

RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 25 January 2022 at 7.30pm in Rattlesden Village Hall

Approved 22.02.22 (Minutes 2021/063 refers)

Present: Cllr Kerry Burn (Chairman), Cllr Steve Atkinson, Cllr Peter Brooke, Cllr David Goodlad, Cllr Dan Jewers and Cllr Russell Morley.

In Attendance: County and District Cllr Penny Otton;
One member of the public; and
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed.

2021/049 Apologies for Absence

Accepted from Cllr Tony Edwards who was having to self-isolate due to a family member having tested positive for COVID-19.

2021/050 Declarations of Interest

None.

2021/051 Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Jewers, seconded by Cllr Burn, that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 23 November, be signed as a true record. The proposal was carried.

2021/052 District and County Councillor Report

Cllr Otton presented her report, as circulated previously. She noted that both Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council had yet to determine their budgets for the forthcoming year and, as a consequence, their elements of the council tax. She also highlighted the on-going concerns at the County Council about social care, not least the funding for appropriate services.

2021/053 Public Comment and Questions

It was reported that there had been a recent incident involving the work of the River Rat Group. Whilst noting the concerns raised, councillors emphasised and reiterated their support for the excellent work done by the volunteers.

2021/054 Planning

054.1 Applications: There were no new planning applications for the DC/21/ Council to consider.

054.2 Applications - Responses: Given deadlines in advance of the meeting, councillors had necessarily considered applications:

DC/21/06388 Walnut Tree farm, Mitchery Lane - change of use, conversion of and extension to barn to form live /work unit (re-submission and amended scheme to approved application DC/21/03327). The Council had no objection;

DC/21/06469 Suffolk House, Lower Road - replacement windows and doors. The Council had no objection;

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DC/21/06899 and DC/21/06900 Walnut Tree Farm, Mitchery Lane - erection of a single-storey side extension for oil storage tank; and Listed Building Consent. The Council had no objection;
DC/21/05368 Howe Wood Cottage, Baby Lane (re-consultation) - erection of extension to provide double garage, utility and porch with habitable roof space over and erection of single-storey annexe for elderly relative. The Council had no objection;
DC/22/00046 5 Wheelwright Green - erection of single-storey extension and installation of gates to drive. The Council had no objection;
DC/22/00410 4 Spencers Piece - works to trees in a Conservation Area - fell one Himalayan silver birch tree (c30ft) due to proximity to neighbours' garage. The Council had no objection; and
DC/21/06473 Hillside Cottage, Birds Green - erection of single-storey rear extension to existing sun room (re-submission of DC/21/03316). The Council had no objection.

054.3 Decisions: It was noted that applications DC/21/05927 1 Spencers Piece, DC/21/05635 land to the rear of 6 Pightle Grove and 2, 3 and 4 Wheelwright Green, Rising Sun Hill, DC/21/06266 and DC/21/06285 Avis, Lower Road, DC/21/06267 11 Windyridge Road, DC/21/06388 Walnut Tree farm, Mitchery Lane, DC/21/06469 Suffolk House, Lower Road, DC/21/06473 Hillside Cottage, Birds Green, and DC/21/05608 2 Wheelwright Green had been granted.

2021/055

Finance

055.1 Financial Report: The report to 31 December was received. It was noted that the TSB current account stood at £8,216.06 and the deposit account at £49,153.83 further to which it was proposed by Cllr Burn, seconded by Cllr Morley, that the reconciliation be approved and duly signed. The proposal was carried.

055.2 Payments and Income: It was proposed by Cllr Morley, seconded by Cllr Jewers, that the schedule of payments be approved. The proposal was carried. The schedule comprised not only recent payments and income, but also transactions both pre-authorised by councillors and authorised by councillors since the Council last met, as follows:

- ◆ Litter-picker: salary (January) - £172.23;
- ◆ Clerk: salary (January) - £403.70;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE (January) - £101.00;
- ◆ Elan City Ltd: three speed devices - £5,331.19 + £1,066.24 VAT (Community Infrastructure Levy funding);
- ◆ Rattlesden Community Council: support for new play equipment - £5,000.00 (Section 137 expenditure);
- ◆ Cllr David Goodlad: reimbursement of cost of hi-vis jacket - £29.98;
- ◆ Gudgeons Prentice Solicitors: legal fees - £804.00 + £152.80 VAT;
- ◆ Cllr David Goodlad: reimbursement of cost of locks for speed devices - £16.00;
- ◆ Mr David Peachey: litter bin repairs - £38.00;
- ◆ Clerk: reimbursement of costs of voucher for internal auditor - £50.00 (Chairman's allowance);

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- ◆ Mr Richard Mahony: reimbursement of village Christmas tree cost - £50.00 (Section 137 expenditure);
- ◆ Anglian Water Business Ltd (National): Cemetery water - £12.04;
- ◆ The Felsham Gardeners: Cemetery and village maintenance (January) - £275.00; and
- ◆ PP Garden Services: 447th Bomb Group Memorial grass-cutting (November) - £40.00 (Section 137 expenditure).

