

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 21st March 2023 ~ 7.00pm

Ufford Community Hall, The Avenue, Ufford

Present

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)

Cllr. Keith Bennett

Cllr. Nick Crocker

Cllr. Pat Edworthy

Cllr. Jane Hawthorne

Cllr. Kathryn Jones

Cllr. Ashley O'Malley

Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Vincent Smith

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

Dist. Cllr. Carol Poulter (from 7.32pm)

No members of the public were present

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies for absence:

a) To Receive Apologies:

Apologies had been received from Cllr. Steve Mayhew (Previous engagement).
Cllr. Alexander Nicoll had also sent his apologies.

b) To Accept Apologies:

The acceptance of the apologies of Cllr. Mayhew were proposed by Cllr. Hawthorne, seconded by Cllr. O'Malley and all were in agreement.

2. To receive any:

a) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items

None

b) Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items

- Cllr. V Smith – Non-Pecuniary interest in item 12. b)
- Cllr. Findley – Non-Pecuniary interest in item 10. d)

c) Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items

None

d) Declarations of Gifts or Hospitality received over the value of £25.00

None

Chair's initials.....

- e) Notification of Lobbying with reference to any Planning Application to be discussed

None

3. Public Session:

- a) Reports or comment from any member of the public (notes only):

- None

- b) Reports or comment from ESC and SCC Councillors (notes only):

- **Dist. Cllr. Carol Poulter** - Cllr. Poulter's report had been circulated and she further commented on the following items:
 - Katch Bus - this bus has been saved with a £90k input from the Community Partnership fund. New stops being trialled in Hacheston and Parham, £4k has been spent on training new drivers. A good team is now on board but we want to hear your ideas for expanding the service
 - The George Pub in Wickham Market – Funding is now in place and work will start soon on the renovation of this community pub.
 - New ESC CEO – Cllr Poulter had had a recent meeting with Chris Bally which was very constructive, volunteers from WM showcased their work and we spoke about the Park and Ride facility for Sizewell C. Lots of feedback regarding the Planning Department at ESC has been passed on, including perception of a lack of empathy from the team; steps are being taken to improve relations and the balance of information provided by the team. Cllr. Poulter felt that the new CEO is certainly a listener and is easy to talk to. *Q. What power does a CEO have?* This differs from Council to Council. At ESC the Officers have significant power and are listened to but it is the Councillors who make the policy.
- **Cnty Cllr. Alexander Nicoll** – Cllr. Nicoll had sent his apologies

4. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 21st February 2023:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 21st February 2023 had been circulated and slight amendments had been made to the initial draft. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Crocker, seconded by Cllr. O'Malley and all Councillors, who were in attendance at the meeting, were in agreement that they be signed.

The Clerk agreed to publish the minutes on the website.

Action: Clerk

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5. To discuss and agree responses to the following Planning Applications:

- a) DC/23/0646/TCA - 1no. Ash (T1 on plan) - Reduce crown by 2.5 metres back to suitable growth points - 2 Melton Hamlet, Lower Street, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:
- [A photograph of the tree had been circulated and the Tree Warden had been asked to comment but no report had been received]
 - It is a large tree (12/15m tall) at the back of the garden
 - It looks healthy but it is too large for the garden
 - The tree will grow faster once reduced.
 - Conclusion: **No Objection** (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec: Cllr. Bennett, all in agreement)
- b) DC/23/0531/VOC - Variation of condition 1 (approved plans/drawings) of planning permission ref. DC/21/0466/VOC (as amended by DC/22/2613/AME) - Erection of 7x single storey bungalow dwellings - Part Land North Of Hill Farm, High Street, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:
- A number of applications have been approved on this site and the gas main has been moved, there is also a lowering of the main entrance gate walls
 - The differences are small and may be to ensure the development conforms to standard materials
 - There is little overall change
 - Conclusion: **No Objection** (Prop: Cllr. Jones, Sec: Cllr. Bennett, all in agreement)

Action: Clerk

6. To acknowledge previous months list of ESC Planning decisions and to discuss any other planning matters or reports:

Receipt of the list of Planning Decisions was acknowledged (*there had been none in February*) and there were no further questions.

- a) Action taken following Appeal decision on land opposite 1 Loudham Lane – The Clerk reported that she had passed the appeal decision to the residents of the Sick Cottages and details of how those residents could contact the ESC Environmental Protection Team. She had also sent the appeal decision to ESC Environmental Protection Team, copying in the Planning Department, with a letter of concern that this decision may result in noisy behaviour by holiday makers.
- b) Land at top of Church Lane – The Clerk reported that she had received two comments from residents regarding the ownership of the land at the top of Church Lane; this had been explained to the residents

- c) Additional Item – Caravan Site on Yarmouth Road - It was reported that the land opposite Redwood Terrace was now up for sale. This land had been formally granted permission for a Caravan Site, but the permission had lapsed as work had not started within the permitted timescale.
- d) Additional Item – Non Material Amendments at Cambrai House (DC/23/1061/AME) and The Walk (DC/23/0962/AME) – The Clerk had circulated details of these two AME applications the day before the meeting. Cllr. Jones reported that DC/23/0962/AME had been ‘approved’ earlier in the day. It was felt the amendments for DC/23/1061/AME were so small that they did not warrant comment.

