

# Easton Parish Council

## UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 18 MARCH 2024 – 7.45PM Easton & Letheringham Village Hall

### 1 PRESENT & APOLOGIES

**Present:** Cllr Piggott (Chair); Cllr Balcombe; Cllr Edwards; Cllr Gibbon; Cllr Ladbrook; Cllr Palfreyman; and Cllr Siddall. **In attendance:** Cllr Langdon Morris (ESC); and A Staples (Clerk).

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

No members of the public attended.

### 3 RECEIVE REPORTS FROM ESC & SCC COUNCILLORS

Cllr Langdon Morris presented an oral report covering the following topics: the Framlingham flood assessment for the Ore catchment area, on which a further public meeting is taking place on 24 April; a recent meeting with the Environment Agency about the Deben catchment area to discuss their strategic approach to the river; Dennington Parish Council have raised £25,000 to refurbish their playground, the total cost is expected to be £50,000; follow up enquiries raised with Chief Executive about the 230 water truck visits to Saxtead and the temporary water pump that was set up in Easton; concern that agencies and utility companies are not informing town and parish council when works are being carried out in our wards; and East Suffolk Services is now a limited trading company (LATCO) having been taken back in-house from Norse, 80% under control of ESC, and 20% commercial involvement.

### 4 RECEIVE ANY CHANGES TO MEMBERS INTERESTS

No changes received.

### 5 RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS RELATING TO AGENDA ITEMS

No declarations received.

### 6 APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING held on 15 January 2024

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

### 7 FINANCE MATTERS:

#### 7.1 Consider and agree Financial Statement

The Financial Report dated 18 March 2024 was considered and approved. The Chair noted the recent receipts of: £150.00 for an interment of ashes in the cemetery; and a £2,000 locality grant from ESC (purchase of SID). It was noted by Cllr Palfreyman that the reserves for training expenditure was showing a negative balance, it was agreed to discuss how to re-distribute reserves at the next meeting to bring the training reserves into credit.

## **7.2 Discuss year end 23/24 Audit arrangements**

The Chair has investigated several software packages. Rialtas and Scribe look too expensive. EasyPC accounts is more affordably priced at £5 per month, with a free trial for the first three months. The council authorised taking up the EasyPC free trial and the £5 per month subscription thereafter, if the trial period proved successful.

The council does not have an RFO at present. The Chair offered to take on the preparation for the external and internal audit this year. Advice might be needed from SALC about how to sign off the external audit AGAR forms without an RFO in post.

## **8 MATTERS TO REPORT FROM ACTIONS OF LAST MEETING:**

### **8.1 Purchase of accountancy software update**

Discussed at 7.2 above.

### **8.2 Play area – update from Cllrs Ladbrook and Siddall**

Cllr Ladbrook has examined the playground and believed it was reaching the end of its lifespan and would need to be replaced or removed in the medium term. A grant would be required for replacement, options might be the Community Foundation or a grant from Sizewell C. It was agreed that quotes should be obtained for play equipment and Cllr Ladbrook would investigate what grants might be available. It was also noted that the lease for the play area would need to be renewed prior to committing to the purchase of new equipment. Cllr Siddall will review the lease paperwork.

### **8.3 Progress of Land Registration applications**

Clerk reported that the council's solicitors had recently written regarding the remaining outstanding application to register the village green. The Land Registry were requesting up to date evidence of the council having maintained the green.

### **8.4 The Chair has contacted Kindewood to confirm the new grass cutting contract arrangements, as agreed in the budget at the last meeting. The Chair has contacted Aquaforce Cleaning to confirm the contract for annual cleaning of the village gateways and fingerpost signs, as agreed in the budget at the last meeting.**

## **9 HIGHWAYS**

### **9.1 Flooding from Storm Babet; update on actions by SCC Highways**

The Chair contacted ESC regarding the planning conditions on the Hopkins Homes estate regarding the ownership and maintenance of the

watercourse and culvert. ESC said they have passed the issue to SCC. It is understood that SCC has written to the landowners that abut the watercourse and culvert to advise them of their riparian duties. SCC staff have attended to look at the watercourse, as well as the ones at Harriers Walk and culvert at Kettleburgh junction. It was noted that the flooding reports placed on the SCC portal have now been taken down, and emails sent to the residents that made the reports to say SCC are investigating and this could take up to two years.

