

## **Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Annual Meeting**

Held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024 ~ 7.00pm

The Parish Hall, Church Lane, Ufford

### **Present**

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)

Cllr. Keith Bennett

Cllr. Tim Buxbaum

Cllr. Pat Edworthy

Cllr. Jane Hawthorne

Cllr. Kathryn Jones

Cllr. Angela Linforth

Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Tig Thomas

(after item 4)

Cnty. Cllr. Alexander Nicoll

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

Two members of the public were present

*The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting*

### **1. To elect the Chair of the Council for 2024/25 and signing of the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office':**

Nominations were requested for the role of Chair of the Council. Cllr. Bennett nominated Cllr. Findley, who indicated he would be willing to stand for one further year. This nomination was seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne. There were no further nominations. Councillors all voted in favour of Cllr. Findley being elected as Chair. Cllr. Findley signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### **2. Apologies for absence:**

#### **a) To Receive Apologies:**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Nick Crocker (Previous Commitment) and Cllr. Vincent Smith (Away). Cllr. Noble had also sent her apologies.

#### **b) To Accept Apologies:**

The apologies of absence from Cllrs. Crocker and V Smith were proposed as accepted by Cllr. Edworthy, seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement.

### **3. To receive any:**

#### **a) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items**

- None

#### **b) Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items**

- Cllr. Edworthy - Item 15. a – Trustee of the Community Hall Charity
- Cllr. Findley – Item 11. b – Recipient of refund

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*Chair's initials.....*

- 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

**4. To co-opt a Councillor and the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office:**

Cllr. Findley welcomed Tig Thomas to the meeting, who had previously indicated she would like to join the Council. There were no other members of the public who wished to stand for co-option. Cllr. Findley proposed Tig Thomas' co-option, this was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement. Cllr. Thomas joined the meeting and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Clerk agreed to speak to Cllr. Thomas after the meeting about setting up a separate email account and to register her with East Suffolk Council.

**Action: Clerk and Cllr. Thomas**

**5. Public Session:**

- a) Reports or comment from any member of the public (notes only):
  - Proposed Gas Works – I am here to listen to the debate regarding the proposed Gas Works and why it is necessary for it to be placed under the highway.
- 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 was thanked for his continuing assistance with the proposed Gas works and indicated he wished to comment on two matters:
    - Sizewell C – There had now been four meetings of the two Transport Forums (North and South), with these proving to be of increasing value to local communities as standards of engagement improved. It was positive that Ufford have now been accepted as a regular attendee. The work to upgrade the rail network was progressing, with some Saxmundham residents praising the work by Network Rail to mitigate the noise from the freight trains. This work continues but the use of the railway remains a concern to many. Some examples of issues raised were: how many trains per night are expected, how noisy will they be, how long will they take to cross at various points (holding up traffic), what happens if there is a signal failure or a breakdown, will other train services be affected? A specific issue raised is the time taken for Melton and Woodbridge Dock level crossings to open and how this would affect ambulance response times at night.

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*Chair's initials.....*

Q. Does 4 trains a night actually mean 8, as they will have to return? I don't believe so, however I will check. [Cllr. Findley reported he had visited the Sizewell C office in Leiston and had been very impressed with the knowledge of the Communications staff].

○ Proposed Ufford Gas Main Renewal:

- Test Drilling – One outcome from the Information Event was the requirement put in place by SCC Highways for Cadent to carry out test drilling in Ufford High Street. This permit has now been issued [acknowledged by the Clerk] and would take place between 30<sup>th</sup> May and 12<sup>th</sup> June. I will be pushing for both myself and a representative of UPC to be present when the outcomes are discussed.
- Public Transport - Following the information event, and concerns from the Melton Parish Clerk, one fear was for public transport, including school buses, and what the impact would be during the works. I have now brokered a meeting with all relevant stakeholders, to occur once the test drilling has taken place, when the length of the road closure, if any, should be known. There may be scope for a 'hopper bus' to be put in place temporarily.
- General comments – We have to remember that Cadent have the legal power to 'enter the highway'. They have now carried out a consultation with residents but SCC Highways have asked that they do not carry out any work until they have satisfied them that they will use the 'least worse option' for Ufford residents and local businesses. The second set of notices that went up were taken down by SCC staff, not Cadent. Cllr. Findley has raised with me the option of having an independent assessment of the project and I have passed this on to Andrew Cook. [See additional comments at item 18]

**6. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024:**

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (*date error on the agenda*) had been circulated and there were no further amendments. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Jones, 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**

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Chair's initials.....

