

WINFARTHING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th March 2024 at 7.30 pm at Winfarthing Village Hall, Hall Road, Winfarthing IP22 2EJ

Councillors Present: Cllr Eric Cole (Chair), Cllr Lynne Rogers, Cllr Jim Collins, Cllr Richard Steel, Cllr David Rix, Cllr Jono Smith

In attendance: Karen Rix (Clerk), District Councillor James Easter (from item 1 to item 7) County Cllr Catherine Rowett (from item 5 to item 7)

Members of the public: 2

1. To receive and consider apologies for absence

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Peter Frost

2. To receive or update any declarations of pecuniary interest

None received.

3. To approve minutes of previous meeting held on 5th February 2024

Minutes unanimously approved.

4. To consider any matters arising from minutes (not covered by an agenda item)

No matters arising.

5. To receive an update on actions from previous minutes

Item 7 – Feb – Cllr Smith reported that owners of The Ramblers were the riparian owners of the ditch alongside the school. The owners of Serenity maintained their section of the ditch at their own cost.

Item 7 – Feb – Cllr Cole had established ownership of the ditch behind properties in Chapel Close and asked District Cllr Easter to investigate why Saffron Housing had been allowed to build so close to the ditch preventing easy accessing for maintenance.

Item 16 - July – Cllr Cole to provide information to Cllr Frost and Cllr Steel on the ID required remains ongoing.

Item 16 – July – Cllr Cole to contact solicitors regarding the land registration remains ongoing.

Item 8.5 – November – Clerk to purchase Microsoft Office 365 in the new financial year once the audit completed.

Item 9.5 – November – Cllr Rogers to query the charge for hiring the village hall to the parish council remains ongoing.

All other actions were completed

6. To receive questions or comments from parishioners

None received

7. To receive a report from County and District Councillors

- County Councillor Rowett provided a report prior to meeting. This can be found with these minutes
- District Councillor provided a report prior to the meeting. This can be found with these minutes.

8. To receive the Clerk's report

- An email had been received offering two free places for the CPRE Norfolk Flood Management Conference, 22nd May 2024 in Dereham. These would be reserved by the Clerk.
- The portrait of King Charles had been ordered.
- The Clerk had attended part 1 of the End of Year Finance Training. Part 2 takes place on 25th April in person at The Costessey Centre Norwich.
- The new parish council website was now live and NALC would be informed to remove old site. It was agreed the clerk should write a piece for The Cock Crow magazine promoting the new site as well as informing the community about the work councillors had been doing on behalf of the community. It was agreed to publicise the new website on the village Facebook group.
- The internal auditor had been contacted and an initial conversation had been had.

Action: Clerk to reserve 2 places for Flood Management Conference for Cllr Cole and Cllr Steel

Action: Clerk to write piece for The Cock Crow promoting the new parish council website and the work undertaken by councillors around the village i.e. footpaths, flooding etc

9. FINANCE

9.1. To approve payments (C)

| Payment Type/ Cheque No | PAYEE | DESCRIPTION | ACTUAL AMOUNT | VAT |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-----|
| 100253 | Karen Rix | Salary February 2024, | 156.16 | |
| 100254 | HMRC | PAYE February 2024 | 39.20 | |
| 100255 | Karen Rix (S Jackman) | Website development and support | 205.00 | |
| | | Total | 400.36 | |

Payments were unanimously approved.

