

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Thursday 21 March 2024, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash.

Present: Cllrs T Pulham (Chairman), R Kember, Mrs V Lane, G Leggett, R Maisey and G Tancred. District Cllr T Weller and one member of the public

1. **Apologies and Approval of Absence** were received and approved from Cllr Mrs C Maisey and County Cllr A Stringer.
2. **To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda**
Item 13 – Cllr T Pulham.
3. **PUBLIC FORUM:** to receive the following reports:
Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised
County Councillor – a written report from Cllr A Stringer had been circulated (copy attached to the Minutes).
District Councillor – Cllr Weller presented his report (copy attached to the Minutes).
 Items raised included the recent publicity over the proposed planning application for a 750 acre solar farm in the Mendlesham/Thwaite area. This was one of several in the district others being a 2000 acre site at Mickfield/Wetheringsett and 1000 acre site at Eye as well as a 2000 acre site near Cambridge resulting in some 6000 acres of agricultural land in the eastern region becoming solar farms. The applications would be a Government decision and MSDC would be consulted as a consultee as well as parish councils. Some discussion took place including disposal of the non-recyclable panels.
 Cllr Leggett queried the lack of a bus service for young people attending school and college and cited an incident of a young person requiring transport to Otley College and requested that routes were identified before a school term. Cllr Weller stated he would bring that to the attention of County Cllr Stringer.
 The Chair enquired as to the availability of grants for Village Hall and Community Room refurbishment, wc's/kitchenette for the Thwaite Old School Room and solar panels and small extension for the Stoke Ash Village Hall. Cllr Weller stated funds were available for the refurbishment mentioned and he would forward details to the Clerk. The Chair thanked Cllr Weller for his advice.
Parishioners and Public (meeting open for 10 minutes)
 The member of the public stated she was interested in hearing discussion on the Thwaite items.
4. **To consider Health and Safety items for report**
It was reported the A140 drain cover at Thwaite had been repaired again.
5. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 18 January 2024**
Cllr Leggett proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane – unanimously agreed.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report only**

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, Thwaite	<i>See Agenda item</i> TP To be removed Jan/Feb 2024. RM TP RM The donors of the tree would be happy not to include tags. Planting would need to be deferred until the autumn.
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. Pending - 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 information.
16/11/23	<p>Stoke Ash:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 4.Clear pipes under road at the Ford and Bridge 5. Ditches Wetheringsett side of Deadman's Lane ford 	<p>These were cleared during the March litter pick. Complete.</p> <p>Suffolk CC declined. This could be considered from Cllr Stringer's locality budget. Await new financial year.</p> <p>Suffolk CC declined. As above. Suffolk CC assessed but declined at present Request landowner clear ditches – pending improvement in weather conditions - TP</p>
16/11/23	<p>Thwaite:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>Reported via Suffolk CC reporting tool Roadside ditches partially cleared. TP to liaise with landowners.</p> <p>Awaiting Suffolk Highways response</p>
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 – broken drain in road	Complete.
18/1/24	Stoke Ash VH overflow car parking	Use of Church car park and provide signs – speak to Church. complete
18/1/24	Reinstate Church Lane SA 30mph speed sign/s	Reported Suffolk CC – declined at present

7. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/24/00855: Gt Hallows, Church Lane, Stoke Ash – conversion of existing outbuilding to annexe use ancillary to main dwelling. Installation of sewage package treatment plant. Associated landscaping works. Increase height of eaves and ridge line of roof to allow insulation to be installed over existing rafters. A recommendation of approval was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
2. DC/24/00594: Land north of Clay Lane, Stoke Ash – application under s.73a for the removal or variation of conditions following grant of DC/1005400 dated 8.1.24 Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and change of use and extension of barn to form 1 dwellinghouse (following demolition of ancillary buildings) to vary condition 2 (approved plans and documents) as per revised details. A recommendation of approval was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

8. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. 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. Planning Permission Refused.
2. DC/23/00187 & Planning Appeal against refusal for LBC and Planning Application - Coppins Cottage, Clay

DC/23/00186 Lane, Stoke Ash - Erection of conservatory to existing single storey extension; alterations to fenestration and erection of porch (following demolition of existing external store).
Appeal Dismissed

9. **Planning correspondence** – none.

10. Neighbourhood Watch report

Cllr Kember was pleased to report there had been no incidents to report since the last meeting. Cyber crime and scams were still prominent issues, Cllr Kember would include a further note raising awareness in the next parish magazine.

11. Thwaite Community Projects Group report

1. Hardstanding next Old School Room, Thwaite – deferred pending possible extension to the Old School Room.
2. Donated Conifer tree at the Old School Room – to clarify pet labels
Planting had been deferred pending obtaining a root ball tree for planting in the autumn. There had been no objection to the request for no pet labels.
3. Report on Allotment Lettings – deferred pending working party rotation and marking of the plots
4. Report on removal of tree on Allotment land – see above.

The Chair proposed and councillors agreed the meeting was opened to the public to enable a parishioner to speak

Thwaite Allotments – a member of the public expressed interest in renting an allotment and enquired when they would be available. The Chair stated the working group was looking to re-align the plots from east/west to north/south to maximise the sun. The availability of water was raised. The Chair stated there was a water main that could be connected, the cost of which would be included in the rent.

A query was raised as to whether the plots would be bound by the Allotment Act. District Cllr Weller stated he would make enquiries and inform the parish council.

Meeting closed to the public

12. Christmas Tree Wish List 2023 – outstanding items

Roman Way 30mph flash sign or reduced speed limit

Village Hall car parking during events

30 mph speed signs – Church lane

It was reported all three items above had been discussed and actioned where possible now complete, proposed Cllr Leggett, seconded Cllr R Maisey and unanimously agreed.

13. Report on Spring Litter Picks held 9 March 2024 Stoke Ash, 10 March 2024 at Thwaite

and to consider payment not exceeding £80.00 to Tony Pulham regarding breakfast goods supplied for the litter pick

Both days had been well attended and the full waste bags had been collected. One volunteer had cleared the pathway between A140 junction to Guide Centre entrance and from White Horse PH to Church Lane.

Cllr Leggett would send a letter of thanks to the volunteer. Cllr Kember proposed a payment of £80 was made to Cllr Pulham as reimbursement for the breakfast goods, seconded Cllr Tancred and unanimously agreed. Thanks were recorded to Cllrs Mrs C and R Maisey for preparing the breakfast food.

14. Rural Coffee Caravan report

Cllr Tancred reported some 14 parishioners had attended the Coffee Caravan February visit to Stoke Ash. Advice covering financial and community issues was available if required and at least two/three parishioners had been given appropriate advice. Supermarket vouchers were available to those recognized as in need. There would be no cost involved in the visit to the village but donations would be welcomed. Cllr Tancred would arrange publicity for the next visit on 2 April 2024.

Councillors welcomed the caravan visit and the immediate impact it was able to provide parishioners via advice and social meetings. Cllr Leggett proposed, following the success of the visit, a donation of £40 to be reviewed after four months, seconded Cllr R Maisey, all in favour, proposal carried.

Cllr Weller stated the District Council also made donations to the scheme recognising the value of the service to rural communities.

15. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

Coffee Caravan £40 – see above.