7. Neighbourhood Plan:

- a) To receive an update on the work done by NP Steering Group: A written report from Cllr. N Smith had been circulated to all. The following additional comments were made:
- Whilst funding for 2023/24 is still awaited, the Steering Group will focus on a number of actions required for the final plan
 - The subject of contacting certain landowners is being discussed, in conjunction with ESC and with the guidance of our Consultants

Cllr. Findley wished his thanks to the Steering Group to be recorded

- b) To discuss funding in 2023/2024: The Clerk confirmed that funding from the government's Neighbourhood Planning Support Programme run by Locality for 2023/24, was still to be confirmed. The final invoices from the Consultants had been received and no further work would be carried out by them until the further funding was secured.

Action: Clerk

8. Lobby Groups: (this item was heard after item 9, Cllr. Poulter was in attendance and left after item 10. a))

- a) To receive update on the East Suffolk Planning Alliance (ESPA) and to discuss to what level UPC wish to be involved: During discussion the following comments were noted:
- We need to establish if we want to be a fully signed up member of this group or not. If we sign up we need to know what policy positions they are taking, who any formal communications are being sent out to e.g. to media or other interested groups
 - Both the ESPL and JPTI are similar groups with merging boundaries but however, there are already people leaving each

- These lobby groups often form when it is too late and a development has been given the go-ahead, it is much better to fight a development before it is approved. Development can be disproportionate and SCC will try to help where they can (with Highways matters, etc.)
- Changes to National Planning Policies suggested by the Minister Michael Gove MP are currently being analysed and will need close examination
- The ESPA is calling for support to request the Local Plan be suspended but where will that leave us? We are in the middle of our NP and we must continue to have good working relationships with ESC and its Planning group
- The ESPA appear to have little understanding of PC protocol and think that matters can be approved by attendees without them being taken back for discussion by full Council.
- This group was started in Grundisburgh but is not all Grundisburgh Parish Councillors. Do they have a constitution, an elected Chair and Officers?
- The next meeting of the ESPA is on Saturday 25th March, we need to decide if we will be represented and speak or if we are just there as an observer. It would be useful to know what is going on but we do not want to put our relationship with the ESC Planning team at risk
- The Agenda for the next meeting implies that they wish to put out a public statement and appoint a press officer
- [Clerk] I believe a letter has already been sent to Chris Bally and I am concerned that Ufford PC may be named as a signatory to it, without us seeing the content of the letter.
- [Cllr. Poulter] I can confirm a letter has been received by Chris Bally from this group and I will try to obtain a copy

In conclusion it was agreed that Cllr. N Smith should attend the next meeting, as an observer only and not commit Ufford PC to any letter or statement. UPC would only consider joining if there was a proper structure for the group.

b) To discuss draft letter to Chris Bally (CEO of ESC) from the Joint Parish Traffic Initiative (JPTI):

Cllr. N Smith reported that the JPTI were planning on sending a letter to Chris Bally but had not sent it as a similarly worded letter from Eyke PC had not received a favourable response. Instead they had requested a meeting with Mr Bally. It was acknowledged that personal abuse of Planning Officers cannot be tolerated and UPC did not wish to be party to that in any way.

Action: Clerk and Cllr. N Smith

9. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive Accounts as of 28th February 2023 – The Accounts had been sent to all and Cllr. Hawthorne confirmed she had verified that the accounts matched the actual figures in the Bank Accounts.
- b) To review reserves held by the Council – A spreadsheet of the predicted reserves as at 31st March 2023 was circulated to all and explained by the Clerk. It was agreed that, although not as high as they had previously been, the reserves were sufficient.
- c) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:
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| i. J Hallett (Salary and Expenses) | £844.32 |
| ii. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's Pension) | £246.50 |
| iii. Ufford Punch (Annual Subscription) | £18.50 |
| iv. Direct365Online Ltd (Defib Pads) | £142.04 |
| v. A Martin (Tree Poppers) | £739.20 |
| vi. SALC (Payroll provision for 6 months) | £54.00 |
| vii. Compass Point Planning and Rural Consultants (NP) | £1,440.00 |

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. N Smith and all were in agreement it be paid. Cllrs. Bennett and Edworthy agreed to authorise the online payments the following day.

