

POLSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 18th January 2024 at 7.30pm in Polstead Village Hall

Present: Councillors Andrew Wade, John Flather, John Engleheart, Shaun Davis, James Oxford, Stewart Sowman, and Kenneth Davey
Attending: DCllr John Ward (District Councillor), CCllr Georgia Hall (County Councillor) Christine Hargan (Clerk) and 4 members of the public.

2411 Apologies for absence

There were none.

2412 Receive declarations of interests and requests for dispensation from Councillors

There were none.

2413 Agree Minutes of Polstead Parish Council (PPC) meeting held on 19th October 2023.

It was resolved that the Minutes were to be signed by the Chairman as an accurate record of the meeting.

2414 Public Forum

Reports from District and County Councillors

In addition to the circulated report CCllr Hall reported:

- Grit bins please check bins regularly in cold weather and report on the Highways Reporting Tool
- Scams There are a number of active scams currently please be vigilant.
- Railing around the pond there is a possibility to use both Highways and Locality budgets toward the repair.
- Parishioners are anxious about gritting of Polstead Hill, because it becomes unpassable when icy. CCllr Hall to research whether it is on the list to grit regularly and respond.

District Councillor Report – in addition to the circulated report DCllr Ward reported:

- Babergh District Council is chasing a shortfall of £1.8 million. Income from rental of commercial properties is helping to fund the shortfall but it is likely that they will need to use reserves and there may be cuts in services. 2.99% will be added to council tax.
- Parking, remains an anomaly modest parking charges of £1 for 3 hours will be introduced in Hadleigh Sudbury and Lavenham which will raise half to three quarters of a million pounds.
- Section 114 (bankruptcy) notices are being presented by a number of district councils across the country.
- The Government is postponing reviews on business rates and rentals, impacting on the cashflow of district councils and this is unlikely to change prior to the General Election.

Questions from Parishioners

The Chairman invited all attending parishioners and members of the public, if they wished to raise a question or matter of concern, now was their opportunity to speak.

- Fruit cages Is there a decision yet on enforcement? DCllr Ward reported that the last correspondence was in November, that BDC were awaiting response from their legal advisor and will make enquiries on Friday 19th January. The Clerk is to write to the Chief Planning Officer, to ask for an update and report on the action taken.
- Thanks were noted for the update on National Grid
- An update was requested on affordable housing which is an item later in the Agenda.

2415 Reports and questions from Councillors.

There were none.

2416 Planning

[DC/23/05760](#) Erection of new 3 bay cart lodge with lean-to garden store. Conversion of existing single storey outbuilding to carers annexe

Green Farm Barn White Street Green Polstead Sudbury Suffolk CO10 5JL

Resolved raise no objection to the principle of the application but to request suitable condition that the outbuilding remains ancillary to the existing dwelling,

Consider status of planning applications

Noted

- Deadline for enforcement on the buildings in Flaggy Pond has passed and DCllr Ward advised that it will result in eventual removal.

2417 Actions required on emails

Noted in the actions log

The Church Warden has booked the brass band for December 14th, would like the PC to partner with the church/ It was resolved to contribute up to £150 toward the event.

2418 Clerk's Report

Actions required following the Clerk's Report are noted in Actions Log.

24110 Finance

- Note income received since the last meeting.
- Review the Reconciliation of Accounts against bank statements
Finance report accepted.
- Resolved to pay invoices according to the attached schedule.
- The Budget for 2024 – 25 will be finalised in February. Clerk to complete forecast for the 2023/24 budget, for the next meeting when decisions on grants will be made.
- Precept Resolved to increase by 4% proposed by Cllr Engleheart, seconded by Cllr Davis
resolution carried.

24111 Highways and Footpath issues

Footpaths , a request had been received to place no cycling signs on public footpaths Cllr Davey volunteered to duplicate and laminate signs.

Footpath 35 branch of tree is obstructing the footpath close to Flaggy Pond. Cllr Sowman to check if this has been resolved and to notify Clerk for action.