**9.2 Speed Indicator Device; update on funding from ESC and SCC**

The Chair has made funding approach to our ESC councillors, and two grants of £1000 each were received. A number of similar approaches have been made to Cllr Bryce (SCC) who replied on 16 February to say she would consider the request but has not replied since. Further funding is required to meet the purchase price of two units at £2,250 each. The preference would be to purchase two units for a total discounted price of £4,000, this offer is available until 31<sup>st</sup> July. It was agreed to continuing trying to engage Cllr Bryce to consider this application for a locality grant.

**Action:** Chair

**9.3 Flooding on The Street; update from Cllr Bryce (SCC)**

No update has been received from Cllr Bryce (SCC) since the last meeting.

**9.4 Routing of traffic through Easton as a result on frequent closures on B1116 between Wickham Market and Framlingham**

It was reported that residents have complained about the levels of traffic in the village when the road between Wickham Market and Framlingham is closed, as it has been on numerous recent occasions. The village is not equipped for the level of traffic this causes in the village, residents are put at risk with some deciding it is not safe to walk on the roads, and there is damage being caused to verges. Motorists often choose to not follow the approved diversions signposted by Highways, and drive through Easton instead as it is a short cut. The Chair suggested that these concerns be voiced at SCC cabinet level, to raise awareness of the impact on the village and to request change to their policy of implementing road closures rather than using traffic management measures. Cllr Langdon Morris confirmed his support and was invited to assist.

**Action:** Chair / Clerk

**10 VILLAGE GREEN**

**10.1 Consider purchase of additional posts for green (in front of the White Horse)**

A volunteer in the village has offered to purchase and install posts outside the White Horse. The purchase price is likely to be £50. The council approved the spending of £50 on posts.

**Action:** Chair to notify volunteer.

## **10.2 Consider purchase of new village sign post**

The council expressed thanks for the work on the sign carried out by a volunteer in the village. It was decided that a replacement post is not required at present.

## **11 POLICIES – To review and ratify:**

### **11.1 Financial Regulations (deferred from last meeting)**

The amended draft was approved.

### **11.2 Standing Orders (deferred from last meeting)**

The amended draft was approved.

### **11.3 Risk Assessment (deferred from last meeting)**

The amended draft was approved.

**Action:** Clerk to put amended policies on the website.

## **12 PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS**

12.1 None received.

## **13 CONSIDER ARRANGEMENTS FOR D-DAY 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

The council discussed arrangements for an event on 6 June 2024. Information sent by the King's Pageant Master states that the beacon is to be lit at 21.45. It was suggested that a volunteer be sought to light the beacon, perhaps someone who served in the armed forces. It was suggested that bellringers be invited to attend. It was also suggested collaborating with the pub to provide street food rather than the council arranging a hog roast. Another idea is to raffle commemorative bottles of whisky. It was agreed Cllrs Gibbon and Ladbrooke will approach the manager of the White Horse about catering.

## **14 SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Cllr Edwards requested consideration of the state of the footpaths, villagers have reported slipping on leaf litter. Defibrillator training events has been arranged by some adjoining parish councils, to consider whether Easton should do the same.

## **15 DATES OF MEETINGS 2024**

13 May 2024 (Annual Parish Meeting); 20 May 2024 (AGM); 29 July 2024 (note the date of the July meeting has changed from 15 to 29 July 2024); 23 September 2024; 18 November 2024.

Closed at 20:58

**Signed:**

**Cllr Piggott (Chair) – 13 May 2024**