

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 16th April 2024 ~ 7.00pm

The Parish Hall, Church Lane, Ufford

Present

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)	Cllr. Keith Bennett	Cllr. Tim Buxbaum
Cllr. Nick Crocker	Cllr. Pat Edworthy	Cllr. Jane Hawthorne
Cllr. Kathryn Jones	Cllr. Angela Linforth (<i>after item 3</i>)	
Cllr. Nigel Smith	Cllr. Vincent Smith	

Judi Hallett (Clerk) One member of the public was present until Item 3

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. County Councillor Alexander Nicoll and District Councillor Sally Noble had sent their apologies. Cllr. Findley reported that Cllr. Noble's absence had been caused by a last minute change to her schedule, due to her recent appointment as Cabinet Member for the Environment. Cllr. Noble was congratulated on this appointment.

b) To Accept Apologies:

Not applicable

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 – Item 9. a – Treasurer of the Community Hall
- Cllr. Edworthy - Item 9. a – Trustee of the Community Hall Charity
- Cllr. Findley – Item 6. j – *Declared when item discussed*

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

Chair's initials.....

3. To co-opt up to two Councillors and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office:

Cllr. Findley welcomed Angela Linforth to the meeting and indicated that Angela had expressed a wish to join the Council. Cllr. Findley proposed this co-option. This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement. Cllr. Linforth joined the meeting and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Clerk agreed to speak to Cllr. Linforth after the meeting about setting up a separate email account and to register her with East Suffolk Council.

Action: Clerk and Cllr. Linforth

4. Public Session:a) Reports or comment from any member of the public (notes only):

- Not applicable

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

- East Suffolk Council - Cllr. Noble's report had been circulated.
- Suffolk County Council – Cllr. Nicoll had sent his apologies.

5. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 19th March 2024:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 19th March 2024 had been circulated and there were no further amendments. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Jones, 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

6. Finance Matters:a) To receive and agree End of Year Accounts to 31st March 2024 - The Year End Accounts had been sent to all, following Internal Audit by Mr Trevor Brown.

The Clerk was asked to explain the Neighbourhood Plan Grant process and the requirement to return unspent monies to Locality. It was agreed that an item should be placed on to the May Agenda, to discuss if CIL funds should be spent on a limited number of hours consultancy time, in order to maintain the momentum of the Plan, if the Locality Grant process was not yet open for applications. Cllr. Bennett proposed the Accounts 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.

- b) To receive and accept Internal Auditor's Report for 2023/24 and 'Annual Internal Audit Report' within Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 - Mr Brown's Full Internal Audit Report and the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' within Part 3 of the AGAR 2023/24 had both been circulated to all Councillors and were published on the web site. Cllr. Hawthorne proposed that these be acknowledged as received and accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy 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. This was acknowledged by all Councillors.
- c) To agree and complete Section 1 of Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 - The Clerk read aloud each statement on Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2023/24. Cllr. N Smith proposed that the Council answer in the affirmative to each statement. This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and Councillors voted 9 For and 1 Abstention. The Clerk ticked 'Yes' to each question and the Chair and RFO signed Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2023/24.
- d) To agree and complete Section 2 of Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 - The proposed entries to Section 2 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2023/24 had been circulated to all and were the figures suggested by the Internal Auditor in his full report. Cllr. Jones proposed these be used and the form be signed. This was seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all were in agreement. Section 2 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2023/24 was signed by the Chair and RFO.
- e) To agree the CIL Report as at 31st March 2024 - The draft CIL report had been circulated to all and, had been published on the web site. The Clerk read the details of the report to the meeting and explained the time by which the Parish Council had to spend the funds, before they were returned to ESC. Cllr. Findley proposed the report be accepted as a true reflection of CIL transactions during the year. This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement.
- f) To agree the Reserve Allocations as at 1st April 2024 - The suggested Reserve Allocations were explained by the Clerk. She clarified that the figures differed from the figures as of 31st March 2024, due to further allocation of funds to the Play Park Equipment and Car Park Refurbishment being added as of 1st April. The Clerk agreed to circulate the report after the meeting. Cllr. V Smith proposed the figures be accepted and published. This was seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and all were in agreement.