24112 Asset, allotment, playground or playing field

Christmas Tree – consider alternative mechanism for securing future trees and rechargeable lights.

24113 Provision of Affordable Housing within the Parish

Update summary – Councillors have found 16 sites across the parish. BDC's advice is that they focus on the sites around the main village, as they currently consider the other built-up parts of the Parish to be unsuitable. This may change if the Planning Appeal at the Brewers Arms is approved due to there being a proposed shop on site. The next step is to meet with BDC and then with landowners with a view to promoting their land for Affordable Housing. BDC will only provide funding for a need survey if the process is followed.

24114 Update on the National Grid Bramford to Twinstead reinforcement scheme.

Babergh District Council's Cabinet will continue to support communities and will formally do so in the next submission deadline, they are unable to comment technically due to lack of information.

National Grid have not considered Layham Quarry and BDC are not in a position to challenge this. They are permitted to comment solely on what is presented.

Southern Parishes Group will continue to argue the case. A technical paper has been submitted inviting investigators to respond to the question why new technology/super conductors and cabling is not being considered? As it would enable them to use the existing pylons, thus saving a significant amount of money and disruption to local communities.

24115 Fence and Gate to Rockalls Road playground

Two updated quotations have been received.

Resolve to appoint Kevin King

The contractors recommended a hydraulic closer system, however the Councillors favoured the addition of a locking mechanism similar to the gate at Bures playground Cllr Davis to photograph the gate and discuss with Mr King to ensure that the gate stays closed Clerk to be notified to enable S106 applied for and landlord to be notified.

24116 Update on bus shelter and book exchange

Councillors to assess the structure to consider whether there is a point in refurbishing the bus shelter.

24117 Strategy for Churchyard Maintenance

Resolved to change the nature of the support provided to grant aid. Clerk and Cllr Wade to write to church wardens and notify that they may be able to take on the existing or, they can make your own arrangements.

24118 Requests for Grants

Deferred to the next meeting.

- A Community Hardship fund
- Grant to church for grass cutting
- Fuel allowance for village hall
- Strategy for grants to other organisations

24119 Village Pond.

Councillors agreed that they would be unable to justify the cost of wholesale replacement of the railings, even if part funded by a third party. Cllr Engleheart to organise a quote for a more targeted scope of work. Cllr Davey to discuss funding possibilities with CCllr Hall. Consideration also needed on how to avoid the risk of taking on liability for railings owned by Suffolk County Council.

24120 Future Agenda Items

- National Grid update
- Affordable Housing
- Bus shelter
- Village Hall accounts requested, consideration for the fuel grant next year
- Grants for Community Pantry
- Visibility of where we are
- Christmas tree plan for next year
- D Day

Time date and place of next meeting 7.30pm Thursday 15th February 2024 Village Hall Polstead
The meeting was closed at 9.40pm.

