

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING IN THE VILLAGE HALL HELD ON

Monday, 15th January 2024 at 7.15 pm

Present:

Cllr John Ross (Chairman)
Cllr Sarah Gregory
Cllr Chris Yeo
Cllr Derek Dickerson
Cllr Ann Wignall
Cllr Cate Last
Cllr John Parrish
Parish Clerk Angie Buggs
Cllr Mike Ninney East Suffolk Council
Cllr Lee Reeves East Suffolk Council
7 members of the public

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Patti Mulcahy Suffolk County Council – no report.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Cllr Mike Ninnmey East Suffolk Council – verbal report
Cllr Lee Reeves East Suffolk Council – verbal report

Cllr Mike Ninnmey reported that he had sent a general report to councillors from him and Cllr Lee Reeves. He stated that Cllr Lee Reeves would be dealing with all Planning Applications which includes the Ship and Walk Farm. Cllr Mike Ninnmey reported on the value of parishes developing a Neighbourhood Plan. He said that there are grants available to support parishes to do this piece of work, but residents would need to take a major role in developing a plan. Mike explained to the meeting the relevance of the Local Plan. Cllr S Gregory said she felt that the most of the councillors at Planning Committee when Red House Farm was discussed were in favour of the development but hoped it could be challenged when the detailed plans are submitted. A member of the public said that the Parish Council had objected to the development of Red House Farm from the beginning however despite those objections it was included in the Local Plan.

VILLAGE FORUM

An opportunity for residents to give comments on any issues on the agenda. (As per standing orders max 15 minutes unless otherwise directed by the Chairman, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.

A resident said that on the 6th June 2024 it is the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. For King Charles III Coronation last year the village held a 'low key' event by having a picnic on Church Field which was enjoyed by all who attended. Another resident reported that the Church would be very happy to mark the occasion, but it is too early to put any arrangements in place.

The formal meeting of the Parish Council started at 7.30 pm.

01.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received however Cllr Patti Mulcahy is currently off sick.

02.24 CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were declared.

03.24 TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 27TH NOVEMBER 2023

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 27th November 2023, which had previously been circulated, were approved and signed as a true record by Cllr J Ross (Chairman).

04.24 MATTERS TO REPORT FROM THE LATEST MINUTES (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

There were no matters outstanding.

05.24 FINANCE

a. Income since last meeting

None

b. Expenditure to be agreed at this meeting

Expenditure Warm Room November 2023	£540.00
Tuddenham Press – Newsletters	£100.00
Helen Kingston-Ross – Warm Room Expenses	£38.09
Mrs A J Buggs Salary & Expenses (incl. back pay) Nov/Dec	£1,023.96
HMRC – Tax and NI	£485.44
Village Hall – Warm Room – December 2023	£510.00
Louise Overbury – Dog Bags	£14.90
Helen Kingston-Ross – Warm Room Expenses	£39.93

c. Bank Balances

Current Account as at 30th November 2023	£24,217.04
Deposit Account as at 30th November 2023	£8,562.41

d. To discuss moving bank accounts from Barclays to another bank

Cllr C Yeo reported that he had been researching new bank accounts for the Parish Council because the Parish Council have concerns regarding Barclays closing bank accounts at very short notice. The two banks being considered are Unity Trust Bank and the Nat West. A full report will be presented to the Parish Council at their next meeting on the 4th March 2024 to enable the Parish Council to make a decision. **Action: Cllr C Yeo / Clerk**

06.24 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PARISH COUNCIL'S FOUR-YEAR PLAN – CONSULTATION WITH VILLAGE RESIDENTS

In October 2023, the Parish Council launched a consultation with the residents of the two Parishes (122 households), asking two questions:

1. What could be changed in the parishes to enhance your experience of living here?
2. What would you like to see unchanged to maintain your experience of living here?

The intention was to engage with residents to capture their views, with their views shaping the 4-year plan for the period of this Parish Council term. The questions were purposely 'open' so no attempt was made to steer respondents to what might or might not be within the remit of the Parish Council.

Seventeen responses were received (14% of households).

The Parish Council held an informal meeting in January 2024. Four categories were used to classify each response:

- First Priority - items that are already open with the Parish Council.
- Second Priority – items within the responsibility or significant influence of the Parish Council, not presently open.
- Administration – items considered beyond the responsibilities or significant influence of the Parish Council, for example relating to private land or to responsibilities held by other Council bodies, resolved by the Parish Council writing to the relevant person or body to inform of the survey and the comment.
- No action required.

The headings of responses are scheduled below, presented under the four categories. The responses classified as 'Second Priority' will be considered by the Parish Council in due course when compiling the 4-year plan.

