was on holiday and Cllr Dan Jewers who was also on holiday.

**2015/135 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**2015/136 Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting**

It was proposed by Cllr Rayner, seconded by Cllr Morley, that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 12 January, be signed as a true record. The proposal was carried.

**2015/137 The meeting was adjourned for reports from external bodies and for public comment and questions:**

**137.1 District and County Councillor:** Cllr Otton presented her report in which she noted that the County Council had voted for a small rise in the council tax of 2.0% to cover the increasing costs of social care. She also

# RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL

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highlighted problems with HGVs in High Town Green and with water flooding properties adjacent to the "Five Bells" footpath. On a positive note, she reported that a Parish Council bid for grit bins to be paid for by her Mid Suffolk District Council 'Locality Budget' had been successful and that this funding would be provided in the near future. Councillors thanked her for that money but raised concerns about the rise in the charge for a 'brown bin' which it was felt was unreasonable. She was asked to convey those concerns to the District Council.

**137.2 Public Discussion:** Thanks were expressed by both residents and councillors to the River Working Group. It was agreed unanimously that the members undertook excellent work on behalf of the village and that their efforts warranted appropriate recognition. On the matter of the painting of the railings in Lower Road, a resident kindly volunteered to lead the task and found immediate support from others present, including councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Morley, seconded by Cllr Rayner, that the Council make available up to £500.00 to fund the work. The proposal was carried. It was emphasised that a risk assessment needed to be carried out such that appropriate health and safety measures were in place when the work was undertaken.

## Meeting resumed:

**2015/138**

### **Parish Clerk's Report**

The Clerk's report was noted. While several items were covered elsewhere on the agenda, a query was raised regarding the intended campsite on Felsham Road. The Clerk confirmed that no response had been received from the owner of the site in response to the invitation to meet councillors to address concerns about what was planned. This was considered disappointing as the Council had been anxious to ensure the most beneficial outcome for all involved.

**2015/139**

### **Planning**

**139.1 Applications:** There were no new planning applications for the Council to consider.

**139.2 Decisions:** It was noted that applications 4266/15 and 4267/15 both concerning Quince Cottage, Church Path had been granted.

**2015/140**

### **Finance**

**140.1 Financial Report:** The report to 31 January was received. It was proposed by Cllr Jewson, seconded by Cllr Morley, that the reconciliation be approved and duly signed. The proposal was carried.

**140.2 Payments and Income:** It was proposed by Cllr Jewson, seconded by Cllr Morley, that the schedule of payments be approved. The proposal was carried. The schedule comprised the following:

- ◆ Litter-picker salary (February) - £129.51;
- ◆ Clerk salary (February) - £267.49;
- ◆ PAYE (February) - £66.80;
- ◆ The Felsham Gardeners - cemetery grass-cutting - £190.00;

# RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL

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- ◆ Lara Turner Architectural Services - planning application work - £335.92;
- ◆ Rattlesden Parochial Church Council - contribution towards the printing costs of "Revelations" - £40.00;
- ◆ Mr Roger Heard - 447th Bomber Group Memorial grass-cutting - £37.50;
- ◆ Age UK Suffolk - grant - £50.00; and
- ◆ Mid Suffolk CAB - grant - £50.00.

In addition it was proposed by Cllr Morley, seconded by Cllr Jewson, that £113.53 be reimbursed to Chard Wadley for the cost of waders bought on behalf of the River Working Group. The purchase having been approved at the last Council meeting, the proposal was carried.

Income received was duly noted as follows:

- ◆ Business account interest (January) - £0.89;
- ◆ Business account interest (February) - £0.79; and
- ◆ Residents - burial reservations - £225.00.

**140.3 Audit Plan 2015-2016:** It was proposed by Cllr Morley, seconded by Cllr Jewson, that the Audit Plan, and the 'Terms of Engagement' for and appointment of an internal auditor be approved. The proposal was carried. It was further proposed by Cllr Morley, seconded by Cllr Rayner, that Mr Graham Reid be asked to carry out the internal audit of the Council for 2015-2016. The proposal was carried.

