

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 18th February 2025 ~ 7.00pm

The Community Hall, The Avenue, Ufford

Present

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)

Cllr. Keith Bennett

Cllr. Nick Crocker

Cllr. Jane Hawthorne

Cllr. Angela Linforth

Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Vincent Smith

Cllr. Tig Thomas

County Councillor Alexander Nicoll (*part*)

No members of the public were present

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies for absence:

- a) To Receive Apologies: Apologies from UPC Councillors had been received from Cllr. Tim Buxbaum (Previous engagement), Cllr. Pat Edworthy (Away), and Cllr. Kathryn Jones (Previous engagement). Cllr. Noble had also sent her apologies.
- b) To Accept Apologies: The apologies of Cllr. Buxbaum, Edworthy and Jones were proposed as accepted by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Linforth and all were in agreement.

2. To receive any:

- a) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items
 - Cllr. Findley – Item 6. d) iii. – Refund of expenses
- b) Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items
 - Cllr. V Smith - Item 9. a) & b) – Treasurer of the Community Hall Charity
 - Cllr. Hawthorne – Item 10 – Member of Friends of Parklands Wood
- 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

3. Public Session:

- a) Reports or comment from any member of the public (*notes only*):
 - None

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

- East Suffolk Council - Cllr. Noble was not in attendance:
- Suffolk County Council – Cllr. Nicoll reported on the following items:
 - Gas Main Replacement – To date the gas main replacement works had gone well. However, there has been confusion over the closure of Byng Hall Road and the A12, which has caused issues for local residents and business owners. A meeting of Highways engineers and Cadent had recently taken place, and it was confirmed that Byng Hall Road would be closed, but with limited resident ‘access’. [It was felt this term was misleading and the Clerk was to write seeking clarification. There had also been misunderstanding over which A12 slip road was to be closed and the Clerk was asked to clarify this through PUNCHLine]
 - Devolution – There is a great deal of information being published now but we will have to wait to see what it means for Suffolk. The creation of a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk seems certain, with Suffolk then having 1, 2 or 3 ‘Councils’ covering all aspects covered presently by the County and District Councils (2 would be the most likely but there is talk of a ‘Greater Ipswich’, which could extend outside the present Ipswich boundary. There is likely to be 90 Councillors covering all of Suffolk.
 - Notice Board – [The Clerk advised Cllr. Nicoll that the notice board for Parklands, that he had funded two thirds of, had arrived and should be put up in the next few days.]

Action: Clerk

4. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 21st January 2025:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting (including the Confidential Minutes) dated 21st January 2025 had been circulated and there were no further amendments. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Linforth, seconded by Cllr. Bennett 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

5. Devolution – To receive an update on the latest news regarding Unitary Councils and to discuss Ufford Parish Council’s position and any action it should take:

A full discussion had been held on this subject with Cllr. Nicoll. It was agreed that all Councillors would review the government constitution and a decision would be made at the March meeting if Members were to respond independently or Ufford PC as a whole.

Action: ALL

6. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive Accounts as of 31st January 2025 – The Accounts had been circulated and there were no questions. Cllr. Edworthy had verified the figures shown in the Lloyds Bank account via an email to all.

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Cllr. Bennett reported that he had carried out his role as Councillor Internal Controller, and had checked all entries back to April 2024. He had found no errors but had discovered some invoices that had not been initialled by the authoriser of the payment; even though it was recorded in the minutes that they had reviewed the respective invoices. It was agreed that all authorisers would take greater care to initial the invoices in future. Cllr. Bennett also agreed to work with the Clerk to set up an agreed process/check list for the role.

- b) To authorise cost of train travel for Clerk to attend Power Shift 2025 conference on Devolution (approx.. cost £60.00) – The Clerk explained the purpose of this conference and that Melton PC had funded her attendance ticket (£60.00). Cllr. Findley proposed the cost of the Clerk’s train ticket (approx.... £60.00) be funded by UPC. This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all were in agreement.
- c) To discuss renewal of grass cutting contract with ESS – The Councillors discussed the quote for grass cutting from East Suffolk Services. It was felt that other contractors in the area would be more expensive, as given the proximity of their depot to the village, ESC were known to offer an extremely competitive rate reflecting their minimal transportation costs. Therefore, Cllr. N Smith proposed the quote be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Linforth and all were in agreement.
- d) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:
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| i. J Hallett (Salary and Expenses) | £891.44 |
| ii. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk’s Pension) | £232.70 |
| iii. D Findley (Apple Cable for Projector) | £26.65 |
| iv. Ufford Community Hall (Hall Hire) | £40.00 |
| v. Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd (Chain Catcher) | £2.90 |

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Hawthorne, seconded by Cllr. Thomas with Councillors voting all in agreement that the payments be paid, with the exception of Cllr. Findley who abstained. Cllrs. Bennett and Findley agreed to authorise the online payments the following day and inspected them.

The Clerk reported that there was currently £16,000+ in the current account with Lloyds, earning no interest. It was agreed (Prop: Cllr. Bennett and Sec: Cllr. V Smith) that up to £10,000 should be moved to CCLA, with the remaining funds being placed in to the Instant Access Deposit Account, where it would be earning a small amount of interest, but could be moved back to the Current Acc when needed.

