

# YOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting of YOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

held on

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

at 7pm

Yoxford Village Hall

### 1. Attendance and apologies

#### Attendees:

Cllr. David Childs  
Cllr. Janet Gardner  
Cllr. Ian Patterson  
Cllr. Angela Roper  
Cllr. Deborah Thompson  
Cllr. David Tower  
Cllr. John Walford  
Cllr. Hazel Wheeler

#### Apologies accepted for absence:

Cllr. Laura Greenberg  
Cllr. Nicol McCallum  
  
District Cllr. Julia Ewart

#### In attendance:

County Cllr. Richard Smith

2 members of the public  
Trudy Charles - Clerk/RFO

### 2. To receive declarations of interest and to consider requests for dispensations

### 3. Public Forum

- a) Members of the public may address the Council on any agenda item.
- i. George Fothergill, Director of the CIC Status Creative addressed the Council and, as a result, it was agreed by the Chairman to move Agenda Item 7a. to be discussed with the representative during the Public Forum.
  - ii. Mr Fothergill shared the background to the CIC and its planned bid to Sizewell C's Community Foundation. He is collecting evidence of need for a community based weekly creative arts project for aged 50+ residents of the local area (Middleton, Theberton and Yoxford).
  - iii. The proposed project will be designed to counter direct impact of Sizewell C such as: anxiety caused by increased traffic and the potentially/subsequent developing loneliness and isolation.
  - iv. With no charge for the end user, the project will use a professional team employed by Status Creative.
  - v. Mr Fothergill asked that the Parish Council support his application and submit a summary of need. His proposal was discussed at length and it was felt by all that this could be a powerful piece of work. Cllr. Tower proposed and Cllr. Patterson seconded a motion to support Mr Fothergill's request. All present voted in favour.
  - vi. Mr Fothergill thanked the Council and left the meeting.

**ACTION: Clerk to submit a summary of need to Mr Fothergill.**

- b) To receive a report from County Cllr. Richard Smith:
- i. Traffic measures for the village are due to be completed by January 2025.
  - ii. Suffolk County Council has started early planning for its 2025/6 budget in readiness for February 2025. Funding comes from 1/3 from Council Tax and 1/3 from central government.
  - iii. Speculation that a one year settlement is to be expected.
  - iv. The devolution deal for Suffolk/Norfolk has been withdrawn by the new government although Cllr. Smith outlined the possibility of a new mayoral layer shared across Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and others is being explored.

- v. Changes in planning policy are expected.
  - vi. With the new government's drive for carbon neutral by 2030, Cllr. Smith outlined his personal opinion that NSIPs in the area are likely to be approved.
- c) To receive a report from the District Cllr. Julia Ewart: a report will be forwarded.

#### 4. Minutes

- a) To approve as accurate the minutes of the Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024: Cllr. Roper asked for two changes to the Extraordinary Minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> September. Cllr. Tower proposed that, with the changes requested by Cllr. Roper, the Minutes of the meetings of both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September be approved. Cllr. Wheeler seconded this proposal/ All present voted in favour.
- b) Matters arising: covered within the Agenda.

#### 5. Councillors' and Clerk's Reports

- a) Cllr. Tower welcomed Cllr. Roper to the Council and noted the resignation of Cllr. Anna Noakes. The Clerk gave an update on the Casual Vacancy and expected to hear from East Suffolk Council's Election Team after the 10<sup>th</sup> October deadline.
- b) *Cemetery*: to discuss further, ideas regarding a memorial wild flower area/rose garden: there was a lengthy discussion about the feasibility of setting up said garden:
- i. The soil in the cemetery is not conducive and any garden will require a long-term plan for maintenance/care. Cllr. Thompson suggested an expert is contracted to complete a survey of the land and then advise. She has a contact.
  - ii. Cllr. Walford shared that he knows a garden designer.
  - iii. Cllr. Patterson suggested that planting a range of bulbs would provide colour at a much reduced cost and not require a maintenance plan.

**ACTION: Cllrs. Thompson and Walford to gather two quotes for survey of the cemetery.**

- i. Cllr. Thompson proposed that Council implements a policy of natural/biodegradable/compostable flower/plant arrangements for the cemetery and withdraw the option for the use of plastic flowers. This was discussed at length.
- ii. Cllr. Walford seconded the proposal and everyone present voted in favour. The following timetable was agreed: From January 2025, all burials to abide by the policy. From June 2025, removal of plastic arrangements from all existing graves.

**ACTION: Clerk to notify users via Newsletter, contact with Funeral services and the fixing of a Notice at the Cemetery gates.**

- c) *Children and Young People* (Cllrs. McCallum & Gardner): no report.
- d) *Church*: no report.
- e) *Community Partnership* (Cllr. Thompson): the next meeting is 10<sup>th</sup> October. Cllr. Thompson to attend.
- f) *Volunteers Work Party*: key tasks were agreed as the cleaning of street signs and clearing leaves. Cllrs. Thompson and Walford to meet to clean the signs. Volunteer work party for 2<sup>nd</sup> November to clear leaves from pavements around Village Hall area.

**ACTION: Clerk to contact Volunteers.**

- g) *Yoxwood* (Cllr. Childs): new picnic benches have arrived and are being assembled. Cllr. Childs will enquire as to whether, on a temporary basis, the woodland team can loan a bench to the cemetery. In addition, Cllr. Roper enquired whether memorial plaques are permitted and if not, that this be a new offer. Cllr. Patterson seconded this proposal and all present voted in favour.

**ACTION: Cllr. Roper to research how other Council's deliver the service including costs.**

- h) To review Councillors' responsibilities: these were reviewed and revised. The agreed revisions are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

#### 6. Strategic Objectives 2024-2025

- a) To receive further updates concerning the legal transfer of Yoxwood View play area (Priority 1.2): the Clerk summarised her contact with the solicitor and awaits a response.

- b) To receive an update on progress on works to implement the revised traffic management measures on Old High Road and Fish Shop Hill. (Priority 3.1): as mentioned by County Cllr. Richard Smith in his report, works are due to be completed by January 2025.
- c) To consider any information for communicating (Priority 2.1) and to discuss further, ways that the Council can improve access to information for the parish and agree next steps: the matter was discussed. An offer of a nearly new display board had been made by Chediston PC for £650. The Clerk shared that she was waiting for further detail from its clerk.

## 7. Parish Matters

- a) To consider the request from the CIC 'StatusCreative' to support an application to the Sizewell Community Fund for a creative arts offer: see 3a) Public Forum
- b) To discuss and agree priorities for any funding applications: this matter was discussed. The Clerk suggested that to move the item on, in the first instance, a Working Party could be formed. Cllrs. Gardner, Roper, Tower and Thompson and the clerk offered to be part of this group.

### **ACTION: Clerk to contact the team and arrange a first meeting.**

- c) Review the village maintenance plan (Community Self-Help Scheme) and agree next steps: covered under Item 5f).
- d) To receive and discuss relevant updates regarding the Sizewell C project, including:
  - i. Cllrs. Patterson, Tower and Walford's attendance on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at the Sizewell C's presentation to Darsham PC on the works surrounding Darsham and Yoxford was noted.
  - ii. Cllr. Walford's attendance at the Community Forum meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> October was noted.
  - iii. Cllr. Tower summarized a meeting he and the Clerk had had with a representative from Breheny Civil Engineering Ltd. about the company's planned tender for the Sizewell C works at Darsham and Yoxford roundabouts. As part of its submission, the company intends building in an offer of a community project and has asked for ideas for projects. The Clerk will provide a summary of the Parish Council's development priorities.
- e) To consider the following requests for support from AEPA:
  - i. Both requests were discussed. Cllr. Patterson proposed and Cllr. Tower seconded that Yoxford Parish Council supports the proposed letter to Ed Miliband and endorses the Draft Constitution for the East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership - a steering group of Town & Parish Councils to engage with DESNZ ministers and officials on a regular basis to discuss the many energy projects proposed for our area, and in particular, the cumulative impact of these on our communities. All present voted in favour of this proposal.

