

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 17th September 2024 ~ 7.00pm

The Parish Hall, Church Lane, Ufford

Present

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)
Cllr. Nick Crocker
Cllr. Kathryn Jones
Cllr. Tig Thomas

Cllr. Keith Bennett
Cllr. Pat Edworthy
Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Tim Buxbaum
Cllr. Jane Hawthorne
Cllr. Vincent Smith

Cnty. Cllr. Alexander Nicoll
Judi Hallett (Clerk)

Dist. Cllr. Sally Noble
Three 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. Angela Linforth (At Work).

b) To Accept Apologies:

The apologies of absence from Cllr. Lindforth were proposed as accepted by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne 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. Edworthy - Item 10. a) & b) – Trustee of the Community Hall Charity
- Cllr. V Smith – Item 10. a) & b) – Treasurer of the Community Hall Charity
- Cllr. Findley – Item 11. h) v. – Recipient of refund
- Cllr. Findley – Item 11. g) – Member of the Water Testing Group

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. Public Session:

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

- DC/24/3141/FUL – We have concerns that this development will touch the boundary fence and will be very close to our border, at its closest point within less than 0.5 metres. If the fence is removed two windows will overlook our garden and this will be intrusive. There will be no space to maintain the fence and they will have to come on to our land to carry out any maintenance. [The residents were encouraged to write to ESC Planning and the Clerk agreed to provide the email address].

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

- East Suffolk Council - Cllr. Noble reported on the following elements:
 - NPPF Consultation – ESC are reviewing and will be responding to the latest Government consultation document.
 - Pettistree Solar Farm – This application is back under review and will not be a new application – *Cllr. Findley requested further information.*
 - Refuse Collection – This will be enhanced from 2026 with glass and soft plastics being collected, alongside food waste; further details soon.
 - Four Rivers Project – Hoping to find funds to assist with the Water Testing, and related projects, more news soon.
- Suffolk County Council – Cllr. Nicoll reported on the following items:
 - Congratulations to the Clerk in her new role as Clerk to Melton PC; this will work very well alongside the Ufford role.
 - Gas Works – This appears to be going well but we must ensure all parties adhere to the promise not to work during December – *Clerk to check.*
 - Sizewell C Transport Forums – Lots of details now emerging regarding improvement works to the rail network. Some HGV drivers have been parking overnight in unauthorised locations, but this has been resolved.
 - Notice Board – [The Clerk advised that Council would be discussing a new Community Notice Board for Parklands] – Both Councillors indicated they would be happy to help with funding.

Action: Clerk

4. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 13th August 2024:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 13th August 2024 had been circulated and there were no further amendments. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. V Smith, seconded by Cllr. Crocker 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

Chair's initials.....

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

a) DC/24/2352/TPO - T4 of TPO No. 189 / 2005 1no. Oak (T4 on Order and marked on plan) - Crown reduction by up to 2.5 metres - 2 Tovells, Ufford. The following comments were noted:

- This work was started and then stopped half way through. The Tree Surgeon informed the householder that permission had been granted by ESC, when it hadn't.
- The tree looks awful and is very unbalanced. The Tree Surgeon needs to take responsibility and there should be consequences for him in not acquiring the required written permissions before starting.
- Rob (UPC tree warden) has looked at the tree and give advice as to what needs to be done now.
- We need to write a strong letter to ESC Planning Officer, Head of Planning and Planning Committee Chair, to show our serious concerns about this breach of the planning regulations.
- Conclusion: **Objection** – (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec. Cllr. V Smith, all in agreement)

b) DC/24/2954/TCA - T1 False Accacia x3, T2 Fir Tree, T3 Acer x3, T4 Holly, T5 Walnut, T6 Silver Birch, T7 Medlar, T8 Quince All trees to be reduced by 1-2m. according to guidance contained in BS3998. Thin crowns of crossing limbs by 15% as required, and crown lift up to 2m. from lowest limb. - Knoll Cottage, Barrack Lane, Ufford. The following comments were noted:

- I have no issues with this application, these trees are all quite small and it appears to be sensible work
- Our Tree Warden, Rob Flory, has reviewed the application and has no issue with it
- Conclusion: **Support** – (Prop: Cllr. Bennett, Sec. Cllr. V Smith all in agreement)

c) DC/24/3141/FUL Proposed alterations and extensions to existing residential dwelling (revised scheme). - Two Trees, Spring Lane, Ufford. The following comments were noted:

- The original application [DC/24/1902/FUL] has been permitted by ESC. This application is for a single storey dwelling this time, but on the same footprint as the earlier application, which was two storey.
- The proposed development is extremely close to the boundary, this will cause overlooking of the neighbours garden, if the fence is removed
- There are no neighbours objections yet, and there were none to the original application but that may be because neighbours might not wish to voice their concerns for fear of straining relations
- The Arboricultural Statement is detailed but it is commissioned by the applicant so it is going to be favourable to them.

- If the new build is so close to the boundary, there would need to be footings in the neighbour's garden and that should not be permitted – Building Control would need to ensure that this did not happen.
- This case is similar in terms of proximity and over-development to that in the recent Lodge Road/ Hungarian Lodge application.
- We should object on the same lines as our previous objection: over development of the site, loss of amenity (garden privacy) to neighbouring property, and damage to trees. We should also insist the matter is referred to the Planning Committee (South) and that a site visit is carried out, involving the Planning Committee.
- Conclusion: **Objection (see above)** – (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec. Cllr. Jones, all in agreement)

Action: Clerk

6. Other Planning Matters:

- a) To acknowledge previous months list of ESC Planning decisions – The list from ESC had been circulated and there were no further comments.
- b) To consider affiliating to the East Suffolk Planning Alliance – Cllr. N Smith explained the history of the ESPA and detailed his attendance (as an observer only) at a few of their meetings. After discussion, Cllr. Findley proposed the matter was deferred until after the Ufford Neighbourhood Plan was made. This was seconded by Cllr. Jones and all were in agreement – *Clerk to diarise.*
- c) To discuss communications from the East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership and whether UPC should endorse the proposed constitution and support the response letter to the Secretary of State – Cllr. N Smith explained the remit of this lobby group and its purpose. It was now supported by many Town and Parish Councils, including Melton. After debate Cllr. N Smith proposed Ufford Parish Council endorse the proposed constitution of the group and support the letter to the Secretary of State. This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement. The Clerk was asked to contact the group.
- d) To discuss reply from ESC Planning Enforcement Officer, with reference to case ENF/24/0004/DEV (Land at the top of Church Lane, Ufford) – The latest letter from the ESC Planning Enforcement Officer had been circulated and it was agreed that no further action would be taken.
- e) To discuss if UPC wish to respond to the consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – After discussion it was agreed that Ufford PC would not respond as a group to the Consultation, however, individual Councillors could respond, if they wished.

Action: Clerk

7. To appoint persons to the following offices:

- a) Deputy Community Partnerships Representative: - No one stepped forward and it was agreed that this role would be filled as and when needed.

Action: Clerk

8. Ufford Charities:

- a) To receive resignation of Mr Andrew Dennis as a Representative Trustee – Mr Dennis' letter of resignation had been received and the Clerk was asked to write and thank him for his years of service to the Charity, as a representative of the Parish Council.
- b) To discuss appointing a Representative Trustee to replace Mr Dennis – Cllr. V Smith indicated that he would be interested in representing the Council as a Trustee to the Town Estate and Non-Ecclesiastical Charities. His appointment was proposed by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement (with the exception of Cllr. V Smith who abstained). The Clerk was asked to write to the Charities.

Action: Clerk

9. Highways:

- a) To receive an update on the Gas works on High Street and Byng Hall Road – The Clerk reported that she had received no comments about the works; only a couple of emails regarding the sewer / water supply work outside the new housing development at Hill Farm, which would result in the closure of Spring Lane for a week. The Clerk was asked to confirm with Cadent that there will be no working during December 2024.
- b) To receive an update on the East Lane to Eyke Footpath – Cllr. Findley explained the situation and it was noted that there were actually three separate breaches of the river bank; one in Ufford and two in Bromeswell. However, there was good news that the Ufford breach had now been repaired and the public path was now fully accessible again.