- d) To note Payments made since last meeting:
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| i. Imperative Training Ltd (Defib Case) | £594.00 |
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- e) To note Payments received since last meeting:
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| i. Anonymous Donation (Grant for Defibrillator Case) | £495.00 |
| ii. HMRC (VAT Refund) | £3,035.09 |
| iii. Ufford Community Hall (Grant for Refurbishment) | £425.64 |

Action: Clerk

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

a) *None*

8. 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 acknowledge decisions taken by ESC Licensing Committee on Jet Skis – Cllr. Findley reported that this application had not been permitted by ESC.
- c) To acknowledge receipt of pre-application consultation details re a proposed Care Village along Yarmouth Road, Melton – There was no further update on this proposal but the Clerk agreed to alert members as soon as she had any news.
- d) To receive update on BSR Energy Consultation re. Pettistree Solar Farm – Cllrs. Findley and N Smith reported that a good turnout had been reported at the consultation; with many Ufford residents attending. The knowledge of the BSR staff in attendance had not been particularly great and the revised plans were awaited.
- e) To receive update on 'DC/24/4278/DRC discharge of conditions 10 and 11 of DC/23/3492/FUL - Hungarian Lodge, High Street, Ufford' re. heritage wall – The Clerk reported that the developer of this site had changed and that she had sent the new company pictures of the wall before and after it was knocked down, and a picture of the wall at The Red House. ESC Planning Officers had confirmed that the temporary fence was not permitted and that the wall would have to be replaced.

Action: Clerk

9. Community Hall Upgrade:

- a) To receive update on the Electric Vehicle Charging Point and to approve signing documentation if appropriate – Cllr. V Smith gave an update on the project and the Clerk was asked to circulate questions he had posed to SCC, with their answers. He was still working through the paperwork but it was looking increasingly likely that the Community Hall Committee would not sign up to the project.
- b) Additional Emergency Item - To receive report on collapsed drain in the Recreation Ground Car Park – Cllr. Findley reported that drain specialists had been called to blocked drains at the Community Hall again and after investigations they had found a broken pipe in the ground underneath the car park (close to the notice board). As this was the responsibility of the Parish Council, they would have to fund the repair. A quote had been obtained (circa £650.00). As this repair was needed urgently, Cllr. Findley proposed the quote be accepted and work carried out as quickly as possible. This was seconded by Cllr. Linforth and all were in agreement.

Action: Cllr. V Smith and Clerk

10. Recreation Ground/Woodlands:

- a) To receive update on correspondence with Anglian Water re. the Sewer Pipes that run beneath the Recreation Ground – Cllr. Findley reported that he had spoken to AW and they had confirmed all issues within the Recreation Ground had now been resolved.
- b) To receive an update on the Management of the Woods and draft Woodlands Management Plan – The Clerk and Cllr. Hawthorne reported that the draft plan had been completed but that other documents were now required. These would be drafted by members of the Friends of Parklands Wood and the Clerk would submit them.
- c) To discuss working with HM Prison Service to work in the Woods – Cllr. Hawthorne reported that she was still waiting to hear from HMP Hollesley Bay and she would pass all the contact details on to Mrs Rilla Forge, who would be taking over as Chair of Friends of Parklands Wood. Cllr. Hawthorne also agreed to contact Matthew Allen to arrange for the work he agreed to do, to be carried out as soon as possible.

Action: Cllr. Findley

11. Projects List - To receive an update on the refurbishment of the Stocks project:

Cllr. Findley reported that Cllr. Buxbaum had looked at the Stocks and had suggested some work. However, in order to be in line with the requirements of the Heritage Officer (ESC) this work should be minimal and only to areas that required attention. It was suggested Cllr. Buxbaum should report at the March meeting. The Clerk was asked to write to the resident who had offered his services free of charge and explain the position of the Heritage Officer.

Action: Clerk

12. Documentation – To confirm review and/or adoption of the following documents:

- a) Suffolk Code of Conduct (2020) – All Councillors present confirmed they had reviewed the Suffolk Code of Conduct. The Clerk was asked to contact the members not present.

Action: Clerk

13. Council Administration - To re-consider moving to a 'gov.uk' domain for the website and Council e-mail address:

The Clerk explained that although moving to a 'gov.uk' domain and email addresses was not compulsory yet, it may be soon and was therefore strongly recommended by SALC. The cost of the move was discussed (circa. £400 a year) and it was felt that as this was unbudgeted this year or next it should be delayed for as long as possible. However, the members asked that the Clerk obtain a price for moving the website over to a gov.uk domain.

Action: Clerk

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

- JPTI – *Cllr. N Smith* – A proposed new road, linking Eyke to the A12 had been floated, but would be very expensive (Clerk to circulate), a presentation from staff at Rock Barracks had indicated two new regiments would be moving in (one being another Gurkha regiment)
- Community Partnerships – *Cllr. Findley* – Focus on the Sizewell Community Fund and its availability to other parishes, several projects had received funding from the CP, notably those in Framlingham and at Campsea Ashe.

15. To receive resignation from Cllr. Hawthorne:

Cllr. Hawthorne announced her resignation with immediate effect. She recalled all the projects she had worked on and the great support she had received from present and past Councillors and Clerks.

Cllr. Hawthorne was thanked by the Chair for what was thought to be over 30 years' service; in numerous projects, including being the Chair for many years. Cllr. Hawthorne's leadership role in the purchase of Parklands Wood and setting up the Friends of Parklands Wood was particularly noteworthy.

Cllr. Hawthorne left the meeting

It was acknowledged that the Emergency Plan would need to be amended, along with Cllr. Hawthorne being removed as a bank authoriser.

16. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (18th March 2025):

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

- Items carried forward
- Review of the Risk Registers and Asset Register
- Annual Parish Meeting
- Bank Authorisers

Action: Clerk

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public were excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed

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17. To discuss Policy UFF16 in the Draft Ufford Neighbourhood Plan and engagement with Land owner:

Notes taken during this matter are available to Members only.

At 9.00pm Cllr. V Smith proposed Standing Order 3. X) was suspended to allow the meeting to conclude. This was seconded by Cllr. Findley and all were in agreement.

The meeting was closed at 9.12pm

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

Date:

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

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