- d) To note Payments made since last meeting:
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| i. Starboard Systems Ltd (Scribe) | £714.00 |
| ii. Suffolk County Council (Street Light Upgrade) | £5,376.00 |
- e) To note Payments received since last meeting:
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|---|---------|
| i. Astco Recycling (Clothes Bank) | £48.00 |
| ii. East Suffolk Council (Grant for Poppers) | £587.00 |
| iii. D J L R Cope (Donation for Defibrillator Pads) | £142.04 |

Action: Clerk

10. Project Updates – To receive updates on the following projects:

- a) Ufford Warm Room Project and to discuss setting up a regular 'Coffee and Chat' event – It was acknowledged that the attendance at the Warm Rooms was not as high as had been anticipated and there had been a lack of diversity of attendees. However, 4 or 5 residents had received a great deal of benefit from attending. Cllr. Edworthy and Hawthorne agreed to provide a proposal for a regular Coffee and Chat event, for Councillors to discuss at the April meeting.

b) Placecheck Actions – The Clerk reported that she was still working through the actions and the following individual items were discussed:

- Hawkeswade Bridge – Following concerns raised that its continuing use by heavy goods vehicles could damage the bridge SCC had confirmed that Hawkeswade Bridge was suitable for 44 tonne vehicles. It was agreed that this statement should be placed in to a PUNCH report and the item concluded
- Stop sign at Avenue/Yarmouth Road Junction – SCC had provided confirmation that the junction at the top of The Avenue was NOT suitable for a 'Stop' sign. However they did suggest a 'double arrow' sign could be placed opposite the junction to alert drivers to traffic travelling in both directions (with an approximate cost of £500). It was suggested that Cllr. Nicoll should be asked if he could assist by providing grant funding for this.
- Hedge opposite Crownfields – It was agreed that the Clerk should check the Electoral Register and write to the resident of this property to ask them to arrange for their hedge to be cut back.
- Foot Bridge at Hawkeswade Bridge – Cllr. Findley reported that he would speak to Mr Flemming about repairing the Foot Bridge at Hawkeswade Bridge (an explanation of the ownership and responsibilities for this bridge and the surrounding land was given by Cllr. Findley).

c) Sale of Social Housing – The Clerk reported that there had been no further comment from ESC.

d) Water Testing of Deben at Hawkeswade Bridge – A report on the recent testing results had been sent to all before the meeting. Cllr. Findley reported that he was working with Anglian Water to provide test results to the relevant authorities. He had also attended a meeting regarding this subject in Woodbridge. The subject was in the local press often and Ufford would continue to play its part in highlighting the river quality issues.

Action: Clerk

11. Recreation Ground and Parklands Woods:

a) To receive update on the Kings Coronation Celebrations – The Clerk reported that both the Crown Inn, the White Lion Inn and the Church were planning events around the King's Coronation. She had offered support and was waiting to hear.

Action: Clerk

12. Ufford Community Hall:

- a) To receive an update on Woodbridge Town Youths using the Football Pitch – The Clerk confirmed that the License had been signed and the £100 license fee would be paid in April. Cllr. V Smith reported that he had left a message with the Chair of the Football Club but that they had not managed to speak yet. It was agreed that it was a matter for the Community Hall Committee to take forward.
- b) To receive notification of the outcome of the prosecution regarding the damage caused to the Community Hall (July 2022) and to discuss compensation awarded by the Court – A letter from the courts detailing the outcome of the hearing regarding the incident, had been passed to all. Cllr. V Smith confirmed the Hall Committee had been contacted with reference to receiving the £300 compensation.
- c) To discuss a Public Toilet at the Community Hall – Cllr. Findley gave details of an ‘incident’ that had occurred on the patio area of the Community Hall (he was thanked for dealing with it). After discussion it was agreed that whether there was a public toilet at the Community Hall or not would be a matter for the Hall Committee to decide. However, research had shown them to be very expensive and prone to vandalism.

Action: Cllr V Smith

13. Highways/Footpaths:

- a) To receive Footpaths Report March 2023: The latest Footpaths Report had been circulated and the Clerk was asked to thank Rilla for her work.

Action: Clerk

- 14. To discuss draft ‘Projects List’ for the spending of CIL funds:** The re-drafted list was circulated to all. It was agreed that this list would be fluid and would require revisiting once CIL funding was received. The Clerk agreed to finalise the list and file.

Action: Clerk

15. To review format of the Annual Parish Meeting:

Cllr. Findley advised Council of the format of the Annual Parish Meeting and thanked those who would be presenting. The Clerk confirmed the meeting would further be promoted the following day.

Action: Clerk

16. To receive reports on meetings attended on behalf of the Council:

- *There were no meetings to report on*

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17. Documentation – To review and adopt or comment on the following Policies / Procedures / Documents:

- a) Risk Assessment (Financial) March 2023
- b) Risk Assessment (Non-Financial) March 2023

Councillors confirmed both documents had been read; their acceptance and adoption was taken together. Cllr. N Smith proposed both documents be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and all were in agreement. The Clerk agreed to finalise the documents and publish.

Action: Clerk

18. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (18th April 2023):

- Receipt and Signing of Annual Accounts
- Working with Lobby Groups

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 8.53pm

Signed:.....
Cllr. David Findley - Chair

Date:

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

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