

RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 28th November 2023 at 19:30 in Rattlesden Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Tony Edwards (acting Chairman), Cllr. Russell Morley, Cllr. Steve Atkinson, Cllr. Dave Goodlad, Cllr. Sarah Osborne.

In Attendance: County Cllr. Penny Otton, District Cllr. Nicky Willshire, Parish Clerk Nick Skelhorn, and three members of the public.

2023/119 Apologies for absence
Cllr. Dan Jewers.

2023/120 Declarations of interest
None.

2023/121 Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting
It was resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 31st October 2023 be approved.

2023/122 Public Comment and questions on agenda items
122.1 Comments in support of the Community Council (Pavilion) grant application: Historic issues of vandalism were raised (solar panels, drainpipes) leading to a need for CCTV/lighting to deter future incidents. It was reiterated, as per the CIL grant application, that associated costs were c.£2,300, with the Community Council seeking £1,000 from the Parish Council. Details on Community Council reserves were shared, and the need for the external funds justified.

122.2 Comments in support of the Preschool grant application: An update on the project was provided and it confirmed that c.£4,700 had been spent to date from previous CIL grant. Details of how costs had been minimised (i.e. all volunteer labour) were shared, but it noted how there remained limited Preschool reserves to afford the remaining works (shed/fencing) - Nursery fees had been raised so far as reasonably possible, but this was likely to be offset by proposed minimum wage increases. It was confirmed c.75% attending the Preschool were from Rattlesden, with others from Felsham, Drinkstone etc.

122.3 Mr. John Lees, Footpath Officer: Mr Lees spoke of his passion for the vacant role, and shared ideas he had to deliver enhanced benefit to the Parish should he assume the role.

2023/123 County Councillor's report
Cllr. Otton highlighted her reports update on support for flood victims, notably the provision of up to £5,000 for those impacted. Cllr. Goodlad raised disparity between purported support and reality, suggesting awareness of support/policies shared by the Environment Agency/DEFRA did not align, and that it was unclear how to apply for the financial support. Cllr. Morley requested specific dates for road repairs on Rising Sun Hill and raised that drains on High Street remained continually blocked and also the issue of 'rat runs' resulting from the A14 improvement works (shared by multiple Councillors) and the lack of preventative measures by National Highways. Cllr. Edwards raised the issue of Suffolk Highways blocking St. Nicholas' close during repair works and affording no passage over a 2–3-hour period. Cllr. Otton confirmed she would feedback and revert on all

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matters, suggesting in relation to 'rat runs' that mobile speed vans and signage could be sought as had been adopted in other affected localities.

2023/124

District Councillor's report

No additional report was received (October report also covering November). Cllr. Willshere raised her concern at the lack of response to flood victims, confirming that all affected parties should have been consulted. Cllr. Goodland confirmed he, nor other parishioners he had engaged, had received contact save initial phone calls. Cllr. Willshere confirmed she would report the matter.

2023/125

Matters arising from the previous minutes.

125.1 'Minute 113.2 Proposed Parish Council actions [flooding]': Sand and sandbags were made available at the Pavillion and bracings erected behind the bottle banks. The Clerk confirmed (in a preceding email) that response was still awaited from the Environment Agency on their waterway management policy, and that details of flood support had been shared on the village Facebook page and within the village magazine. It was noted that the Flood Subcommittee had formed and held its first meeting.

125.2 'Minute 114 Review of Council assets': The Clerk confirmed the damaged signpost had been reported to MSDC, the grit bin successfully replaced and the bus shelter repainted.

125.3 'Minute 115 Allotments': The Clerk sought approval to utilise the National Allotment Society template for the new Jubilee Allotment Lease (approved, save some amends – See item 130.2).

2023/126

Planning

126.1 Applications considered by e-mail due to the consultation deadline: DC/23/04920 'Application for Listed Building Consent. Retention of re-roofing of 70's built extension' - no objections.

126.2 Applications approved/rejected: DC/23/04698 'Reduce Crown of weeping willow to the left of driveway by 1/2' was granted on 2nd November 2023.

2023/127

Finance

127.1 Financial Report: The Clerk's financial report to 31th October was received. The current account balance stood at £4,214.05 and the deposit account at £116,085.47, of which £86,842.64 represented CIL funds, and it was agreed that the reconciliation be approved and duly signed.

127.2 Payments Schedule: The schedule of payments for November 2023 was approved, with two additions, £450 to Graham Cornish (bus shelter painting), and £75.40 to Nicholas Skelhorn, Clerk (3 x £25 vouchers for young flood volunteers as per October minutes plus gift cards). For the benefit of members of the public in attendance, Cllr. Edwards clarified the purpose of said vouchers.

