

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 19th December 2023 ~ 7.00pm

The Community Hall, The Avenue, Ufford

Present

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)
Cllr. Nick Crocker
Cllr. Kathryn Jones
Cllr. Vincent Smith

Cllr. Keith Bennett
Cllr. Pat Edworthy
Cllr. Steve Mayhew

Cllr. Tim Buxbaum
Cllr. Jane Hawthorne
Cllr. Nigel Smith

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

Dist. Cllr. Sally Noble

No members of the public
were present

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies for absence:

a) To Receive Apologies:

No apologies for absence had been received from Parish Councillors.

b) To Accept Apologies:

Not applicable.

2. To receive any:

a) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items

- *See item 9. e)*

b) Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items

- Cllr. V Smith – Item 8 – Treasurer of the Community Hall
- Cllr. Edworthy - Item 8 – Trustee of the Community Hall

c) Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items

- None

d) Declarations of Gifts or Hospitality received over the value of £50.00

- None

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

- None

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3. To receive nominations for Co-option of a Councillor and to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office:

There were no members of the public present and Cllr. Findley reported that each person he had approached regarding joining the Council, had not wished to join or if interested was not yet ready to, at this present time. All Councillors were asked to continue to consider any neighbours who may wish to join the Council and to pass on any possible names to Cllr. Findley, so that he could approach potential candidates.

Action: All

4. Public Session:

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

- N/A

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

- **East Suffolk Council** - Cllr. Noble's report had been circulated and she further reported on the following items:
 - Roles within the Council
 - Sally is now Deputy Cabinet Member for the Environment (alongside Rachel Smyth-Lyte) and looking at projects to improve the Street Scene with additional trees and planting, in all villages and towns; working alongside partners such as Flagship Housing [Cllr. Hawthorne to speak to Cllr. Noble regarding previous planned projects]
 - She is a member of the Scrutiny Committee – ESC Planning Department recently held to account on enforcement issues
 - Anti-Social Behaviour – Mainly in the larger towns
 - 'Wild About...' Campaign – Launch in Wickham Market on 3rd February 2024, building on the initiative from Campsea Ashe, Sally is hopeful that all villages and towns will have a 'Wild About...' team [advert in January PUNCH for co-ordinator for Ufford]
 - Community Partnerships continue to play a big role in supporting parishes
 - Solar Farm at Pettistree/Loudham – made a recent site visit to see the extent of potential development realised, localised flooding recently on part of the site, some original letters have been rebutted by the applicants (see the Portal), new letters of objection have now been submitted [UPC to discuss in January]
 - Planning:
 - Referral Process likely to change in the new year [current process was discussed]
 - New Net Biodiversity rules will come in next year and the Council will expand to monitor this; there is a new lead for this group, Chris King.

- Planning Enforcement team has recently grown and this will have greater focus next year

- **Suffolk County Council** – Cllr. Nicoll was not in attendance.

5. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 21st November 2023:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 21st November 2023 had been circulated and there were no further amendments. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne 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

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

- a) DC/23/4519/TCA - 1no. Pine (T1 on plan) – Fell; 1no. Cypress (T2 on plan) – Fell; 1no. Maple (T3 on plan) - Reduce over extended upper branches by up to 4 metres at Ash Greys, Church Lane, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:
- Rob Flory (Tree Warden) has inspected the site and recommended that the work to the three trees was necessary
 - It is a great shame to cut down the Cypress but this garden is very well maintained and has many more trees and shrubs; these trees are very close to the property and are perhaps a sign of over planting
 - I feel we should respect the opinion of our Tree Warden
 - Conclusion: **No Objection** – (Prop: Cllr. Mayhew, Sec: Cllr. Bennett, all in agreement). Clerk to write to ESC.
- b) DC/23/4328/OUT Outline Application (With some matters reserved) - with layout, scale, landscaping and access applied for in detail, for nine Self Build and Custom Build homes - Land West Of PROW 21, Woods Lane, Melton. Councillors made the following comments:
- [An explanation of a previous application – for 29 houses – on this site was given, including an explanation of why Ufford PC commented]
 - This is outside the Settlement Boundary but is very small scale and a lot of effort has gone in to a better design of the properties with single story at the front and 2 storey in the lower ground levels
 - The application is full of errors but that is not really for us to comment on.
 - Just 9 house (rather than the 30 originally proposed) will have a much smaller impact on Woods Lane and therefore on Ufford.
 - This is not in the Melton NP but perhaps it is up to Melton to fight.
 - Conclusion: It was agreed that Ufford PC would make no comment on this application as it would not affect Ufford residents.

