

WINFARTHING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5th February 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 Peter Frost, Cllr Richard Steel, Cllr David Rix, Cllr Jono Smith

In attendance: Karen Rix (Clerk), District Councillor James Easter (from item 5 to item 7)

1. To receive and consider apologies for absence

Apologies received from County Cllr Catherine Rowett.

2. To receive or update any declarations of pecuniary interest

None received.

3. To approve minutes of previous meeting held on 5th December 2023

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

Item 18 – July Cllr Steel reported that a conversation with Adam Mayo, NCC Highways, regarding the installation of village gates had taken place. Any installation had to adhere to strict guidelines which Cllr's felt made any 'do it yourself' project complicated and unfeasible. It was agreed to wait until the next Parish Partnership Project was released in November and discuss the project feasibility again at that point.

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

Item 8.5 – November – the Clerk confirmed that the purchase of Microsoft Office 365 can be paid for annually as well as monthly. The Clerk confirmed that the purchase would be made early in the new financial year once the audit had been completed.

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

Item 5 – December – Cllr Cole advised that the parish council did not have authority to close flooded roads so any purchase of barriers would not be pursued.

All other actions were completed

6. To receive questions or comments from parishioners

None present

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.

Cllr Easter provided information about a Mental Health Awareness training session taking place at 5.30 – 7.30 pm on 21st March 2024 at Shelfanger Village Hall. It was agreed the event would be publicised on the Winfarthing Village Facebook page.

Cllr Cole raised a concern regarding the ownership of the ditch behind properties in Chapel Close as no response had been received following an earlier meeting. Cllr Easter agreed to chase South Norfolk Council.

Action: Cllr Frost to post a copy of the mental health training poster on village Facebook page

Action: Cllr Easter to chase response from SNC regarding the ownership of the ditch in Chapel Close

8. To receive the Clerk’s report

- The new parish council website had been developed and was nearly ready to go live in April. A link to the new website had been emailed to all Cllr’s prior to the meeting.
- Reassurance had been received regarding the use of NALC templates once subscription had been terminated
- In line with the council’s business continuity plans, a sealed envelope was given to the Chair for safekeeping.
- The new electoral roll had been received and all Cllr’s were advised to destroy any old soft or hard copies in line with GDPR regulations.

9. FINANCE

9.1. To approve payments (C)

Payment Type/ Cheque No	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	PAYE
100248	Karen Rix	Salary December 2023,	156.16		
100249	HMRC	PAYE December 2023	39.20		39.20
100250	Norfolk PTS	Managing end of year finance training	75.00		
100251	Karen Rix	Salary January 2024 & additional hours 01/08/23-28/01/24	586.20		
100252	HMRC	PAYE January 2024	146.20		146.20
		Total	1002.76		185.40

Payments were unanimously approved.

9.2. Receipts (B)

DATE	RECEIVED FROM	DETAILS	AMOUNT

9.3. To receive a report from the Responsible Finance Officer

DETAILS	CR	DR	BALANCE
Cash book balance brought forward: A	5191.08		
Receipts this month (listed above): B	0.00		
Payments this month (listed above): C		1002.76	
Cash book balance carried forward (A+B-C) Community Account Balance			4188.32

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
Total Income	660.00	193.49	-466.51	
EXPENDITURE DETAILS	BUDGET Ex VAT	DR TO DATE Ex VAT		
Insurance	300.00	214.00	86.00	
Clerk Salary & Expenses	2645.00	2159.19	485.81	
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
Total Expenditure	4590.00	4028.04	561.96	

9.5. To approve 2024/25 budget

The Clerk reminded Cllr’s that the budget had been approved in principal at the December 2023 meeting subject to the receipt of the Tax Base figure from SNC. As the council do not sit in January the Clerk notified SNC that their signed precept form would be submitted in early February and provided them with the budget figure likely to be submitted.

The Tax Base figure had since been received as 199 which had the effect of increasing the Band D charge to £25.80, this was an increase of £3.18 from 2023/24.

Approval of the 2024/25 budget was proposed by Cllr Rogers, seconded by Cllr Steel and unanimously agreed. Cllr Cole signed the precept form. The Clerk advised the form would be submitted on 6th February 2024.

9.6. To approve the Clerk’s online access to the parish council bank account

Cllr Cole and Cllr Rogers signed the bank forms approving the online access and signed a covering letter to Barclays Bank authorising the request.

9.7. To receive a report following ‘scrutineers’ internal financial check.

Cllr Frost and Cllr Steel carried out the internal check on 8th January 2024 and reported that everything was in order.

10. To appoint an internal auditor:

Cllr’s discussed the quotations from two auditors. The appointment of Mr Robin Goreham was proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Frost and unanimously agreed.

11. PLANNING

11.1. To Comment on planning applications:

Application 2024/0088 – Cllr’s agreed the proposals would improve the entry into the village.

Application 2023/3838 – No comment.

