

RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 30th January 2024 at 19:30 in Rattlesden Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Tony Edwards (Chair), Cllr. Sarah Osborne (Deputy Chair), Cllr. Russell Morley, Cllr. Steve Atkinson, Cllr. Dave Goodlad, Cllr. Dan Jewers.

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

Absences: **Apologies for absence**
None.

2024/001 **Declarations of interest**
None.

2024/002 **Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting**
It was resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 28th November 2023 be approved.

2024/003 **Public Comment and questions on agenda items**
Attendees sought an update on the progression of the Rattlesden Preschool grant application. Cllr. Edwards confirmed this was to be discussed as per item 9.1 on the agenda. Whilst not on the agenda, the acting PC Footpath Officer gave an update on recent queries/findings, and sought PC consent to purchase OS mobile mapping to support the role which was approved, subject to confirmation of costs.

2024/004 **County Councillor's report**
Cllr. Otton confirmed the pothole situation on Rising Sun Hill had been reported on the Politics Look East programme and gave an update on the CC's recent budget review (unanticipated reserves were to form in part a 'grant pot' for local eligible organisations). An update on Ofsted reports concerning local special needs and secondary schools was provided and dates / locations confirmed for the next A14 improvement works meeting. Cllr. Goodlad queried if repairs to Rising Sun Hill were being delayed until residential development work in the area had been finalised and Cllr. Morley if the CC were to receive funds from National Highways given increased local traffic because of the works. On the former it was confirmed works were due to take place as soon as possible, and the latter that this was not planned, but had been raised.

2024/005 **District Councillor's report**
Cllr. Willshere, following attendance of a full DC meeting, provided an update on the Gateway 14 development and feedback on discussions about the Environment Agency's response to recent flooding (this being deemed inadequate) and how the DC were establishing a separate working group to plan for and mitigate future flooding events and to collate information on actions/initiatives at Parish level. Cllr. Atkinson queried if Rattlesden's exclusion from the 'Flood Investigation List' would limit support for the village.

2024/006 **Matters arising from the previous minutes**
006.1 'Minute 128.1 Rattlesden Community Council CCTV and Security Lighting': The approved £1,000 grant was credited to Rattlesden Community Council from CIL funds in December.

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2024/007

Planning

007.1 Applications considered by e-mail due to the consultation deadline: DC/24/00130 '12 Birds Green - Application for works to tree(s) in a conservation area' – no objections.

007.2 Applications approved/rejected: DC/23/04645 'Erection of 6no. dwellings (following the demolition of the existing house and barn)' and **DC/23/04646** 'Demolition of existing dwellinghouse to facilitate erection of 6no. Dwellings' were granted on 5th January 2024.

2024/008

Finance

008.1 Financial report: The Clerk's financial report to 31st December 2023 was received. The current account balance stood at £688.44 and the deposit account at £114,407.28, of which £72,593.65 represented CIL funds. The clerk highlighted that the increase in Council reserves and decrease CIL reserves reflected an historic incorrect allocation of the first 2023-2024 Precept payment to CIL Reserves opposed to General Reserves. It was agreed that the reconciliation be approved and duly signed.

008.2 Payments schedule: The schedule of payments for December 2023 and January 2024 (£3,207.64) was approved with no additions.

008.3 New banking signatory: It was collectively resolved that following the departure of former Cllr. K Burn that Cllr. Osborne was to replace her as a banking signatory.

008.4 2024-2025 Draft Budget and Precept: The Clerk presented the proposed 2024-2025 draft budget to Councillors (also circulated prior to the meeting) and resulting precept requirement, a sum of £22,338 (a £14 increase from 2023-2024). The budget and precept were approved by the PC and the precept forms signed.

2024/009

CIL grant applications

009.1 Rattlesden Preschool accounts in support of grant application: Cllr. Atkinson and Cllr. Morley thanked the Preschool for the provision of accounts. They raised the need for a forecast of c.3 years for the Council to be able to properly evaluate the financial standing of the Preschool.