- c) DC/23/4761/FUL - Single Storey Oak Framed Garden Room Extension to Rear and Incorporation of French Doors Into Existing Dormer Window to Side. - 5 Melton Hamlet , Lower Street, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:

- Not sure that a 'Juliette Balcony' is really in keeping with the Suffolk vernacular
- This development is very small but it will result in the rear of #4 losing day light – the owner of #4 has not commented on the Portal
- I know this company and their work is very good. The natural Oak finish will look appropriate
- This development will be seen in the winter, when walking along Lower Street, from the Hawkeswade Bridge; but this is not listed as one of our Important Views in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- Number 3 has been extended so there is a precedent.
- Conclusion: **No objection** – (Prop: Cllr. Bennett, Sec: Cllr. Crocker, Councillors voted 8 'For' with 2 'Abstentions'). Clerk to write to ESC.

Action: Clerk

7. Other Planning Matters:

- a) To acknowledge previous months list of ESC Planning decisions – Receipt of the list of Planning Decisions was acknowledged and there were no further questions.

- b) To discuss the Surface Water Drainage Plan for the former Crown Nursery Site – Councillors made the following comments on this matter:

- ESC Planning Department have supplied several links to documents related to this site and the Planning Permission granted on it.
- Maintenance of the Attenuation Ponds is vital for the control of water, not only from the site but also from as far away as the A12.
- Whoever has the Freehold of this land (and the ponds) must be compelled to keep them, and any drainage pipework, in clear working order
- When/If the land is sold, the responsibility for this drainage must be passed on to the next landowner
- We need to ensure the drainage infrastructure is kept in good condition, in order to ensure houses in School Lane/The Oaks/Tovells are not flooded
- I believe we have to write to ESC Planning to ask if it is their intention to ensure that any responsibilities for the management of the ponds and pipes are passed on, via way of legal obligation, to any new owners
- The attenuation ponds are designed to cope with a 1:100 year event, with 20% extra capacity; is that enough? Perhaps the basins need to be deeper?
- The pond at the top of the site is designed to catch water runoff from the A12
- A 9" drain goes from the site, under School Lane and through the gardens of two bungalows in School Lane, is 9" enough? There was certainly some flooding during Storm Babet.

In conclusion the Clerk was asked to contact ESC Planning Officer and Ben Locksmith (Flood Engineer for ESC) to comment on the suitability of the flood controls at the former Crown Nursery site, along with the method by which they will ensure any responsibility for maintenance is passed on to any new owner of the site.

- c) Additional Item for information – Loudham Solar Farm (Pettistree) – Cllr. Findley reported that he had recently visited the proposed Solar Farm in Pettistree with District Cllr Noble and two people from Wickham Market. He asked that the application be re-visited at the January meeting, as further plans had been submitted and objections previously posted, rebutted, including that from Ufford. There was now an issue with flooding on part of the site and the panels would clearly be visible from many angles. The Clerk was asked to re-send the link to the application to all.

Action: Clerk

8. Projects List:

- a) To receive update on potential costs for refurbishing the Community Hall Toilets and Kitchen: - A second quote for the Kitchen and Toilet refurbishment had been received. It was agreed that the project would focus on refurbishment of the Toilets first. A third quote for the work had been received earlier in the day and would be forwarded to all, but was much higher than the second quote. The following project parameters were established:
- As Freehold owners of the building the Parish Council would manage and pay for the project to refurbish the Toilets and Kitchen (with Toilets Phase I and Kitchen Phase II)
 - The Parish Council will reclaim the VAT on all costs but will need to factor in paying this and then reclaiming it.
 - Judi, as Clerk to the Parish Council will manage the project, along with Cllrs. Edworthy and V Smith, meeting as necessary and ensuring all decisions are authorised by both the Parish Council and Community Hall Charity.
 - Judi will establish a draft funding Plan, for discussion at the January Meeting. Based on the costs as given in one quote (£28,907.79 + VAT) the plan would be along the lines of:
 - £4,500.00 – Ufford Parish Council
 - £4,500.00 -Ufford Community Hall Charity
 - £19,907.79 – Lottery Grant

The above plan was proposed by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and the Councillors voted 7 'For' with 3 Abstentions. Cllr. Edworthy remarked that there may be funding from the Sizewell C project; this would be investigated if the Lottery money was not obtained.

The following actions were agreed:

- Cllr. V Smith would take the outline plan to members of the Hall Committee for approval
- Cllr. Edworthy would try to obtain a fourth quote, from a local builder; and a separate quote for the refurbishment of the Kitchen
- Clerk to investigate process for requesting a grant from the Lottery