First Priority

- Website
- Flooding
- Dog waste

Second Priority

- Speeding in the village
- ANPR camera security
- Changes to the management of Church Meadow

Administration

- Vehicles driving over verges / courteous driving
- Affordable housing in village
- Public transport link to Felixstowe
- Litter picking
- Mobile phone signal / Wifi at Village Hall
- The impact of planning applications
- Painting of Village Hall fence
- Extension of boardwalk to foreshore
- Mowing of fields either side of boardwalk

No action required.

- Less traffic
- Parking at junction of Bridge Road and Church Lane
- Parking provision in the village

- Fly tipping
- Growth of trees on Church Field
- Males in layby
- Footpath to Nacton School
- Greater community engagement
- Minimal development in parishes
- Great community spirit
- Street lighting
- WhatsApp group
- Parish Council
- The pub

Following discussion, Cllr J Ross proposed that the Parish Council should adopt the findings of the survey and that an update of the survey would be published in the next edition of the Levington Newsletter, seconded Cllr A Wignall – all in favour. **Action: Cllr J Ross / Clerk**

07.24 UPDATE ON THE UNSOCIABLE BEHAVIOUR ON THE OLD A45

Cllr C Yeo said that he was aware that there is now a Public Space Protection Order Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2024 at Landguard Point Nature Reserve due to cars gathering there and then going through Felixstowe and up on to the A14. Cllr J Ross stated that the Clerk had contacted the Police about the issues being raised on the Old A45. The local Police Officer has been asked to attend our Parish Council meeting on the 4th March 2024 however she has not, as yet, confirmed acceptance to attend. Cllr C Yeo reported that his neighbours had reported more than 20+ vehicles and sometimes 100 vehicles congregating on the Old A45 and one female resident, on her way home to Levington, felt intimidated by the number of vehicles. Cllr C Last stated that the vehicles gather more regularly on the dual carriageway by the Bridge. Cllr J Ross stated that when incidents of this nature occur, residents need to report it to the Police (and the Parish Clerk) and obtain an incident number so there is a record of the number of occurrences. **Action: Clerk**

08.24 UPDATE ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE D-DAY 80 TO COMMEMORATE THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE D-DAY LANDINGS ON 6TH JUNE 2024

The Chairman said that he had researched on the Royal British Legion Website and he gave a brief resume of how the local area of Felixstowe, Nacton and Levington were involved in the D-Day landings on the Normandy Beaches. Cllr J Ross said that there are local people in the village who have a living memory of what took place. Cllr J Ross said that Levington and Stratton Hall can light the beacon at 9.15 pm on the 6th June 2024 but that the parishes need to decide what else they would like to do to mark this momentous occasion. Councillors made several suggestions:

- To involve the Ship Inn.
- Asking a Fish and Chip van to come along.
- Purchase a number of Lamps of Peace (Cost £55 each including postage and packaging)
- Rather than just a celebration in the evening to have Services of Remembrance throughout the day in the Church.

It has already been suggested that it should be a “low-key” affair in a similar way to the celebrating of the Coronation of King Charles III.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should discuss informally and bring back ideas for both the commemoration and celebration back to their March 2024 meeting to discuss. **Action: Clerk / All Councillors**

09.24 TO DISCUSS CREATING A COMMUNITY HUB FROM APRIL 2024

In 2022 the PC was successful in securing funding to operate a Warm Room under the 'Ease the Squeeze' Government initiative. We experienced good take-up from residents, and as we approached time for the Warm Room to end (March 23), we received feedback from users that one of the significant secondary benefits of the facility was the community interaction users experienced.

Covid is quite a recent event, and this caused the fracturing of social connections with the repeated lockdowns and isolation, and the Warm Room proved really valuable in establishing reconnections.

On this basis the PC agreed to operate a similar facility throughout the April – November 2023 period, a Community Hub. This of course wasn't a warm space, and it operated on a less frequent basis – once every 2 weeks.

The Parish Council was again successful in securing funding for a Warm Room in 2023, and this has been operating since November 2023, expiring in March 2024. We have received the same request from residents as last year, to operate a Community Hub from April – November 2024.

To operate a Community Hub the funding commitment would be

- 1 session every 2 weeks, for 7 months = 14 sessions
- Hall hire per session = £30
- 7 x £30 = £420
- A small allocation for refreshments.

The Parish Council has not budgeted for this expenditure in this financial year; if the PC paid for it the funds would need to be allocated from reserves.

However, in 2023 the Parish Council was successful in acquiring funding from an external source, and there is every reason to be equally confident the same could occur this year.