**140.4 External Audit 2017-2018:** Given advice from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, this matter was deferred from the last meeting. Information received subsequently had indicated that the Council should opt in to the national arrangements being put in place for the five-year period from 2017-2018. Accordingly, it was proposed by Cllr Jewson, seconded by Cllr Rayner, that the Council enter the new arrangements under the Sector-led Body, Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The proposal was carried.

## 2015/141 Council Governance

**141.1 New Legislation, Codes or Regulatory Issues:** The Clerk noted that the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 were now in force and would mean some changes for standing orders which would be updated as soon as further details had been received from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

**141.2 Risk Register, Policies and Internal Controls:** There were no decisions or actions which impacted upon the Council risk register, policies or internal controls.

**141.3 Publication Scheme:** It was felt that further time needed to be allowed for councillors to review the draft and so this item was deferred until the next meeting.

## 2015/142 Correspondence

Further to the list as presented, it was noted that no response had yet been received from Rudlings Wakelam Solicitors regarding the recent concerns over how that company had handled the matter of conveyancing relating to the Cemetery extension. However, further to enquiries by the Clerk, it had

# **RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

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been confirmed that a reply would be received by 26 February. In other matters, information about an initiative entitled "Suffolk Year of Walking" would be passed to the Footpath Officer in case of any interest; and it was agreed that an event hosted by Suffolk Record Office entitled "Celebrate Our Heritage and Our Future" be attended by two councillors. Information about the latter would be circulated to ascertain interest.

## **2015/143 Queen's 90th Birthday**

With the Community Council indicating that it was not planning any activities for the celebrations but with a joint event being organised between the Community Shop and "Five Bells" public house, it was resolved that the Council seeks to support the latter in whatever way was most appropriate. Cllr Rayner was asked to speak with the organisers to see how the Council might become involved.

## **2015/144 Street Signs - Church Path**

Based upon feedback following a site visit, councillors remained convinced that the formal street signs offered by Mid Suffolk District Council would be an eyesore. However, it was agreed that signs would be helpful but should be, as suggested originally, more in-keeping with the Conservation Area. Cllr Jewson kindly offered to investigate options and costs.

## **2015/145 Common Land**

Further to the decision at the last Council meeting, Prettys Solicitors advised that the initial cost estimate was for determining the ownership of one piece of common land rather than all six in and around the village with no known owners. The revised quotation for the work was £2,000.00 plus disbursements plus VAT. Acknowledging that the Council needed to determine the position against future planning and other considerations, it was proposed by Cllr Morley, seconded by Cllr Rayner, that Prettys Solicitors be engaged to undertake the work at the revised quotation. The proposal was carried.

## **2015/146 Village Railings**

This matter had already been reviewed and action taken during public discussion (minute 2015/137.2 refers).

## **2015/147 Annual Parish Meeting**

It was recognised that the Annual Parish Meeting needed to be revitalised to stimulate attendance and interest. Otherwise, it was in danger of becoming the same each year with no real outcomes. It was suggested that a keynote speaker be identified of topical or local interest, and Rattlesden organisations invited to offer posters/notices or 'trade stands' about their activities and personnel. If refreshments were also offered then attendees might view and discuss what was on offer in the village over drinks and some food. It was agreed that ideas for potential speakers be considered further and arrangements for the event confirmed at the next Council meeting.

# **RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

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**2015/148 Council Vacancy**

Mid Suffolk District Council had now confirmed that no election had been requested, and so the Parish Council was able to advertise the possibility of a co-option to fill its casual vacancy. The Clerk would publish a notice such that any interest might be identified to enable a decision to, potentially, be taken at the next meeting.

**2015/149 Matters to be Brought to the Attention of the Council**

Two matters were raised. The first was a query regarding the ownership of half of the playing field. Cllr Otton reported her understanding which was that the portion owned by the County Council was to be transferred into the ownership of the Community Council. It was not known if any cost was involved. The second matter related to the School which was now an academy and part of the Thedwastre Education Trust. Cllr Morley raised concerns about how the School was performing, given ostensibly conflicting views between those represented to parish councillors before Christmas by the Headteacher and those reported more recently in the local press. Cllr Jewson, who was also a governor of the School, offered to look into the precise position.

**2015/150 Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 29 March at 7.30pm in Rattlesden Village Hall.

**The meeting closed at 8.47pm.**