**7. To elect the Vice- Chair of the Council for 2024/25 and signing of the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'**

Cllr. Findley recapped the informal roles of Cllrs. N Smith and Bennett, thanking them for supporting him during the past year. Cllr. Jones proposed Cllr. N Smith was elected Vice-Chair. Cllr. N Smith advised that he would be willing to stand as Vice-Chair but did not wish to stand as Chair in the future. Cllr. Hawthorne seconded the motion and all were in agreement.

Cllr. N Smith signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'.

**8. To advise Members to review their entry on the ESC Register of Interests Website:**

The Clerk reminded Councillors that it was their responsibility to review their details held on the ESC Register of Interests Website, and to amend them where necessary. The Clerk further agreed to send the link to view the Register to all, with details of how to acquire your log-on and password if anything required amending.

**Action: Clerk and Councillors**

**9. To confirm all Standing orders and Direct Debits presently set up for the Council:**

The Clerk confirmed that there was just one SO set up on the Bank Account:

- Information Commissioners Office for £35.00 per annum (this being a £5.00 saving on other payment methods)

Cllr. Findley proposed this continue. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement.

**10. To appoint persons to the following offices:**

The following appointments were proposed by Cllr. N Smith, seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and agreed by all:

- a) Responsible Finance Officer – Judi Hallett (Clerk)
- b) Tree Warden – Rob Flory
- c) Footpaths Warden – Rilla Forge
- d) SALC Representative (+ meetings) – *to be discussed at June meeting*
- e) Internal Auditor – Mr Trevor Brown
- f) Maintenance Officer – Mr Steven Churchyard
- g) Ufford Community Hall representative(s) – Cllrs. V Smith (tbc) and Edworthy
- h) Representative of ESC Community Partnership – Cllr. Findley (deputy needed)
- i) Friends of Parklands Wood representative – Cllr. Hawthorne
- j) Sizewell C Transport Forum Representative – Cllr. Findley (deputy needed)
- k) JPTI and ESPA Forums – Cllr. N Smith

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*Chair's initials.....*

The Clerk was asked to notify anyone outside of the Council of their appointment.

**Action: Clerk**

#### **11. Finance Matters:**

- a) To receive Accounts as of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – The Accounts had been circulated and there were no questions. Cllr. Bennett had verified the figures in Lloyds Bank. The Clerk reported that she had not received a statement from CCLA and was asked to check what frequency they would be released.
- b) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:
- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| i. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's Pension)                  | £307.05 |
| ii. Value Products Ltd (No Parking Sign for East Lane) | £35.79  |
| iii. David Findley (Water Testing Consumables)         | £176.66 |
| iv. R Forge (Petrol for Brush Cutter)                  | £10.69  |
| v. Potsford Farm Ltd (Bird Boxes)                      | £168.00 |

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Edworthy with Councillors voting 8 For and 1 Abstention, that the payments be paid. Cllrs. Bennett and Findley agreed to authorise the online payments the following day, and viewed the invoices during the meeting.

Cllr. Jones reported that she had not heard about her application to become a signatory and the Clerk was asked to chase this.

- f) To note Payments made since last meeting:
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|------------------------------------|-----------|
| i. J Hallett (Salary and Expenses) | £1,112.23 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
- g) To note Payments received since last meeting:
- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| i. Mrs Cope (Parking Sign for East Lane) | £29.83     |
| ii. ESC (50% of Precept)                 | £11,910.50 |
| iii. ESC (Grant for Tree Popper)         | £315.00    |
| iv. ESC (CIL)                            | £1,523.12  |

Cllr. Findley asked that thanks should be recorded for Mrs Cope's contribution to the cost of the No Parking signs in East Lane.

**Action: Clerk**

#### **12. To discuss and agree responses to the following Planning Applications:**

- a) None

#### **13. Other Planning Matters:**

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

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*Chair's initials.....*

- b) Solar Farm Pettistree – to receive update on the ESC Planning Committee (South) Meeting – Cllr. Findley reported that, despite good representations from local residents and Cllr. Noble, and long debate, the application for a Solar Farm in Pettistree had been approved (the ESC Planning Committee (South) had voted 3 For, 3 Against, with 2 Abstentions; the matter being passed on the Chair's casting vote). It was disappointing that some comments were not included in the Officer's report summary. It was explained that there was no appeals process.

