

Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Joint Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
held at Shadingfield Village Hall on 17 May 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillors C Ellis (Chair), Blunn, Chipperfield, Drane, R Ellis, Sheldrake.

In attendance:

Mr S C Blackburn (Clerk); County Councillor J Cloke, representatives of County Broadband Ltd and four members of the public.

23.060 Election of a Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2023/2024

Proposed by Cllr Chipperfield, Seconded by Cllr Blunn and RESOLVED that Cllr C Ellis be appointed Chairman for the coming year.

Cllr C Ellis signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman.

23.061 Apologies for Absence: Cllr London (ill health) and Cllr Mather (family commitments).

RESOLVED: that the apologies be accepted.

23.062 Election of a Vice Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2022/2023

Proposed by Cllr C Ellis, Seconded by Cllr Blunn and RESOLVED that Cllr Chipperfield be appointed Vice Chairman for the coming year.

23.063 To receive declarations of acceptance of office

Councillors C Ellis (Chair), Blunn, Chipperfield, Drane, R Ellis and Sheldrake signed declarations of acceptance of office as councillors.

23.064 To receive consents to receive summons etc by electronic means

Councillors C Ellis (Chair), Blunn, Chipperfield, Drane, R Ellis, Sheldrake signed declarations.

23.065 Co-option of a Councillor to fill a vacancy for the Sotterley Parish

Mr Andy Thornton spoke in support of his wish to be co-opted. Proposed by Cllr C Ellis, seconded by Cllr Blunn and unanimously RESOLVED to co-opt Mr Thornton to the Council.

Cllr Thornton signed the declaration of acceptance of office as a councillor and the consent to receive summonses by electronic means.

23.066 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations: None.

23.067 Appointments for the year 2023/2024:

- HR Committee: RESOLVED to defer any appointment until a need arises.
- Tree Warden: Dr Bynum had advised us that the title of tree warden was not acceptable unless a qualification was held. She had agreed to be appointed as 'tree adviser' on the basis that any appropriate issues with trees would be referred to a fully qualified arboriculturalist. RESOLVED to invite Dr H Bynum to continue as tree adviser.
- SCPT 2+2 Group: RESOLVED to re-appoint Cllr Drane and Mr Blackburn.
- East Suffolk Council Community Partnership: RESOLVED to re-appoint Cllr C Ellis.
-

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____

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

Proposed by Cllr Chipperfield, seconded by Cllr Drane and RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 be signed as a correct record.

23.069 Public Participation:

Representatives of County Broadband spoke to outline their offer to residents of Shadingfield, Willingham and Sotterley to install fibre broadband. These communities, not including Ellough, have been identified as areas where Openreach have no upcoming plans to improve their network. Between now and the end of August, households will be visited and 40% need to express an interest after which public meetings and webinars will be held. 25% of residents will then need to commit to allow the work to proceed. In response to questions, the following information was provided:

- The scheme is backed by Aviva who will contribute upto £1,500 per residence
- Speeds of 100 mbps are guaranteed (currently 30-39 mbps) at approx £34 per month with 900 mbps at £70 per month.
- The company has been established for 20+ years , is backed by Aviva and has completed work in 175 villages in East Anglia
- The design and build stage will be about 12 months; the company has access to all Openreach poles and ducts and will replace any rotten poles.
- There is a service commitment to make any repairs etc within 48 hours, with a service centre based in Colchester.

23.070 Chair's Report

Welcome back all of you. Following the elections on 4th May, we have new council representatives at East Suffolk – welcome to Anthony Specca and Toby Hammond. Sadly, Judy Cloke was not re-elected, although she remains our representative at Suffolk County Council. Judy has worked very hard for our community and others that she represented at local council level, notably researching issues and speaking in support of our community at Planning Committee and when residents of Ditchingham were flooded out on Christmas day in 2021, Judy was out there on the day and into the evening, working to resolve issues immediately affecting her constituents. I hope we can build an equally positive and constructive relationship with Cllrs. Specca and Hammond in the future. I am very happy to report that 4th May also marked the date of the referendum for our Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and this was approved by a very healthy majority of those who voted. Thanks go to Cllr Tracey Blunn who went to Lowestoft with her husband to witness the count. It now has legal standing when we and/or ESC consider planning applications in our Parishes and will be formally adopted by ESC in June. Huge thanks go to members of the NDP team who have worked over several years to bring this to its successful conclusion. The Fox inn was made a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) in the NDP, and along with the Village Hall and the Playing Field (pending) has separately been awarded the status of Asset of Community Value. We said goodbye this year to Rev. Phillip Miller and his wife Natalie as they moved on to a new Parish and we welcome Rev. Mark Bee, who will be officially licensed and installed on 8th June at St. Andrew's, Westhall. Sadly, we seem to have come to an impasse with Sotterley Estate regarding our licence for the Playing Field and, consequently, fund raising; if anyone has any ideas on how we might move this forward or needs more information on the current situation, please speak to Steve, our Clerk, or any of our Councillors. The Jubilee Oak was planted last Autumn in Ellough Churchyard and to the best of my knowledge, was thriving in its gently protected environment. We also planted three trees on the periphery of the Playing Field, and I still have the commemorative plaque for these in the corner of my kitchen, so let us see if we can make arrangements to put that in place in the next month or so; we had planned to do this as part of our 'Picnic on the Playing Field' Jubilee or Coronation celebrations but as these both ended up being held in the Village hall (waterlogged grounds were our nemesis), there has been no ceremony for this. Let's make it a June agenda item, please. Cllr. Gartley resigned and Cllr Potter didn't seek re-election this year, both of them having brought their own unique qualities to the Council; they are very much missed and I wish them well. We have held successful litter picks in spring and autumn, and now have our own equipment – grabbers, bag holders and very important when clearing verges on the A145, high viz vests. Special thanks to Cllr. Chipperfield and Sotterley Estate for managing and supporting this initiative, and also thanks to Cllr. Chipperfield for her monthly contributions to the Sheaf parish magazine on our behalf. With financial support from ESC and SCC, we have new signage alerting drivers on the A145 to the proximity of a children's' playground. Unfortunately, we are still having issues with the SID signs that were ordered in the latter part of 2022 and this remains an unresolved issue. A new coffee machine was delivered to the Village Hall in November 2022, paid for out of residual lunch club funds that the Parish now hold to be used for events in and benefiting the residents of Shadingfield. Last, but not least, my thanks again to our Clerk, Steve Blackburn, who has been an invaluable support and asset again over the past 12 months, being instrumental in allowing us to adopt the General Power of Competence. The Chair thanked Pat and Paul Evans for cleaning and decorating the bus shelter in time for the picnic.

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____

RESOLVED: that the report be approved.

23.071 Reports

(a) County Councillor and (b) District Councillor:

Judy Cloke, until recently District Councillor for the Bungay and Wainford Ward thanked her colleague David Ritchie who had retired, for his work, notably on coastal matters. She referred to her work in Scrutiny, her membership of the audit and governance committee, housing committee and refugee support including for Ukrainians. She paid tribute to Sam Kenward, Community Support Office who had worked hard for communities in her ward.

Her work on Suffolk County Council included membership of the Development and Regulatory Committee, the Fire-fighters Pension Board and the County Service Companies and Highways. It had been a privilege and pleasure to serve East Suffolk Council and to continue to serve on Suffolk County Council.

Cllr C Ellis thanks her for her work and support of this community.

(c) Police: No report. Cllr Cloke will ask the Police and Crime Commissioner what reports and support ought to be available.

RESOLVED: that the reports be noted.

23.072 Correspondence: The Clerk circulated correspondence as and when received. There were no comments.

23.073 Planning Applications

(a) New Applications

DC/23/0891/FUL: An amendment to the previous application appeared only to cover landscaping matters.

RESOLVED: To support the proposals.

(b) Updates on previous applications: None. Cllr C Ellis will ask the District Council for an update on long-outstanding pending applications including the proposed intensive poultry units, the latter in the context of the newly approved Neighbourhood Development Plan.

(c) East Suffolk Planning Alliance This group had been formed by parish councils and other groups ostensibly to liaise with and challenge East Suffolk's Planning Department. A concern was expressed about its agenda but after discussion it was agreed that Cllr C Ellis would be the point of contact and would report back on the group's meetings and discussions.

23.074 Finance

(a) To approve payment of outstanding invoices: Proposed by Cllr Thornton, seconded by Cllr C Ellis and RESOLVED: That the payments listed in Appendix 1 be authorised.

(b) To note the financial situation and bank reconciliation as at 30 April 2023: Proposed by Cllr R Ellis, seconded by Cllr Drane and RESOLVED: that the situation be noted.

(c) To review the signatories for the Council's bank account: Following the retirement of Cllr Potter, it was RESOLVED to remove his name from the bank mandate. It was discovered that Cllr Barne's name had not been removed after two requests and this would also be addressed again.

Remaining signatories are Cllrs C Ellis, Chipperfield, London and Sheldrake. RESOLVED: to appoint Cllrs Blunn and Drane as signatories to the Council's Bank account and to complete the forms required by the Bank.

(c) Noted that VAT for 2022/23 in the sum of £,1427.22 has been claimed and received.

(d) Noted that the Precept of £8,000 for 2023/24 has been received in full.

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____

23.075 Exemption from External Audit

The Parish Council is exempt from external audit as neither its gross income nor gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 and there were no issues arising in a previous financial year. RESOLVED: that the Council meets the criteria for exemption from External Audit and that the appropriate certificate be signed and sent to the External Auditors.

23.076 General Power of Competence

RESOLVED: that the Council meets the criteria set out in the Localism Act 2011 that two thirds of Councillors have stood for election and that the clerk holds the professional qualification, Certificate in local Council Administration (CILCA).

23.077 Cemetery and Chapel

A proposal to update the Letter of Agreement between the Council and the Sotterley Chapel Preservation Trust will be put to the June meeting.

23.078 Village Matters

(a) Arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting: Discussion took place on the level of community engagement, most recently to the picnic which had been leafleted, and which was felt to be low and that to have a speaker for an expected low turnout would be embarrassing. It was noted that the situation appeared to have worsened since Covid. It was agreed that the minimum formalities (election of Chair, confirmation of previous minutes and public forum) would take place before the next Parish Council meeting on 21 June.

(b) Future articles for Sheaf Magazine: Cllr Chipperfield's offer was again accepted and she was thanked for her continuing efforts.

(c) The mobile ANPR/speedwatch camera would be visiting Shadingfield sometime after July.

(d) Speed Indicator Devices. The Clerk updated the meeting on the situation regarding the return of either the faulty units, the entire package or the delivery of two working units and that he was seeking legal advice from the SLCC's legal adviser as to what our rights were. A spare unit has become available from Beccles Town Council and the use of this would be explored.

23.079 Items for discussion at the next meeting

Proposals from SCPT re working arrangements.

23.080 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Appendix 1 – Payments Authorised

	To	For	Net	VAT	Gross
226	Graphic Solutions	Printing of picnic flyer	60.00	-	60.00
227	S C Blackburn	May salary and expenses	311.71	-	311.71

_____ Chairman

_____ Date

Chair _____ Clerk _____ Date _____