

BLYFORD AND SOTHERTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting held on Monday 20th November 2023 at 6.30 pm
In the Meeting Room of Wenhaston Village Hall

Councillors Present: Mr G Walker (Chairman), Mr B Martin, Mr V Bucknell, Mrs A Cackett, Mr B Goldbart and Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk)

In Attendance: Mr Matt Goodwin – Landlord of the The Queen’s Head Public House, Blyford

Public Forum 0 members of the public were in attendance.

To receive reports from County & District Councillors: Councillor Annette Dunning and our District County Councillors Beth Keys-Holloway and Geoff Wakeling forwarded their month reports to the Parish Council and were duly received.

Action: Clerk to publish these on our website.

- 1 **Welcome, apologies and receipt of absences:** Blyford Cllr L Sharman, SCC Cllr Annette Dunning, East Suffolk District Cllr Beth Keys-Holloway and Geoff Wakeling.
- 2 **Receipt of declarations of interest and any dispensations allowed:** None
It was agreed by Council to bring forward the following Agenda item in order to allow the Landlord of the Queens Head Pub to participate in the discussions.
- (8) **Proposal for a Community Orchard:** Mr Matt Goodwin attended the meeting to discuss setting up a community orchard on grounds within the Queens Head Pub at Blyford. This would involve the purchase of 15 trees with a cost quote of £439 including delivery. Mr Goodwin had approached the Parish Council to ask for a donation to cover this cost. Following discussions with Mr Goodwin and a site evaluation, Cllr Goldbart presented a report to the Council. The Parish Council agreed in principal to use Latitude Funds for the purchase of the trees subject to formal approval by Adnams who own the land. Consideration could also be given to setting aside a further amount to assist with extending the irrigation scheme if required. **Action: Mr Goodwin to contact Adnams for formal approval, Cllr Bucknell to contact supplier for an invoice to be submitted to the Clerk for payment.**
- 3 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution passed that minutes of Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council meeting held on 18/09/23 were approved and signed as a true record.
- 4 **Chairman and Clerk’s report on progress of actions from last meeting(s):** All actions completed/designated to other Agenda items below, but following noted:
Item 9 (21/11/22) Refurbishment of Sotherton Noticeboard: Ongoing. New signage for board received.
Action: Cllr Martin will carry out maintenance work to the board and will install new signage.
- 5 **Finance:**
 - 5a **Approval of Bank Reconciliation to 12/11/23.** The balance on our current account stands at £6,812.05 and the balance on the Latitude/Savings Account at £4,628.04 – combined total on accounts being £11,440.09 which was verified and approved by Council.
 - 5b **Approval of online payments:** £396.45 to Clerk/RFO (net salary , home office allowance); Mileage £3.15; £28.20 to HMRC, Internal Audit 2022-23 £193.20; SALC Payroll £27; SALC Training £36; SALC Conference £18; Website hosting £110; Clerk – Purchase of Printer, toner & memory stick £181.94; Blyford Election costs £773.39. **Action: Clerk/RFO to action online payments.**
 - 5c **2023/24 Budget – Half Year Status:** Half year budget to 30/09/23 shows a total spend of £6,602 within a £7,236 budget. A majority of budgeted items are within spend limit. There was an overspend on the Parish Amenities budget due to the Kings Coronation Celebrations and donation to Wenhaston School Library project – these costs were partially offset by increase in Latitude ticket sales for 2023 of £1,800.
 - 5d **2024/25 Draft Budget and setting of Precept:** To ensure that the Council is aware of its responsibilities and commitments and the need for forward planning and retaining adequate reserves, the RFO presented the draft budget for preliminary discussion as part of the expenditure plans for the forthcoming year. Total expenditure budget will rise in 2024/25 due to the increase in the cost of living and to ensure that adequate funds are available to secure viability beyond the immediate future.

- Therefore, an increase in the 2024/25 Precept will be required. **Action: Final approval on budget and setting of precept at January meeting.**
- 5e **Review of Internal Auditors Report for year 2022/23:** A copy of this report was circulated to Council. SALC undertook this year's audit and highlighted some areas for attention but otherwise the internal auditor was pleased with the work undertaken in ensuring that the Parish Council is following good practice. **Action: Clerk to complete recommendations as soon as possible.**
- 5f **Request for Donation:** A request for a donation was received from Trustees of Halesworth Volunteers who provide support and companionship for people in the Halesworth and surrounding villages. A donation of £250 was proposed by Cllr Cackett and seconded by Cllr Martin. **Action: Clerk to make payments.**
- 6 **Planning Applications** Public Access Link: <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications>
- 6a **New Applications:** None received
- 6b **Update on Previous Applications:** There are currently no outstanding planning decisions.
- 7 **Footpaths, Speeding and Road Signage Damage Update:**
Footpath from Blyford Village to the River Blyth: Cllr Goldbart has written to the owner of Heveningham Hall and has received a response from the Estate's Manager. **Action: Cllr Goldbart – ongoing.**
Speeding: The Parish Council resolved to support Cllr Goldbart liaising with Suffolk County Councillor, Annette Dunning, to arrange a site meeting with an area highways engineer concerning extending the 30-mph speed restriction eastwards beyond the Queens Head. **Action: Cllr Goldbart**
Signage damage: Missing road sign at junction of Kings Road and the B1124 Beccles Road uploaded to Suffolk Highways reporting tool by Clerk. **Response awaited.** All other signage damage resolved.
- 9 **Fly Tipping:** Cllr Bucknell had highlighted problems with fly tipping around the Kings Lane, Sotherton area. He contacted East Suffolk Council following the link - <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/waste/fly-tipping/> who arranged to remove the items concerned.
- 10 **East Suffolk Community Partnership Meetings:** Meeting on 18/12/23 at 6pm in the Town Hall, Beccles and the Annual Forum on 22/03/24 at the Trinity Park Conference Centre, Ipswich.
- 11 **SALC Training Requests:** Approval by Council for Cllr Goldberg to enrol on 2 e-learning sessions of Councillor Training. **Action: Clerk to book sessions on SALC Portal.**
- 12 **Correspondence Received:** All correspondence distributed to Council and no comments submitted. Items of public information posted on our website/noticeboards.
- Suffolk Police – Nov update and new operating model for public on website.
 - Litter and Fido Waste bin policy for East Suffolk Council – Draft policy for response – see website.
 - Draft Healthy Environments and Draft Rural Development Supplementary Planning documents
- 13 **Reports from Councillors and any other business:** None
- 14 **An items of information:** Cllr Goldman will be attending the Local Council Conference 2023 to be held on 29th November 2023 at the Hold, Ipswich. Suffolk Highways new partners (Milestone Infrastructure) will be attending for a Q&A session. **Action: Forward any questions to be raised to Cllr Goldberg.**
- 15 **Dates set for 2024 Parish Council Meetings held bi-monthly on 3rd Monday of the month at 6.30 pm, in Wenhaston Village Hall on:**
15th January; 18th March; 20th May – Annual Parish Meetings followed by Annual General Meeting;
15th July; 16th September; 18th November 2024
- 16 **Adoption of general update in National Pay Rates for Local Authority employees:** The Council noted the NJC scales applicable to the Council had been uplifted by national agreement and agreed to adopt the scales as amended.
- 17 **Suffolk in Bloom:** East Suffolk Council has donated 500 daffodil bulbs to be distributed around Blyford and Sotherton and must be planted on public land owned by East Suffolk or Suffolk County Councils only.

Meeting closed 8.15 pm