One Councillor indicated their discontent with the way two Planning Committee (South) members had abstained from voting and indicated they may yet write a personal letter to the Committee Chair.

#### **14. Neighbourhood Plan:**

- a) To receive an update on the Regulation 14 Consultation – Cllr. N Smith reported that the Regulation 14 Consultation had concluded on 3<sup>rd</sup> May and a number of responses had been received (final number unknown).
- b) To receive an update on the Grant Application process and to decide if other funds should be spent on a limited number of hours support from the Consultants – The Clerk reported that the process for applying for Grant funding from Locality had opened and an application had been submitted earlier in the day (for £5,070.00). It was agreed to wait until the next meeting (18<sup>th</sup> June) before deciding if any Council funds should be used whilst the grant was still being assessed, as the time between application and grant approval was only 11 days last year.
- c) To receive report from Clerk on additional hours worked on the project and to discuss if the additional hours should continue – The Clerk produced her timesheet and reported that the first year of the project she had worked an average of 2 Hours and 53 Mins per week on the project; the second year of the project she had worked on average 3 Hours and 3 mins per week. It was proposed by Cllr. Jones to continue to pay for an additional 3 hours per week, until the end of Stage 4, when the hours would be reviewed again. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement.

#### **15. Community Hall Upgrade:**

- a) To receive update on the project for refurbishing the Community Hall Toilets – Cllr. Edworthy reported that unfortunately a further quote for the work at the Hall had proven to be 50% higher than the most competitive quote. It was agreed that no further work on the project could be undertaken until the Lottery Grant bid was known.

**Action: Clerk**

**16. Projects List:**

- a) Emergency Plan – To receive update from Cllrs. Bennett and Hawthorne – Cllr. Bennett reported that an officer from ESC would be attending the Community Hall on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May & he & Cllr. Hawthorne would report back at the June meeting.
- b) Wild about Ufford - update on key events – Cllr. Findley had sent pictures of the Bird Box building at the Ufford White Lion Family Day, which saw all 20 boxes completed by very enthused children. The Plant and Seed Sale had also been a success and three organisations would be attending the Gardening Club Summer Show. Cllr. Hawthorne also reported that an event would take place at the Woods Group AGM (exact details tbc).

**Action: Cllr. Hawthorne and the Clerk**

**17. Parklands Woods and Recreation Ground:**

- a) To receive update on work in the Woods – Cllr. Hawthorne's report had been circulated and she highlighted a number of items. It was agreed that further signage for the Woodland Carvings was required and Cllr. Hawthorne agreed to obtain an estimate of the cost. It was also suggested that more volunteers were needed to run the group, as members retired. AGM date of the FPW, had been set as the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2024.
- b) To discuss renewing our Woodland Management Plan and Felling Licence – Cllr. Hawthorne asked that this matter be discussed at the June meeting, where she hoped to have had a reply to a letter she had sent.
- c) To receive update on the quotation for Grass Cutting from ESS – The Clerk reported that the cost of cutting the grass at the Recreation Ground and Ufford Place had been set at £532.00 by East Suffolk Services; the Clerk had agreed to this as it was a fraction of charges other Parishes faced.
- d) Additional item – Football Training – The Clerk had received a late request from the Chair of the Woodbridge Youth Football Club and it was agreed to discuss the request given the urgent nature. After discussion, it was agreed that:
  - I. The club would be permitted to use the football pitch some week days for training sessions between May & September each year. The sessions can only take place Tuesday to Friday and will be limited to a maximum of two sessions in any one week
  - II. The Club would be permitted to use the football pitch for a match on a Sunday morning, between 10.00am and 12.00pmThese additional uses would be trialled for 2 months (Clerk to arrange review in September), would carry an additional charge of £50 for the year, would not include use of the Community Hall (to be booked separately if required) and would be subject to any other Village event being held, for example Ufford Arts Festival.

