

# RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 28th January 2025 at 19:30 in Rattlesden Village Hall

Draft Form duly approved on: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Present:** Cllr. Sarah Osborne (Deputy), Cllr. Dave Goodlad, Cllr. Russell Morley (quorum achieved).

*In the absence of Cllr. Edwards, Cllr. Osborne assumed the role of Chair.*

**In Attendance:** District Cllr. Nicky Willshere, Parish Clerk Nick Skelhorn and six members of the public.

**Absences:** Apologies were received from Cllr. Tony Edwards (Chair), Cllr. Dan Jewers, County Cllr. Penny Otton.

**2025/001**      **Declarations of Interest**

The Clerk declared an interest in planning application DC/25/00313 (tree works) given their association with his property.

**2025/002**      **Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting**

It was collectively resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 19th November 2024 be approved as a true record of events.

**2025/003**      **Public Comment and Questions on Agenda Items**

Bus Service – Numerous parishioners aired their surprise that the recent cancellation of the Bury St. Edmunds bus service from the village was due to insufficient use given the service was normally full. Cllr. Goodlad reiterated his support, noting his disappointment that no advanced warning had been provided or consultation sought, and how neighbouring settlements (Woolpit) continued to enjoy daily services. Cllr. Morley raised how the service was a 'lifeline' for parishioners of all ages – elderly residents (this being a growing demographic in the parish) who could no longer drive, or youngsters reliant on the service to attend various higher education settings.

Village Lunches – Mrs L. Stiff raised concern over the long-term feasibility of the popular 'Village Lunches'. The Council suggested, subject to a formal application to the clerk, that a discretionary grant could be considered. Cllr. Wilshere suggested District funds may also be available to assist.

Allotments – Clarity was sought on when the Jubilee Allotments could be used. The Clerk confirmed that the land transfer had only recently completed, and now the formation of an Allotment Society was desired. Mrs D Minns kindly volunteered to help coordinate parties interested in taking a plot.

Jubilee Field – Clarity was sought from parishioners on the future of the site. The Council confirmed that initial tree planting initiatives had been limited in success due to adverse weather conditions, and that new direction on use was currently being considered following the retirement of Cllr. Atkinson, but that a regular maintenance programme was in place to maintain pathways and manage invasive species.

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River Rat (whalebones) – Concern was raised over children climbing on the bridge and railing and creating dams in the watercourse. The Council asked the Clerk to contact the School so that children and parents could be addressed.

## 2025/004 County Councillor's Report

Cllr. Otton was not in attendance, but the Council confirmed receipt of her January report (circulated via email in advance of the meeting).

## 2025/005 District Councillor's Report

The Council received Cllr. Willshire's report. Cllr Willshire specifically provided an update on the anticipate devolution process and the envisaged replacement of the Local Authority with 4 or 5 unitaries in Norfolk / Suffolk. An Extraordinary meeting of BMSDC to discuss the matter further is planned on 10<sup>th</sup> Feb.

## 2025/006 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

**006.1** 'Minute 145.3 'Additional Works' A final cut of the grass at St. Nicholas' Close was conducted in December and sand bags, sand and new storage boxes obtained and sited at the Village Hall and the rear of the Pavilion.

**006.2** 'Minute 147.1 'Resignations' Following the resignation of Cllr. Atkinson and Cllr. Bradnam, BMSDC confirm that following the prescribed timescales no members of the public had come forward to call an election. Consequently, the Council is free to co-opt appropriate applicants.

## 2025/007 Planning

007.1 December and January Applications: DC/24/05468 *Planning* and DC/24/05469 *Listed Building's Consent* (White House Farm, Felsham Road – Demolition of a conservatory and replacement of a garden room. Replacement of 7 windows). The Council confirmed they has no objections via email given the response deadline; DC/25/00246 (Water Run House, High Street – Tree works, lime tree height reduction via pollarding). The Council confirmed they has no objections; DC/25/00313 (Allerton House, Lower Road – Tree works, to remove 1 x Dogwood tree and pollarding 1 x hazel to existing hedge line). The Council, due to a conflict of interest (see minute 2025/001), consulted in advance of the meeting via email confirming they had no objections.

007.2 Applications Approved/Rejected in December and January: DC/24/05468 *Planning* and DC/24/05469 *Listed Building's Consent* (White House Farm, Felsham Road) were both approved on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

## 2025/008 Finance

**008.1 Financial Report:** The Clerk's financial report up to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 was received.

- Current account balance = £109.77

- TSB deposit account (general and earmarked reserves + £4,239.16 CIL) = £43,620.13

- Dudley deposit account (CIL funds less c.£4.2k in TSB deposit) = £66,311.13.

The Clerk reiterated that general and CIL reserves remained high and that strategies should be considered to utilise funds appropriately. Explanation was also provided on various November budget discrepancies (i.e. later payment of audit fees than

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budgeted, awaiting 'room hire' invoice from the Village Hall, planned spend of reserves accounting for higher than budgeted 'Grounds' and 'Fixed Asset' costs).