11.2. To receive an update on any previous applications:

No comment. It was agreed that this item was not required on any future agendas.

12. To agree and adopt parish council statutory policies

12.1. Financial Regulations Policy

The policy was agreed and adopted.

12.2. Internal Control Policy

The policy was agreed and adopted.

12.3. Risk Assessment and Risk Register

The policy was agreed and adopted.

Adoption of all three policies was proposed by Cllr Frost, seconded by Cllr Steel and unanimously agreed.

- 13. To receive an update on meeting with NCC Highways regarding village flooding**
Cllr Cole reported that the meeting with Adam Mayo, NCC Highways, was useful and all the areas of concern were discussed in detail. Cllr Cole agreed to email Adam Mayo with photo and video evidence of the flooding issues.

Cllr's discussed ownership of the ditch alongside the school and behind the two properties next to the school as the ditch needs to be dug out to aid the flow of water. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the riparian owners. Cllr Smith agreed to investigate ownership.

Action: Cllr Smith to investigate ownership of the ditch alongside the school and behind the adjacent properties.

- 14. To receive an update on the village litter pick held on 28th January 2024**
The event was supported by 16 Cllr's and parishioners. Cllr's expressed their thanks to Jeff Rogers for the use of his tractor and trailer. A large and varied amount of rubbish was collected and has been disposed of by South Norfolk Council. The next litter pick will take place in April, date to be decided at the March meeting.

- 15. To receive an update on the Norwich to Tilbury Pylon Scheme**
An email from UK Power Networks providing an update on the scheme had been circulated to Cllr's prior to the meeting.

- 16. To receive an update on All Saints Primary School**
Pupils are enjoying school and the teaching staff remain stable.

- 17. To receive an update on Community Speed Watch**
Two additional members have been recruited to the team. Once checks have been completed this will offer more flexibility to the rota.

- 18. To receive an update on parish footpaths**
Cllr Steel reported that FP 22 had been closed due to a broken/absent bridge. FP 21 had a broken way marker post which Cllr Steel will repair. FP23 has been walked and is ok.

Action: Cllr Steel to repair way marker post on FP21.

- 19. To consider any update on correspondence received**
Clerk to respond to an email from a parishioner who raised a concern about a drainage ditch that has been filled in behind properties in The Street.

- 20. To receive items for the next Agenda and confirm date of next meeting**
To agree the beneficiary of a S137 donation for 2024.
To agree the date of the next litter pick in April 2024.
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 Monday 4th March 2024 at 7.30 pm

Meeting closed at: 9.50 pm

Action List

February 2024

- Item 7 - **Cllr Frost** to post a copy of the mental health training poster on village Facebook page.
- Item 7 - **Cllr Easter** to chase response from SNC regarding the ownership of the ditch in Chapel Close.
- Item 13 - **Cllr Smith** to investigate ownership of the ditch alongside the school and behind the adjacent properties.
- Item 18 - **Cllr Steel** to repair way marker post on FP21.

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 contact solicitors regarding the land registration.

DRAFT

County Council Budget

The Council has received a very disappointing settlement from the government, worse even than their pessimistic expectation, leading to the need to make even more swingeing cuts and putting at risk the very possibility of delivering even a basic level of the services that are expected of a county council. The settlement does not cover the cost of inflation, the increase in the minimum wage, and the extra burdens imposed by a rural and aging population and considerable deprivation caused by long term illness in the wake of covid and by poverty, especially child poverty in many of our most deprived towns.

The problem has been mildly alleviated by additional emergency funding injected by the government after it became apparent that a large number of councils would be unable to deliver their statutory obligations and were likely to go bankrupt. The extra funding is directed 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) and there is also a boost to the rural services grant which helps councils with the additional costs of servicing a large rural area (such as Norfolk) but again the funding will struggle to cover the extra costs of maintaining drainage systems on roads and storm damage, flooding, coastal erosion and damage to the waterways from pollution from roads, fields and sewage.

The budget will come to council to approve on 20th February. I along with the rest of the Green Group have been preparing some proposed amendments, to try to ensure that the most important things are protected, but there is very little wriggle room when the resources have been cut to the bone under more than ten years of Conservative government austerity and incompetence.

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 will be consulting on their proposals to reduce the MIG in Norfolk, which would 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, are preparing our proposals for amendments to the budget for the Council to vote on this month. We are looking to get the Council to vote to continue to fund the MIG at the levels they have been at in recent years, and not to make these cuts at a time of such hardship in many families.

Road Safety Schemes:

My list of requests under the Road Safety Community Fund went in for consideration in November, after much consultation and calculations by Adam Mayo, our highways officer. There were lots of requests, and they really only considered two of mine, one for safer speed limits in various locations around Bressingham and one for a speed limit on the main road at Bunwell. They refused the latter on the grounds that not enough people had been hurt or killed. A clear example of the bonkers criteria that prevent us from making people feel safe to come out and walk, ride bicycles or walk dogs and horses.