Appendix

Agenda no	Action	Who	Complete
23106 23513 23613 23919 231019	Polstead Pond , SCC installed post and rail during the 1960s Cllr Engleheart contacted CCllr Hall to request a donation response awaited. No donation forthcoming from SCC Contact RK and LM for advice on cutting pond banks Contact Sudbury Wardens for advice and action on fallen fence	Clerk Clerk	Ongoing ✓ ✓
231119 24119	Nature Citizen to discuss with local ecologist replanting pond bank with low flowering plants/seeds Cllr Engleheart to organise quote and Cllr Davey to connect with CCllr Hall	LM JE/TD	✓
231109	Pay suppliers	Clerk	✓
23212/ 23312 23412 23518 23711 23911 231020 231123 24115	Replacement of Rockalls Road fence , and gate with metal fencing liaise with councillors re choice of fencing. Chase Lease for Rockalls Road Play area BDC refused funding for the gate and fence. Agenda item for September meeting exhaust all possible funding options for Clerk to chase additional funding options – Safeguarding Policy required for additional funding Safeguarding Policy agreed Cllr Davis to be lead. Funding obtained, contact suppliers for updated prices for decision at the next meeting Cllr Davis to investigate, photograph gate at Bures and liaise with Contractor regarding gate closure, Clerk to use information to apply for S106 funding	Clerk/TD SD Clerk SD Clerk	Ongoing ✓
23213/ 23318 23615 23913	Additional defibrillators advice gained that Zoll AED 3 defibrillator and thermal cabinet is the best option, acquire funding options and apply for grants to be discussed at the June meeting. Clerk to obtain written permission for placement at White Street Green and the Brewers Arms and to purchase 2 no defibrillators. prior to seeking formal permission and ordering, Intent to purchase but funding is required.	Clerk/Cllrs	Ongoing
23405 23905 23104	Counsel Opinion to BDC and CC Boxford Fruit farms chase response from Chief Exec and Chief Planning Officer. Clerk to write to Chef Planning Officer requesting progress report	JW Clerk	Ongoing
23706 23909	Discuss siting of Dog bin in Popes Lane with landowners Place dog bin at What 3 words Northward.reservoir.grower in Martens Lane – clerk to confirm location with BDC prior to fitting Bin has been ordered and is with Sudbury Wardens for fitting. Awaiting fitting.	JO	✓ ongoing
23703 23903	Contact Clerk at Leavenheath re funding for car charging points left message and awaiting response. 26/7/23 Correspondence and estimate received from Angliacarcharging.co.uk at £2,229 per unit subject to inspection. A funding application would be necessary. Roll until in a position to purchase – approval will be needed from the village hall for siting of the units	Clerk	✓
23704 231110 24111 24111	Write to CCllr Hall re inconsistency of repair to signage and roads. Additional issues with drainage and potholes, report issues on SCC reporting tool and provide numbers to CCllr Hall Print and laminate no cycling signs Branch of tree is obstructing footpath near Flaggy Pond, check if resolved and notify Clerk for action	TD All TD SS/Clerk	✓
23710 231110 24104	Contact SCC regarding grit fill programme for B roads Write covering letter to member of public re grit bins and to continue pressure on SCC Highways to regularly top up grit. And to add Polstead Hill to regular gritting programme Continue pressure on SCC	Clerk Clerk	✓ Ongoing Ongoing
23712 23912	Send Clerk information on plot of land for Affordable Housing to enable contact with BDC Planning Volunteers to contact local landowners requesting land for potential affordable housing sites.	JO	Ongoing ✓ ✓ ✓

Signed

Date

Series no 818

231112	Contact housing associations with a view to developing affordable housing on the existing plot Awaiting response from BDC Planning regarding feasibility of scheme	SD	✓
24113	Meet with land owners to ask if they would consider their land being used for affordable housing	JE	
23905	Chase BDC for a response regarding Boxford Fruit Farms legal opinion	JW	ongoing
231105	Awaiting response from BDC Legal		
231005	Planning responses to BDC	Clerk	✓
23906	Consider churchyard maintenance budget and whether more appropriate to donate a set amount to maintain churchyard as currently almost 10% of Precept is spent on the churchyard.	All	✓
23106	Clerk to enquire the level of contributions made by other Parish Councils Add to agenda for November	Clerk	✓
231106	Discuss with the budget in January.		
24117	Clerk to compose a draft letter to Churchwarden grant rather than budget	Clerk/AW/ JF	
23916	Grant to village hall for heating oil. Clerk to write to village hall committee due to pressure on finances unable to help this year, however there is still a donation of £500 outstanding toward provision of broadband.	Clerk	✓
231106	Pay for broadband Request sight of account sheet prior to discussing heating grant further	Clerk SS	
24116	Delay payment of rent and consider with all grants in February	Clerk/All	
231011	Chase Lease with BDC Legal	JW	ongoing
231014	Consider sites for Christmas tree prior to next meeting.	All/SS	✓
231120	Liaise with Lord of Manor for agreement to site Christmas tree on the Village green, purchase Solar Christmas lights Liaise with vendor to arrange delivery of tree Consider site for Christmas tree on green, and fit tube flush with turf to safely hold the tree Decorate tree	SD AW SS/JO MP	✓
24111	Consider alternative method of securing tree and lights	All	
231016	Check whether £500 locality donation received from SCC to refurbish bus shelter , if yes notify councillors and pay to Village shop, if no request from GH. Awaiting breakdown of costs to forward to GH	Clerk	
24116	Cllrs to assess whether refurbishment of structure is desirable or cost effective	All	Ongoing
231017	Liaise with church wardens re Meeting cemetery grass cutting	Clerk AW/JF	
	Agenda items for the next Summons, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Grid update • Churchyard maintenance • Budget 2024/25 • Electric Vehicle Charging Points • Affordable Housing • Fence and gate for Rockalls Road Playground • Bus shelter, maintenance, once costs agreed will be a grant not a liability • Village Hall accounts, consideration for the fuel next year • Grant for community pantry • Community Energy Scheme 	Clerk	

