

Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Joint Parish CouncilMinutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held at Shadingfield Village Hall on 21 February 2024 at 7.00 pmPresent:

Councillors C Ellis (Chair), Blunn, Chipperfield, Drane, London and Thornton.

Absent: Cllr Mather and Cllr Sheldrake.

In attendance:

Mr S C Blackburn (Clerk), no members of the public.

24.021 Apologies for Absence: Cllr R Ellis (on business), County Councillor Cloke and District Cllrs Speca and Hammond.

RESOLVED: that the apologies be accepted.

24.022 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

Cllrs C Ellis and London declared an interest item 15(h), provision of fencing at the bus stop as they are personal friends of the occupiers of the affected property.

24.023 To sign as an accurate record the minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 17 February 2024 be signed as a correct record.

24.024 Public Participation: None.

24.025 Reports

Reports had been circulated as and when received and were held on file.

(a) Chair

The Chair had circulated her report which is held on file.

(b) County Councillor

(c) District Councillors

Reports had been circulated as and when received and are held on file.

(d) Police: No report received.

RESOLVED: that the reports be noted.

24.026 Correspondence:

Cllr Thornton reported that he had availed himself of a public offer from Green Suffolk for half-price loft insulation. This offer will be publicised on the Council's website.

The Clerk is to attend a zoom meeting on devolution and what it may mean for Suffolk on 29 February

SALC are offering a portrait of HM the King to be displayed in Council premises and this has been passed to the village hall committee for consideration.

24.027 Planning Applications

(a) New Applications: None.

(b) Updates on previously considered applications

Proposed anaerobic digester: Cllr C Ellis and representatives of other local parish councils are to meet prior to speaking at the County Council meeting at which this application will be debated.

Following a complaint from a resident, East Suffolk Council had opened an enforcement case regarding the possible

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____

unauthorised change of use of the former telephone exchange.

24.028 Finance

(a) To note the financial situation and bank reconciliation as at 31 January 2024

RESOLVED: That the situation as shown in Appendix 2 be noted.

(b) To approve payment of outstanding invoices

RESOLVED: That the payments listed in Appendix 1 be authorised.

(c) Internet Banking

It appears that 'Full Signatories' have more powers than was known to the Clerk either as a 'Delegate' or as now with 'View Only' access. The authorisation process will be tested by authorised signatories after the formal business, after which a procedure will be finalised.

(d) Transfer of Earmarked Funds

The current list of earmarked funds is as follows:

Earmarked Funds	Opening 1.4.2023	Now	Proposed change	Proposed end of year
Playing Field	5,000.00	5,000.00	+2,437.64	7,437.64
Neighbourhood Development Plan	937.14	837.64	-837.64	0
Neighbourhood Watch	250.00	250.00	-250.00	0
Shadingfield Luncheon Club	433.38	433.38		433.38
Good Neighbour	600.00	600.00	-600.00	0
Friendly Bench	750.00	750.00	-750.00	0
Ellough Village Sign	1,000.00	1,000.00		1,000.00
Laptop	0.00	500.00		500.00
Picnic	495.50	495.50		495.50
Total	9,466.02	9,866.52	-	9,866.52

The Luncheon Club monies and the Ellough Sign are 'restricted funds' so are commitments made to outside bodies.

The Laptop fund (to be increased to £1,000 from this year's budget, unless bought) and Picnic Fund are for known eventualities.

The remaining funds are for projects which are not on the horizon. These, together with the Playing Field monies are 'designated' but available for re-designation at any time.

Proposed by Cllr Blunn, seconded by Cllr London and RESOLVED: that the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Neighbourhood Watch, the Good Neighbour and Friendly Bench earmarked funds be transferred to the Playground Fund.

The Laptop Fund will be augmented by a further £500 from this year's precept and it was agreed, after discussion, that a new laptop and suitable MS Office software should be sourced and a recommendation put to the next Council meeting.

24.029 Review of Policies and Procedures

(a) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Clerk has carried out a review of the Council's Standing Orders both in general and with specific reference to the adoption of internet banking. No changes are recommended.

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____

The Clerk has carried out a review of the Council's Financial Regulations both in general and with specific reference to the adoption of internet banking. A minor change is recommended to item 6.

It has been announced that NALC and the LGA have agreed a new version of the model financial regulations and this is expected to be released later in 2024.

(b) Internet Banking Procedures

A draft set of the steps by which internet banking is managed had been circulated. This will be clarified further once the bank's methodology is fully understood.