**Action: Cllrs. Hawthorne and the Clerk**

**18. Highways:**a) High Street closure for Gas works – To discuss consultation event and steps taken –

*Council agreed that Cllr. Nicoll should take part in the discussion.* General comments:

- The event was very well attended (140 visitors from 54 different post codes) and thanks go to the Clerk for organising it and providing much of the equipment and plans. The Cadent staff were presented with a barrage of questions, for which they were ill prepared and gave conflicting answers.
- At some point the argument was very heated but was managed by residents walking away.
- Many business owners attended, from Ufford, Pettistree, and Wickham Market; they all had concerns about a lengthy road closure.
- Cadent staff had little or no knowledge of local roads, at one point suggesting Byng Lane was used by the Combine Harvester and School Lane/The Avenue would be fine for traffic to use
- There were many errors in the Cadent presentation, it was embarrassing to see the poor level of preparation by this agency. The plans on display were too small and too complicated, without a key for people to understand what works were planned and where. The B1438 was described as a “quiet rural road”, demonstrating the lack of background research by Cadent
- I have spoken to a Civil Engineer who is looking at the plans and measuring the road accurately; he cannot see why a partial road closure with traffic lights cannot be achieved.
- The comments received stretched to 14 pages! These have been sent to SCC and Cadent. There has been excellent press coverage and we must keep this up.
- It is clear that any compensation for businesses will take months to emerge, this will be too late for some businesses.
- Great that trial drilling has been requested by SCC but what should happen now and what should happen after the trial drilling? We need to ensure SCC and Cadent appreciate the needs of the local community; and that the method used for replacing the pipe is what is best for Ufford not what is cheapest.
- Where will the test drills be made? How many will there be? We do not have a lot of confidence in Cadent. They could drill just one site, then report their findings and continue as first requested. We must ensure SCC and UPC have a part in the analysis of the test drilling results and the ultimate plan for the works to be completed. SCC must be asked to review the test drilling data and plans from Cadent before giving any permissions
- We need to ensure that what is best for Ufford takes precedent over what is best for Cadent. Could the work be split in to smaller parcels and different techniques used at different stages? What about deliveries (food, medicines, carers, etc.) to properties in the closed off area?



- What about the buses, including the School Bus. Some people rely on the Bus - little attention seems to have been given to the bus services from Woodbridge/ Melton and Wickham Market
- The terrain along the High Street and beyond towards the A12 slip road differs from side to side; one side is on clay whilst the other is more sandy. Hence there must be more than one test drill site to evaluate the issues in both direct drilling and trench cutting.
- A letter must go to SCC and Cadent; this could then be followed by a distilled summary to the local press. This will affect many other villages, not just Ufford. We should ask if other villages would like to put their name to any letter sent.

It was concluded that the following actions should be taken:

- I. The Clerk, alongside Cllr. Findley, to draft an email to Cllr. Nicoll, for onward forwarding to appropriate SCC Staff. The mail would question the location and number of the Test Drilling Sites (with image of one.network plan), how the results would be analysed and how the project plan would be agreed following examination of the results.
- II. The Clerk and Cllr. Findley to draft a comprehensive letter to Cadent and SCC Highways, setting out the comments and fears raised at the Information Event, stating the concerns the Parish Council have if the road were to be closed (even for a short while), and setting out all mitigating factors that need to be taken into consideration. The letter is to be reviewed by all Councillors before being sent and where possible to be countersigned by neighbouring Parish Councils.

**Action: Cllr. Findley and the Clerk**

*Cllr. Findley proposed Standing order 3. X) was suspended to allow the business of the meeting to conclude. This was seconded by Cllr. Jones and all were in agreement.*

#### **19. Documentation – To review and adopt the following:**

- a) Health and Safety Policy May 2024 – Cllr. Bennett proposed this document be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and all were in agreement. The Clerk was asked to finalise the document and publish.
- b) Financial Regulations May 2024 – It was agreed to defer adoption of this document to the June meeting as a number of further queries were raised.

**Action: Clerk**

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

- Sizewell C Office Visit – Cllr. Findley – Cllr. Findley reported that he was impressed during his visit to the Sizewell C Office in Leiston earlier in the month. They had not fully appreciated the implications for traffic in Ufford, notably that coming from Wickham Market and across from Bentwaters, nor the possible impact of the Hub@ Ufford business park which could be built on the former Crown Nursery site. The SZC staff had given considerable details of the Construction Traffic Management Plan and how this would be managed. The Wickham Market Park and Ride facility would not start to be built until Q4 2025, work up until that date would be to carry out archaeological and ecological surveys.

**21. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (18<sup>th</sup> June 2024):**

- Items carried forward
- Financial Regulations
- Neighbourhood Plan

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm

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

Date: .....

Judi Hallett  
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

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Chair's initials.....