Following discussion, Cllr C Yeo proposed that, subject to external funding being secured, the Parish Council should provide a Community Hub from April – November 2024, seconded Cllr S Gregory – all in favour. **Action: Clerk / Cllr J Ross**

10.24 TO DISCUSS AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON THE WAY THE PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNICATES WITH RESIDENTS

In October the Parish Council conducted a survey of residents to identify what they may wish to see changed or remain unchanged in the parishes. Added to this survey were two questions relating to the communication with residents. The questions were:

The Parish Council presently communicates with residents via:

- The Parish Council Newsletter
- Posting a notice on the Parish Council notice board
- Messaging on the Levington Together WhatsApp Group Chat
- Bespoke printed letters hand-delivered to every resident

1. Do you consider this sufficient?
2. Are there other means of communication the Parish Council should consider?

The responses received are:

1. Do you consider this sufficient?

- 11 residents felt that the methods of communication are sufficient.
- 1 stated that they believe the Parish Council is very active and effective in the way they currently operate and communicate.
- Mostly, but occasionally a full letter box drop may be needed. The newsletter is not as readable as it once was, residents don't seem to note contents.
- It is more than sufficient, in fact, the notice board and WhatsApp methods can be considered undemocratic - not all villagers will or can walk to the notice board and not all are on WhatsApp.

2. Are there other means of communication the Parish Council should consider?

- 5 residents thought that the communication was okay.
- Parish Council website on 'OneSuffolk' is not listed in the Parish Council Newsletter.
- No, unless various forms of developing social media are appropriate. It is important to keep in mind that communication should be to all and not exclude those who don't have the technology to access information.
- E-mail to send out information of key planning applications.
- It would be helpful if the Parish Newsletter had published dates for contribution deadlines and issue. It is no help to anyone if advertised events are over before the newsletter is delivered.
- The Notice Board needs tidying.
- Talking to people/parishioners more - in the road/village events.
- Facebook - but realise this would need someone to administer it.

The Parish Council noted the feedback from residents.

Cllr A Wignall stated, with regard to the comments concerning the publishing of the Levington Newsletter, it is not always possible to give an actual delivery date and this date needs to be flexible. The printing company is always given an approximate date on which they can expect to receive the newsletter for printing, and they always give us a quick turnaround. It was noted that the Levington Website is not listed in the Levington Newsletter, and it was agreed this will be added to the next edition. It was noted that if there are occasions when late editorial was received, a separate flyer could be included as an insert in the Parish Magazine however this is seen as an exception and not for every edition. Cllr J Ross suggested that a closing date for the next editorial could be included at the end of each newsletter. The Parish Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that the Levington Notice Board is maintained. Although 87 residents had signed up to the Levington Together WhatsApp Group this was not a Parish Council initiative. **Action: Cllr J Ross / Cllr A Wignall / Clerk**

11.24 PLANNING

- General – Updated Planning List for January 2024**
The Parish Council noted the contents of the Planning List.
- Planning Application DC/23/2694/FUL and DC/23/2695/LBC Ship Church Lane Alterations and extensions to provide additional dining and upgraded kitchen facilities and an outdoor seating area and extended parking**
No further update from ESC
- Planning Application DC/23/3717/FUL Walk Farm Old Felixstowe Road Change of use of 3no. buildings from agricultural use to Class E use (light industrial/storage) Walk Farm Old Felixstowe Road Stratton Hall Ipswich IP10 0LR**
No further update from ESC

- d. **Planning Application DC/23/2930/OUT Land South of Felixstowe Road, Stratton Hall Outline Application (Some Matters Reserved) - Construction of lorry park comprising 69 no. lorry parking spaces inclusive of ancillary office, driver's building, staff parking, landscaping and associated CCTV and lighting apparatus (with access and layout)**

No further update from ESC

- e. **Planning Application DC/23/4699/OUT Land Opposite Seven Hills Roundabout Felixstowe Road Nacton Suffolk Outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for a Business Park to provide floorspace for Class B2, B8 and E(g) Uses alongside ancillary uses**

Parish Council to consider and submit comments to ESC by the 19th February 2024

12.24 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE LEVINGTON WARM ROOM

The Warm Room is open 4 mornings a week from 9.30 m – 12.30 pm between November and the end of March. It was noted that the Warm Room can only be open if volunteers come forward. The Chairman thanked Mrs Sally Long, Mrs Helen Kingston-Ross and their 'team' for all their hard work. It was also noted that the Warm Room is well attended and provides not only a warm space for residents but also provides a very important social group.

13.24 CORRESPONDENCE

All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to councillors.

14.24 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

- a. **Tree and Church Field Warden**

No report.

- b. **Village Hall**

No report.

