

DALHAM PARISH COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21st March 2019**

Councillors present: John Riddell (Chairman), David Fitch, Rachael Padman and Simon Bates.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk) and one member of the public.

Open Forum

Mike Chester, the Conservative candidate who is standing for election for the new Chevington Ward, introduced himself to the Parish Council.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Isobel Aylott and Jackie Bolton. District Councillor Roger Dicker and County Councillor Robin Millar also sent their apologies.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests

John Riddell and Rachael Padman declared an interest in item 9a on the agenda, the planning application DC/19/0341/TCA.

3. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17th January 2019.

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.

4. County Councillor's Report

No report was received.

5. Borough Councillor's Report

Roger Dicker will no longer be District Councillor after the May elections as Dalham will be part of the new Chevington Ward. He wished everyone good luck in the new ward and said it had been a pleasure to serve Dalham over the last 14 years.

6. Police issues

No police issues were raised.

7. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting

There were four outstanding councillor actions.

8. Finance**a) Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments**

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- HMRC – PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 - **£2.40**
- J P Kirk - expenses - LGA 1972, s111 – **£9.00**
- Ousden Parish Council – $\frac{1}{6}$ of cost of elections training for clerk - LGA 1972, s111 - **£4.16**
- J Goodacre – repairs to parish noticeboards and metal bench – Parish Councils Act 1957, s1 and LGA 1972, s226 - **£240.00**

Rachael Padman and Simon Bates signed the schedule of payments and invoices. The chairman countersigned it.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings

No payments were authorised between meetings

c) Receipts and Payments (including regular and online payments) made since the last meeting

Receipts		Details		Amount
Payments	Minute reference	Details	Method	Amount
10/01/19	118/8g	Fidelity Funds Network	D/D	£15.00
16/01/19	118/8g	HMRC - PAYE	Online	£2.20
18/01/19	138/8a	Risby PC - 1/6 of cost of print cartridge	Online	£5.82

18/01/19	138/8a	J P Kirk - expenses	Online	£9.92
21/01/19	139/11c	Alpha Signs - 50% deposit for replacement village sign	Online	£1,179.00
24/01/19	140/13b	The Voluntary Network - donation	Online	£50.00
30/01/19	123/8n	Staff costs	S/O	
10/02/19	138/8g	Risby PC - to reimburse pension payment	S/O	£15.00
28/02/19	123/8n	Staff costs	S/O	

d) Signatory to complete the checklist of Internal Controls including confirmation of bank reconciliation

Rachael Padman checked the Council's bank statements and signed the checklist of internal controls.

Current account: £1,492.79

Reserve account: £6,000.91

e) Review of all regular payments including the clerk's salary and approval of payments relating to these services for 2019-20

It was resolved the following regular payments would continue to be paid in 2019 - 20:

Payment	2018/19	2019/20	Notes
Community Action Suffolk - Insurance	£241	£241	
Subscriptions:			
SALC	£136	£140	
Risby Parish Council - phone costs	£21	£21	
CAS Ltd - website hosting fee	£60	£60	
HMRC - PAYE	£10	£10	Amount may vary slightly
Clerk's salary	£2,666	£2,845	Monthly payment, amount may vary slightly if PAYE paid.
Risby PC – monthly payment of £15 for clerk's pension costs	£180	£180	
Verge cutting	£1,440	£1,440	Amount may vary depending on weather conditions and number of cuts
ICO - data protection registration	£35	£25	
Village hall rental	£200	£200	

f) Revised contract of employment for the clerk

It was resolved that the revised contract would be approved. The Chairman and clerk then signed it.

g) PAYE details and tax code for the clerk's salary

Rachael Padman reviewed the clerk's Confidential Cashbook and confirmed that the PAYE details and tax code were correct.

h) Review of the income and expenditure for 2018/19 against the budget and the level of reserves for general and earmarked expenditure

Councillors reviewed the income and expenditure for 2018/19 against the budget. At year end, DPC had a budget deficit of £393. This is due to unplanned expenditure for a new grit bin, 30 mph roundels and a replacement village sign. A large part of these costs was covered by a larger VAT refund that anticipated and lower verge cutting costs due to the dry weather in the summer. The remainder will be covered by allocated funds held in reserve and the Council's general reserve.

Estimated reserve as of 31/03/19: £6,031 which includes allocated funds of £3,162. The general reserve is within the guidelines of no more than one year's annual precept.

i) Review the register of fixed assets and insurance values

Councillors reviewed the assets register. No new assets were added in 2018/19. The insurance value for the VAS was amended to £3,100 as the figure on the assets register was incorrect. The clerk was asked to check if the insurance cover for the VAS is for replacement value.

j) Review of the Council's Risk Assessment

It was resolved that no amendments were necessary. The Chairman then signed it.

k) Liability insurance

The Council has the following levels of liability cover:

- Public liability cover: £10,000,000
- Personal accident: £25,000
- Employee dishonesty: £25,000
- Employer's liability (clerk only) £10,000,000

