



# STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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## Chairman

Roger Barrell

**Meeting of Stratford St Mary Parish Council held on Monday  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2024, at the Village Institute Higham Road at 1930hrs**

## DRAFT MINUTES

### **PRESENT:**

Cllr R Barrell - Chairman  
Cllr W Davies  
Cllr G Robinson  
Cllr M Pearce  
Cllr L Shead  
Cllr D Robinson

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

F Hall - Clerk  
County Cllr Georgia Hall  
District Cllr John Ward  
Member of the public - 3

### **01.03.24 Present and apologies for absence.**

None.

### **02.03.24 To accept members declarations of interest in accordance with the Council's code of Conduct.** Cllr D Robinson and Cllr Davies are trustees of the Village Institute Committee.

### **03.03.24 To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Shead and seconded by Cllr G Robinson, all in favour.

### **04.03.24 To discuss if the PC has received any applications to fill the 3 vacancies on the Parish Council.** 1 expression of interest has been received – interested party will forward details for application to be considered at Mays meeting.

### **05.03.24 Public Forum and receive reports from the District and County Councillor**

County Cllr Hall highlighted from her report that there is a consultation for the Local Transport plan - A link to the survey can be found at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/ltp4>. The consultation will run for

eight weeks until 8 April 2024. SCC are putting 4.4 million more funds to strengthen SEND which will also create 60 more jobs. Suffolk Business Board - local businesspeople are sought to form the board, which will represent the local business community and will help steer the local economic strategy to create a stronger and higher-skilled economy for Suffolk. Public consultation on SCCs proposed devolution deal starts on the 18<sup>th</sup> March for 10 weeks – the consultation can be found at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution).

The Anchor Public footpath sign – County Cllr Hall advises this is still ongoing.

Cllr D Robinson thanked County Cllr Hall for her contribution of £500 towards the purchase of the new speed camera.

District Cllr Ward highlighted from his report that Council tax and rents are increasing. Babergh and Mid Suffolk have won the UK Council of the year award at the Public Sector Transformation awards ceremony.

A member of the public asked what proportion of residents have complained about dog fouling – the Chairman advised that there has been a spate of dog fouling complaints but a small amount. The PC are addressing the issue with signage and encourage people to go down the proper complaint route which is Babergh.

#### **06.03.24 Proposal of a 30mph zone on the B1029 to Dedham**

PC discussed if this option could be looked at again but all in agreement that the road does not meet the criteria required to make it a 30mph zone. Cllr Shead proposed creating a pavement on the road to Dedham. Proposal to add this to the agenda for the APM to ask residents for feedback on this. **Clerk**

#### **07.03.24 Grass cutting**

Cllr G Robinson has advised that all the green areas are now mapped out. Babergh have advised that their cutting schedule will be 6 cuts in the season between 4-6 weeks apart. Due to absences etc last year this did not happen so PC proposed at looking at interim cuts for this year. District Cllr Ward advised that Babergh now have an inhouse team for grass cutting and the PC could pay to have additional cuts. Defer to Mays agenda and District Cllr Ward to revert with quote.

#### **08.03.24 Planning Applications**

Discuss any planning applications that have been received:

##### **APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/05817**

**Proposal:** Householder Application - Conversion and extension of existing garage to an annexe

**Location:** Bay House, Lower Street, Stratford St Mary, Colchester Suffolk CO7 6JS

Extension for comments granted until the 15.03.24

Application was discussed and Cllr D Robinson proposed no comment, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour. Clerk to write a letter to planning.

##### **APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - DC/24/00782**

**Proposal:** Application for Listed Building Consent - Repairs to roof of side lean-to extension.

**Location:** Gatemans, Upper Street, Stratford St Mary, CO7 6JH

Extension for comments granted until the 13.03.24

Application was discussed and Cllr Davies proposed no comment, Cllr G Robinson seconded and all in favour. Clerk to write a letter to planning.

Discuss having a Sub Committee on the PC for Planning Applications – All in agreement to monitor how many planning applications we have coming through and whether the PC needs to form a Sub Committee.

#### **09.03.24 Chairmans comments**

None.

#### **10.03.24 Correspondence and Clerks Report**

16.02.23 - A resignation email has been received from Gareth Francis.

Q3 Cleansing grant of £338.65 has been received from Babergh. Going forward Babergh has advised that this will be payment will be processed every 6 months.

