

Easton Parish Council

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY 15 January 2024 – 7.45PM Held at Easton & Letheringham Village Hall

APPROVED MINUTES

1 PRESENT & APOLOGIES

PRESENT: Cllr Siddall (Vice-Chair, taking the Chair in absence of Cllr Piggott), Cllr Balcombe; Cllr Edwards; Cllr Gibbon; Cllr Ladbrook; and Cllr Palfreyman.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Langdon Morris (ESC); and A Staples (Parish Clerk).

Apologies were received from Cllr Piggott. This absence was approved.

2 COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA / SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No members of the public attended the meeting.

3 RECEIVE REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

A report was received from Cllr Langdon-Morris (ESC) covering: the success of the traffic calming measures in Easton; 20 mph speed limits; flood payments made by ESC; a meeting of the Framlingham Flood Resilience and Recovery Group on 21 January 2024; reporting potholes to SCC on the Highways reporting portal; a proposal to take drain clearing into the control of ESC via East Suffolk Services and charging costs back to SCC; and a proposal to create a resilience fund.

4 RECEIVE ANY CHANGES TO MEMBERS INTERESTS

No changes received.

5 RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS RELATING TO AGENDA ITEMS

No declarations received.

6 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING on 20 November 2023

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record and signed.

7 STAFFING – confidential session

It was noted that S Ashton resigned from the post of RFO on 20 December 2023. Payments to S Ashton were approved (as set out in the financial report dated 15 January 2024). It was agreed to explore parish council accounting software packages before making decisions on appointing a replacement RFO.

8 FINANCE MATTERS:

8.1 Consider and agree Financial Statement

The financial report dated 15 January 2024 was considered and approved.

8.2 Consider purchase of accounting software package for parish council

Action: Clerk to contact SALC to seek recommendations as to the most suitable package to purchase. Cllr Palfreyman pointed out that the Barclay's Community Account may already include a free accounting package.

Action: Clerk/Chair to investigate this option.

8.3 Confirm two councillors to check and sign-off payment of invoices, (who are not on the bank mandate)

Cllrs Siddall and Palfreyman were agreed to be authorised to check and sign-off invoices.

8.4 Consider additional signatories for Barclays mandate

No additional signatories were agreed. Deferred to the next meeting if further signatories for mandate required. It was agreed that the Clerk/RFO be approved as bank service administrator (as per Regulation 6.15 – in EPCs Financial Regulations, as amended.)

Action: Chair to add Clerk/RFO to the Barclays mandate as service administrator.

9 CONFIRM APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was agreed to appoint SALC as the internal auditor for 24/25.

10 BUDGET - consider and agree Budget and Precept for 2024/2025

The proposed budget was approved. It was noted that the grass cutting budget in 23/24 was significantly exceeded due to the weather conditions during the 2023 growing season necessitating extra cutting. The Chair had proposed changes to the 2024 grass cutting arrangement to keep within the budget. These changes were agreed, namely: village green to be cut weekly in the months of April and May, and two-weekly for the rest of the growing season; the play area to be cut two-weekly; the grass near the car park to be cut three-weekly; the cemetery to be cut three-weekly; and grass along the crinkle-crankle wall cut three-weekly.

Action: Chair to convey this change to the contractor.

It was agreed the request for 24/25 should be increased by 5% on last year's figure of £10,007.61. This would be an increase of £500.38 to £10,507.99. ESC having determined there to be 178.05 Band D properties in the parish, this would result in a charge of £59.01 for a band D property. This charge will show as a 5.09% change on the 24/25 Council Tax bills against the Parish element.

Action: Clerk to return the completed precept form to ESC by 26 January 2024.

11 MATTERS TO REPORT FROM ACTIONS OF LAST MEETING:

11.1 Progress of Land Registration applications

There was no update from solicitors in relation to the registration of the village green. Regarding the cemetery, Easton Parish Church confirmed they do not hold deeds for the cemetery. Further enquiries to be made with Diocesan Registrar.

11.2 Play area

This item was deferred to the next meeting. Cllr Balcombe reported visiting the play area and making a number of minor repairs, including cleaning of the sign, cutting off protruding bolts, and screwing down the flip-up seating.

11.3 Flooding from Storm Babet

A request has been submitted to ESC Head of Planning for details on the apparent omission to secure conditions regarding to the management plan and ownership of the watercourse and culvert in the vicinity of Skylark Rise.

11.4 Spring Bulbs

The 500 bulbs were planted by Cllrs Edwards, Ladbrook and Piggott.

11.5 Rain water flooding on The Street in vicinity of traffic calming by school

Action: Clerk to follow up response with Cllr Bryce (SCC) (see item 13.2 in minute of meeting dated 18 September 2023).

12 HIGHWAYS

12.1 Consider and agree type of Speed Indication Device (SID) to purchase

It was agreed that a SID with a solar panel would be preferable, such as the EVOLIS Solar-Mobile pack, which is available for £2,250.00 (exclusive of VAT and shipping) from Elan City Radar Speed Signs, but any purchase would be subject to full costs being met by grants from ESC and SCC locality budgets.

12.2 Consider whether to purchase one or two SIDs, (one for entrance to, and one for exit from, village or a single device to alternate)

It was agreed that this would be dependent on whether the grants available would be sufficient to fund the purchase of two devices.

12.3 Consider and agree grants to apply for from County Council and District Council Locality Budgets for purchase of SID(s)

Action: Clerk to contact District and County Councillors to request grants to fund the purchase price of one or two devices.

13 VILLAGE GREEN – to consider purchase of additional posts for green (in front of the White Horse)

It was understood that P Bennett-King had offered to install additional posts on the edge of the green in front of the White Horse at no costs to the PC. The council agreed to this proposal.

Action: Clerk/Chair to convey to P Bennett-King.

14 POLICIES – To review and ratify:

14.1 Financial Regulations

This item was deferred to the next meeting to consider.

14.2 Standing Orders

This item was deferred to the next meeting to consider.

14.3 Risk Assessment

This item was deferred to the next meeting to consider.

14.4 Code of Conduct

The amended policy was reviewed and approved.

Action: Clerk to upload amended policy to PC website.

15 PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS – To consider:

15.1 DC/23/4653/FUL; 1 Home Farm Barns, Wickham Market Road, Easton, IP13 0ET; change of use from agricultural land to garden use, including tree and hedge planting

No objections raised.

Action: Clerk to note on ESC planning portal.

16 LITTER AND FIDO BIN CONSULTATION FROM ESC

It was agreed that no response is required to this consultation.

17 TO CONSIDER AND REVIEW ACTIONS ARISING FROM INTERNAL AUDIT 22/23

Actions arising from the 22/23 internal audit were noted. It was agreed: payments made on relevant financial reports should confirm the legal power relied on to make the payment; and the effectiveness of internal auditor review should be reviewed during the year and it should be recorded on the meeting minutes whether the council agreed the internal audit was effective, independent and competent.

18 TO CONSIDER PROPOSAL TO REFURBISH VILLAGE SIGN

It was agreed a contribution could be made to the cost of the refurbishment of the sign from the Council's General Reserves, in the region of £200 - £300. This would be subject to the Council having sight of and approving a project plan and the contractor carrying out the work.

Action: Clerk to convey to P Bennett-King.

19 SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

It was suggested that the D-Day 80th celebration in June should be discussed.

20 DATES OF MEETINGS 2024

18 March 2024; 13 May 2024 (Annual Parish Meeting); 20 May 2024 (AGM); 15 July 2024; 23 September 2024; 18 November 2024

Meeting closed at 21:13

Signed:

**Sue Piggott (Chair)
18 March 2024**