### **ACTION: Clerk to provide AEPA with this update.**

- f) To agree the team who'll deliver East Suffolk Council's 2024/5 Keep the Heat: thermal imaging project: this was discussed. Cllrs. Roper and Walford offered to lead on the delivery of the heat surveys. Clerk to complete the admin.

### **ACTION: Clerk to liaise with Cllrs. Roper and Walford as relevant. Clerk to publicise the project in the monthly newsletter.**

- g) To receive an update on liaison between the Parish Council and other landowners in order to meet the requirements of riparian responsibility: the matter was discussed at length. A representative of a local landowner was present and summarised the work of his team and also offered to review the length of land which runs alongside the Council's land at the allotment and Yoxwood to inform further discussions. He also shared that the Environment Agency has reviewed the River Yox to inform a flood model of the river. The representative also advised that home owners with riparian responsibility should also ensure that surface water drains are kept clear.

### **ACTION: Cllrs. Tower and Thompson and the clerk to complete a walk along the land to ascertain work that is needed.**

- h) To receive and discuss relevant updates regarding the Sea Link project: no update.
- i) To consider the Parish Council's response to a resident's email regarding concerns about its decision on Donkey Meadow and its general working practices: this matter was discussed at length:

- i. The resident's email was thought, in part, to be egregious, factually inaccurate, patronising and failed to understand the powers and responsibility of the Parish Council but, despite these observations, the resident's email had triggered important reflection about how the Council reaches and encourages dialogue with, and engagement from residents. Given the accusations within the resident's email, it was advised by the Clerk and Chairman that it should be seen as a complaint and so responded to under the procedures within the Council's Complaints Policy.

**ACTION: Clerk to contact the resident to arrange a meeting. Cllrs. Tower and Walford to attend. Clerk to minute.**

- ii. In addition, Cllr. Patterson suggested that, from January, Council trials a surgery type offer where three Councillors are available to meet with residents on a 1:1/small group basis. This proposal was discussed in detail and the following was agreed:
  - a. Quarterly from January
  - b. 1 hour session
  - c. Scheduled for daylight hours at the Village Hall

**ACTION: Clerk to draft a schedule/rota for circulation to Council for editing/approving and then publishing.**

- j) To consider the purchase and planting of a Christmas tree to begin an annual festive 'Yoxlights' event for the village, beginning 2024: discussed at length, it was agreed that to site a Christmas tree in the churchyard would be a central and most appropriate location.

**ACTION: Cllr. Wheeler to contact Pegg's to request a donation. Clerk to contact Rev'd Tim for permission to site the tree in the churchyard.**

- k) To consider a proposal to invite the charity 'The Rural Coffee Caravan' to deliver its service in the village: this was discussed and it was proposed by Cllr. Thompson that the option be explored further. Cllr. Wheeler seconded and all were in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk to contact the charity to initiate further discussion about location/timings etc.**

## **8. Planning**

- a) To consider the following full planning application:

**Planning reference:** DC/24/2966/FUL

Proposal: Annexe to Main Residence set within the grounds of the Main Residence.

Ancillary to the Main Residence. Providing 2 additional bedrooms with bathrooms and a central multipurpose room including kitchen facilities.

Site address: Moss Cottage, Sibton Road, Yoxford, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 3JP

Consultation letter expiry date: 10 October 2024

- i. The application was discussed. It was noted that the concerns submitted by Council on 8<sup>th</sup> July had been addressed in the applicant's Planning Statement and so it had no grounds to oppose the application.
- ii. It was noted that within the planning statement, point 5II.ii, the following intent is stated, "There is no intention of using the annexe as a holiday let, as common in the area." This was an important and influential statement, which if possible, should be included as a condition of the application being passed.
- iii. Cllr. Childs proposed that the application be supported. Cllr. Walford seconded the proposal and all present voted in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk to submit Council's comments via the ESC Planning Portal.**

## **9. Administration**

- a) The insurance renewal for 2024/5 from Community Action Suffolk was noted as £1937.26.
- b) To approve the revised Complaints Policy. The updated policy was proposed for approval by Cllr. Tower, seconded by Cllr. Patterson and all present voted in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk to process the policy.**

- c) The annual review of the Standing Orders was completed. No revisions required. Cllr. Tower proposed that the orders be approved. Cllr Patterson seconded the proposal and all those present voted in favour.