A letter was received with regards to an obstruction to the public footpath at the Black Horse from a Resident – SCC are looking into this and talking to the owner. Clerk to write back to the resident.

#### **11.03.24 Dog fouling**

3 x A5 no dog fouling signs have been purchased and are to be placed prominently in Strickmere as this is the area where the PC are receiving complaints from. Comments from residents have been noted with regards to too much street furniture. PC are not responsible for enforcing the cleaning up of dog waste but are hoping that the signs will prompt people to do it. All in agreement for signs to be placed at the top, middle and bottom of Strickmere and that these will not be permanent and will be reviewed in Mays meeting. There is also another rigid plastic sign which will be placed on the reverse of the road name on Tally Ho Corner.

Ideas for educating the village on dog fouling - proposal for graphic signs with QR codes on them which would direct people on how to report dog fouling. Cllr G Robinson will look into this further.

#### **12.03.24 Finance**

- (1) To approve the expenditure since the last meeting and to receive a financial report from the RFO including balances at bank. To sign report to clarify as correct. The expenditure sheet, financial report and bank statements had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr D Robinson and all in favour. **Decision** expenditure of £5,192.86 from 09.01.24 to 11.03.24, balances at the bank – Current account £4,998.68 and reserve account £26,431.62 was approved by all and signed by the Chairman. A copy can be found attached to the minutes.
- (2) Monthly cashflow analysis against agreed Precept – no comment.
- (3) Monthly cashflow reserves – no comment.
- (4) Changing bank accounts - bank signature and electronic sign off – The Clerk has got recommendations from other PCs and is looking at accounts with Barclays and Unity Bank. Clerk to look into further and report back at Mays meeting.
- (5) To discuss and agree the budget – Clerk has circulated a revised copy of the budget before the Meeting, Cllr G Robinson proposed, Cllr D Robinson seconded and all in favour.

#### **13.03.24 Earmark Reserves**

Cllr D Robinson is looking into so agreed to defer to Mays meeting.

#### **14.03.24 The River Garden**

Update on the installation of the bollard in front of the gate at the River Garden – Clerk advised that we are still waiting for NWL to confirm that this is ok to do.

Quote received from Blands of £145.44 including VAT to get the noticeboard turned – Cllr G Robinson proposed acceptance of expenditure, Cllr D Robinson seconded and all in favour. Cllr D Robinson noted that there is still a fallen tree at the River Garden and this is still being discussed with NWL.

Clerk to check if the PC have got a quote for the bollard.

#### **15.03.24 Purchase of new noticeboards**

Expenditure at the last meeting was agreed at £1050 plus VAT x 2. The order for the Noticeboards was placed and with p&p totalled £2680.19. The Chairman granted the extra expenditure under emergency provisions. Cllr Shead proposed expenditure, Cllr D Robinson seconded and all in favour.

#### **16.03.24 ETRO's / TRO Lower Street – Double yellow lines**

Quote has been received from Suffolk Highways - £6643.40 inc VAT for professional services and £1242 inc vat for construction est. The Chairman has asked both the County Cllr and District Cllr if there is any funding available to help with these costs but has been advised that there isn't. Cllr Pearce proposed for the PC to write to Suffolk Highways to ask if we could deal with the plans ourselves to reduce some of the costs. All in agreement to carry forward to Mays meeting and to approach the County Cllr/District Cllr in the new financial year to see if any funding is available.