009.2 Village Hall insulation grant, building report: Councillors confirmed receipt of the Building Inspection Report and the outstanding need for a project plan. Cllrs Edwards and Osborne raised the potential transfer of the Village Hall to a new leaseholder, and it was resolved that until clarity upon the future of the Village Hall Committee was known decision of the grant was to be withheld.

2024/010

Vacancies

010.1 Councillor Vacancy: The clerk formally reported that there had been no responses to the published Notice of Vacancy. The Council collectively approved the issue of the Clerk's proposed advert for the vacancy.

010.2 Appointment of new Chair and associated vacancies: Cllr. Edwards formally confirmed interest in assuming the Chair role which was fully supported by Councillors, and he was duly appointed with immediate effect. Cllr. Osborne consequently confirmed an interest in assuming the now vacant Deputy Chair role which was too supported by Councillors with her also assuming the role with immediate effect.

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2024/011

Allotments

011.1 Jubilee Allotment: The Clerk reported that the legal transfer of land had been delayed due to awaited instruction of Hartog Hutton's (HH) solicitor. Cllr. Edwards asked the clerk to follow up with HH and query when the tap would be installed on the water supply. Cllr. Osborne confirmed with the wider Council specific requirements for the allotment lease template she was drafting.

011.2 Hanging Hill Allotment: The clerk confirmed the 2023 payment has been received from HHAA following the completion of the Lease.

2024/012

Flood Subcommittee Update

Cllr. Goodland, on behalf of the committee, confirmed that four meetings had been held to date (minutes logged with the Clerk) and that Chard Wardley had been appointed as an advisor to the committee given his relevant knowledge. It was confirmed that four impacted residents had successfully applied for and been credited grants following flooding of their properties. Details were provided on the Committee's focus on researching and drafting an emergency response plan to be employed in future events and engagement with the Environment Agency to ascertain local fluvial management policies and to stress the need for dredging the river due a large build-up of alluvium. It was lastly reported that the Committee had been invited to attend a flooding consultation hosted by Great Finborough PC and that three members of the Committee were to attend.

2024/013

Rolling Review of Council policies and procedures: 04 Reporting at Council of Committee Meetings - It was resolved collectively that the current policy was sufficient and proportionate, and it was approved in its current form save the alteration of the term 'Chairman' to 'Chair' which was agreed on by the Council for this and all other Council Policies.

2024/014

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

014.1 Rattlesden Primary School: Cllr. Atkinson raised a number of projects the school were considering (CCTV, security doorbell) and noted the retirement Head Teacher Helen Ballam – The Council collectively noted the dedication and enthusiasm she had brought to the role.

014.2 Clerical maintenance: Cllr. Jewers raised that he believed regulation had been amended so that parish Council could again, if desired, award funds to support various clerical maintenance expenditures. The Clerk was asked to confirm the position should the Church seek support again in the future.

014.3 Jill Gladwell: The Council collectively applauded the ongoing efforts of Jill Gladwell MBE for her works with the British Legion over the last 80 years and her recent recognition within the New Years Honors List.

014.4 Village Hall Lease: Cllr. Edwards noted that on Thursday 21st March a meeting and vote was to be held concerning the potential surrender of Village Hall Lease. Given only registered electors were able to vote, the Clerk was asked to attend to confirm eligibility upon arrival.

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014.5 New Bins: Cllr. Edwards confirmed he was still awaiting response following an initial request for information on costs for replacing existing dog and general waste bins with combined bins.

014.6 Risk Assessments: Cllr. Edwards confirmed he had issued the Clerk risk assessments to be reviewed and completed by the Village Warden and those undertaking SID maintenance works.

014.7 Dudley BS New Account: The Clerk confirmed the Council's intention and agreement to open a new savings account with Dudley Building Society (Club and Community Saver, issue 2) with the account being operable by Cllr. Osborne, Cllr. Edwards and the Clerk (Nicholas Skelhorn) with there to be at least two signatories as and when required.

2024/015

Next Meeting

Tuesday 27th February 2024 at 7:30pm.

The meeting closed at 20.59.