2023/128

CIL Grant Applications

128.1 Rattlesden Community Council CCTV and Security Lighting: Cllr. Atkinson queried if sufficient details on the Community Council's financial standing had been received (confirmed positive by the Clerk). Councillors collectively resolved to grant the full £1,000

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from CIL reserves based on information provided and shared within this meeting (see item 122.1 also).

128.2 Rattlesden Preschool gardens works (shed and fencing): Councillors shared their wholehearted appreciation for the service provided by the Preschool and the recent investments for the benefit of local children, but raised the point that, unlike other organisations, the Preschool was also a private venture with a regular income stream and consequently there was an expectation that some funds could reasonably be raised independently to, so far as possible, 'match' any CIL grant. Cllr. Osborne raised that the current Lease affords all users of the hall to utilise the garden space and queried if the proposed works could curtail this – discussions concluded this was unlikely. It was resolved that given the Preschool does not solely accommodate Rattlesden children and that there was limited evidence of fund acquisition from alternative sources, that the Council would award in principle a CIL grant representing 50% of the requested funds (50% of £4,195.50 + £1,891.22 = £3,043.36), less labour costs given evidence indicated this was to be largely fulfilled by volunteers. 75% of the funds were to be awarded in advance, subject to the provision of financial accounts evidencing good standing, with the remaining balance to be paid upon completion of the works in accordance with evidence of final project spend.

128.3 Clerk Report on CIL Allocations: The Clerk highlighted how, following consultation with MSDC, various Parish Council maintenance obligations could be fully or partially attributed to growth from development and consequently allocated to CIL funds. He did, however, suggest more understanding was required on how this could impact the Budget and Precept. Cllr. Morley raised a need for greater understanding to ensure all allocations were correct. It was collectively resolved that the Clerk would conduct additional research.

2023/129

Vacancies

The Clerk noted recent vacancies (Councillor, Chairman and Footpath Officer), confirming that MSDC had been made aware and a Notice of Vacancy published (Councillor vacancy) and roles advertised (Footpath Officer). The Clerk confirmed that save John Lee's application (in attendance as per item 122.3) no other applications for Footpath Officer had been received. It was resolved that Mr. John Lee was to be duly appointed. It was confirmed that as Deputy Chairman, Cllr. Edwards was to continue as Acting Chairman until the appointment of a new Chair.

2023/130

Allotments

130.1 HHAA: The Clerk confirmed that the Lease agreement with the HHAA had been agreed and signed, and that he was recommending countersignature by the Council. He confirmed that the Form of the Lease was based on the National Allotment Association template. The Council collectively resolved to sign the agreement.

130.2 – Jubilee: The Clerk confirmed that after review of three quotes, and subsequent evaluation and approval by Councillors via email, that Gudgeons Prentice had been instructed. The Clerk requested Council approval to use the National Allotment Society Form of Lease for the new allotments which was approved, subject to amends to ensure temporary structures (i.e. sheds) were proportionate to the site and in keeping with the surrounding character. Given Cllr. Osborne's expertise in this area, she was to draft the final agreement for Council approval.

2023/131

Rolling Review of Council policies and procedures: 03 Health and Safety Policy

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It was resolved collectively that the current policy was sufficient and proportionate, and it was approved in its current form.

2023/132

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

132.1 Cllr. Morley reiterated the desire for his wife to host a talk on dementia and available support at a future meeting.

132.2 Cllr. Osborne confirmed she was meeting with solicitors concerning the proposed assignment of the Village Hall Lease to the Preschool. The Council requested an update via email given the next ordinary meeting was scheduled for January.

132.3 Cllr. Goodland provided an update on the next flood subcommittee meeting (4th December '23).

132.4 Cllr. Atkinson confirmed he had spoken with Rattlesden School's Head Teacher about the flooding issue and shared her wish to be made aware of any developments given the significant impacts of flooding upon the school. It was also confirmed that the School had received a grant to replace existing windows, and that they would soon likely be seeking funds for the installation of CCTV at the rear of the building (currently exploring all available funding options).

132.5 Cllr. Edwards raised combining dog and litter bins to realise long-term cost savings for the Council. It was also noted how the replacement of the current red bins with black would be more in-fitting with conservation measures.

132.6 The Clerk noted that he was not yet in receipt of the necessary mandate papers to remove former Cllr. Burn as a banking signatory. Cllr. Edwards proposed Cllr. Osborne was added as a new signatory which was agreed in principle by the Council subject to formal approval at the next ordinary meeting.

2023/133

Next Meeting

Tuesday 30th January 2024 at 7:30pm (no December meeting).

The meeting closed at 21.05