- 17.03.24 To consider the purchase of a new speed sign for the village**  
Cllr D Robinson proposed the purchase of the Elan City speed sign which is a total of £2807.99 including VAT and delivery. No additional solar panel to be purchased so the sign would stay in the same place – agreed that the best position would be by the Black Horse. Data from the speed sign can be retrieved via Bluetooth. Cllr D Robinson proposed to purchase, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour. County Cllr Hall has given the PC £500 from her locality budget towards this speed sign and the PC can reclaim the VAT.
- 18.04.24 Electric Pylons campaign**  
No updates – the Chairman will contact the campaign group to see if they would like to attend the APM.
- 19.03.24 Footpaths**  
Anchor footpath – please see update under agenda item 05.03.24
- 20.03.24 Village Institute and Institute Committee**  
Cllr Davies agreed to be the representative for the PC for the Village Institute Committee.  
Play area maintenance and zipwire in play area – Cllr D Robinson advises that the Play Inspection report has been sent to several companies to obtain quotes for works that need to be done. Hags have quoted approx. £1,000 for the repairs to the play area equipment but cannot assist with any landscaping. Mortimers have been out to inspect the play area themselves and have quoted approx. £10,000 for repairs which include replacement zipwire, gate plus replacement of woodchip. The gate to the play area has been flagged as a finger pinch hazard so all in agreement to have the gate removed until repair can take place. Cllr D Robinson to obtain a third quote for repairs. Clerk to look at the possibility of any grants that maybe available to replace the play area surface. A ‘No dogs’ sign has been purchased for the play area gate at a cost of £17.67.
- 21.03.24 Scheduled Councillor walks / Village works action plan**  
Agreed at the last meeting to have organised Cllr walks around the village in twos or threes once a month to engage with the village. Cllr Shead has mapped out areas for walks – Cllr Shead and Cllr G Robinson to action the organisation of the walks.  
Village works action plan – Cllr D Robinson will circulate.
- 22.03.24 Promotion of the Parish Council**  
Cllr G Robinson has attended two training sessions with a communication company. PC should come up with a communication strategy, look at what the PC goals are and how PC is held by residents. Make sure our website is accessible and that we can sign post people to the correct places, encourage people to come to PC meetings and the APM. All in agreement for ideas to be put on email and to be reviewed in a months time.
- 23.03.24 Asset Register review**  
Cllr D Robinson re-circulated before the meeting – Cllr D Robinson proposed to accept, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour.
- 24.03.24 Purchase of new maintenance equipment**  
Update on quotes for the purchase of trimmer and hedge trimmer for maintenance of common Area – agreed to defer to Mays meeting.
- 25.03.24 Parish Council Activities in the Community**  
Update to be received on the overgrown tree affecting lamppost, due to be repainted, on corner of School Lane and Upper Street – the Chairman advised that he has spoken to the owners of the property concerned and they have agreed to cut down some of the tree but they are disputing the ownership of the hedge and land in front of their property. Clerk has emailed County Cllr Hall to ask her if SCC own the hedge/land.
- 26.03.24 CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)**  
Cllr D Robinson proposed that the CIL report for year 2023-2024 was correct, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour, the Chairman signed as correct, and the Clerk will submit to Babergh.
- 27.03.24 Internal Audit**

Cllr D Robinson proposed that Julie Lawes be appointed to carry out the internal audit for year end March 2024, Cllr Davies seconded and all in favour.

**28.03.24 Grounds Maintenance**

Cllr Davies proposed to renew the PCs contract with Vertas for the grass cutting for the Village Institute playing field, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour.

**29.03.24 Weir Bridge**

No authority claims responsibility for the bridge despite repairs being undertaken a couple of years ago. Should the council continue to investigate its ownership, and how, or should the PC assume responsibility for it and commission additions of a non-slip surface and low-level fencing. The PC discussed and it was agreed that Cllr D Robinson is to contact County Cllr Hall for help as no one is claiming ownership of it.

**30.03.24 Refurbishment of the Village sign**

The Village Sign needs some maintenance - the wood is splitting and the paint is coming off. Cllr D Robinson has contacted different companies for quotes and the best quote received is just under £1,000. The Chairman has contacted the District Cllr to see if any funding can be obtained for this but there is nothing available. Cllr D Robinson asked that other Cllrs look at the sign and this is to be discussed again at Mays meeting.

**31.03.24 Annual Parish Meeting**

Agreed to add Neighbourhood Watch to the APM agenda. Cllr D Robinson proposed to pay £10 to Dave Leach the Quartet delivery man to deliver to APM notices, Cllr Davies seconded and all in favour.

**32.03.24 Neighbourhood Watch signs**

The signs are looking tired and old, Cllr D Robinson proposed that the Parish Council request Neighbourhood Watch to remove the signs, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour, 1 abstain from the vote.

**33.03.24 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council**

Blossom tree in Strickmere is dead – this has been reported and will be looked at this spring.  
Building on A12 coming from Ipswich past Hughes Road is burnt down, should we find out who owns this as it's in the AONB – to be looked into.  
Cllr Davies advised that the Community First Responders are holding their AGM on the 16.04 and asked if other Cllrs would like to attend.

**34.03.24 Confirm the date of the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 1930hrs for the next Parish Council meeting**

Agreed. Cllr G Robinson informed the meeting that her and Cllr D Robinson are out of the country on that date.

Meeting closed at 2130hrs