- g) To agree the Internal Control Statement for year ending 31st March 2024 - The document had been sent to all but as it was being discussed the Clerk realised there was an error with the date in the title. Cllr. Findley proposed the document be adopted, subject to the correction of the date in the title. This was seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all were in agreement. The Clerk agreed to correct the document and take it to the Chair for signing after the meeting.

The Clerk agreed to finalise all documentation for the Year End, publish it on the Website and send all required documents and links to PKF Littlejohn LLP, the External Auditors.

Cllr. Findley asked that a ‘Vote of Thanks’ be recorded for the work the Clerk had completed on the Accounts and for saving the Council money on the Internal Auditor’s fees, which were discounted due to the high standard of the documentation presented to him. This was seconded by Cllr. N Smith and all were in agreement.

- h) To receive update on the CCLA Account - The Clerk confirmed that the CCLA account had now been set up and the transfer of £25,000 to it was included in item 6 j.
- i) To receive update on grant request for Mini Tree Popper for Woodlands – The Clerk confirmed that Cllr. Noble had agreed to fund the purchase of the Mini Tree Popper from her Enabling Communities Budget, but that payment would not be made until after the 2nd May Election for a Police and Crime Commissioner, as all Councillors were in a Purdah period. The Clerk was asked to thank Cllr. Noble for this grant.

- j) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

i.	J Hallett (Salary and Expenses)	£1,020.05
ii.	SCC Pension Fund (Clerk’s Pension)	£245.63
iii.	HMRC Cumbernauld (Clerk’s PAYE)	£338.97
iv.	SALC (Payroll for 6 months and Annual Subscription)	£451.64
v.	Suffolk.Cloud (Website Hosting for 2024/25)	£120.00
vi.	Suffolk County Council (Upgrade to Light 9 Parklands)	£572.40
vii.	Shopfitting Warehouse (2 Footpaths Leaflets Dispensers)	£32.94
viii.	D M Bracey (Quarterly/Annual RoSPA Play Equipment Inspections)	£516.00
ix.	Groundwork UK (Return of Unspent NP Grant)	£1,111.67
x.	St Mary’s Church, Ufford (Grant 2024 – for Christmas Trees)	£300.00
xi.	Ufford Community Hall (Grant 2024 - for Coffee Mornings)	£100.00
xii.	The Public Sector Deposit Fund TA Account (transfer to CCLA)	£25,000.00
xiii.	D Findley (Water Testing Consumables)	£145.33
xiv.	Trevor Brown (Internal Audit)	£223.00

The Clerk explained the breakdown of the payment to SALC, the need to return unspent NP grant money to Locality and the cost from David Bracey for the Play Park Inspections.

Cllr. Hawthorne explained that the grant to St Mary's Church was not for flowers, but for the Annual Christmas Tree exhibition.

Cllr. Findley declared a non-pecuniary interest in item xiii as recipient of the refund of the cost of the Water Testing consumables.

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Hawthorne, seconded by Cllr. Edworthy with Councillors voting 9 For and 1 Abstention, that the payments be paid. Cllrs. Edworthy and Hawthorne 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. East Suffolk Council (CIL Payment)

£1,523.12

Action: Clerk

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

- a) DC/24/0920/FUL - Single storey rear extension - Windy Ridge, Ufford Place, Ufford.

Councillors made the following comments:

- This dwelling is made up of a number of small extensions and this one is again a very small infill
- The work is not visible and will improve the layout of the building
- Conclusion: **No Objection** (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec: Cllr. Bennett, all in agreement). Clerk to write to ESC.

Action: Clerk

8. Other Planning Matters:

- a) To acknowledge previous months list of ESC Planning decisions – ESC made no decisions on planning applications in Ufford, during March 2024.

- b) Neighbourhood Plan – to receive an update on the Regulation 14 Consultation – Cllr. N Smith reported that the latest figures from the Consultants had stated that there had been 48 responses online (including the paper forms that had been input) and two emails from statutory agencies. It was also reported that the Exhibition had been displayed before the Annual Parish Meeting, and another six residents had viewed the material.

Clarification was sought on whether Suffolk Preservation Society and Historic Suffolk had been consulted, and it was thought they had. Councillors also asked what the expectation for responses was and it was explained that more were hoped for, but that so far, the response was better than average.

