

**STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Thursday 18 January 2024, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash.**

Present: Cllrs T Pulham, R Kember, Mrs V Lane, G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey and G Tancred  
County Cllr A Stringer and four members of the public (two Stoke Ash, two Thwaite)

1. **Apologies and Approval of Absence** – none. County Cllr Stringer would be arriving later due to the prior meeting.
2. **To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **PUBLIC FORUM:** to receive the following reports:  
Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk> – no queries were raised.  
County Councillor – deferred pending arrival of Cllr Stringer.  
District Councillor – no report available.  
Parishioners and Public (meeting open for 10 minutes) – deferred pending arrival of Cllr Stringer.
4. **To consider Health and Safety items for report**
  1. Flood issues update – deferred pending arrival of Cllr Stringer.
  2. Other items for report – none received.
5. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 16 November 2023**  
 Subject to the amendment below the Minutes were unanimously approved.  
 Item 10 Neighbourhood Watch – the attempted entry was into the Village Hall Shed and not the Hall.
6. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report only**

1. 7.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	Currently 3 vacancies – <i>advertised in parish magazine.</i>
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	TP liaising with Record Office.
17.5.18 18.5.23 18.5.23 21.9.23 18.1.24	Thwaite Comm Projects Hardstanding at OSR Tree on Allotment land Prepare allotment land for letting Prune Fruit Tree on allotment land Request to donate Conifer tree to plant next OSR	<i>See Agenda item</i> TP Would be removed Jan/Feb 2024. RM TP TP Agenda item below
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP, RK & GT. RK reported on a useful meeting with the Local Emergency Planning Officer at MSDC. An emergency plan template had been supplied. The Village Hall had been mentioned as a focal meeting point and rest centre. The draft plan had been sent back to the MSDC emergency officer. RK
18/5/23	Preparation of Village Welcome Pack	VL – progressing
21/9/23	Availability of grant funding – Stoke Ash VH & Thwaite OSR	Awaiting District Cllr Weller.
21/9/23	Village Booklet	Complete
16/11/23	Stoke Ash: 1.Reinstate damaged verges and gully’s following recent flood damage 2.Provide a double-sided High-Water Sign at the ford to give warning from both directions. 3.Provide Flood Warning sign at Stoke Ash Street/Deadman’s Lane junction	Reported via Suffolk CC reporting tool.  Suffolk CC declined.  Suffolk CC declined.

	4. Clear pipes under road at the Ford and Bridge	Suffolk CC assessed but declined at present
16/11/23	Thwaite: 1. River Dove clearance from Deadman's Lane bridge to Thwaite 2. Resolve flooding at A140/Wickham Road junction during rainfall 3. New manhole drain in Wickham Road at dip between Church Lane and OSR	Reported via Suffolk CC reporting tool Suffolk CC Highways had ordered work report no. 425 Awaiting response from Suffolk Highways

## 7. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

- DC/23/05805: Land north of Thwaite Road, Wickham Skeith -part in the parishes of Thwaite and Stoke Ash) – application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed formation, alteration or maintenance of private ways for Agricultural or Forestry use. The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) Schedule 2 Part 6 – Creation of farm tracks. Parish Council no objection.
- AP/23/00060 & 61: Planning Appeal – Coppins Cottage, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash - Erection of conservatory to existing single storey extension; alterations to fenestration and erection of porch (following demolition of existing). Parish Council offered no further comment.
- DC/23/05660: Land at Norwich Road, Thwaite/Wetheringsett - Application under S73a for the Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of DC/20/00324 dated 06/10/2020 Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - Erection of 9no dwellings with associated private amenities and parking to vary Condition Number: 2 To allow a revision/amalgamation of the SUDS areas as per Landscaping plan 4957-01. Councillors unanimously agreed no response to the application.

## 8. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

- DC/23/05056: Petrol Filling Station, Brockford Garage, Norwich Road, Thwaite – erection of front extension to accommodate customer wc and alterations to main pitch roof to form shallow pitch roof and accommodate first floor construction for storage and manager's office. Siting three covered cycle storage units. Planning Permission Granted.
- DC/23/04929: Coppin Cottage, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/23/03701 - Condition 3 (Screening Details) – Approved.
- DC/23/04538: Eastwick Farm, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash – application for List Building Consent – repair works to agricultural barn. Listed Building Consent Refused.

## 9. Planning correspondence

Babergh MSDC notification of Call for Sites – following adoption of the Babergh Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 2018-2037 Development Plan Document November 2023 the Council had now progressed to Joint Local Plan Part 2 DPD inviting submissions for a Call for Sites. Submissions to be received by MSDC by 2 February 2024. It was reported one site opposite the village hall in Stoke Ash had previously been considered. Councillors agreed No Response to the notification.

## 10. Neighbourhood Watch report

Cllr Kember was pleased to report no issues had been recorded in either parish, he would however provide a report for the parish magazine on cyber crime.

## 11. Thwaite Community Projects Group

- Hardstanding next Old School Room, Thwaite – no report to date.
- To consider planting donated Conifer tree at the Old School Room  
Cllr Kember reported two Thwaite parishioners had offered to donate a conifer to be planted near the Old School Room in place of the removed tree with suggestion tags could be placed on the tree in memory of deceased pets and decorated with lights over the Christmas period. It was confirmed the area of green in question was owned by Thwaite community. An electricity connection was estimated at £120. There was a general view in favour of a tree that could be planted in memory of deceased pets and for decoration at Christmas but it was generally believed labels could become untidy over time and possibly removed from the tree during poor weather.

*The chair proposed opening the meeting to parishioners for their view*

Parishioners present supported the planting of the tree and decorations over the Christmas period but

supported councillors in their view regarding the labels. The Chair thanked parishioners for their view.

*Meeting closed to the public*

It was resolved the donation of the Conifer tree in memory of deceased pets and decoration with lights over the Christmas period on a timer system was accepted with thanks recorded to the two Thwaite parishioners but the hanging of labels on the tree was not approved, 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Cllr Kember would pass on the Parish Council's decision, clarify the label issue and report to the next meeting.

3. Report on Allotment Lettings 2023-24 – no further update.
4. Report on removal of tree on Allotment land – Cllr R Maisey reported the tree was due to be removed during late January/February. The nearby shed had been removed.

**12. Christmas Tree Wish List 2023** – to consider items raised by parishioners

The following requests had been made via the Christmas Tree Wish List, December 2023. Cllr Tancred reported on action taken so far:

1. Dig out the channels into ditches, plus put dyke weirs in sloped areas, which slows lots of water to lower areas, at least every 2 years. Ditches are like mini rivers or streams. *This had been reported via the Suffolk CC reporting tool.*
2. Village hall needs to be able to park about 20 cars in its car park when events are being held, not parked around the village. *The only available land would involve taking out some of the village green area. It was suggested the Church car park was used for overflow parking when an event was held at the Village Hall. With the permission of the Church Cllr Tancred would look into providing signs indicating whereabouts of additional parking.*
3. Better signage at the top of Deadmans Lane, regarding ford/flooding, and unsuitable for diversions. *The request for a sign at Deadman's Lane/ The Street junction had been made to Suffolk Highways with response this could not be provided at the present time.*
4. 30 MPH flash sign on Roman Way – *it was suggested this was referred to Cllr Stringer for comment or a reduction in the 30mph speed limit.*
5. Need new 30mph signs along Church Lane close to A140 and along Roman Way – *to be referred to Suffolk CC High ways.*
6. Cut gullies to lead water from the road into ditches in both Stoke Ash & Thwaite, so water can get into the ditches etc., and ditches dug out.– *cleaning and digging out existing gullies could be incorporated into the Spring Litter Pick.*
7. Clear the culvert at the end of Wickham Rd where it joins the A140 . *This had been referred to Suffolk Cc Highways and confirmation received work would take place.*
8. Roman Way road sign missing – *District Cllr Weller was arranging for a new sign.*

8.15pm County Cllr A Stringer arrived

**13. To report arrangements for Spring Litter Pick: 9 March 2024 Stoke Ash, 10 March 2024 at Thwaite**

Meet 9.45am on 9 March at Stoke Ash Village Hall and 9.45am on 10 March at Old School Room, Thwaite

An advert notifying parishioners of the litter pick and asking for volunteer help had been placed in the Parish Magazine. Cllrs Mrs Maisey and R Maisey would arrange refreshments after the litter pick on both days.

The Chair would obtain bacon, sausages and rolls.

Collection of the full waste bags week commencing 11 March would be requested via MSDC Public Realm.

**8.20 pm - deferred Agenda item 3 PUBLIC FORUM**

2.County Council – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Stringer added discussions regarding flooding were ongoing. Suffolk CC Flood Risk Management Partnership had produced a document covering riparian ownership and responsibility – highlighting that areas prone to flood were often not due to one problem but a series of problems.

The Chair enquired whether Highways approval would be required for volunteers to cut out and clear roadside gully's during the annual litter pick planned for 9/10 March. Cllr Stringer stated there would be no need for permission from Suffolk CC.

Parishioners and Public

Thwaite flooding – a Thwaite resident raised concerns over flooding in Church Lane preventing access for residents/emergency vehicles. Cllr Stringer stated co-ordinated work with landowners was required to ensure ditches are cleared. He understood landowners had been contacted some 2 months ago and unless there had been action this would be followed up by a letter and enforcement action from Suffolk CC Flood Management. The Chair stated he would speak to the landowner adjoining Church Lane.

Deadman's Lane – Cllr Leggett raised flooding in Deadman's lane. Cllr Stringer suggested a letter to the River Authority. Cllr Leggett offered to draft and send a letter asking for action to relieve the flooding.

Broken manhole, Stoke Ash – Cllr Leggett stated this had been reported via the Suffolk CC reporting tool. The availability of the website reporting facility would need to be published in the parish magazine for information of parishioners with request that they used the service where possible.

Internet connection Stoke Ash – a Stoke Ash resident enquired as to Broadband connection. Cllr Stringer stated this would need to be from a landline number. The resident was asked to send details to Cllr Stringer.

Fallen trees along A140 – a resident stated a number of fallen trees were protruding out onto the main A140. Cllr Stringer stated responsibility to remove would be the landowner, some of the land was owned by Suffolk CC. Cllr Stringer stated he would inspect and report via the website.

Wickham Road, Thwaite – Cllr Kember stated the A140/Wickham Road junction had now reached crisis point for the village, the junction becoming inaccessible due to flood during rain. Cllr Stringer stated the junction was the responsibility of County Council and landowners. It was stated the work required to alleviate the flood could not wait for the enforcement process and the priority for work to combat flooding was queried, with request that a list of work was made available for the Parish Council to monitor. Cllr Stringer was asked to investigate whether a letter/enforcement action had been taken with regard to the junction.

Manhole on A140 opposite Thwaite layby – Cllr Maisey raised the problem of the broken drain, this had been repaired and broken over some 15 years and requested that a solid drain was provided. Cllr Maisey was asked to report the drain direct to Cllr Stringer if and when it was in need of further repair.

*Meeting closed to the public 9.10pm*

#### 14. Rural Coffee Caravan report update

Cllr Tancred reported visits to Stoke Ash would be made on the first Tuesdays of the month the first being Tuesday 6 February 2-4pm at the Village Hall. If additional tables and chairs are required it was understood MSDC may be able to provide funding to purchase them.

The Coffee Caravan was a registered charity with 50% funding from the National Lottery and the remainder from donations. The Charity had won a European Award last year. The chair thanked Cllrs Tancred and Mrs Lane for arranging the facility to the village.

