

STRADISHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th March 2016

Parish councillors present: Ady Swift (Chairman), Adrian Lee (Vice-chairman), Martin Hurst, Ian Hutchinson, Robert Deeks and Debbie Gates

Also present: Joanne Kirk (clerk), County Councillor Mary Evans and one member of the public

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Gemma Raymond.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda

No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda.

3. Approval of minutes of meeting held on Monday 4th January 2016

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed the minutes.

4. Police issues

No issues were raised.

5. Report from Councillor Evans

Mary Evans spoke about the following:

- The bollards on Stradishall crossroads have now been replaced. The Council pointed out that there are no reflective strips on either side of the bollards, making it difficult to see the turning from the A143 when driving from Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. Mary Evans agreed to report this.
- The current Highways contract. The new Assistant Director for Highways is looking at ways to make Highways more efficient.
- The speed camera van was put on deployment in Clare and will go to other villages where there is a proven problem with speeding including Stradishall.
- The recent OFSTED inspection of Children's Services which was rated 'good'.
- Suffolk County Council has agreed to take in one Syrian unaccompanied child asylum seeker a week.

The Parish Council raised the following issues:

- When the hedge on the A143 between Stradishall Crossroads and Howes Farm was cut, all the cuttings were blown into the ditch and onto a footpath bridge. Mary Evans agreed to report this
- There were traffic lights on Home Farm corner a couple of weeks ago. During this time heavy lorries were forced to go round the lights and have damaged the side of the road. Mary Evans says this will be the responsibility of the contractors and agreed to report it.

6. Borough Councillor's report

Councillor Farthing did not attend the meeting. The clerk was asked to contact St Edmundsbury Borough to complain about his lack of attendance at meetings.

7. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting

There were no outstanding councillor actions.

8. Finance

a) Payments made between meetings

- ARO Parliamentary Elections - LGA 1972, S111 - costs of an uncontested as budgeted for in March 2015 - **£21.34**

It was resolved that this payment would be approved. A Swift and A Lee signed the invoice.

b) Approval of payments and signing of the Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- LCPAS - annual subscription - LGA 1972, s11 - **£80.00**
- HMRC - PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 - **£128.00**
- J P Kirk - to reimburse the pension contribution for February 2016 as direct debits for February were not collected from the clerk or any of the parish councils she works for due to clerk's name change. Fidelity have requested a single top-up by cheque to cover the missed payments which the clerk will pay - LGA 1972 , s111 - **£15.00.**
- J P Kirk- expenses – LGA 1972, s111 - **£21.15**

Robert Deeks and Adrian Lee signed the Schedule of Payments and Ady Swift countersigned it.

c) Approval of the record of online payments made since the last meeting

It was resolved that the record of online payments would be approved. Martin Hurst then signed it.

d) Checklist of Internal Controls

Martin Hurst completed the checklist of internal controls.

e) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting

It was resolved that the statement of receipts and payments would be approved.

f) Review of all regular payments including the clerk's salary and approval of payments relating to these services for 2016-17

It was resolved the following regular payments would continue to be paid in 2016 - 17:

Regular Payments	2015/16	2016/17	Notes
Community Action Suffolk - insurance	£446	£446	3 year long term undertaking until May 2018
Subscriptions:			
LCPAS	£80	£80	
Community Action Suffolk	£25	£25	
Services			
Grass cutting	£900	£900	
St Margaret's Church (churchyard maintenance)	£600	£600	
Greene King - playing field rent (1 year)	£150	£150	
Internal audit	£65	£65	
Risby Parish Council - clerk's phone	£19	£19	
Staff costs			
Clerk's salary electronic payment paid monthly	£171	£171	
HMRC PAYE	£513	£513	
Fidelity Funds Network - contribution to clerk's workplace pension paid by direct debit	£180	£180	

g) Review of the income and expenditure for 2015/16 against the budget and the level of reserves for general and earmarked expenditure

Councillors reviewed the income and expenditure for 2015/16 against the budget. The Council was within budget with a surplus of approximately £544. At year end, the estimated bank balance will be £3,145 and the balance of the reserve account will be £5,161 less allocated funds of £ 1,189. Predicted reserve: £7,117. BDO LLP recommends that reserves should be at least 50% of the Council's annual precept request of £6,515 so Council has a good reserve.

h) Review the Register of Fixed Assets and insurance values

Councillors reviewed the assets register. It was resolved that no amendments were necessary and that the insurance values were adequate.

i) Review of the Council's Risk Assessment

It was resolved that no amendments were necessary. The Chairman then signed it.

j) Liability insurance

The Council has the following levels of liability cover:

Public liability cover: £6,000,000

Personal accident: £25,000

Fidelity guarantee: £25,000

Employer's liability (clerk only) £10,000,000

k) Review of the Council's Financial Regulations to ensure that they are being complied with

It was resolved that the new Financial Regulations were working well so far and that regular checks are carried out to ensure that electronic payments are monitored. The Chairman then signed them

l) Appointment of a councillor to check the accounts and complete the checklist of internal controls including salary details and PAYE tax codings

It was resolved Ady Swift would check the Council's accounts this year.

m) Appointment of a councillor to inspect the Council's property for damage or defects by 30th April 2016 and complete the inspection checklist.

It was resolved that Adrian Lee would inspect the Council's property.

n) Appointment of an internal auditor to complete section 3 of the annual return

It was resolved that Elaine Taylor would be appointed as internal auditor again this year and that a fee of £65 would be paid.

o) Review of the effectiveness of the internal audit

The Council reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit. It was resolved that the internal audit was effective and that audit regulations would be met.

p) Review the Council's Standing Orders

The Council's Standing Orders were reviewed. One change has been made: the Council's new Financial Regulations were adopted on 13th May 2014.

q) Precept request

No precept information has been received yet.

r) Pensions update

Stradishall Parish Council has received a letter from the Pensions Regulator notifying them that it must complete a Declaration of Compliance notifying them of how many employees are eligible for automatic enrolment into a pension scheme. As the clerk's salary is below the threshold for auto-enrolment of £833, Stradishall Parish Council does not have to automatically enrol her, therefore the clerk has submitted a Declaration of Compliance confirming that Stradishall Parish Council does not have any eligible employees. The Chairman checked the form and confirmed that the details were correct.

q) Revised Direct Debit form for Fidelity

Due to the clerk's change of name, the direct debit for the clerk's pension was cancelled by Fidelity and a revised form sent. It was resolved that the revised direct debit would be approved. Robert Deeks and Adrian Lee signed the form

q) Mandate change form from HSBC following the clerk's change of name

It was resolved that the bank mandate would be changed to include the clerk's new surname of Kirk. Adrian Swift and Adrian Lee signed the form.

9. Planning

DC/16/03/TCA - St Margaret's Church, The Street, Stradishall - TCA notification - (i) Pollard back to previous points - 1 horse chestnut (ii) Horse chestnut - reduce longer branches back into canopy and reduce both sides by 3 m (iii) Horse chestnut - remove dead limb (exempt work) (iv) Horse chestnut - reduce limbs over road by 3m (v) Horse chestnut - lift crown to 5m over church path

It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application

10. Highways/rights of way matters/tree or transport issues:

It was resolved that the clerk would report the following Highways issues:

- Vegetation was cut back by Openreach next to number 11 St Margaret's Place and dumped on the verge opposite the notice board.

11. Playing field matters

a) Play inspection report

The timber rot needs to be monitored.

b) E-mail from Greene King in response to the Council's request for a longer lease on the playing field in St Margaret's Place

Greene King rejected the Council's initial offer but is happy for Stradishall Parish Council to obtain a valuation. It was resolved that the clerk would get quotes and that she would be authorised to obtain a valuation up to the cost of £1,000. The Council has also received a letter from resident suggesting that the playing field be registered as a Community Asset. It was resolved that no decision would be made about this until after the valuation.

12. Date of a future litter pick

It was resolved that the clerk would order ten sets of litter picking equipment for the Council to give to volunteers to clear litter on an ad hoc basis rather than organising a formal event.

13. To discuss the progress of the draft village questionnaire

A draft questionnaire has been produced and will be e-mailed to councillors for them to comment on and add suggestions with a view to the final questionnaire being ready for the next meeting.

14. To discuss the Queen's 90th birthday on Sunday 12th June

It was resolved that an informal event would be organised on the playing field.

15. Correspondence

a) Letter from a resident about the phone box in The Street and suggesting ways to use it.

The clerk has contacted BT for more information about current usage of the payphone and the procedure for adopting it as it is listed. BT has confirmed that the payphone is cashless and that usage is low. It is

possible to adopt it, but there may be restrictions. It was resolved that the clerk would look into the restrictions to adopting a listed phone box before any decision made.

b) E-mail from SEBC giving date of the next Parish Conference on Monday 11th April

No councillors are able to attend.

c) Letter from St Edmundsbury Newstalk requesting a donation

It was resolved that no donation would be made.

d) Information from Suffolk County Council about a survey regarding Recycling Centre opening hours and the suggestion to close on a Wednesday and open for longer on Sundays, Bank Holidays and one day a week during summer hours

It was resolved that no response would be submitted as councillors are happy with the existing hours.

e) Letter from EACH requesting a donation

It was resolved that no donation would be made.

16. Any other business for noting or including on the next agenda

It was resolved that the following items would be added to the next agenda:

- The possibility of a councillor stepping down

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9p.m.

Signed..... Dated.....