The Clerk confirmed that a PUNCHLine article would be released the following week, and an article would appear in the May PUNCH magazine. All Councillors were encouraged to complete a Consultation Questionnaire.

- c) Solar Farm Pettistree - update re. ESC Planning Committee (South) Meeting – Cllr. Findley confirmed that a fourth letter had been submitted to ESC on this matter. The Officer dealing with the application had recommended that the Planning Committee (South) make a site visit and this was arranged for Tuesday 23rd April. The Officer had also granted permission for one representative from each of the opposing Parish Councils to be present during the Site Meeting, although attendees would not be permitted to speak to the Committee members. Cllr. Findley reported that he would be happy to attend. It was expected that the application would be heard at the May meeting of the Planning Committee (South) – 28th May.
- d) Additional Item – Land off Old Bredfield Road – It was reported that a Site Hut on the meadow on the corner of Old Bredfield Road and Yarmouth Road had been removed and that public social media posts by the Ipswich Bus Shelter project had indicated they were assessing their activities and seeking funding.

Action: Clerk

9. Community Hall Upgrade:

- a) Update on the project for refurbishing the Community Hall Toilets from the Hall Committee – Cllr. Findley reported that he had spoken to Cllrs. Edworthy and V Smith and a way forward had been devised:
- The toilet refurbishment would be based on the existing toilet plan followed by the current quotation for the work [Company name removed], as agreed at the last meeting, refurbishing the existing structure; no alternative design to be pursued. The kitchen refurbishment will wait until funds are available.
 - The Clerk will progress the National Lottery Application, requesting the maximum £20,000, Cllrs. Edworthy and V Smith to provide final details of User Groups and numbers of users.
 - An Asbestos Management Survey and a separate Asbestos Building Works Survey are both likely to be required, although specialist advice would be needed on the scope of these. Cllrs. Edworthy and V Smith would be responsible for arranging these, with the view to obtaining the ‘best price’. This should happen as soon as possible and in parallel with the Lottery application (which may take 12 to 16 weeks).

- A local builder [Company name removed], has been asked (by Cllrs. Edworthy and V Smith) to submit a quotation. They should be requested to do this no later than Friday 17th May, and a decision will then be made jointly by the Parish Council and Hall Committee on which tender to accept. Acceptance of tenders is conditional on the lottery grant application being successful.
- The responsibility for managing the refurbishment is with the Parish Council as freeholder of the Hall but the lessee (Ufford Community Hall CIO) will need to be consulted in advance of major decisions.
- The Project Team for UPC will be Cllrs. Edworthy and V Smith, as Community Hall representatives and with the Clerk providing administration support. UPC will also act in a consultee/ approval role;
- There needs to clear accountability to oversee delivery of the work, any professional advice to the project will be handled by the Project team; a budget of £1,000 be added to the project costs to cover this advice.

It was agreed that the application to the National Lottery would be based on all three elements of the project being undertaken (toilet refurbishment, walls replastered and new doors provided). This would be re-visited if the Lottery grant was not awarded. The Clerk reminded Councillors of the need for the Parish Council to manage this project, in order for the VAT to be reclaimed. Any funding support from the Hall Committee would be in the form of a Grant to the Parish Council.

Cllr. Buxbaum stressed the need for an Asbestos Management Survey, it is thought the building was built in the early 1980s. It was agreed that the Asbestos Surveys would be part of the project costs; Costs plan to be drafted by the Clerk in conjunction with Cllrs. Edworthy and V Smith.

Action: Cllrs. V Smith and Edworthy, and Clerk

10. Projects List:

- a) Emergency Plan – To receive update from Cllrs. Bennett and Hawthorne - Cllr. Bennett reported that he had made contact with an officer of ESC, Courtney Walsh, and Mr Walsh would be visiting the Community Hall on 31st May, to assess it as a Rest Room. An article in the PUNCH had not been responded to yet, but it was hoped some volunteers would come forward.
- b) Wild about Ufford - update on plans for key events in Ufford and request for funding – Cllrs. Findley and Hawthorne reported on four events planned under the ‘Wild about Ufford’ banner:
 1. Plant and Seed Sale – organised and funded by the Ufford Gardening Club – Supported by Notcutts
 2. Stand at the Summer Show - organised and funded by the Ufford Gardening Club – Transition Woodbridge have confirmed that they will attend and the RSPB have been approached - details to be confirmed