Action: Clerk

10. Community Hall Upgrade:

- a) To receive update on the refurbishment of the Community Hall Toilets – Cllrs. V Smith and Edworthy reported that the work appeared to be on schedule, although there were often no work operatives on site. It was agreed that Cllr. V. Smith would seek assurances that the project would be finished on schedule.

- b) To receive update on the Electric Vehicle Charging Point – Cllr. V Smith gave an update on the project and confirmed a review of the site had been carried out and he was awaiting a report. After discussion, Cllr. V Smith proposed that the Chair be authorised to sign any documentation, once the legal advice received by Suffolk County Council had been seen. This was seconded by Cllr. Jones and all were in agreement. Cllr. V Smith agreed to request sight of the advice.

Action: Clerk

11. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive Accounts as of 31st August 2024 – The Accounts had been circulated and there were no questions. Cllr. Jones had verified the figures in Lloyds Bank.
- b) To discuss decision to pay the Clerk £12.00 per week as a Working From Home Allowance, and the impact this will have on her Tax liability – The Clerk explained that the Working From Home Allowance had been set at a maximum of £6 per week, by HMRC, and up to this limit had no bearing on an employee's Tax they paid. Therefore, she requested that the contribution towards Broadband costs reverted back to the £22.50 per month, as originally requested. This was proposed by Cllr. Bennett, seconded by Cllr. Jones and all were in agreement.
- c) To acknowledge receipt of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Section 3 of Part 3 of the 2023/24 AGAR from PKF Littlejohn LLP – The Clerk reported that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Section 3 of Part 3 of the 2023/24 AGAR had been received from PKF Littlejohn LLP. There were no remarks made on the Section 3 document. Both had been published on the website and the notice had been placed in the notice board. This concluded the 2023/24 Audit. The Clerk was thanked for her work on the Audit and was asked to pass on thanks to the Internal Auditor.
- d) To receive Insurance renewal and to discuss whether or not to sign up to a 3-year Long Term Agreement – The Clerk had circulated the Insurance Renewal documentation. After discussion Cllr. Hawthorne proposed that the Council should sign up to the three year Long Term Agreement and pay the premium quoted. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement.
- e) To discuss purchase of a new notice board for Parklands, and requesting funding for this from SCC and ESC Councillors – The Clerk has circulated details of a Community Notice Board to replace the old wooden one in Parklands. One side was locked for PC notices and the other was open (with a sealable door) for Community Notices. The approximate price of the board was £1,200.00. It was agreed to obtain the exact price and then to request one third from both Cllr. Noble and Cllr. Nicoll (approximately £400); with the Parish Council funding the remaining third.

- f) To discuss purchase of a Printer for the Clerk (circa £205.00) – The Clerk explained that as a consequence of retiring as Clerk to Hollesley PC, Ufford PC would no longer have the use of their printer. It was proposed by Cllr. Crocker that a new A3 printer be purchased (approx.. cost £205.00). This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement. The Clerk was asked to arrange purchase of the printer.
- g) To discuss expenditure on Water Testing consumables and options for funding – The Clerk had produced an analysis of expenditure and income on Water Testing consumables over the past two and a half years. Cllr. Findley reported that the Four Rivers Project, a joint development between ESC and the Deben Climate Centre, would be looking to fund the water testing, but that the details were not available yet. It was agreed that Cllr. Findley would assess the expenditure in Easton, Woodbridge, Melton, Rendlesham and Wickham Market, and produce a ‘Suggested Contribution Guide’ that would be sent to each Parish/Town Council for a contribution towards the cost to be requested. This was formally proposed by Cllr. V Smith, seconded by Cllr. Jones and agreed by all (with Cllr. Findley abstaining).
- h) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:
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|---|-----------|
| i. J Hallett (Salary and Expenses) | £946.91 |
| ii. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk’s Pension) | £245.63 |
| iii. AJGIBL GBP Client NST Account (Insurance) | £1,834.03 |
| iv. Suffolk Digital (Reprinting of Footpaths and Heritage Leaflets) | £290.00 |
| v. D Findley (Water Testing Consumables) | £174.26 |