Agenda Item 9 Finance

Budget to Date				
	2022/23		2023-24	
	Budget	To year end	Budget	YTD
Income				
Balance Brought Forward from current a/c	19500	19,500.00		2,921.43
Balance b/f from Business Premium a/c				33,397.19
Grants	745.00		1,294.32	13,450.00
Bank Interest	1.00	1.00	10.00	630.93
Allotment rent	120.00	81.68	90.00	114.16
Wayleave	22.00	21.01	22.00	21.01
CIL	0.00	0.00	0.00	230.94
Precept	22,500.00	19,500.00	24,500.00	24,500.00
VAT Repayment	0.00		0.00	0.00
Transfer				10,000.00
Total Income	£42,888.00	£19,603.69	£23,388.00	£38,947.04
Expenditure				
	Figures exclude VAT where paid as it is reclaimed, and is shown as VAT paid			
Clerk Salary	4,700.00	4,500.00	5,172.00	3,336.34
Insurance	600.00	580.00	600.00	0.00
Admin	2,355.00	2,305.00	2,395.00	981.91
Audit	380.00	340.00	380.00	430.00
Donations	1,000.00	1,000.00	3,000.00	2,000.00
Chairman's allowance	60.00	100.00	60.00	0.00
Community Wardens	710.00	700.00	700.00	0.00
dog and litter bins	950.00	850.99	800.00	1,085.81
Footpaths	950.00	3,200.00	2,500.00	2,085.00
Grass Cutting (P3 Scheme)	5,500.00	4,825.00	4,000.00	0.00
Ditch Clearance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maintenance	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,700.00	593.86
Projects	2,000.00	1,825.00	1,500.00	7,661.27
Village Hall	965.00	965.00	1,500.00	0.00
Contingency	500.00	500.00	500.00	0.00
CIL	0.00	7,537.00	877.00	0.00
Elections				148.85
VAT paid	0.00	1,700.00	0.00	1,702.25
Transfer				0.00
Total Expenditure	£21,870.00	£32,127.99	£25,684.00	£20,025.29
Totals Income - Expenditure	£21,018.00	-£12,524.30	-£2,296.00	£18,921.75
Totals Income - Expenditure including balance B/F				£55,240.37
Bank Reconciliation				
Unity Trust Bank Current account at 11/1/24				£3,981.41
Unity Trust Bank Deposit account at 11/1/24				£51,258.96
Outstanding credits				0.00
Total Held in all accounts				55,240.37

Signed

Date

Series no 820

20462217 • Current T1

3,981.41 GBP

Available: 3,981.41 GBP

20462220 • Instant Access

51,258.96 GBP

Available: 51,258.96 GBP

e Payments made since previous meeting

in accordance with minutes of the previous meeting

Payments to be made.

£100 Previously agreed contribution to the Christmas Fayre

£126.00 CO10 Gardening November

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£418.00 Clerk Salary November

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£120.00 Clerk expenses repair of Parish Computer

£267.00 Webnos new battery for VH defib

£5,625.30 Mr Palmer grass cutting Clerk to notify that the PC would prefer to pay quarterly.

Decision for the following to be deferred to the next meeting

£325.00 Village Hall hire in 2023