2. Accounts for Payment/Receipts received

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
21/3/24	Coffee Caravan	Donation 137	£40.00	-	£40.00	Agreed	100539
21/3/24	Cllr T Pulham	Reimbursement Litter Pick expenses	£80.00	-	£80.00	Agreed	100540

21/3/24	Stoke Ash VH	Hire Charges 9/3/24 litter pick	£24.00	-	£24.00	Agreed	100541
21/3/24	Clerk	Sal-expen Jan-March 2024	£751.50	-	£751.50	Agreed	100542
20/2/24	E.on Next	OSR electricity 4/1/24-3/2/24	£25.60	-	£25.50	Agreed	100307
20/2/24	Anglian Water	OSR water charges 30/7/23-29/1/24	£41.03	-	£41.03	Agreed	100308
21/3/24	E.on	OSR electricity 4/2/24 – 3/3/24	£25.60	-	£25.60	Agreed	100309
21/3/24	Clerk	Expenses 2023-24	£192.24	-	£192.24	Agreed	100310

Cllr Kember proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Tancred – unanimously agreed.

Receipts: 4/3/24 bank interest 4.12.23-4.3.24: £59.24

3. To consider for adoption Financial Internal Control Policy

The above document had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting, no queries were raised.

Cllr Tancred proposed adoption of the Financial Internal Control Policy, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane – unanimously agreed.

16. Clerk’s report/correspondence

The clerk confirmed the MSDC Parishes Survey covering facilities and services available in both villages, evidence base for the Joint Local Plan, had been completed and returned to MSDC.

17. Chair’s report

The Chair thanked councillors for their support and work on both Litter Picks and he thanked District Cllr Weller for his attendance at the meeting.

18. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests

Parish Bulletin – this was being sent out via email keeping parishioners enlightened regarding any topical parish issues, ie flooding. More people would be encouraged to join the mailing list.

Parish Magazine – Cllr Leggett reported the magazine was currently running at a deficit. Current advertisement income of £1190 pa would not cover outgoings of £2200. Cllr Leggett asked the parish council whether it would consider a donation towards the magazines costs. Item to be included on the next agenda.

19. Date of next meetings:

Stoke Ash & Thwaite Annual Parish Meetings - Thursday 25 April 2024, 7.00pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall
Stoke Ash & Thwaite Annual Parish Council meeting – Thursday 16 May 2024, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall.

Meeting closed 9.40pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of Action Points

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18/1/24	Reinstate Church Lane SA 30mph speed sign/s	Reported Suffolk CC – declined at present
21/3/24	Thwaite Allotments – investigate whether covered by Allotment Act	DC Weller
21/3/24	Letter of thanks to path clearance volunteer	GL

Devolution Consultation Begins

People across Suffolk are being asked for their views on a proposed, in principle, devolution deal that would hand Suffolk greater decision-making powers and control of more than half a billion pounds of public funding over 30 years.

In December 2022, Suffolk County Council and the Government signed an in-principle deal to transfer certain

powers and funding from London to Suffolk.

Residents and businesses can now share their views about important aspects of the deal, including:

- Control of a new investment fund worth £480m over the next thirty years
- Local control of the Adult Education Budget each year (worth £9.4m in 2025/26)
 - £5.8m one-off funding to prepare brownfield sites for development
- Multi-year transport funding plus an additional £500,000 over two years to finalise Suffolk's Local Transport Plan.

If agreed, the proposed deal would also mean that, for the first time, the leader of Suffolk County Council would be directly elected by the people of Suffolk – rather than by county councillors. Once every four years, residents would vote to elect both their local county councillor (as they do now) and the leader of the county council who will have the unique power to select all the members of the cabinet.

Sizewell C Construction Begins

Construction begins this month of the controversial new power station at Sizewell, a project that is forecast to take 17 years to complete. This will have a massive impact on local communities, the coastal environment and transport routes in the county. Suffolk County Council has secured £250m in mitigation monies for Suffolk communities, but this will still create a lot of upheaval in the county and the council has a role to play in making sure Sizewell C make every effort to minimise its impact and listens to the concerns of residents and local businesses.

New Funding to Combat Serious Violence

Suffolk's Safer Stronger Communities Board has announced a fund of £150,000 from the Home Office to support Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy. Organisations can bid for funding for specific projects which support the work of Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy, with allocation of funding managed through Suffolk Community Foundation.

