

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 18th April 2023 ~ 7.00pm

The Parish Hall, Church Lane, Ufford

Present

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)

Cllr. Keith Bennett

Cllr. Nick Crocker

Cllr. Pat Edworthy

Cllr. Jane Hawthorne

Cllr. Kathryn Jones

Cllr. Steve Mayhew

Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Vincent Smith

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

Cnty Cllr. Alexander Nicoll

One member of the public was present

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies for absence:

a) To Receive Apologies:

Apologies had been received from Cllr. Ashley O'Malley (Previous engagement).
Apologies had also been received from Dist. Cllr. Poulter who was unable to attend due to the Pre-Election Period restrictions.

b) To Accept Apologies:

The acceptance of the apologies of Cllr. O'Malley were proposed by Cllr. Edworthy, seconded by Cllr. Jones 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

None

c) Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items

None

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

None

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- 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):

- The member of the public wished to make no comment

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

- **Dist. Cllr. Carol Poulter** - Unable to attend due to Pre-Election Period restrictions but had offered support if and when needed
- **Cnty Cllr. Alexander Nicoll** – Cllr. Nicoll reported that he would be standing for District Councillor in a ward further north in ES. His previous work with a unitary authority had resulted in him chairing a Planning Committee and he was looking forward to being more involved in planning matters, if elected. Cllr. Nicoll further reported involvement with the Ufford Arts Festival in the form of a grant, and he was working with SCC Highways to ask they could delay the closure of Yarmouth Road for one week, so as not to disrupt the festival.

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

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 21st March 2023 had been circulated and amendments had been made to the initial draft. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Bennett, seconded by Cllr. N Smith 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

5. Election:

- a) To receive notification of the Nominations for Council and confirmation that all Nominees were automatically elected – The Clerk confirmed that only ten candidates had applied to be a Parish Councillor, and therefore all had automatically been elected and there was no requirement for an Election. Cllr. Findley asked that all Councillors consider the vacancy and if they knew of a suitable resident who could be approached. The matter would be discussed at the May Meeting.

- b) To complete the Election Expenses Forms – The Election Expenses forms were distributed by the Clerk, completed by all and collected in again ready for dispatch to the District Council. The Clerk agreed to take Cllr. O'Malley's form to her.

Action: Clerk

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

a) DC/23/0965/OUT Outline Application (all matters reserved save for access) -

Construction of up to four dwellings and garages - Part Former Crown Nursery , High Street, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:

- The Business Park (with small amendments) has been approved, this application covers a small parcel of land adjacent to Tovells and Goldsmiths and bounded by a track which continues on from Nursery Lane
- The Pre-Application advice does not consider the application acceptable
- I live in Tovells and I have not had a letter [*Post meeting the Clerk reported that that particular house in Tovells had not received a letter as the property did not adjoin the development*]
- This is outside the Settlement Boundary (SB)
- The quoted 'survey' in the application has been taken out of context and mis-interpreted; they are mis-naming the Household Survey for the NP as a "Village Survey"
- Of 38 responders to the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) questionnaire regarding a desire to change the size of their house, 75% wished to downsize but then their houses would become available; the housing numbers are over inflated
- The new road only opens up the possibility of further development
- It is rare that 'rounding off' the SB is permitted; the SB was moved to accommodate Goldsmiths anyway; this is just continuous salami slicing of land outside the SB
- The Pre-App clearly lists the reasons why the proposal does not satisfy any of the exceptions in the Local Plan which permit development in the 'Countryside'
- The density of the properties is approx.. 20 per hectare; this is very cramped and not suitable for a rural area, it should be more like 8 per hectare
- Although our NP is not yet made, some information from published documents has been lifted and used out of context
- The NP, when made, may show alternative uses for this land
- Results of a survey conducted by Landex before the Business Park was permitted have never been passed to the Council and there has never been evidence of a 'Master Plan' for this site
- Some residents of Goldsmiths may be looking forward to the old poly tunnels being taken away
- **Conclusion:** Two steps agreed (both to be drafted by Clerk and distributed for comment before sending):
 - i. **Objection to the Application** on the grounds of outside the Settlement Boundary, 'rounding' of the Settlement Boundary is not acceptable, the housing density is not appropriate, the pre-app advice clearly shows none of the exceptions which permit development in the Countryside have been met and the Local Plan indicates that no houses are required in Ufford (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec: Cllr. Mayhew, all in agreement)