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Edworthy, seconded by Cllr. Crocker with Councillors voting all in agreement, that the payments be paid. Cllrs. Jones 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 and Cllr. Findley

12. Parklands Woods and Recreation Ground:

- a) To receive general update on the Wood Management and to agree expenditure on managing trees in a poor condition or overhanging property – It was agreed that a full report on the management of the Woodlands would be discussed at the October meeting. However, some urgent work to trees by Mr Matthew Allen, was required. This was proposed by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and all were in agreement that it be carried out. Clerk to contact Mr Allen.

- b) To receive update on work in the Woods and application for grant towards Woodland Management Plan and Felling Licence – The Clerk reported the grant had been awarded and could be claimed after 1st October 2024

- c) To discuss Anti-Social Behaviour around the Recreation Ground and East Suffolk Services Depot – Cllr. Findley detailed a number of ASB incidents in the village in recent weeks. These included damage to refuse vehicles at the ESSL depot, motorbikes riding in Parklands Wood, and the Resource Locker being broken into again. It was commented that there was no Police Liaison Officer at present. The Clerk was asked to contact the Police to ask if a Community Officer would be appointed soon and place the item back on the Agenda for the October meeting.

Action: Clerk

13. Projects List:

- a) Emergency Plan – To receive update from Cllrs. Bennett and Hawthorne – Cllrs. Bennett and Hawthorne reported that they would be attending Rest Centre Training in October. The Clerk reported that the draft plan should be available to discuss at the October meeting.

Action: Cllrs. Bennett, Hawthorne and the Clerk

14. Neighbourhood Plan:

- a) To receive an update on progress of the Plan – Cllr. N Smith reported – Cllrs. N Smith, Jones and Findley reported on the work of the Steering Group and a number of Zoom meetings that had been held over the summer to trawl through all the comments received as a result of the Consultation. The Plan was presently being updated and would be sent to the Councillors, following a meeting of the Steering Group on Monday 23rd September. There would then be a Zoom meeting for the Councillors on Monday 7th October, where they could put questions to the Consultant, prior to UPC agreeing to pass the final draft plan on to ESC for their statutory actions to progress the plan, on Tuesday 15th October 2024.

A request was received for an indication to be available as to the percentage of comments that had been positive, negative, or neutral. It was agreed this would be requested at the meeting on Monday 23rd September. It was also noted that an article would be placed in the October PUNCH to update residents.

- b) To discuss amending the Clerk's hours to reflect the progress of the Plan – It was agreed to defer this item until after the Clerk's Annual Review, in October.

Action: Clerk and Steering Group

15. Documentation – To acknowledge review of:

- a) Asset Register (Sept 2024) – Cllr. Findley proposed this document be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. N Smith and all were in agreement – Clerk to finalise
- b) Standing Orders (May 2023) – It was agreed that the Clerk would review the Standing Orders again and clarify the situation when it comes to gender specific words in documentation, with SALC.

Action: Clerk

16. Quarterly Health and Safety Review – To receive notification of any H&S matters and to add to Action List:

The Clerk gave details of an incident involving a lady who had slipped down one of the BMX humps, whilst walking on them with her young son. She had broken her ankle in three places and tore a ligament. The Clerk was in regular contact with the lady’s father and would continue to be, until she was 100% well again.

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

- Sizewell C Transport Form (South) – Cllr. Findley – A written report had been circulated by Cllr. Findley. It was clear that a great deal of work was required to the railway crossing at Melton and it had also been reported that the archeological excavation work at the Wickham Market Park and Ride had started. It was further reported that there had been 7 road accidents in 6 weeks at Stratford St Andrew and issues in Sternfield where water was proposed to be transported via Friston to the SZC site.

18. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (15th October 2024):

It was agreed to include the following items on the agenda:

- Woodlands Report
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Neighbourhood Plan Draft Sign-Off

It was agreed that all discussion on Budget would be deferred until the November meeting.

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 9.15pm

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

Date:

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

Chair’s initials.....