(c) Social Media

A draft policy has been circulated based on practice at another Parish Council and at a County Council. This is held on file.

Proposed by Cllr C Ellis, seconded by Cllr London and RESOLVED:

(a) that the Standing Orders remain unchanged

(b) that section 6 of the Financial Regulations be amended with regard to internet banking to emphasise the need for two authorising signatures and for the procedure to be documented and

(c) that the Social Media policy be adopted.

24.030 Playing Field

(a) Proposed new lease

The Clerk has arranged to meet Mr Tom Brown of Sotterley Estate on 13 March.

A number of Councillors expressed concern about water run off from Sotterley land which had cause flooding and which was alleged to be due to the lack of maintenance of ditches. A particular concern was at the home of Cllr London, adjacent to the playing field, where regular flooding had damaged the structure of her driveway. It was agreed that a video of the damage would be discussed with Mr Brown.

Another concern was water running onto the A145 near Low Barn which was felt to be a hazard to traffic.

RESOLVED:

(a) to write to Sotterley Estate on behalf of residents saying that water run off was causing concerns and asking what plans were in place to rectify the problems and

(b) to write to Suffolk CC Highways Dept about the A145 and ask them to bring pressure to bear on the estate to do more to prevent the road flooding

(b) Formation of a committee to manage the playground

It was agreed to defer this until the new lease had been agreed.

24.031 Cemetery and Chapel

(a) Tree inspections: A meeting of the Liaison Group and Dr Bynum will be held on 19 April.

(b) Proposed Toilet Facilities: SCPT have discussed their proposals with East Suffolk Council who require planning consent to be applied for and granted. They have suggested that the Trust obtain pre-application advice. Although there is now a charge for this service, it is not levied on Parish Councils and the Clerk has agreed to apply as the Parish Council is the owner of the land. Any subsequent application will be at the expense of the Trust.

24.032 Nominations for Chair of the Parish Council for 2024/2025

Discussion took place on this matter following the decision of Cllr C Ellis to stand down at the Annual Parish Council meeting. It was also noted that there is one vacancy on the Council and that this would be advertised on the Facebook page.

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____

24.033 Road Safety – Defective speed indicator devices

The case against S G Manufacturing Ltd had been referred to Norwich County Court who had advised us that the company's defence had been struck out and that, if no better defence was submitted by 14 February, judgment could be applied for. The clerk had circulated the potential costs of any future action to recover the money spent by way of Bailiffs or High Court Enforcement Officers. At the modest level of costs it was agreed that the further effort should be made to recover what is in effect public money.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to apply to the Court for judgment in our favour and
- (b) to use the High Court Enforcement Officer route for recovery at a cost of £110 plus a further £66 court fee after which to review any progress that had been made before taking further steps.

24.034 Village Matters(a) Sheaf Magazine

Cllr Chipperfield agreed to write the next article, to include mention of the Seppings meat delivery service and the Green Suffolk household energy offer.

(b) Notice Board Repairs

The contact at Beccles Men's Shed was not currently available and his replacement as Chairman had agreed to look into what had been done.

(c) Blocked Bridleway at Ellough

The Clerk is still in contact with Suffolk CC officer dealing with this case. It was reported that the Hornbeam site was for sale.

(d) Ellough Village Sign- deferred for the time being.(e) Litter Pick – Sunday 24 March meeting at the Village Hall at 10.00 am.(f) Date and Arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed that this would take place on Wednesday 15 May at 6.45, preceding the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

(g) Playing field to be registered as an Asset of Community Value

Deferred for a report from Cllr R Ellis.

(h) Repairs to Fence at the Bus Stop

Cllrs C Ellis and R London withdrew from this discussion due to their close friendship with the owner of the affected property

Cllr Chipperfield took the Chair.

Cllr C Ellis had previously circulated a note concerning the fence damaged by recent storms. This was paid for by the Parish Council at the time the bus shelter was put up as the former wooden bus shelter formed part of the fence and the new shelter was of glass, leading to a loss of privacy. The note acknowledged the work of the residents in maintaining and decorating the shelter and proposed that the Council pay for the replacement fencing. She had obtained a written quotation of £475.00 for the work which was on a materials only basis. Although no other written quotes had been obtained, the Clerk had discussed this figure with another contractor who had confirmed that the price was reasonable for the materials proposed.

The Clerk advised the meeting that, while the Council had the General Power of Competence as so could lawfully incur the expenditure, councillors should bear in mind the way in which this proposal might be seen by other members of the community.

It was confirmed that, as the Parish Council had previously paid for the fencing, it was, in effect, Council property albeit on private land. Proposed by Cllr Blunn, Seconded by Cllr Thornton and RESOLVED: that the works would be

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____

paid for by the Parish Council but that the fence would then become the responsibility of the adjacent property in future.

Cllrs C Ellis and R London returned to the meeting.

Cllr C Ellis returned to the Chair.

It was noted that County Broadband, potential suppliers of improved broadband in the area had ceased taking on new customers but would honour all existing commitments

24.035 Items for discussion at the next meeting:

The need for road sweeping and drain clearance – the clerk to write to Suffolk CC and ask for this work to be done.

24.036 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Appendix 1 – Payments Authorised

Confirmation of invoices paid since the last meeting

	To	For	Net	VAT	Gross
ib	East Suffolk Council	Bill for uncontested Parish Council elections – May 2023	89.76	-	89.76
ib	Suffolk Assn of Local Councils	Fee for Internal Audit for year to 31.3.2023	216.00	43.20	259.20

Approval of outstanding invoices

	To	For	Net	VAT	Gross
ib	S C Blackburn	February salary and expenses to date	337.85	-	337.85
dd	Information Commissioner Office	Annual registration fee	35.00	-	35.00

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____

Appendix 2 Budget and Bank Reconciliation at 31 January 2024

Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Joint Parish Council
Receipts and Payments Account 2023/2024 - Year To Date

As At 31 January 2024					
	Budget	General Fund	All Earmarked	Total	
RECEIPTS					Recent Transactions
Precept	7,500	7,500.00	500.00	8,000.00	Previous Bank
Cemetery Fees		100.00	0.00	100.00	
Picnic		0.00	0.00	0.00	Credits
Miscellaneous Income		0.00	0.00	0.00	
Earmarked Funds - Receipts			0.00	0.00	
VAT Recovered	1,427	1,427.22	0.00	1,427.22	Debits
TOTAL RECEIPTS	8,927	9,027.22	500.00	9,527.22	East Suffolk Council - Elections
					HMRC P30
PAYMENTS					East Suffolk Svcs - Bin emptying
Administration					S C Blackburn
Staff Costs	5,050	4,394.00	0.00	4,394.00	R J Porter - Cemetery
Payroll Costs	105	45.00	0.00	45.00	Suffolk ALC - Audit
Mileage	220	110.70	0.00	110.70	
Printing Stationery & Postage	120	129.85	99.50	229.35	
Insurance	600	579.03	0.00	579.03	
Hall Hire	210	6.00	0.00	6.00	
Web Hosting	55	50.00	0.00	50.00	
Membership & Subscriptions	450	232.65	0.00	232.65	
Audit	180	216.00	0.00	216.00	
Laptop			0.00	0.00	Net Bank Account
Data Protection	35	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Training	100	60.00	0.00	60.00	
Miscellaneous Expenses	0	89.76	0.00	89.76	Bank Reconciliation
VAT Paid	0	391.95	0.00	391.95	Lloyds Current Account Statement Balance
	7,125	6,304.94	99.50	6,404.44	
Maintenance					Less: unrepresented items
Playing Field Maintenance	1,038	923.90	0.00	923.90	
Playing Field Improvement	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Notice Board Repairs	400	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Playground Inspection	80	65.00	0.00	65.00	
Bin Emptying	50	39.96	0.00	39.96	
Pest Control	200	0.00	0.00	0.00	Add: credits in course
Cemetery Management	500	512.00	0.00	512.00	
General Maintenance	400	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Vehicle Sign		260.14	0.00	260.14	Net balance
	2,668	1,801.00	0.00	1,801.00	
Community Events					Difference
Raising the Parish Profile		0.00	0.00	0.00	
Grants and Donations	1,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Earmarked Funds - Payments			0.00	0.00	
	1,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL PAYMENTS	10,793	8,105.94	99.50	8,205.44	Chairman
Surplus (-Deficit) to date	-1,866	921.28	400.50	1,321.78	Clerk
Brought Forward 1.4.2023	9,937	5,135.61	9,466.02	14,601.63	Date
Transfers between funds					
Surplus/Deficit	-1,866	921.28	400.50	1,321.78	
Carried Forward	8,071	6,056.89	9,866.52	15,923.41	

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Chair _____ Chair
 _____ Date
 Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____