- c. **Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses**

Report from Sarah Gregory

Cllr J Ross reported that Cllr Sarah Gregory had resigned as the Parish Council's representative as an Almshouse's Trustee. Cllr S Gregory stated that she became a Trustee on the 21st March 2022 at which time Ian Angus was the nominated Trustee on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr S Gregory said that to her knowledge Ian Angus had never resigned and that she had never been appointed as a Trustee on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr J Ross said that she became the Parish Council Trustee when the new Parish Councillors took on their roles, but it was all quite unclear. Cllr S Gregory requested that the Parish Council revisit the nominations.

Action: Clerk / Cllr J Ross / Cllr S Gregory

- d. **Public Transport**

Report from Marian Rose

Marian Rose reported that there had been two issues recently.

There has been another incident of the local bus (Service 78) being unable to pass parked cars in Bridge Road. This was on the 29th November 2023 when a wreath making workshop was being held in the Village Hall. The problem was that, with cars parked beside the hall and stakes in the ground on the grass verges opposite, the driver felt he did not have enough room

to safely pass the cars. Word reached us in the hall and I went outside to see if I could help. The driver was very irate and was on the telephone to police saying that the bus had a right to access along the highway. He took several photographs of the scene. I managed to get some cars to move and the bus was then able to proceed. My own car was also parked there but I did not feel it needed to be moved. The bus eventually crept past the cars, although there was at least a foot clearance. As a re-emptive strike, I emailed the bus company about this issue as the driver was so angry that I feared he would complain and perhaps lead to the service being stopped. However, First said the driver had not reported the incident. The road is quite narrow and if large cars park at the notice board end it is clear that the bus and other wide vehicles will struggle to get past without hitting the stakes in the grass verge. I do not know if the stakes and large stones on that verge are legally placed and I have asked the Parish Council for their opinion on this. Dependant on the answer, Councillors may consider asking the residents to remove these to avoid a repetition.

The bus shelter on the Ipswich bound side of the Old Felixstowe Road has been damaged. One pane of Perspex has been removed (or fallen out). This is propped up in the shelter so can be replaced. I understand that the Parish Clerk was told about this (she then alerted me) and that she has reported this to the District Council.

I am not aware of any other issues affecting the bus services although I note that the morning service into Ipswich has been late on a few occasions in recent weeks. However, I have not considered this sufficiently serious to warrant a complaint to the company.

e. Footpaths

Report from John Parrish

At high water the boardwalk is flooded. Unfortunately, the newly erected 'no cycling' signs have been 'ripped' down.

Cllr J Ross stated that any incidents of vandalism, when either the signs are removed or damaged, should be reported to the Police (101) and an incident number obtained. **Action: Cllr J Parrish**

Cllr J Ross reported that the Clerk had reported two blocked drains; one in Nacton Road and one in Bridge Road Levington and Suffolk County Council Highways have stated that they will continue to monitor however they receive thousands of highways related reports which significantly increase in winter months. However, the Parish Council are not satisfied with the reply regarding flooding and will be taking further action. **Action: Clerk**

f. Nacton School

No report.

g. SALC

No report.

h. Port Liaison Group

No report.

i. Police/SNT/ASB

No report.

j. ESPA

Report from Cllr Cate Last

First Annual ESPA Conference will be held on Saturday, 17th February 2024 at 2.30 pm at Grundisburgh Village Hall which Cllr C Last will be attending and reporting back at the Parish Council Meeting on Monday, 4th March 2024.

15.24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, 4th MARCH 2024 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15 pm.

VILLAGE FORUM (Opportunity to raise issues not necessarily on this agenda)

A resident stated that a member of a family who lives at Heath Cottages were involved in the D-Day Landings. He suggested that a lady who remembers the D-Day landings and another resident should light the Beacon.

Community Hub – A resident suggested that by having the Community Hub one day a fortnight would confuse in particular one resident who liked to attend. One of the organisers of the Community Hub stated that she always telephones the lady to remind her when the Community Hub is open.

A resident said that the Ship should be involved in the D-Day Commemoration and the Celebrations and that the Parish Council should make them aware now that events were being planned. **Action: Clerk**

A resident suggested asking local farmers to dig the ditches out however the Chairman said it is drains that are blocked which would be solved by digging.

One resident said that he had sent a letter to the Parish Council re the Village Survey. The Chairman replied that his comments had been included in the Village Survey results.

A resident commented on the flooding of the boardwalk and the land adjoining it and that the Parish Council should be writing to the relevant people. Cllr J Ross stated that the Parish Council is not responsible for either the land or the boardwalk.

It was reported that the unsociable behaviour on the Old A45 started at approximately 11.30-12 at night and involves approximately 40-60 cars adjacent to the Bridge.

A resident, who was a former Trustee of the Almshouses, said that if Cllr S Gregory has resigned, the Almshouses would have problems with bank signatories.

Signed..... Date

Angie Buggs
Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council