**143.2 Payments Schedule:** The schedule of payments for December 2024 and January 2025 totalling £2,692.75 was presented to the Council and duly approved.

A DD of £22.39 to Anglian Water (cemetery water) was due for payment in January (pre-approved).

*Should a member of the public wish to view any supporting documentation in relation to the above please contact the Clerk.*

**143.3 2025/2026 Budget and Precept:** The clerk summarised the results of initial discussions and recommendations made by the Financial Councillor and Chair, and then subsequent wider Council proposals leading to the now presented final 2025/2026 Draft Budget and Precept (copies of communications, draft budget, ringfenced reserves and precept calculation enclosed, and summarised below)

- £23,294.46 anticipated 2025/2026 operating expenses
- £5,038 anticipated 2025/2026 receipts
- £25,420 of earmarked reserves (breakdown enclosed)
- 2025/2026 Precept of £25, 811.32 (a 14.88% increase on 2024/2025)

The Clerk suggested that additional review of the proposed ringfenced 'Flood Mitigation' fund of £8,000k was advised. Cllrs. drew on evidence of flood mitigation reports / legal advice invoked by adjacent authorities, the costs of which had exceeded the proposed ringfenced amount, noting also the absence of Environment Agency support and plans to mitigate future flood events. Consequently, the Council voted to retain the reserve.

The Clerk also highlighted a c.15% increase on the previous years precept – the Council confirmed their satisfaction that this was reasonable and proportional given 1) the recent acquisition of new assets and associated maintenance costs 2) not having implemented an increase for multiple previous despite high inflation 3) planned investment in the parish in 2025/2026 4) an increasing requirement to undertake additional responsibilities due to a decline in service delivery from other authorities.

## 2025/009

### Appointments

**009.1 Parish Councillors:** The Council received three eligible applications for the two vacant Councillor roles – Howard Knight, Richard Osborne and Hayley Hubbard. Following review of the previously circulated applications and questioning results the Council duly elected to co-opt Richard Osborne and Howard Knight with immediate effect. Cllr. R Osborne (present as a member of the public) was asked to leave the room whilst discussions took place.

**009.2 Parish Warden:** The Council received three applications for the vacant role – Sean Lock, Vanessa McBain and Robert Day. Following review of the previously circulated applications the Council choose to appoint Robert Day from the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 given his historic experience and suitability for the demands of the role.

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**2025/010**

## **CIL Funds**

The Clerk summarised his report, namely that;

- to date one grant of £760.84 had been awarded with £69,665.40 of funds remaining
- by 11<sup>th</sup> April 2026 £1,891.92 and by the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2026 £15,218.98 of CIL funds needed to be allocated
- given there was no immediate know demand for CIL funds, and given the Council's potential limit to allocate them all within the same period (i.e. spending authority limits) an allocation strategy should be considered.

Cllr. Morley raised the recent request for help by Rattlesden Airfield to fund runway repairs, and whether CIL funds could be used to support. The Clerk confirm there was capacity to utilise CIL to funds the maintenance / restoration of heritage assets (the airfield being a decommissioned WW2 base), but clarity was 1) required to ascertain if heritage status required official designation of the site and 2) if the fact that half of the runway exceeded the Parish boundary would impact proposals.

**2025/011**

## **Works**

**011.1 Bus Shelter / Bottle Bank Works:** The Clerk confirmed that the appointed contractor, due to recovery from a recent operation, was not able to proceed with works until April/May 2025. The Council confirmed this was acceptable.

**011.2 Jubilee Field / Allotment Works:** The Clerk presented quotes received for the acquisition of an establish oak tree (memorial at Jubilee field) and planting materials (£221) and subsequent collection (£70) and planting (£130) which was approved by the Council. The Clerk also presented costs to build and install a bespoke standpipe surround for the water supply in Jubilee Allotment (£80) which was duly approved. A quote was also presented for the ongoing maintenance of the grass within / around the newly acquired Jubilee allotment (£80/cut) which was also approved at the same frequency as cuts for the adjacent Jubilee Meadow (8 visits, so a total cost of £640/annum).

**011.3 Cemetery Entrance Resurfacing:** Cllr. Goodland presented a quote for resurfacing works to the entrance leading into the Parish Council owned Cemetery. Suffolk Highways had suggested it was not their responsibility and, given the ongoing health and safety risk (uneven surface / trip hazard), the Council approved the only quote that had been received of £2,271.60.

**2025/012**

## **Rolling Review of Council Policies – 01 Standing Orders**

Following review, the policy was approved by the Council in its current form.

**2025/013**

## **Matters to be Brought to the Attention of the Council**

No matters were raised.

**2025/014**

## **Next Meeting:**

The date and time of the next meeting is the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 19:30 in the Village Hall.

**The meeting closed at 21:06**