9.2. Receipts (B)

| DATE | RECEIVED FROM | DETAILS | AMOUNT |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| 26/01/24 | South Norfolk Council | Clean Up and Bloom grant | 300.00 |

9.3. To receive a report from the Responsible Finance Officer

| DETAILS | CR | DR | BALANCE |
|--|---------|--------|---------|
| Cash book balance brought forward: A | 4188.32 | | |
| Receipts this month (listed above): B | 300.00 | | |
| Payments this month (listed above): C | | 400.36 | |
| Cash book balance carried forward (A+B-C) Community Account Balance | | | 4087.26 |

9.4. Spend against budget 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024

| BUDGET 01/04/23 TO 31/03/24 | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|
| INCOME DETAILS | BUDGET Ex VAT | CR TO DATE EX VAT | BALANCE | COMMENTS |
| Land rent | 640.00 | 0.00 | -640.00 | Budget transferred to Winfarthing Parish Trust Account |
| Litter Pick | 20.00 | 20.00 | 0 | |
| HMRC Refund | 0 | 173.49 | 173.49 | Additional income not budgeted |
| SNC Clean Up & Bloom Grant | 0 | 300.00 | 300.00 | Additional Income not budgeted |
| Total Income | 660.00 | 493.49 | -166.51 | |
| | | | | |
| EXPENDITURE DETAILS | BUDGET Ex VAT | DR TO DATE Ex VAT | | |
| Insurance | 300.00 | 214.00 | 86.00 | |
| Clerk Salary & Expenses | 2645.00 | 2654.44 | -9.44 | |
| Training | 100.00 | 230.00 | -130 | £130 additional expenditure not budgeted |
| Rent - Glebe Land | 10.00 | 10.00 | 0 | |
| Hire of Village Hall | 150.00 | 110.00 | 40.00 | |
| Memberships | 150.00 | 193.98 | -43.98 | |
| Dog bins | 285.00 | 297.29 | -12.29 | |
| Defibrillator | 100.00 | 117.00 | -17.00 | |
| Stationery | 100.00 | 26.12 | 73.88 | |
| Litter pick equipment | 100.00 | 268.14 | -168.14 | £168.14 additional expenditure not budgeted |
| Donation – Royal British Legion, EAAA | 50.00 | 100.00 | -50.00 | £100 additional expenditure not budgeted |
| Churchyard maintenance | 600.00 | 0 | 600.00 | |
| Audit | 0 | 302.32 | -302.32 | Additional expenditure not budgeted |
| Website Development & Support | 0 | 205.00 | -205.00 | Additional expenditure budgeted in 2024/25 |
| Total Expenditure | 4590.00 | 4728.29 | -138.29 | |

9.5. To agree beneficiary of S137 donation for 2024/25

It was agreed that a donation of £50 would be made to the Royal British Legion.
Proposed by Cllr Smith seconded by Cllr Rix unanimously agreed

10. PLANNING

10.1. To Comment on planning applications:

Application 2024/0476 – No comment.

11. To consider training requirements of councillors

Councillors asked the clerk to investigate available courses for the whole group with Norfolk PTS and bring to the April meeting

Action: Clerk to provide a list of available training courses to the next meeting

12. To consider SNC's Electric Vehicle Charging Point scheme

The Parish council had previously expressed an interest in the scheme but SNC had taken a long time to provide further information. Councillors expressed concerns over the location and any maintenance costs however this information was not yet available. It was agreed that the parish council would maintain its expression of interest.

13. To agree a date for the next village litter pick and discuss involvement with SNC's Big Litter Pick

It was agreed the next litter pick would be held on Sunday 21st April 2024. It was also agreed that this event could be used to sign up for SNC's Big Litter Pick.

Councillors discussed the use of 'Litter signs' around the village to deter habitual offenders. It was agreed to contact the school and ask if the children would like to get involved in the designing some A3 signs.

Action: Clerk to email the school to ask if the children would like to design A3 litter signs

14. To receive an update on communications with NCC's Highways and Water Management departments regarding flooding in the village.

Cllr's Cole, Steel and Smith met with representatives from Norfolk County Council Highways and the Water Management Alliance. All problem areas were viewed and discussed. It was agreed that during heavy rain, the water flow in the watercourse running alongside Holly Farm and the neighbouring bungalow was undermining the bank. The NCC Highways representative reported that finances to address this work were limited. Councillors asked for a camera to be used to survey the drains in Mill Road, this was not agreed however representatives agreed to check previous surveys to identify the drain networks

15. To receive an update on the Norwich to Tilbury Pylon Scheme

Nothing to report.

