

RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 31 October 2023 at 19:30 in Rattlesden Village Hall

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

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

2023/104 Apologies for absence
Cllr. Kerry Burn (Chairwomen).

2023/105 Declarations of interest
Cllr. Goodland and Cllr. Morley declared an interest in agenda item no. 9, 'Flooding', given the recent impacts of flooding on their properties.

2023/106 Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting
It was resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 26th September 2023 be approved.

2023/107 Public Comment and questions on agenda items
Members of the public spoke at length about the flooding event on the 20th September 2023, noting the impacts upon property and personal safety as the worst experienced in c.25 years. It was collectively felt that the responsible authorities (Environment Agency, Highways Authority, and the Police) prioritised other, larger communities, and that greater transparency was required on how flood events in Rattlesden are evaluated and managed (i.e. Environment Agency sluice gate policy up and down river). Concerns were also raised on the integrity and capacity of Village drainage and the attitudes of drivers during the flood, specifically commercial vehicles, who sped through floodwaters causing large bow waves. Collective praise was attributed to a number of younger parishioners who volunteered a great amount of their time to minimise flooding impacts and clear up the highways/drains after the event.

2023/108 County Councillor's report
Cllr. Otton introduced her report, highlighting specifically the County Council's provisions for support/relief following Storm Babet, the recent launch of a public consultation about the County's libraries in advance of a new service provider being appointed in 2025, and increased funding for street signage.

2023/109 District Councillor's report
Cllr. Willshire introduced her report, highlighting the District Council's support provisions for flood victims, and how to access funding. Cllr. Goodlad raised how the online reporting function was incomplete currently. Cllr. Willshire confirmed she would review this internally.

2023/110 Matters arising from the previous minutes

110.1 Minute 099.1 Village Hall Secondary glazing – Evidence supporting the costs of the glazing were obtained by the Clerk for presentation and approval in the October meeting.

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110.2 Minute 099.2 Village Hall internal cladding – A building survey report and project plan were requested by the Clerk to evidence the funds requested.

110.3 Minute 101.1 Appointment of Clerk – Mr Nicholas Skelhorn commenced his role as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on 1st October 2023, with Mr Andrew Scott stepping down on 30th September 2023.

110.4 Minute 101.2 Amend TSB plc mandate – Mr Andrew Scott has been removed and Mr Nicholas Skelhorn added as a non-signatory and internet banking full access delegate user.

110.5 Minute 101.3 Amend Council correspondence address – Rattlesden Parish Council's correspondence address has been changed to Allerton House, Lower Road, Rattlesden, Bury St. Edmunds, IP30 0RJ.

2023/111

Planning

111.1 Applications received: **DC/23/04645** 'Erection of 6no. dwellings (following the demolition of the existing house and barn)' and the related **DC/23/04646** 'Demolition of existing dwellinghouse to facilitate erection of 6no. Dwellings.' were considered. Recent public comments from adjacent residents supporting the development allayed the Cllrs. initial concerns and it was resolved that there were no objections to either application.

111.2 Applications considered by e-mail due to the consultation deadline: **DC/23/04233** 'Erection of annexe to provide home office and guest accommodation' - no objections; **DC/23/04698** 'Reduce Crown of weeping willow to the left of driveway by 1/2' - no objections.

111.3 Application approved/rejected: DC/23/04363 'Pollard 6 yews, fell pine, ash' was granted on 13th October 2023.

2023/112

Finance

112.1 Financial Report: The Clerk's financial report to 30th September was received. The current account balance stood at £287.95 and the deposit account at £112,313.30, of which £81,951.31 represented CIL funds, and it was agreed that the reconciliation be approved and duly signed.

112.2 Payments Schedule: The schedules of payments for October 2023 was approved, with one addition, £2,086.99 to the Rattlesden Village Hall Committee (CIL grant).

2023/113

Flooding 20th October 2023

113.1 - Causation and impacts of flooding: Whilst Councillors largely echoed the causes and impacts raised by parishioners (see entry 107), it was collectively felt that the severity of the September 20th flood was attributable to one of the village's three bottle banks becoming wedge in the culvert under the highway adjacent to Old Moot House - Cllr. Atkinson presented graphs of river levels during this and past flooding events which supported this assertion. Cllrs. Goodlad, Edwards and Morley raised how commercial vehicles had greatly added to the impacts of the flood due to their speed through the waters and consequential bow waves.

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113.2 Proposed Parish Council actions: It was concluded that the Council would immediately procure sand (Cllr. Morley) and sandbags (Clerk) which would be made available for free to 'at risk' parishioners, and that bracings were to be erected to prevent the bottle banks entering the watercourse from the rear of their enclosure (Cllr. Edwards). It was also agreed that clarification on Environment Agency flood mitigation and response policy was to be sought (Clerk), that more permanent flood infrastructure around the Village (i.e. sand 'grit bins' and sand bag storage sheds) should be investigated, and that more information on how to prepare for a flood/details of support following a flood were to be publicised on the Village website (Clerk). Given the extent of required action and need for specific focus, a separate subcommittee was proposed and approved. The committee is to comprise of Cllr. Morley, Cllr. Goodland and a Mr. David Young (parishioner in attendance).

2023/114 Review of Council assets

The Clerk reported that inspections had identified three assets in need of immediate repair/attention, and two for ongoing review. It was agreed that the Clerk was to contact MSDC to seek replacement of the broken signpost at the playing fields, and to facilitate the replacement of the split grit bin adjacent to the bus shelter on Rising Sun Hill. Cllr. Edwards volunteered to engage a contractor to repaint the Rising Sun Hill bus shelter given initial requests indicated a lack of availability until Spring '24.

2023/115 Allotments

Cllr. Edwards provided an update on the handover (legally and physically) from the developer to the Council and raised the developer's requirement that the Council either assume liability for damage/deterioration over the unadopted road leading to the allotment or agree to an annual service charge. The Council approved the proposed £200 service charge. A lease template between the Council and the proposed allotment committee is to be drafted and engagement with the developer's Legal representatives to progress the transfer of ownership (Clerk).

2023/116 Rolling Review of Council policies and procedures: 03 Health and Safety Policy

To afford proper attention to the agenda items and public queries and comment it was resolved that review of the Health and Safety Policy would be postponed until the November Ordinary Meeting.

2023/117 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

117.1 Cllr. Goodlad raised the desire (shared by members of the public in attendance) for an increased presence of Police representation at Council Meetings.

117.2 Cllr. Jewers raised the need to move a camper van adjacent to the boundary wall of St. Nicholas on Top Road to afford access with a crane to lower in (and subsequently remove) materials and temporary offices to support works in the Church. Cllr Goodlad is to speak to the owner to request that the van is moved.

117.3 Cllr. Goodlad raised the need for 3 x additional SID batteries given issues with the current ones. The Clerk is to obtain a quotation and present this to the Council.

2023/118 Next Meeting

Tuesday 28th November 2023 at 7:30pm.

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The meeting closed at 21:55.