#### 15. Finance

##### 1. Section 137 donation awards

Mid Suffolk CAB – it was understood advice covering a wide range of subjects would be available via the Coffee Caravan. Item deferred for re-consideration when Coffee Caravan established.

SARS – deferred to next financial year.

Headway Suffolk – deferred.

##### 2. Accounts for Payment

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
20/12/23	Cllr Mrs V Lane	Poppy Wreath	£50.00	-	£50.00	Agreed	100537
18/1/24	Clerk	Sal-expen Nov 23-Jan 24 (including some backdated)	£886.25	-	£886.25	Agreed	100538
12/12/23	Zurich Insurance	Annual premium St George's Hall	£396.44	-	£396.44	Agreed	100304
4/1/24	E.on Next	OSR electricity 12/10/23 – 3/12/23	£23.36	-	£23.36	Agreed	100305
18/1/24	E.on Next	OSR electricity 4/12/23-3/1/24	£21.25	-	£21.25	Agreed	100306

Cllr Kember proposed payment of the above accounts, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey – unanimously agreed. Receipts - £1,000 Lottery income into the Thwaite Comm Projects Account. Many thanks were recorded to Cllrs Mrs C Maisey and R Maisey for running the Lottery Club this was much appreciated income for the Projects Group.

##### 3. Finance Working Group report to approve Budget and Precept 2024-25

A revised precept and budget figures had been circulated by the Finance Working Group. This showed a revised total precept of £12,036.00 which included allowances for contributions to a proposed summer wellbeing event for both parishes, an Easter egg hunt and fireworks event. Grants towards the events would also be sought from Suffolk CC and MSDC.

Cllr Tancred proposed approval of the Finance Working Group recommendation of £12,036.00, seconded Cllr R Maisey – proposal unanimously agreed.

Cllr Stringer added Suffolk CC Records Dept had archive information if D Day commemorations were to be included in any event.

**16. Parish Risk Assessment** – to include and approve Wash Lane Risk Assessment

A risk assessment of Wash Lane would only be applicable if the Parish Council maintained it.

The Parish Council had agreed at the last meeting not to pursue ownership. Cllr Tancred reported there was very little use of the lane and suggested the parish council should withdraw any future maintenance and that it be allowed to return back to nature. Any person or parishioner using the lane in future would do so at their own risk. Cllr Mrs Lane proposed the Parish Council withdrew involvement and maintenance of Wash Lane, seconded Cllr R Kember – proposal unanimously adopted.

**17. Clerk’s report/correspondence**

Mid Suffolk CAB – notification of cost of living forum via Zoom 16 February 2024

Stoke Ash & Thwaite Annual Parish Meetings – a date of 25 April 2024 at Stoke Ash VH starting at 7pm was agreed.

**18. Chair’s report**

The Chair thanked his fellow councillors for their help and support over the past few months, Cllr Stringer for his assistance and Parishioners were thanked for attending the meeting.

**19. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests**

Thwaite Christmas Carol Concert 16 December 2023 – some 35 people had attended and enjoyed the event.

**20. Date of next meeting: Thursday 21 March 2024, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall**

Meeting closed 9.40pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

**Summary of action points**

1. 7.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	Currently 3 vacancies – <i>advertised in parish magazine.</i>
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18/1/24	Clear ditches adjacent Church Lane	TP to speak to landowner
18/1/24	Deadman's Lane flooding	GL to send letter to River Authority
18/1/24	A140 at Thwaite – broke drain in road	RM to report direct to AS
18/1/24	Stoke Ash VH overflow car parking	Use of Church car park and provide signs – speak to Church - GT
18/1/24	Reinstate Roman Way road sign	Complete
18/1/24	Reinstate Church Lane SA 30mph speed sign/s	Reported Suffolk CC – declined at present

## County Councillor Report January 2024

### Budget Setting

The draft budget papers for 2024/2025 were made public on the 3.1.2024, The settlement this year from central government has been disappointing, and has lead the administration to draft a budget with a series of cuts, on top of a proposed maximum increase in council tax. The Budget scrutiny papers agree that despite the increased overall funding for adult social care, that complaints will rise, while we are proposing doing less for those not in education training etc (neets) other than collect data on their number, finding apprenticeships, helping finding work etc will no longer be budgeted for.

The draft budget also proposes Suffolk County Council closing two records offices, one in Bury St Edmunds one in Lowestoft, centralising all Suffolks records in The Hold in Ipswich.

The draft budget also includes the withdrawal of £500,000.00 from the Arts,

### Flooding in Suffolk

Recent high rainfall has led to many Suffolk residents' homes being flooded, and flooding more generally on roads. At Council on 7 December, a motion was passed for the council to review the frequency of drain and gully clearance in areas at risk of flooding, and to work closely with districts and boroughs, Anglian Water and the Environment

Agency to help prevent future flooding. My group had hoped to introduce further measures on regularity of maintenance, but this was not supported by the Conservative administration. The motion that was passed was preceded by an announcement by the council of £1m in extra funding to investigate flooding incidents in the county.

Details of a government-funded scheme from DEFRA whereby Suffolk residents can apply for up to £5,000 to help protect their property from future flooding can be found at this link, with applications from January 2024:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

### **Sea Link Consultation Response**

On Tuesday 12 December, Suffolk County Council Cabinet reviewed their proposed response to the National Grid's proposals to link up Suffolk and Kent with undersea cables and landfall at Aldeburgh and a substation at nearby Friston. Councillors in these areas were particularly concerned about the impact on the natural environment and the Suffolk coastline, with most councillors agreeing that engagement with the community about the proposals had been poor, and the timing of the construction coinciding with Sizewell C to create even more pressure on the county's transport routes and tourism industry. Cabinet decided that they would not lodge a holding objection at this stage, but their response to the National Grid consultation outlined their concerns and the possibility of objecting in future once more details were known.

### **SCC Carbon Net Zero Ambitions**

The council's Scrutiny Committee met on Monday 11 December to review the council's progress towards becoming carbon net zero by 2030. Overall there had been a 10% reduction in emissions in 2022/23, due to reduced energy use for street lighting (a recent upgrade programme) and reduced gas consumption at SCC property and schools.

However, the council is not on target to be carbon neutral by 2030, at least partially due to the third scope of indirect emissions – this includes emissions by suppliers and contractors used by the council which are difficult to measure accurately and control. The supply chain represents 91% of the council's total footprint, and it has updated its contract terms and conditions to include annual reporting on reducing carbon emissions, and also requires suppliers to sign up to its Carbon Charter and Climate Change Commercial Ask.

### **Getting Children Ready for Education**

On Thursday 14 December, the council's Education and Children's Scrutiny Committee met to review the support the council provides to prepare children for school. This includes the county's nurseries and early years providers, health services for 0–5-year-olds and Family Hubs (formerly children's centres). In recent years the council has worked with the National Literacy Hub to try and engage children with reading, after research in 2020 concluded that educational attainment for Suffolk children was much lower than it should be.

The Committee acknowledged the good work that was going on in a challenging area and urged that recruitment of health visitors be prioritised by SCC to fill the current vacancies (21%). There were also plans to improve the council's digital platform - in partnership with parents - so they were able to find information and support more easily.

### **DEFRA's Property Flood Resilience Grant**

As well as the initial £500 grant payment and council tax/business rate discounts, residents whose homes have been flooded may also be eligible for up to £5,000 from the Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Grant, which the government requires Suffolk County Council to administer on their behalf. The application process will begin in early 2024 and after initial eligibility checks by SCC, property owners will be responsible for sourcing an independent surveyor and PFR contractor. Payment of up to £5,000 including VAT will be paid retrospectively to the property owner once the Council receives proof of the completed installation and invoicing for the approved measures.

Further information about the grant eligibility, conditions and the forthcoming application process can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/property-flood-resilience-grant>

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Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

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<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>