- ii. **Letter to ESC** to request any Pre-App advice that they have given the land owner on the whole site and to ask how the business hub and additional houses fit in to the existing Local Plan, if indeed they do (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec: Cllr. Mayhew, all in agreement)

- b) DC/23/1296/TCA - 1no. Group of 8x Lime (marked red on plan) - Crown reduce in height by up to 5 metres - Dower House, Lower Street, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:

- [Comment from the Tree Warden had been circulated to all]
- This is extensive pruning but is in the interests of the trees and the surrounding buildings
- Conclusion: **Support** (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec: Cllr. Bennett, all in agreement)

Action: Clerk

7. 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 and there were no further questions about these.

- a) St Andrews Place, Melton - Appeal decision by Planning Inspector – It was acknowledged that the appeal by the applicant had been allowed and that the building of the 55 houses at the end of St Andrew's Place would therefore go ahead. The inspector had noted that the additional traffic through St Andrews Place would do 'little harm'.
- b) Additional – Oakdene, School Lane – Confirmation had been received from ESC that the application would not be heard by the Planning Committee (South) but would be permitted, as recommended by the Officer.
- c) Additional – Victoria Mill Road, Framlingham – Cllr. Jones reported that an appeal had been lodged on the initial application in Victoria Mill Road, Framlingham, for 49 houses. A subsequent application for 35 houses had been approved by ESC and still remains in force.

8. 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 and he restated the contents. The following additional comments were made:
 - Q. *The Design Code, is it drafted by the Consultants?* Yes and No, it is drafted by different consultants from our main ones but they do have an input. We have had scope for input and have just sent comments and revisions on the 2nd draft. The document is almost complete, just a few tweaks to add and was looking good. It will be a very important document for new developments to comply with.

- b) To report on plans for potential landowner discussions regarding development sites:
The NP Steering Group planned to speak with ESC (Mr Ridley and Mr Nicholls) before speaking to any land owners.
- c) To discuss funding in 2023/2024: The Chair confirmed that funding from the government's Neighbourhood Planning Support Programme run by Locality for 2023/24, was still to be confirmed.

The Chair wished thanks to be passed to all the members of the Steering Group, especially the non-Parish Councillors who were involved in much of the work.

Action: Clerk

9. Lobby Groups:

- a) To further discuss working with the East Suffolk Planning Alliance (ESPA) Joint Parish Traffic Initiative (JPTI): Cllr. N Smith gave an account of the last meeting of the ESPA and commented that the general aim seemed to be to ask for the Local Plan to be paused and reviewed. They were also asking if PCs wished to be 'affiliated' to them. Comments from Councillors included:
- This seems to be a group of 'like-minded' people but what weight will they have?
 - Many PCs will find it impossible to allow one person to speak for them as they would need to discuss all matters and correspondence
 - Perhaps it is better to encourage the work that SALC has recently been involved with; they seem to have brought forward a number of sensible ideas for process improvements
 - With the NP in progress, I think we perhaps need to stay away from being 'affiliated' from a group we would not have 100% control over
 - Our focus must be on our NP and the relationship with ESC
 - Some PC's do feel like they are working in isolation but we regularly work with our neighbours

In conclusion it was agreed that Ufford would not be affiliated to the ESPA and the Clerk should make this clear to them.

Cllr. N Smith commented that very little had been heard from the JPTI.

Action: Clerk and Cllr. N Smith

10. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive and agree End of Year Accounts to 31st March 2023 - The Year End
Accounts had been sent to all, following Internal Audit by Mr Trevor Brown. Cllr. Mayhew proposed they be accepted as a true record of the year's financial transactions. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement. The official copies of all Accounts documents were signed by the Chair and RFO.