3. Bird Box Making at the Family Fun Day (White Lion) - organised by The White Lion and volunteers from the community – Cllr. Findley reported that Bird Box kits had been found for £6 each and a request had been made for the Parish Council to fund between 20 and 25 of these. Cllr. Findley proposed a budget of no more than £200 be set aside to pay for these. This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all were in agreement. Cllr. Hawthorne agreed to arrange for the invoice for the kits to be sent to the Clerk for payment. Cllr. Jones asked who would have responsibility for the Risk Assessment for this event, it was felt that would lay with the White Lion; the Clerk agreed to provide a RA template.
4. Sapling Planting - organised by the Friends of Parklands Group and funded by donation – Saplings to be planted in the autumn. It is also expected that a stumpery will be created with advice from Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Action: Cllr. Hawthorne and the Clerk

11. Parklands Woods and Recreation Ground:

- a) To receive update on work in the Woods – Cllr. Hawthorne reported that unwanted Sycamore saplings continued to be removed from the Woods, with an area being cleared for further tree planting in October/November.
- b) To discuss renewing our Woodland Management Plan and Felling Licence – A paper on this subject had been prepared by Cllr. Hawthorne and distributed to all. Cllr. Hawthorne explained that the original 10 Year Plan, produced by the Green Light Trust, would expire in 2025. As this was already in place, and the wood had been compartmentalised, an update to the plan was all that was needed and a number of tree professionals had indicated that the Woodlands Group may be able to produce the new report themselves, with some technical support. A grant for £1,500 was available and if most of the work was completed by the FPW, any excess money could be used on other maintenance tasks in the Wood.

The Clerk confirmed her willingness to apply for a grant but suggested the terms and conditions of the grant should be fully understood before it was applied for, to ensure the spending of any excess funds on other maintenance tasks was permitted. Cllr. Hawthorne agreed to provide the Clerk with the link to the grant Ts and Cs.

Action: Cllrs. Hawthorne and Findley

12. Highways:

- a) To discuss problems with Footpath 31 and SCC response – Cllr. Findley explained that a resident of Bredfield, who used a tricycle, was unable to negotiate the gap in PROW Ufford 31, to enter Yarmouth Road, opposite Sogenhoe Chapel. Negotiations between Cllr. Alexander Nicoll, SCC Rights of Way Team and the UPC Footpaths Team, had resulted in SCC admitting the access should be made wider, but that the matter was not a high priority and may be in the list for some time due to limited funding.

SCC had also suggested that they would support Ufford volunteers doing the work under the “self-help scheme” which the parish is already part of. Cllr. Findley reported that the task would be completed by himself, the Footpaths Warden and a member of the public, once Grove Farm had been contacted and had given permission.

Cllr. N Smith reported that the position of that path had originally been alongside the field, and not on the highway. Cllr. Findley agreed to check the definitive map and seek advice from SCC PROW Team.

Action: Cllr. Findley

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

- Sizewell C (SZC) Annual Forum – Cllr. Findley – A report on this meeting had been circulated. Cllr. Findley was asked if he could publish information on the delivery of materials by train, as this had caused concern in other villages where the railway ran through. Cllr. Findley asked if anyone would be available to attend the next meeting of the Southern Transport Forum (15th May) and the Clerk agreed to attend.
- ESC Community Partnership Forum - Cllr. Findley – A report on this meeting had been circulated and there were no further questions
- Joint Parishes Traffic Initiative – Cllr. N Smith – Cllr. N Smith reported that a letter from the Clerk of Campsea Ashe PC had been received that day, and would be circulated after the meeting.

Action: Clerk

13. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (28th May 2024):

- Items carried forward
- Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Appointment of Officers
- Funding for the Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Findley reported that, if elected, he would be willing to stand for a further year as Chair, but that would be his final year. It was suggested that the position of Vice-Chair should be filled by someone willing to take on the role of Chair, if elected.

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 8.55pm

Signed:.....

Date:

Cllr. David Findley - Chair

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

Chair’s initials.....