Action: Cllrs Edworthy and V Smith and the Clerk

9. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive and agree Accounts as of 30th November 2023 - The accounts had been distributed and Cllr. Findley had verified the figures in the bank accounts. There were no questions.
- b) To discuss and agree the Budget for 2024/25 – Version 4 of the Draft Budget had been circulated and the Clerk explained the revisions. A number of questions were asked and debated. Cllr. Mayhew proposed that version 4 of the draft Budget be adopted as Final. This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all were in agreement. Clerk to save as Final and distribute.
- c) To discuss and agree the Precept request for 2024/25 – Following the agreement of the Budget for 2024/25, Cllr. Mayhew proposed a Precept of £23,821.00 be requested of East Suffolk Council, representing an approximate 5% increase on 2023/24 and allowing the Council to balance the Budget. This was seconded by Cllr. Jones and Councillors voted 9 'For' with 1 'Abstention'. The Clerk was asked to request the amount of ESC.
- d) To discuss moving funds to a CCLA Account, in order to achieve greater yield – Questions were asked as to the safety of the funds and if they were covered by the FSCS protection. The Clerk explained that she thought they were not, however Cllr. Bennett thought that the CCLA did offer a protected fund. It was agreed to defer this matter to the January meeting, to allow Councillors more time to investigate the Fund and Fund Management company.
- e) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

i. J Hallett (Salary and Expenses)	£1,241.69
ii. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's Pension)	£402.72
iii. S Mayhew (Parking for SALC Conference)	£6.77
iv. Mid Kent Training Group (Chain Saw Training)	£1,440.00
v. Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd (consumables for Woods and Footpaths)	£195.04
vi. GeoXphere Ltd (Mapping System for NP)	£96.00

Cllr. Mayhew declared a Pecuniary Interest in item 9. e) iii. as the recipient of the refund

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The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Bennett. Councillors voted 9 'For' with 1 'Abstention' that the payments be paid. Cllrs. Bennett and Edworthy agreed to authorise the online payments the following day, and viewed the invoices during the meeting.

- f) To note Payments made since last meeting:
 - i. None
- g) To note Payments received since last meeting:
 - i. None

Action: Clerk

10. Parklands Wood and Recreation Ground:

- a) To discuss fallen Beech Tree and options for disposing of it – [The Clerk left the meeting]. Cllr. Hawthorne explained that a large Beech Tree had fallen in the Woods. Initial cutting back of the branches had been organised by the Woodlands group but the tree was too large for them to deal with. Mr Allen had quoted £250.00 to cut the tree in to manageable pieces and £500.00 to cut up and take the wood away.

With these costs in mind, the Clerk had offered to clear away the cut wood, paying £250 for it and rendering the situation cost neutral for the Council. This offer was accepted by the Council. It was further clarified that the Clerk would be paying for all the wood that was greater than 6cm in diameter and taking it off site, at her own expense and without damaging any paths or walk ways. It was further agreed that the Clerk should contact Mr Allen to arrange a suitable day for the wood to be cut. [The Clerk returned to the meeting]

Action: Clerk

11. Documentation – To discuss and agree:

- a) Bring Your Own Device Policy (Dec 2023)
- b) Health and Safety Policy (Dec 2023)

Due to time constraints, it was agreed to move discussion and decision on these two documents to the January meeting.

Action: Clerk

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

- SALC Conference (Cllr. Mayhew and the Clerk) – Full report circulated and no further questions
- Visit to Proposed Solar Farm at Pettistree (Cllr. Findley) – Report given during Cllr. Noble's report and further details at the January meeting.

13. To set the meeting dates for 2024:

The Clerk suggested the meeting dates were set as follows for 2024:

- 16th January - Community Hall
- 20th February - Community Hall
- 19th March - Community Hall
- 26th March - Community Hall - Annual Parish Meeting
- 16th April - Church Hall
- 28th May - Church Hall - Annual Meeting
- 18th June - Church Hall
- 16th July - Church Hall
- 20th August - Church Hall (if required)
- 17th September - Church Hall
- 15th October - Community Hall
- 19th November - Community Hall
- 17th December - Community Hall

These dates were proposed by Cllr. N Smith, seconded by Cllr. Mayhew; the Councillors voted 9 'For' and 1 'Abstention' to this proposal. The Clerk was asked to advertise the dates on the notice boards and Web site.

Action: Clerk

14. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (16th January 2024):

- Items deferred from this meeting
- Emergency Plan
- Clerk's Annual Review
- Commemorations for the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings

Action: Clerk

Exclusion of the press and public from this item by virtue of Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2) because of the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed

15. Neighbourhood Plan:

- a) To receive an update on the work done by NP Steering Group and the progress of the Draft Plan: Updates were passed to Councillors on the following items:
- Regulation 14 – dates for the start of the formal Consultation process and an exhibition
 - Final Plan (Draft) - details of a Zoom between Councillors, Steering Group and Consultants; and an extraordinary PC meeting to discuss the Plan; hopefully sign off of Draft Plan by UPC on 20th February

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- ESC – details of support from them, with timescales
- Letters to owners of land, buildings and views mentioned in the Plan will be distributed in early Jan – instructions will be in the letter for comments; if in doubt please refer any responses or questions from recipients to the Clerk
- Engagement with Land owners and the process followed by the Consultants

Action: Clerk and NP Steering Group Members

The meeting was closed at 9.01pm

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

Date:

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

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