16. To receive an update on All Saints Primary School

Number on roll is being maintained

17. To receive an update on Community Speed Watch

No further events have taken place. Councillors asked the Clerk to email the organiser to find out when the next event would take place.

Action: Clerk to email Community Speed Watch organiser to establish date of next event

18. To receive an update on parish footpaths

Cllr Steel reported that he and Cllr Smith had undertaken maintenance on a number of the footpath routes. This included removing trees blocking footpaths, repairing stiles and way markers and rebuilding a bridge. Cllr Cole advised that he had timber and way markers that could be used.

Cllr Cole thanked Cllr's Steel, Smith and Rix for all the work they had carried out regarding footpaths and clearing drains in the village.

19. To consider any update on correspondence received

An email had been received from a parishioner concerned about a bonfire on the church grounds and parish council responsibilities. Clerk to respond.

Action: Clerk to email parishioner regarding their concerns about bonfires and parish council responsibilities.

20. To receive items for the next Agenda and confirm date of next meeting

Next meeting will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting.

To consider the training requirements of councillors.

Any other items for the next Agenda please contact the Clerk.

Next meeting of the Parish Council will be Tuesday 2nd April 2024 at 7.30 pm. This will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.00 pm.

Meeting closed at: 10.20 pm

Action List

March 2024

- Item 8 - Clerk to book 2 places for Flood Management Conference for Cllr's Cole and Steel
- Item 8 - Clerk to write piece for The Cock Crow promoting the new parish council website and the work undertaken by councillors around the village i.e. footpaths, flooding etc
- Item 11 - Clerk to provide a list of available training courses to the next meeting
- Item 13 - Clerk to email the school to ask if the children would like to design A3 litter signs
- Item 17 - Clerk to email Community Speed Watch organiser for date of next event
- Item 19 - Clerk to email parishioner regarding their concerns about bonfires and parish council responsibilities

November 2023

- Item 8.5 – **Clerk** to purchase Microsoft Office 365 in the new financial year once the audit completed
- Item 9.5 – **Cllr Rogers** to query the charge for hiring the village hall to the parish council

July 2023

- Item 16 - **Cllr Cole** to provide information to Cllr Frost and Cllr Steel on the ID required
- Item 16 – **Cllr Cole** to chase solicitors regarding the land registration

DRAFT

Council budget

The main issue in February at County Council was setting the budget for 2024-25. There is a huge shortfall in the central grant from government (it's been cutting the grant to local authorities year on year, in real terms, ever since the Conservatives came to power). Initially the Council received a very disappointing settlement, worse even than their pessimistic expectation, putting at risk the very possibility of delivering even a basic level of statutory services required from a county council. The settlement wasn't enough to cover inflation, the increase in minimum wage, nor the extra burdens of a rural and aging population, nor the widespread deprivation caused by long-term illness after covid and by poverty, especially child poverty in many of our most deprived towns.

The problem was then mildly alleviated by additional emergency funding injected by the government, once it became apparent that many councils were likely to go bankrupt. The extra funding was ringfenced for social care, especially children's services (which are especially strained by the increasing child poverty and deprivation in working families who can't cover the cost of food and heat at home). There was also a boost to the rural services grant (which is helpful for Norfolk) but again the funding won't actually cover the extra costs of storm damage, flooding, coastal erosion, damage to the waterways from pollution from roads, fields and sewage. It's annoying that the government seems to think tax cuts for the wealthy are helpful, when everyone stands to suffer from the damaged roads, underfunded education systems, rising crime and ill health. In my view, we need better distribution of the country's wealth, and better funding of public services, not tax cuts for the rich.

At the budget meeting of the Council, opposition groups presented a variety of proposals to improve the outlook and to ensure that the most vulnerable people aren't the ones to lose out most from the cuts. The Green group proposed some amendments to address poverty, hunger and malnutrition among children in Norfolk, to restore the flexi bus provision for rural villages, and to recoup some money by raising revenue by imposing a small charge on companies that provide free parking for their workers in Norwich

Sadly the proposals were turned down, with, to my mind, some very disappointing misunderstandings and lack of vision from those who responded. More below on the MIG and the railways.

The MIG

The Minimum Income Guarantee is a way of subsidising the cost of care, including residential care, for severely disabled people who need to pay for care out of their allowance. It ensures that however much their care costs, they will have some income left to spend on basic necessities such as clothing, shoes, toiletries, outings and so on. The council is required to ensure that people have a certain level of income left, so even if their care costs more to provide, the council will cover the remaining cost so as to leave the person with a little income left over, and families will not be out of pocket if they have a disabled person living with them.

The Council are currently consulting on their plan to save money by reduce the MIG in Norfolk, which would mean that disabled people have to pay more for their residential or home care. This will have a considerable impact on the quality of life and personal dignity of young and working

age disabled people given that we are facing considerable inflation in costs for clothing and other necessities. The consultation will open on 19th February.

I, together with my Green colleagues proposed an amendments to the budget for the Council to produce a budget that would keep the MIG at the level it has been at in recent years, and not to make these cuts at a time of such hardship in many families. Sadly the amendment was voted down by the Conservative group.

A new station for South Norfolk?

In our budget proposal we also suggested making capital purchases of two plots of land with a view to having the resources to reopen a rail station near Long Stratton, and, in due course, one near Cringleford. The land on which the old Fornsett station used to lie is currently available for purchase and much of it is effectively a brownfield site since it was formerly the station yard, sidings and other facilities at the junction with the old line that ran to Wymondham. You may have seen the report on my proposal getting this station reopened in the newspaper. I'm keen that communities that have a railway running nearby should have easy local access to speedy travel to Norwich and London. The plan was to hold the land as part of the County Farms portfolio, until such time as the plans for restoring the station were complete, and then recoup income from it by leasing it for the station and associated car park and businesses etc., while potentially retaining some (or selling it) as farm land. We are also concerned that huge amounts of council funding are being put at risk in plans for new roads that don't have adequate funding, while the condition of our ordinary county roads and small lanes is so dire that people's lives are at risk and the damage to verges and drainage are becoming irreversible. We need better priorities that favour access to good rail travel for everyone, rather than destructive road building that encourages more road traffic, more congestion and more carbon emissions. Sadly, this project was also rubbished by the Conservative councillors, with some particularly impressive misunderstandings and misconceptions. Nevertheless there are many campaign groups who are keen to rebuild a good railway system, and to increase the ambitions of the county towards making that happen properly.

Road Safety Schemes:

Having had disappointing results from the road safety scheme, and no luck so far with my motion to review the speed management strategy, I'm now working with Adam to try to find other solutions for some villages. I have to spend my highways budget this Spring, and will then have next year's budget after the new financial year starts. I'm planning to get a feasibility study for a safe crossing point for the children in Bunwell, on the Turnpike, where we failed to get a lower speed limit. I'm also working on two places where we have problems with lorries taking unsuitable lanes and getting stuck, causing damage etc. So we're looking at new signage and potentially some bollards or other physical controls. I'm also in discussion with other villages about additional signs, paint etc for bends and junctions that are problematic or where people walk and ride horses. This month, I'll have another go at putting my motion to Council for making it easier for villages to get safer speed limits where they want them. This involves revising the Norfolk Speed Management Strategy to prioritise safe speeds in rural areas, for proactively reducing accidents before they happen, not after.

Wet weather and floods

The wet weather and flooding problems have continued to afflict the county, not just in West Depwade but everywhere, with devastating effects on the resources we have to help everyone who has had problems. The officers have been working flat out, and have spend more than a

year's budget on assistance and problem solving, so there has been a lot of activity to try to secure additional funding to help with the costs. I apologise to the many people who have been told that their problem isn't bad enough to merit intervention, but unfortunately it's been necessary to focus on situations where there is danger to life and flooding of properties, and that's meant many places where roads and gardens are getting blocked or inundated, because there simply isn't enough capacity to deal with it all. Do let me know if there are really serious problems you haven't been able to solve, and report road flooding or blocked roads to the County flood reporting site. Report a flood - Norfolk County Council.

Anglian Water also needs to be held to account if there are sewage spills during wet weather. If this is a problem, I'm happy to attend public meetings if you invite Anglian Water to come and speak to us and explain what they are going to do to solve it.

Buses and active travel

I am pursuing some enquiries on behalf of some villages concerning the provision, or lack of it, of Flexibus and Borderhopper services, and the unsatisfactory timing of bus journeys (which are sometimes useless for the purposes one might travel for).

County Council campaigns this month:

Health -Pharmacy First

The government has introduced a new scheme to enable simple illnesses to be dealt with at the chemist's instead of at the doctor's. Unfortunately it coincides with record numbers of local chemists closing down, so it seems unlikely that it will help with anything. There seems to be no plan to save the local chemists.

The end of disposable vapes

The government is outlawing disposable vapes. This is good news not just for the sake of preventing the epidemic of vaping among children but also for the environment.

Dentistry

The lack of access to NHS dentistry is one of the main scandals of our time. The government has produced what it calls a "dental recovery plan". Disappointingly, it fails to address the root cause of the problem, which is the dental contract. The plan is mostly just sticking plaster, like everything in this country at the moment.

Contact me

You can contact me on Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk for Council-related business, and I look forward to helping with a range of issues that people have already brought to my attention. I'm always delighted to attend award ceremonies, events, centenaries, lectures, exhibitions, conferences, debates, litter picking parties, campaign events and protests, so don't hesitate to add me to your mailing lists! I also have a facebook page which includes updates on what I am working on, posts about events and opportunities relevant to residents, and a place where you can comment and leave your views on things I want to ask you about. The link is [here](#).

Catherine Rowett
4th March 2024

District Councillor Report March 24

Council Tax 2024

SNC have held the tax increase to £5 for a band D property. Unlike Norfolk County Council which increases by 4.99%, the maximum allowed and the Police who have applied an increase in the region of £13 final figure not known yet. Plus of course the precept set by parish councils.

SNC budget as per last week's Council meeting

In addition to the normal allocation of funds to the strategic statutory services, the Council will allocate the following sums from the in-year additional investment income:

£145,548 to top up Leisure Support Reserve to £1m, to be used to support the leisure service £250,000 per annum for the next 4 yrs.

£355,000 into the Household Support Fund, which includes discretionary council tax support to double support for hard pressed families in 2024/25

£30,000 to be allocated to the Help Hub to resource operation of discretionary support schemes for residents facing hardship.

£100,000 to support the Council's role in flood prevention, including continuation of the existing work to improve management of drainage. This will be assessed in Sept 24 to see if its meeting its objectives. £50k per year for 2 years

£70,000 to strengthen enforcement of planning conditions, allocated into a reserve for additional planning resource for 24 months as and when required. (Planning Officer 2 years at £35 per year)

Up to £50,000 to support design creation and community participation for the Public Realm improvements for Wymondham.

The Council allocates the following sum from an earmarked capital receipt resulting from the sale of former Council Offices on Middleton Street Wymondham - £100,000 into the CAF fund to take it to £150,000 in total, raising the application limit to £20,000.

The waste Infrastructure Capital Budgets to be reprofiled, 2024-29 £8m. This includes funds to purchase 14 new waste food lorries, investment in a new depot, needed to house increasing size of waste vehicle fleet.