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- b) To receive and accept Internal Auditor's Report for 2022/23 and 'Annual Internal Audit Report' within Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 - Mr Brown's Full Internal Audit Report and the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' within Part 3 of the AGAR 2022/23 had both been circulated to all Councillors and were published on the Web Site. Cllr. Findley proposed that these be acknowledged as received and accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. N Smith and all were in agreement. Cllr. Findley commented on the very positive comments from the Internal Auditor and thanked the Clerk for her work on producing the accounts so accurately and quickly.
- c) To agree and complete Section 1 of Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 - The Clerk read aloud each statement on Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2022/23. Cllr. V Smith asked if the Council needed to consider the position they would be in, if the Locality Grant for the completion of the NP was not forthcoming. The Clerk explained that no further expenditure on the NP had been committed to. If the Locality Grant was not forthcoming the Council would have to decide whether to cease work on the NP or to fund its completion out of General Reserves. Cllr. Jones proposed that the Council answer in the affirmative to each statement. This was seconded by Cllr. Mayhew and all were in agreement. The Chair and RFO signed Section 1 of the AGAR.
- d) To agree and complete Section 2 of Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 - The proposed entries to Section 2 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2022/23 had been circulated to all and were the figures suggested by the Internal Auditor in his full report. Cllr. Mayhew proposed these be used and the form be signed. This was seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and all were in agreement. Section 2 was signed by the Chair and Clerk/RFO.
- e) To agree the CIL Report as at 31st March 2023 - The draft CIL report had been circulated to all and, had been published on the Web site. Cllr. Bennett proposed this be accepted as a true reflection of CIL transactions during the year. This was seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all were in agreement. The Clerk alerted Council to a possible duplication of CIL receipts for Hill Farm. The data was being analysed by Cllr. N Smith and, when complete, would be sent to ESC for confirmation that the amounts received were correct.
- f) To agree the Reserve Allocations as at 1st April 2023 - The suggested Reserve Allocations had been sent to all and were further explained by the Clerk. Cllr. V Smith proposed these be accepted and published. This was seconded by Cllr. N Smith and all were in agreement.
- g) To agree the Internal Control Statement for year ending 31st March 2023 - The document had been sent to all and Cllr. Jones proposed it be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all were in agreement.

h) To discuss a grant to the White Lion and Crown Inn to assist with expenses for the King's Coronation Celebrations – After explanation from the Clerk, Cllr. Findley proposed £250 was granted to both the White Lion and Ufford Crown, to assist with Coronation Celebration expenses. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement. The Clerk was asked to request the grant was acknowledged wherever possible.

i) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

ii. J Hallett (Salary and Expenses)	£969.16
iii. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's Pension)	£237.85
iv. HMRC Cumbernauld (Clerk's PAYE)	£260.86
v. K Bennett (Warm Room Expenses)	£5.35
vi. Suffolk.Cloud (Website Hosting)	£150.00
vii. St Mary's Church Ufford (Grant for Church Flowers)	£250.00
viii. Groundwork UK (Unspent NP Grant)	£3,101.57
ix. SALC (Annual Subscription)	£378.21
x. Trevor Brown (Internal Audit)	£210.00

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

Cllr. Jones thanked the Clerk for supplying the Accounts to the Internal Auditor in such a clear way that a reduction in the charges had been applied.

Cllr. Hawthorne indicated that a tree in the Woods, close to houses in Parklands, was leaning dangerously and should be felled. A quote for the work of £200 (+ VAT) had been received from the regular woodsman and this was agreed.

d) To note Payments made since last meeting:

i. Suffolk County Council (Street Lights)	£653.74
ii. Rachel Leggett (Part Payment of Stage 3 of NP)	£585.00

e) To note Payments received since last meeting:

i. Astco Recycling (Clothes Bank)	£9.00
ii. Ufford Tennis Club (Ground Rent)	£350.00
iii. Ufford BMX Club (Insurance contribution for 2022/23)	£200.00

Action: Clerk

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

a) Placecheck Actions – The Clerk reported that the list of actions was almost complete and the following individual items were discussed:

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- Two Way Arrow sign at Avenue/Yarmouth Road Junction – Cllr. Nicoll had agreed to provide grant funding for this and the matter was with the Highways Engineer for installation.
 - Foot Bridge at Hawkeswade Bridge – SCC had confirmed that this repair was on their list to carry out and the Clerk would request a completion date.
 - New Slip Road on to A12 – The Clerk confirmed that Mr Bradley had not yet communicated with her but she would re-contact him.
- b) Water Testing of Deben at Hawkeswade Bridge – Cllr. Findley reported that testing was continuing. A recent meeting was held with Anglian Water and the Co-Chair of the Rural Deben Association which had been very productive. It had also been learnt that sewage outlet at Wickham Market was high. In addition, co-ordinated testing in Debenham and Woodbridge was also underway. Cllr. Findley suggested that additional expenditure may be required in the near future to allow for testing for Nitrates and Phosphates, but he would provide further information.

Comment was made at the number of House Boats on the Deben and the impact they would have on the water quality.

Action: Clerk

12. Recreation Ground and Parklands Woods:

- a) To receive update on the King's Coronation Celebrations – This item was discussed at 10. h). The Clerk further added that promotion of the events at both locations and also at the Church would be advertised on the PUNCHLine, along with the Volunteering session in the Woods on Monday 8th May.
- b) To discuss setting up an additional CCTV Camera at the Recreation Ground – Although the cost of installing a fourth camera was low (under £200), it was agreed to delay this item until funding for the NP was in place.

Action: Clerk

13. Ufford Community Hall:

- a) To discuss setting up a regular 'Coffee and Chat' event – Cllrs. Edworthy and Hawthorne had drawn up a proposal for organising a regular monthly Coffee Morning. The Community Hall Committee had generously offered use of the Community Hall free until September and it was felt a small charge for refreshments could make the event cost neutral. It was agreed to review the project in January 2024, when an assessment of its benefit would be made.

- b) To receive an update on Woodbridge Town Youth Team using the Football Pitch – Cllr. V Smith reported that the Football Club was looking to hold some training sessions on the pitch and to play full games from September. It was commented that the team bus had been present at the ground earlier in the day.

Action: Cllr V Smith

14. Highways/Footpaths:

- a) To receive information regarding possible Pelican Crossing on High Street and to determine how to take this matter forward - SCC Highways had estimated a crossing close to Byng Hall Road, on High Street, would cost in the region of £70,000. Councillors discussed the merits of asking for a breakdown of these costs, the urban nature of a crossing and the issues a crossing may bring so close to a junction. It was agreed not to take this matter further.
- b) To acknowledge receipt of Traffic Survey carried out on the High Street in Feb/March 2022 – Cllr. Jones had circulated the Traffic Survey, commissioned by Landex, to everyone. It had been hard to find as it had the incorrect date on the Planning Portal.
- c) To receive a report on establishing official 'Passing places' in The Avenue and as an alternative to this consider installing improved signage - SCC Highways had estimated fully installed passing places, with drainage and signage would cost in the region of £75,000. However, they suggested it would be cheaper to put up a sign indicating the road was unsuitable for HGVs. It was agreed that signage would be considered, once the position regarding the NP grant was known.

Cllr. Findley proposed that Standing Order 3. x) be suspended in order that the business of the meeting could be concluded. This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all were in agreement

- d) To acknowledge receipt of communications from Historic England and ESC Conservation Team with reference to concerns for Hawkeswade Bridge – Communications from Historic England had indicated that they were not in a position to comment on the bridge as it was only Grade II listed. The ESC Conservation Team had also indicated that they had no concerns for the bridge and advised the PC to speak to the owner, Suffolk County Council. SCC had further confirmed that Hawkeswade Bridge was suitable for large vehicles and had described the bridges as being “...robust structures and [are] capable of carrying normal highway loading, including HGV’s”. It was agreed that no further action should be taken.

Action: Clerk

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

- Annual Parish Meeting (*Cllr. Findley*) – The APM had been well attended with interesting presentations and questions. It was also good to hear that two more residents had volunteered to join the Woodlands group
- ESPA (*Cllr. N Smith*) – See report at 9. a)

16. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (23rd May 2023):

- Election of Chair
- Appointment of Officers and Specialist Areas of Interest for Councillors
- Report on Inventory for Woodlands

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 9.11pm

Signed:.....

Cllr. David Findley - Chair

Date:

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

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