

BLYFORD AND SOTHERTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024 at 6.30 pm
In the Meeting Room of Wenhaston Village Hall

Councillors Present: Mr G Walker (Chairman), Mrs R Parry, Mr B Martin, Mrs A Cackett, Mrs L Sharman
Mr B Goldbart and Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk)
In Attendance: East Suffolk District Cllr Beth Keyes-Holloway
Public Forum 0 members of the public were in attendance.

To receive reports from County & District Councillors: Cllr Keyes-Holloway presented her January Parish Report which was duly received. **Action: Clerk to publish report on our website.**

Cllr Keyes-Holloway was informed that the Blyford Car Park, which is maintained by East Suffolk Council, was in need of repair. **Action: Beth to follow-up on this.**

- 1 **Welcome, apologies and receipt of absences:** Mr V Bucknell
- 2 **Receipt of declarations of interest and any dispensations allowed:** None
- 3 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution passed that minutes of Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council meeting held on 20/11/23 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: Cllr Martin will refurbish the board in Spring and instal new signage **Action: Cllr Martin will update when work completed.**
- 5 **Finance:**
- 5a **Approval of Bank Reconciliation to 12/01/24:** The balance on the Current Account stands at £5,034.72 and the balance on the Latitude/Savings Account at £3961.34 with combined total on accounts being £8,996.06 which was verified and approved by Council. Payments over £100 were £193.20 for internal audit, Website Hosting £110, purchase of printer and peripherals for Clerk £181.94, Election costs £773.39 and £250 donation to the Halesworth Volunteer Centre.
- 5b **Approval of online payments:** £535.20 to Clerk/RFO (net salary and backpay and home office allowance) +Mileage £3.15; £62.80 to HMRC, SALC training £40.80. **Action: Clerk/RFO to action online payments.**
- 5c **2024/25 Presentation of draft Budget and setting of Precept:** The Clerk/RFO presented the draft budget to Council for final approval. Due to increases in the cost of living particularly, in areas such as salaries, insurance and asset purchase/maintenance, the total expenditure budget will rise in 2024/25 from -£7,236 to -£7,674. Approval of the budget was proposed by Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Cackett.
Precept: To ensure we have sufficient funds available to meet future costs it was agreed unanimously by the Parish Council to request a precept of £3,500 resulting in a charge of £30.67 for a band D property and this charge will show as a 5.86% or £0.68p per annum change on the Council Tax Bills against the Parish element. Setting of Precept was unanimously approved. **Action: Clerk to publish 2024/25 budget and submit Precept Request to the District Council**
- 5d **Consideration of 2024/25 Parish Insurance Quotes:** The Parish Council agreed to renew our policy with Zurich Insurance for another year with their premium of £278.45 being substantially cheaper than other quotes received. **Action: Clerk to action renewal to start 01/03/2024.**
- 5e **Clerk Contract:** The Clerk's contract was updated and signed by the Chairman, following amendments agreed at November Parish Council Meeting.
- 5f **Governance Documents:** The Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council's Disciplinary Policy and Grievance Policy were formerly adopted.
- 6 **Planning – Public Access Link - <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications>**
- 6a **New Applications:** No new applications were 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: Ongoing. **Action: Cllr Goldbart**

Speeding: 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 Public House has been delayed due to Covid.

A resident reported speeding lorries and cars, especially in the early hours of the morning. Cllr Goldbart proposed that we apply to join the Police CSW scheme where members of the Community are trained in the use of hand-held speed guns and conduct roadside monitoring. Details of any speeding vehicles are passed to the Police who issue warning letters to the drivers involved. A Community will need a minimum of 6 volunteers to apply to join the scheme. We presently have 3. **Action: Cllr Goldbart to continue to liaise with Cllr Dunning and to seek more volunteers for CSW scheme. Clerk to find out who has data stored on our shared VAS equipment.**

Signage damage: Report of missing road sign at junction of Kings Road and the B1124 Beccles Road was uploaded to Suffolk Highways reporting tool. Response received was that it does not warrant remedial action but they will monitor the situation and if the matter worsens significantly they will take action.

8 Community Orchard at Queens Head Public House, Blyford: Trees have been purchased and planting will take place later in the year. Adnams as owners of the land have given the Landlord of the Queens Head Pub their written agreement for this project to proceed. **Action: Clerk to obtain a copy of agreement for our records.**

9 Defibrillator: Cllr Goldbart proposed purchasing a defibrillator for Blyford Village and looking into grant funding for this. Unanimously agreed by Council. **Action: Cllr Goldbart.**

10 SALC Local Council Conference November 2023: Cllr Goldbart attended this conference which included Meet Suffolk's new highways partners – Milestone Infrastructure in a Question-and-Answer session, planning etc.

11 Suffolk in Bloom: All bulbs have been planted around the public areas of Blyford and Sotherton.

12 Planning for 2024 Events: Agreed by Council to look into arranging a D-Day 80 Event for all residents of Blyford and Sotherton at the Racehorse Community Pub in Westhall on 6th June 2024. **Action: Clerk to check availability in the first instance.**

13 Correspondence Received: All correspondence distributed to Council and no comments submitted or referred to below. Items of public information posted on our website/noticeboards.

13a Suffolk EP Passenger Group Meeting 9th January 2024: Cllr Goldbart attended this meeting.

13c Planning Forum for Town and Parish Councils: Cllr Cackett will attend the event in Lowestoft on 24/01/24.

14 Any items of information: Cllr Parry has started receiving enquiries about Latitude 2024 tickets. Cllr Cackett will be attending a Sizewell C Northern Transport Forum on 6th February.

Dates set for 2024 Parish Council Meetings held bi-monthly on 3rd Monday of the month at 6.30 pm, in the Meeting Room of Wenhaston Village Hall on: 18th March; 20th May – Annual Parish Meetings followed by Annual General Meeting; 15th July; 16th September; 18th November 2024

Meeting closed 7.45 pm