The Serious Violence Strategy focuses on young people and communities at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, and the funding for projects is available to charities, voluntary sector organizations, social enterprises, parish councils, educational settings and other public bodies from April 2024. Applications are invited for grants between £4,000 and £15,000 and organisations can apply by visiting:

<https://www.suffolkcf.org.uk/grants/seriousviolencedutyfund/>

Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection Report

As you may have read in the local press, Ofsted and CQC published their joint report into SEND services in Suffolk at the beginning of the month. The report was scathing about the county's SEND provision and detailed the failures of the council to communicate and work with parents and carers, improve the EHCP and annual review processes and waiting times, improve outcomes and reduce exclusions. My group was disappointed and concerned that the services are yet to get to grips with improving a service that has now received a third poor inspection result in a row and we offered our assistance to the Local Area Partnership (Suffolk County Council and NHS teams) in preparing the Priority Action Plan they now need to submit to Ofsted and CQC by 7 March.

The poor report led to the resignation of the Cabinet members for SEND, Education and Children's Services and prompted a reshuffle of the political leadership at the council. This report will be devastating for parents of children with special needs in Suffolk, and the council will need to work hard to make improvements quickly and build back trust.

Flood Resilience

Thank you for all the work and communications during the clearing of the water course A140 Walnut Tree (Bucks Head) junction. In the end the total road closure etc was needed as well as landowner input. Local knowledge is going to be pivotal to put right all the flooding issues highlighted by the extremely wet winter.

Follow us on:

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Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/suffolkgli_group/

Facebook - [Suffolk GLI - Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group | Facebook](#)

Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](#)

Cost of Living help and advice:

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

Benefits advice and support:

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

District Councillor Report: Stoke Ash & Thwaite Parish Council

March 2024

Council Budget agreed

The first Green Administration budget was agreed by Council in February. There will be a 2% increase in Council Tax (lower than most authorities). The cost of services to residents and communities is expected to rise by £1.8M, and Core Government funding does not match inflationary pressures, so the Council Tax increase should help protect key services and develop the priorities of the Council. The Green Administration is putting environmental sustainability and social justice at the heart of all its activities.

Housing Revenue Budget

The housing revenue budget has financial challenges ahead, notably an increase of £1.1M in the cost of operation. The housing revenue account and council general fund account are separate - there is no way to cross subsidise. In order to compensate a 7.7% increase in housing rents will be applied to keep pace with rising costs. There will also be increases in service and utility charges for sheltered housing tenants. Advice and help for those struggling financially is available from the Council.

iESE Council of the Year Award

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have been jointly awarded

Council of the Year for their transformation, collaboration and focus on their

communities. This was awarded by the iESE, a not-for-profit organisation

created by local authorities as a shared resource to transform public

services and retain experience within the sector.

Rural Transport grants

A new rural transport grants scheme has just been launched to help provide passenger transport options across the district. Existing community transport operators can apply for funding before 15th April. More details are available here: <https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/rural-transport-grants-scheme>.

Joint local plan (Part 2)

All parish and town councils across both districts have all been invited to complete a survey about the services and facilities present in each area. This information is needed to prepare the next phase of the Joint Local Plan.

Tree Cover

SCC has secured over £200K from the Government's local authority Treescapes Fund for over 1500 new trees in a bid on behalf of all Suffolk councils, including MSDC. The funding will go toward planting as well as maintaining the trees.

Funding for Insulation

Funding is available to help residents with the cost of installing loft insulation, in partnership with Travis Perkins. There are four product options available and residents will receive a 50% discount off their purchase (up to £200), with free delivery.

According to The Energy Saving Trust, it is estimated that an uninsulated home loses a quarter of its heat through its roof. Correctly installed insulation should pay for itself many times over in its 40-year lifetime. More details can be found at the Green Suffolk website <https://www.greensuffolk.org/at-home/grants/>

District Cllr Tim Weller

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