Income received was duly noted as follows:

- ◆ TSB: business (deposit) account interest (December) - £13.36;
- ◆ TSB: business (deposit) account interest (January) - £13.04;
- ◆ East of England Co-op Funeral Services: Cemetery fees - £250.00;
- ◆ Mid Suffolk District Council: cleansing grant (July-September) - £231.66; and
- ◆ Southgate of Newmarket: Cemetery fees - £250.00.

055.3 Budget 2022-2023 and Precept 2022-2023: Councillors had given careful consideration to the budget analysis for the current financial year as circulated ahead of the meeting. In turn, this informed the potential picture for 2022-2023. Some inevitable costs had already been notified to the Council but there were still areas where likely expenditure was hard to predict. Councillors were keen to maintain high levels of support for local bodies and organisations going forward whilst, at the same time, recognising that a number of budget heads, such as staff costs, were dependent upon matters which would not be finalised for a few weeks. It was resolved that reserves be held at present levels which afforded the Council financial security but allowed for opportunities to be developed should new projects emerge. After reviewing options, it was resolved unanimously that the precept required be set at £22,632.00. In so doing, the Parish Council element of the council tax would be held at the same level as 2021-2022. Otherwise, financial heads proposed in the paper accompanying the agenda item were accepted and would form the basis for the final budget to be confirmed at the April Council meeting.

055.4 Speed Devices: It had always been accepted that battery-operated devices would have on-going costs which would need to be met. Initial experience now suggested that recharging and maintaining the batteries for the three devices, plus incidental costs in rotating their locations, amounted to £10.00 per month. It was thus resolved that Cllr Goodlad be reimbursed that sum monthly in recognition of his management of the devices with the figure to be reviewed mid-year. Initial payments would be backdated to December when the devices were first installed.

055.5 Play Equipment: Further to the funding already provided to the Community Council towards much-needed new play equipment, it was resolved that a further £5,000.00 be given, effective at the start of the 2022-2023 financial year.

055.6 Parochial Church Council (PCC): In recent years the Parish Council has provided financial support to the PCC, primarily towards the cost of producing the newsletter "Revelations". It was resolved that such support again be supplied but this year in the sum of £200.00.

055.7 Community Land: The Council confirmed the decision, necessarily taken by e-mail since the last meeting, that £400.00 be made available

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from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for the planting of trees comprising Jubilee Wood (the original sum agreed had been £200.00).

055.8 New Allotments: Regarding the installation of a standpipe for use with the allotments (behind Roman Rise) due to be gifted to the Council by Hartog Hutton Ltd it was resolved that the cost of c£1,900.00 be agreed (from CIL funding) subject to further negotiation with the developer.

2021/056 Allotments - Birds Green

The County Council had belatedly realised that the lease enjoyed by the Council expired in 2021. It was agreed that any renewal be deferred pending acceptance by the Hanging Hill Allotment Association of the new rent of £81.60 per year plus an acknowledgement that its members should be responsible for their element of the insurance implications.

2021/057 Personnel

The situation regarding a new Clerk was noted with a further update due as soon as the deadline for applications (9 February) had passed. With regard to the Council Litter-Picker, councillors acknowledged the retirement of Jean Coleman from the post, as of 31 January, after 12 years in the role. Councillors were unanimous in expressing their gratitude to her for all that she had done in keeping the village in such a clean and welcoming state. Moving forward, it was resolved that a new post be created of Village Warden to be based on litter-picking but with an enhanced environmental focus. This post would be for 25 hours per month at £10.00 per hour and, as with any new position, be subject to an appropriate advertisement.

2021/058 Wildlife Friendly Village Councillor

Given his new roles in relation to the speed devices and flooding matters, Cllr Goodlad felt that he could not continue as Wildlife Friendly Village Councillor. In seeking a replacement, it was agreed that a constructive way forward would be to change the focus and create the position of Wildlife Friendly Village Officer and, thereby, to seek someone in the village willing to undertake the role. Cllr Goodlad offered to approach a resident who was known to have a keen interest in the natural environment.

2021/059 Matters to be Brought to the Attention of the Council

Cllr Goodlad briefed councillors on his recent positive meeting with Cllr Otton and officers from the County Council regarding flooding and emergency signage. Cllr Burn raised the matter of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and what the Council might do to celebrate the creation of the Jubilee Wood. Cllr Goodlad would investigate the planting of an oak tree, Cllr Burn would look at options for descriptive signs and the Clerk check with other village bodies to see if anything was being prepared.

2021/048 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 22 February at 7.30pm in Rattlesden Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.