It was resolved that Employer's Liability Cover for one additional person would be added to ensure that cover is in place for volunteers/residents who occasionally carry out work for the Council. The cost will be approximately £6 per person.

l) Appointment of an internal auditor to complete the Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19 and review of the effectiveness of the internal audit

It was resolved that Cathy Whitaker, clerk to Exning Parish Council, would be appointed as internal auditor this year and that a fee of £65 would be paid. The Council reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit. It was resolved that the internal audit was effective and that audit regulations would be met for the following reasons:

- Does the internal audit sufficiently cover all aspects of the financial controls relevant to the council (for example risk management, detection of fraud, internal controls) and are terms of reference in place and approved? Yes. New Financial Regulations were adopted on 1st May 2014 to introduce procedures to detect fraud when using electronic banking. A checklist of internal controls is completed by a councillor at every meeting to verify payments on bank statements against actual payments as listed in the accounts to ensure that there are no discrepancies.
- Is the internal auditor independent (i.e. does not have any role within the Council)? Yes. The internal auditor does not have a role within the Council.
- Is the internal auditor competent to carry out their work ethically, with integrity and objectivity? Is there any evidence to suggest that this may not be the case? Yes, she is a parish council clerk and RFO for Newmarket Town Council. There is no evidence to suggest that she will not carry out the work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.
- Is the Responsible Officer consulted in the internal audit plan? Yes.
- Are the responsibilities of members of the Council understood and has the necessary training been undertaken? Yes
- Is there a plan in place for when the internal audit will be undertaken and does the plan properly take account of corporate risk? The internal audit will take place in April 2019 prior to the accounts being approved at the Annual Meeting on 13th May 2019. The internal auditor's report will be presented to the Parish Council at this meeting and any issues raised by the internal auditor will be discussed at the meeting and an action plan produced.

m) To review the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls

The following internal controls are in place:

- At each meeting a councillor checks bank statements against the Parish Council's accounts to ensure that transactions correspond and that the bank reconciliation agrees with the bank statement
- Where possible payments are approved at meetings and a Schedule of Payments is prepared which is checked by two councillors. Corresponding invoices are checked and signed by two councillors at the same time.
- Regular payments are approved at the March meeting and the invoices paid when they are received. These invoices are checked and signed by two councillors at the next meeting after they have been paid.
- The chairman rules off and signs the Schedule of Payments so that no amendments can be made after the meeting.
- Cheques must be signed by two signatories along with the corresponding invoice.
- A record of online payments is kept and checked at each meeting.
- If a supplier changes their bank details, the supplier must supply a written hard copy notifying the change.

It was resolved that these controls are adequate and are working well.

- n) **Appointment of a councillor to inspect the Council's property for damage or defects by 30th April 2019 and complete the inspection checklist.**

It was resolved that this item would be postponed until later in the year as the property has only recently been inspected.

9. Planning

- a) **DC/19/0341/TCA – 32 The Street, Dalham - i) Fell one Prunus Kursar (ii) Fell privet hedge**
As two of the councillors had declared an interest in this item, no decision could be made about this application as the meeting was not quorate. John Riddell agreed to speak to the neighbours to check whether they have any concerns about the application.
- b) **Planning update. From 1st May paper copies will no longer be sent to parish councils**
From 1st May paper copies will no longer be sent to parish councils. It was resolved that the clerk would email planning notifications to councillors and that they would check the applications online. There is also a projector in the village hall which could be used to view applications.
- c) **Submitting responses to planning applications online**
It was resolved that the clerk would submit all future responses to planning applications online via the West Suffolk planning portal.
- d) **Update on planning application DC/18/1425/FUL**
Julie Salisbury from the Housing Team at West Suffolk had explained that the Woodyard properties could not be supported as homes for affordable rent because of their size. The option of discounted open market properties might be supported, but legal advice is being sought over the wording of the National Planning Policy Framework to establish whether or not local connection criteria can apply as they are not sure.

There is no need for a Housing Needs Survey as market intelligence says Dalham is an expensive village so there will be a requirement for affordable homes.

10. Highways/Rights of Way/Tree Issues

- a) **Quote for hedge and verge cutting**
It was resolved that the Parish Council would accept a quote of £70 + VAT from K Hutchinson for hedge cutting along a section of Gazeley Road. It was also resolved that the Parish Council would accept the price increase for verge cutting from £360 + VAT to £376.20 + VAT per cut and that it would be left to K Hutchinson's discretion as to when to carry out the first cut of the year and subsequent cuts, subject to a maximum of 5 cuts per year. He will also be asked to avoid the daffodils when he makes his first cut.
- b) **Update on the speed roundels**
30mph speed roundels have now been painted at the entrances to Dalham on Lidgate Road and Gazeley Road.
- c) **Update on the Dalham footpath leaflet**
The footpath leaflets have now been delivered to the Parish Council. It was resolved that the payment of £400 + VAT, which is 50% of the cost of printing the leaflets, would be approved and that the money held in the Parish Plan Fund would be used. John Riddell agreed to send details of the current footpath map to David Falk at Suffolk County Council and ask if he can provide a replacement.
- d) **Email from Suffolk County Council re changes to school transport and the need for families to opt-in by 31st May 2019 if they require school transport**
It was resolved that details of these changes would be displayed on the noticeboard and website.
- e) **Email from Connecting Communities confirming that from 1 April 2019 all Connecting Communities passengers will be charged fares, and free bus passes will no longer to be accepted.**
It was resolved that details of these changes would be included in the next newsletter.
- f) **Email from Suffolk County Council re the Gazeley junction on the B1085**
The Parish Council has received the following response from Suffolk County Council via County Councillor Robin Millar:

The Transport Strategy team oversees the delivery of the road safety strategy, alongside the Police, Fire Service, the PCC, Suffolk Highways and Public Health. Information about the partnership can be found on our website <https://www.suffolkroadsafe.com/>

In terms of casualty reduction, we have made significant improvements across the county over the past years. We continue to analyse the injury collision data that is collected by the Police and to scrutinise this information to ascertain if there are locations where road users are being injured and it may be possible for us to make further improvements. There is no dedicated budget for this work, it forms part of the delivery of all capital schemes under the umbrella of the Local Transport Plan.

For a specific site, we identify locations where there have been 5 or more injury accidents in the most recent five-year period as the minimum threshold. This is then analysed further to identify any common causation factors noted by the attending officer, or similarities in the way the collisions occurred or may have been caused.

The strategy identifies key groups of road users to take into consideration as being at a higher risk of injury. This group is made up of motor cyclists, cyclists, older drivers and younger drivers. Our analysis will also seek to identify where these road users are over represented in the information recorded by the Police and it may be suitable to identify or design a behavioural change activity to address the issues.

11. Parish Elections on 2nd May 2019

a) Nomination forms

The councillors present completed nomination forms for the forthcoming elections on 2nd May 2019.

b) Letter from West Suffolk re cost of an uncontested in May 2019 and from 2020.

The cost of an uncontested election will remain the same as in 2015 at **£21.34**, however from 2020 the cost will increase to **£64.70**

c) Pre-election Purdah

Purdah relates to the period leading up to an election, when councils must take extra care when considering their publishing obligations. Parish councils must not publish, arrange for or give financial support to the publication of any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. The period begins with the notice of election on 22nd March and ends on election day (10 pm on 2nd May).

12. Village issues

a) Update on the meeting at West Suffolk house about affordable housing

West Suffolk is keen to see more affordable housing in villages, although with the current price of property affordable housing, which is rented at 80% of market rates, is no longer affordable for most first-time buyers. Social housing is rented at 60% of market rates and is now becoming affordable housing. Affordable housing can be built outside the Housing Settlement Boundary as an exception site, but the key challenge is finding landowners willing to sell land as affordable housing is not as profitable for developers. There are other low-cost housing options such as Help to Buy and shared ownership.

West Suffolk is currently drafting an affordable housing guide which will be distributed to parishes.

Once this is available Parishes will be in a position to start to look more in depth at their housing need with a view to carry out an initial basic housing needs study if they wish. A Housing Needs Survey is no longer required as the current housing list is evidence of need, however if the register is not showing need, or if local need is to be assessed, a Housing Needs Survey could be carried out.

People with a housing need **MUST** register with Home-link if they would like affordable housing. Even if they are allocated to band D (the lowest priority), it will still provide West Suffolk with information about the level of need.

b) Update on the village sign

The sign has been removed and taken away to be used as a template for a new sign.

c) Updating the village walk's map and producing a walks app

David Fitch agreed to upload the new walks on a walking app. Simon Bates agreed to send the clerk photos and locations of sections of some of the footpaths which are impassable because of mud so that the clerk can report it to Suffolk County Council.

d) Email from Dalham Estate about proposed tree works and replacement road signs – for information only

The Dalham Estate's woodland consultants are currently updating a plan which governs the management of the Estate woodlands for the next 10 years which incorporates sustainable thinning and felling. Most of the

operations in and around the woodlands are not within site of the village some work will be carried out on the main road to Dalham/Gazeley (Hawson Hills) over the next few years. They have also arranged to have the avenues surveyed at Dalham Hall as they will be looking to remove the dead/dangerous Horse Chestnuts and replant with Limes. Given these avenues are in a conservation area they will be applying for permission and the relevant paperwork will be displayed.

e) Repainting the footbridge to Moulton

A group of volunteers has offered to repaint the footbridge to Moulton. The Parish Council agreed to make a donation towards the cost of paint for the volunteer group.

13. Correspondence

a) Email from Suffolk Accident Rescue Service requesting a donation

It was resolved that this item would be postponed until after the May elections.

b) Email from West Suffolk about the Great British Spring Clean

It was resolved that the Parish Council would ask Isobel Aylott if the Dalham volunteers would be willing to carry out a litter pick.

c) Email from West Suffolk asking Dalham Parish Council to support the Rural Service Network campaign for the Government to publish a rural strategy.

It was resolved that the clerk would submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council supporting the RSN campaign.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated