

A meeting of the Parish Council took place on Monday, 18th September 2023 at 7pm in Eyke Village Hall.

Present: Cllr. Fleming, in the chair, Cllrs. Abu-Hejleh, Cushing, Smith, Thomas, Cllr. Andrew Reid, SCC (until 7.10pm), the clerk and three members of the public, including Tilly Hambling-Jones, who wishes to take on the role of clerk.

Apologies: Cllr. Mallinder, East Suffolk Council and Cllr. Sue Clark.

Declarations of Interest: None.

Adjournment for Parish Forum: None requested.

Minutes: Those of 10th July 2023 and the planning meeting of 17th August 2023, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, agreed and signed as a correct record.

As Cllr. Reid had to leave promptly to attend another meeting, he was then invited to give his report. He reported on issues to do with cold calling and the work of trading standards among others. Cllr. Smith asked what measures would be introduced to assist householders in dealing with cold callers. These will include stickers and street signage for areas which are designated as No Cold Calling Zones. The full report will be posted on the village website.

Cllr. Reid will also continue to support the parish council in its efforts to deal with the trailer parked in the layby at the shop. He asked that the correspondence regarding this matter is forwarded to him, as effectively both SCC and East Suffolk Council, including Parking Services, have denied all responsibility. He then left the meeting.

Co-option of councillor to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Cllr. Stangoe.

It was agreed unanimously to co-opt Lee Weavers, whose details and CV had previously been circulated to councillors.

Matters Arising from the minutes:

1. Appointment of new clerk and RFO. Mrs Hambling-Jones has already met with Mrs Pooley to discuss the role and the parish council is pleased to welcome her to the position from 1st October 2023. Mrs Pooley will remain on the books until the end of October, to facilitate the transition.

2. Village Hall update. Work is progressing slowly: the structural report for the roof is still awaited, which Lee Weavers is pursuing and the result of the lottery application for funding is still not known. On the upside, Cllr. Thomas said that bookings are growing from various individuals and groups.

3. Bus Shelter revamp. Cllr. Smith had inspected the finished job, and found it satisfactory. However, to finish it off, he felt that the inside timbers should be painted and structurally and aesthetically it would be good to line the interior surface and paint exposed timbers to match the outside. This would also allow for more noticeboard space.

A suitably sized batten needs to be fixed to the outside to cover a gap between the vertical timber cladding and the underside of the joists to provide weather protection, and to deter squirrels and birds from nesting or damaging the structure. Additionally, a bench fixed inside would be a desirable addition.

It was agreed that Mr Wheeler would be approached for a further quotation, and Cllr Smith will forward to the clerk a suitable form of words for this.

Additionally, he would be asked for a quotation to refurbish the noticeboard in the churchyard, which lets water in and is difficult to use in wet weather.

4. Memorial benches for Mervyn Whitmore. The total raised in donations, excluding the parish council is £1302.65. The cost of the two benches, plus fixings, will be £1227.18, plus the £60 charge for fixing them, and the cost for laying the concrete bases. Cllr. Fleming will chase up the laying of the bases as a matter of urgency, as the benches are ready for delivery. As the parish council has not yet made a donation, this will be finalised when the total cost is known, and a donation made to charity.

5. Recreation Ground. Cllr. Cushing will fix the new sign with owner information to the playground fence. The new 'No Dogs' signs have been fixed already. It was agreed that the pedestrian gate hinge needs tightening at the bottom, but no major work at this time.

Cllr. Smith will measure the height of the barrier at the entrance to the rec, and a new reflective plate showing the height will be ordered.

There was a general discussion about the problem of grasscutting on the rec, following a concern voiced about the ragwort growing in the play area. At a cost of about £700 for a total cut, it was agreed that it would be more cost effective to buy a traded-in ride on mower, which would probably pay for itself in three or four cuts. Cllr Cushing will investigate the cost of trade-ins from various sources.

The clerk will approach Cllr. Reid for help with funding.

It was agreed to accept the quotation from East Suffolk Services to provide and install a new litter bin on the rec. The cost for this will be £400.74 plus vat for a Glasdon Topsy2000 bin in black, with an ongoing emptying charge of £91p.a.

Reports:

East Suffolk Council. Cllr. Mallinder's report was taken as read, and will be available on the village website. Thanks were due to him for the £1000 donation from the Enabling Communities Budget towards the cost of the bus shelter repairs.

Other Matters:

1. Insurance renewal and update. The renewal through Community Action Suffolk required a totally new proposal form to be completed, as the previous insurer had withdrawn from the market. As a result, the premium was more than double, at £1818.82. The clerk established from CAS that premiums have risen significantly, and the increase could also be partly due to the "non-standard" construction of the hall. She also approached other parishes in the peninsula, and found that their prices have increased significantly: 20% was cited, and in one case nearly double. The clerk requested a quotation from Zurich, and their "package" quotation, which excludes the village hall is £534.00. They can offer a bespoke quotation on receipt of the completion of an Additional Information Form.

The council was in agreement that this figure is not acceptable without researching other options, and felt that the non-standard classification of the hall is not accurate.

It was agreed that as a matter of urgency, given that the renewal date is 1st October, the clerk would ask Zurich for a bespoke quotation to include the village hall, with assistance from Cllr. Smith in describing the hall building as succinctly as possible, without going into the detail given previously. Cllr. Smith will also look at companies providing stand alone quotations for village halls. It was agreed that any reduction on the CAS quotation would be welcome and agreed in principle.

2. Health and Safety Policy Review. This policy has not been updated for some time, and now needs to make sure the village hall is included. It was agreed that the policies agreed by the Village Hall Committee would be used in addition, and the existing H & S policy slightly amended.

3. Laying the Remembrance Sunday wreath. Mr Nicholls has said he would be honoured to do this, taking the place of the late Cllr. Whitmore. The clerk will make arrangements for the delivery of the wreath to him once it is available to order.

4. 20's Plenty for Suffolk Campaign. This voluntary campaign seeks to enlist the support of parishes across the county to lobby for a 20mph limit on streets through Suffolk where people and vehicles mix. Although there was some support for this, the general feeling was that such campaigns need to be site specific, and it risks diluting the efforts of individual projects. The clerk will forward the information to councillors for further consideration.

Finance:

1. The clerk was confirmed as Responsible Financial Officer.

2. The Register of Assets, which is required for the End of Year Return to the auditor was agreed.

3. Half yearly check of accounts. Cllr. Thomas agreed to undertake this.

4. Account balances at 1.9.2023: Community Account: £9791.77; Business Savings Account (1) £8632.72; Business Savings Account (2) £119.15

5. Cllr. Thomas has now been confirmed as the new signatory.

6. Cheques to be agreed: Clerk's quarterly salary: £582.60; HMRC, second quarter: £145.60;

Comber Enterprises, website services: £37.80; Raymac Signs Ltd, information sign for playground: £31.14.

Expenses to come, but invoices not received yet: Royal British Legion for poppy wreath, Realise Futures, for benches, upgrades to lights in Church Lane.

7. It was noted that moving to online banking will be necessary before long.

To receive Items for Information:

1. Speeding in Bromeswell. The village is mounting an impressive campaign, and has copied in Eyke Parish Council as an interested party, as it seeks to lobby stakeholders to address the matter. It was agreed to send them the correspondence with Cllr. Bally at East Suffolk for their information.
2. Cllr Smith agreed that when possible he would attend the Peninsula Group meetings, although he would appreciate being given as much advance notice as possible.
3. Woodbridge Connect Meeting will take place virtually on 26th September at 9.30am. No one was available to attend.
4. East Suffolk Community Partnership: Cllr. Cushing will attend this meeting at East Suffolk House on 25th September at 6pm.
5. Cllr. Cushing will also attend the JPTI workshop meeting at East Suffolk Council Offices, and is available for any of the suggested dates and times.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Next meeting: Monday, 13th November at 7.00pm.