I am now working with Adam to try to find other ways of delivering alternative solutions for the problems that didn’t get support, or were too low down the list to stand a chance. I’ve been saving my highways allowance for these projects and hope to find affordable options for at least some of them. Thanks to a letter from the children at Bunwell School I am hoping to get a feasibility study for a crossing point on the Turnpike (a zebra crossing is unlikely but a refuge island to make it safe to cross in two stages may be an option). But this insistence that safety comes last when it comes to deciding what interventions are required is really problematic.

I’ve tried twice now to get a motion to Council for setting up a working group to investigate how we might change the criteria to make it easier to get a safer speed limit in places where village communities want it. I’d like us to be the council that leads the way on promoting safer rural roads, to inspire other councils to do the same. Ten times as many people die on rural roads as on motorways. Cyclists are almost three times more likely to be killed on a rural road than on an urban one. We ran out of time at Council in December and January, so I’ll have another go at bringing the motion in March. I really want it debated and not just voted down without discussion, because I can’t believe the other councillors don’t also have parishes clamouring for something better.

Buses and active travel

I'm looking to arrange a discussion with officers and parish councils about a few situations where we don't have a useful timetable, even though there is a scheduled bus. Another thing we are building into our budget amendment is finding funding to restore on-demand bus provision, such as the Borderhoppa, in the rural places without sufficient transport. We need to make village life a joy, even for those who can't access a car, and those who are trying to get around in more planet-friendly ways.

The Council has now extended free bus travel for those who hold a concessionary pass on grounds of disability, so that it covers travel before 9.30 a.m: this allows those with disabilities to get to work and training opportunities for free, if there's a bus that works for that. But it's not much use if there is no bus that runs at that time!

Roads and railways

Work is now starting on the long awaited Long Stratton bypass. It will take traffic out of the centre of the town, which is good, but not off the roads altogether. In fact, new fast roads always tend to increase traffic overall. We need to be looking at other solutions, and I'm keen to get a head of steam up behind the Railfuture project of reopening one of the stations (closed by Beeching) on the London line between Norwich and Diss. The one between Fornsett and Long Stratton seems the most likely, to serve a large number of people both in Long Stratton and the villages nearby. Purchasing the land, as an investment towards making this possible, is one of the proposals for capital investment in our Green group's County Council budget amendments. We'd use the new transport and investment money levelling up money that comes with the county devolution deal for this.

How do sixth formers get to school or college?

The County Council is undertaking its annual review of its Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. There's a consultation about the [Post-16 Travel Scheme](#) (subsidised travel for eligible students aged 16-18 and 16-25 year olds with Special Education Needs and Disabilities, to get to a school sixth form, sixth form college or further education learning establishment). The council spent £3.8m on this in 2022-23, providing travel assistance to 1,320 students across Norfolk. To reflect forecasted inflation, the parental contribution for the Post-16 Travel Scheme may need to rise. They're consulting on two options for increasing parental contributions: a 3% option, based on current inflation levels and a 6% option based on the council's inflationary forecast for 2024-25. The 6% figure more likely represents the true rise in costs in the coming year.

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](#).

News and campaigns this month:

Health - HIV testing week awareness - Norfolk campaign launched

Norfolk County Council is encouraging residents to get tested for HIV during this year's National Testing Week (Monday 5 - Sunday 11 February).

In Norfolk, of the people newly diagnosed with HIV between 2017-21, almost half received a late HIV diagnosis. There are particularly high prevalence areas in Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

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.

Catherine Rowett

5th February 2024

District Councillor Report Feb 2024

EMERGENCY PLANS

Do you have an Emergency Plan and is it up to date. An Emergency Plan is not just for flooding but everything we can think of where the whole or any part of the community is at risk.

DEAL FARM APPEAL

Due to last minute reports from the applicant that will need to be looked into, the Inspector has agreed to adjourn the hearing until possibly June 24 from 6th Feb 24.

CAR PARKS

There was an inaccurate report in the EDP relating to the increase of parking charges and parking charges on Sundays in South Norfolk.

No decision has been made in respect of an increase in car parking charges and there will be no charges in South Norfolk for car parking on a Sunday. The report on this matter is not expected until September.

NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY

The government have made a £10m contribution to SNC towards the effect NN is having on house building.

DISS SWIMMING POOL

Plans to renovate the pool are moving forward and as you drive past you will see contractors have moved in. Members of the pool have been informed of the impending closure and have been offered options to continue to get access to swimming classes etc.

FOOD WASTE

Mentioned last month, but the Government have now made collection of food waste from every house and business mandatory. This will come into effect by 2026. 14 new vehicles will be required and have been ordered and as soon as they start to arrive people will need to be employed to collect the waste. The Government has part funded this requirement and the rest has to be found locally. The first collections should be made in 2025 when collections will be made from all businesses with 10 or more employees.