

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 15th April 2025 ~ 7.00pm

The Parish Hall, Church Lane, Ufford

Present

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)

Cllr. Keith Bennett

Cllr. Tim Buxbaum

Cllr. Nick Crocker (7.03pm)

Cllr. Pat Edworthy

Cllr. Rilla Forge

Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Vincent Smith

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. Kathryn Jones (Previous engagement), Cllr. Tig Thomas (Away), and Cllr. Angela Linforth (At Work). Apologies had also been received from District Councillor Sally Noble.
- b) To Accept Apologies: The apologies of Cllr. Jones, Thomas, and Linforth were proposed as accepted by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Buxbaum 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. V Smith – Item 8 a) – Treasurer of the Community Hall
 - Cllr. Edworthy – Item 8 a) – Secretary of the Community Hall
- 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):
 - N/A

Chair's initials.....

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

- East Suffolk Council - Cllr. Noble had issued a report
- Suffolk County Council – Cllr. Nicoll had stated he would attend the Annual Parish Meeting (the following day) and report there.

4. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 18th March 2025:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting (including the Confidential Minutes) dated 18th March 2025 had been circulated. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Edworthy 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

Cllr. Crocker arrived at the meeting

5. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive and agree End of Year Accounts to 31st March 2025 – The Accounts had been circulated to all, having been audited by Mr Trevor Brown (see b) below). Cllr. Bennett asked if the Investment Income from the CCLA funds should be labelled as 'Bank Interest'. After discussion it was agreed that the final copy of the Accounts be manually amended to read 'Bank Interest / Investment Income' and that next year's accounts will have the two items separated. The Internal Auditor had verified the figures shown in the Lloyds Bank account, see item b) below. Cllr. V Smith asked why the expenditure on the Street Lighting had been so high and it was explained that the expenditure included the final payment to SCC to upgrade the Street Lights. The Accounts were proposed as a true record of the Council's financial activity throughout the year by Cllr. V. Smith. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement. The Chair signed the official copies of both the Receipts and Payments Summary and the Bank Reconciliation. The Clerk agreed to post all End of Year Accounts documentation on the website and send all required information to PKF Littlejohn LLP.
- b) To receive and accept Internal Auditor's Report for 2024/25 and 'Annual Internal Audit Report' within Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 – The full Internal Audit Report and Annual Internal Audit Report within Part 3 of the AGAR had been circulated to all. The Clerk pointed out that there had been one recommendation from Mr Brown. It had stated "*In addition to the Risk Register entry of 'CCLA Funds not providing an expected level of return' an entry should be made to indicate that the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund is not covered by the FSCS protection*". The Clerk agreed to amend the Risk Register and re-issue for adoption at the May meeting. Cllr. N Smith proposed that these be acknowledged as received and accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all were in agreement.

Chair's initials.....

- c) To agree and complete Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25 - The Clerk read aloud each statement on Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25. Cllr. Findley proposed that the Council answer in the affirmative to each statement. This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all Councillors were in agreement. The Clerk ticked 'Yes' to each question and the Chair and RFO signed Section 1 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25
- d) To agree and complete Section 2 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25 - The proposed entries to Section 2 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25 had been circulated to all and were the figures suggested by the Internal Auditor in his full report. Cllr. N Smith proposed these be used and the form be signed. This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement. Section 2 of Part 3 of the AGAR 2024/25 was signed by the Chair and RFO.
- e) To agree the CIL Report as at 31st March 2025 - The draft CIL report had been circulated to all and seen by Mr Brown. The Clerk read the details of the report to the meeting and explained the time by which the Parish Council had to spend the funds, before they were returned to ESC. Cllr. Edworthy proposed the report be accepted as a true reflection of CIL transactions during the year. This was seconded by Cllr. Findley and all were in agreement
- f) To agree the Reserve Allocations as at 1st April 2025 - The suggested Reserve Allocations were explained by the Clerk. She clarified that ESC had confirmed the CIL funds could be used to receive legal advice regarding the land at Crown Nursery, if the Council needed and wanted to. Cllr. Crocker proposed the figures be accepted and published. This was seconded by Cllr. Forge and all were in agreement
- g) To agree the Internal Control Statement for year ending 31st March 2025 - The draft document had been sent to all. Cllr. Findley proposed the document be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement.
- h) To receive update on the CCLA Account – It was agreed to defer this matter until the May meeting, once the Precept had been received and a clearer picture of the Council's funds could be assessed.
- i) To discuss bank and CCLA signatories and authorise one new Councillor – The Clerk confirmed that the current Bank and CCLA signatories were Cllrs. Jones, Findley, Edworthy and Bennett. It had been agreed at the previous meeting to add Cllr. Linforth and remove Cllr. Hawthorne (who had resigned from the Council in March 2025). Cllr. V Smith indicated that he would also be willing to be a signatory. This was proposed by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement. The Clerk agreed to prepare the Bank Mandate for signature.
- j) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:
- | | |
|---|---------|
| i. J Hallett (Salary and Expenses) | £977.26 |
| ii. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's Pension) | £215.21 |
| iii. SALC (Annual Subscription and Payroll) | £453.00 |

Chair's initials.....

iv.	D M Bracey (Play Park Inspections)	£516.00
v.	Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd (Hatchet and Saw Blade)	£74.65
vi.	HMRC Cumbernauld (Clerk's PAYE and NI)	£140.58
vii.	Suffolk Cloud (Web site hosting and support)	£120.00
viii.	Trevor Brown (Internal Audit)	£250.00
ix.	Geosphere Ltd (Parish Online Mapping)	£96.00

The Council debated whether to continue with the subscription to Parish Online, as the Neighbourhood Plan was almost complete. However, it had been a very useful tool for a number of Councillors and continuation of the subscription was agreed.

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Findley, seconded by Cllr. N Smith with Councillors voting all in agreement that the payments be paid. Cllrs. Edworthy and Findley agreed to authorise the online payments and inspected the invoices.

The Clerk gave notice that the remaining NP Grant funds would need to be returned to Groundwork UK. She also informed Council that the subscription to the ICO had increased to £47.00 per annum (from £35.00).

d) To note Payments made since last meeting:

i.	Westover Landscape (Advice re. NP)	£44.00
ii.	Compass Planning (NP)	£1,080.00
iii.	Rachel Leggett (NP)	£135.00

e) To note Payments received since last meeting:

i.	CCLA (Investment Income)	£74.22
----	--------------------------	--------

Action: Clerk

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

a) DC/25/1319/FUL - Single storey rear extension and raised platform to revised design to application DC/24/3491/FUL – Foxgloves, The Avenue, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:

- The previous application was refused and this one is slightly different but there have been no neighbours comments
- Conclusion: **No Objection**, (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec: Cllr. Bennett, all in agreement)

b) DC/25/1073/FUL - Phased Development of 1x 2 bed Dwelling/Driveway (Phase 1) & 1x 3 bed Self-build Dwelling/Driveway (Phase 2) - Land Between Hill Farm Yarmouth Road And Thornborough Park, High Street, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:

- This proposed development is next to the new Hill Farm dwellings and is very close to the neighbours
- This development is outside the Settlement Boundary and would not meet any of the exceptions associated with development in the countryside

- The design does not conform to the Ufford NP Design Code , which has been agreed by ESC and will shortly be put to the Referendum. This application was felt to be a case of over development of this land (the 'Little Black Barn' is not little, its design is unattractive and does not fit with neighbouring barn-style properties)
- The entrance is very close to the High Street and therefore the visibility splays are very short (less than 10m). These are inconsistent with SCC Highways guidance
- The previous applications to extend the permitted 7 dwellings, had been refused by both ESC and the Planning Inspector.
- Conclusion: **Objection** (see grounds above) (Prop: Cllr. Findley, Sec: Cllr. N Smith, 4 'For' and 4 'Abstaining')

Action: Clerk

7. 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 receive update on a proposed Care Village along Yarmouth Road, Melton – The Clerk reported that she had heard nothing more on this matter but it was thought that an application was imminent.
- c) To receive update on BSR Energy Consultation re. Pettistree Solar Farm – The Clerk reported that she also had heard nothing more on this matter. It was agreed to leave this item on the agenda, and to write to BSR Energy after the May meeting, if no further updates had been received.
- d) Additional Item - DC/24/4217/CLP - Certificate of Lawful use (Proposed) - Use of the land for Class BC - temporary recreational campsites up to 50 pitches.... Land Parcel At Melton Lodge Farm East Of Lower Ufford Road Pettistree – The Clerk was asked to report back to the Council on the decision of ESC regarding this application.

Action: Clerk

8. Community Hall Upgrade:

- a) To receive update on the Electric Vehicle Charging Point and to approve signing documentation if appropriate – The Clerk had circulated the latest correspondence on this matter. In conclusion, the Community Hall Committee had been very reluctant to agree to the latest documentation, as they would have no way of seeing what usage the charging point had had, and therefore no way of checking if payments for their usage were correct. It was agreed to leave the matter with Cllr. V Smith for one further month.

Action: Cllr. V Smith and Clerk

9. Recreation Ground/Woodlands:

- a) To receive an update on the Management of the Woods and draft Woodlands Management Plan – Cllr. Forge reported that herself and Mr Searle were due to show two representatives from the Forestry Commission around the woods the following day. It was hoped they would agree to sign off the Management Plan and Felling License. Cllr. Forge and all other members of the FPW were thanked for their work.
- b) To discuss working with HM Prison Service to work in the Woods – It was agreed that outside support with the wood was not required at the present moment; but that this may be investigated at a later date.
- c) Additional Item – Water issue – Cllr. N Smith reported a possible water leak in the woods and agreed to report it directly to Anglian Water.

Action: Cllr. Forge and Clerk

10. Highways:

- a) To receive an update on the Sizewell C Traffic Monitoring – Cllr. Findley reported that two new traffic monitoring sites had been agreed in Ufford. These would be monitored twice a year, for the duration of the build of the power station. It was also reported that extensive works were required to the Melton Level Crossing, which may result in lengthy closures and, as a result, more traffic through Ufford.
- b) To discuss complaint from resident at the continuous Gas main repairs on the A12 Slip Road, close to Sogenhoe Chapel – The Clerk reported that she had requested details of the recent road closure of the Yarmouth Road for Gas main repairs. A resident had raised concerns that these repairs were frequent and only patching up the issue. A full reply from Cadent was awaited, however, Cllr. N Smith reported the works were complete and the road was due to open the following day.

11. Council Administration - To discuss receive update on project to move to a 'gov.uk' domain for the website and Clerk's email address:

The Clerk reported the switch to a 'gov.uk' domain and email address had been completed with very few issues. The original set up instructions had not been complete and assistance had been required from Mr Graham Allen, for which there would be a small charge. It was agreed that all Councillors should continue to use their dedicated email addresses for Council business, where one had not been set up yet, it should be.

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

- SCZ Community Forum – Cllr. Findley – The meeting was very well attended with an update on the project, including details of the hoard of coins found. A £72m fund was being established for Environmental Management; this was separate to the SCZ Community Fund. One issue raised was the very high property rents around Leiston (almost 6 times the usual market rent). Cllrs. Edworthy and V Smith agreed to investigate using the Community Fund for the refurbishment of the Community Hall kitchen and Cllr. Findley agreed to provide a link to a map showing the communities who could apply for these funds.

13. To receive details of the Annual Parish Meeting - 16th April 2025:

The Chair reminded all that the APM was the following day and that their attendance would be appreciated.

14. To prepare for the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council:

The Chair explained to the new Councillors that the May meeting of the Council would be where all appointments were made. If nominated, he would be prepared to stand as Chair for one more year, but he would not be continuing all the other appointments he presently had. It was agreed that the Clerk should send around the list of appointments and that Councillors should be encouraged to volunteer at the May meeting.

15. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (15th April 2025):

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

- Items carried forward
- All Annual Meeting items

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

16. 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.

The meeting was closed at 8.51pm

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

Date:

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

Chair's initials.....