- d) To consider training needs including:
  - i. New Councillor Basics (two sessions of two hours @ £32 + VAT per session): Cllr. Roper agreed to attend these sessions.

**ACTION: Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Roper regarding dates and book training.**

**10. Finance**

- a) The monthly financial position for October 2024 was noted. The Clerk shared that the AGAR 2023/4 had concluded and there were no actions. The Chair thanked the RFO for her diligence and hard work in ensuring the finances were in excellent order and compliant. In addition, it was noted that the second instalment of the Precept had been received at £7376.97.
- b) The new interest rate on Unity Trust Bank’s Instant Access account to Gross 2.60% / AER 2.62%, effective from 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 was noted.
- c) Cllr. Tower proposed, Cllr. Wheeler seconded the authorising of the payments listed below. All present voted in favour:

Details	Payee	Amount	VAT	Total	Power
External Audit 2023/4 (AGAR) Fee	PKF Littlejohn LLP	£210.00	£42.00	£252.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Salary October 2024	Employee	£881.52	n/a	£881.52	LGA 1972 s.112
Invoice 3969 grass cutting contract	SCL Landscape Management Ltd	£650.00	£130.00	£780.00	OSA 1906 s.9

**11. Correspondence**

- a) To review correspondence received from 28<sup>th</sup> August to 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and to take action as appropriate:
  - i. A request to trade had been received via email from a new business called Coby’s Coffee and this was discussed at length. Reservations were voiced: the appropriateness of the business when the village already has two venues selling refreshments, snacks and light meal options; generation and disposal of rubbish; timings and client base. It was proposed by Cllr. Patterson that further information is required before a decision can be made. Cllr. Wheeler seconded and all were in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk to contact business owner for further information regarding rubbish policy, food offer, target client base and timings and update Council.**

**12. Questions to the Chair/Items for the Next Agenda**

- a) Painting/cleaning of the white posts

**13. Next Meeting**

- a) The date and time of the next meeting of the Parish Council was confirmed as Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm

Trudy Charles  
 Parish Clerk  
 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**Appendix A: Correspondence – August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 27<sup>th</sup> 2024**

<b>Sending Organisation</b>	<b>Date(s) received</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Date forwarded</b>
<b>Suffolk Association of Local Councils</b>	various	Bulletins, training, AGM info,	various
<b>East Suffolk Council</b>	24/09/24	Unrestricted Community Grants / Postcode Places Trust	24/09/24
	24/09/24	Rural Coffee Caravan	24/09/24
<b>Suffolk County Council</b>	20/09/24	VCFSE Sector Grant funding alert	24/09/24
<b>Police</b>	25/09/24	Police Connect: Rural burglaries in Earl Soham & Dennington	25/09/24
	02/09/24	Police Connect: New Right Care, Right Person policy having positive effect	04/09/24
	05/09/24	Police Connect: Halesworth Street Meet	05/09/24
	05/09/24	Police Connect: 'We Don't Buy Crime' Campaign	05/09/24
	05/09/24	Police Connect: Action Fraud warns of the top frauds targeting students	05/09/24
<b>Others:</b>			
<b>AEPA</b>	20/09/24	Request for support re contact with DfEnergy & draft constitution.	24/09/24
<b>Residents</b>	27/09/24	Email re. Donkey Meadow from one residents	04/09/24 & 28/09/24
<b>ESTA</b>	27/09/24	ESTA's Headline News	28/09/24

## Appendix B: Financial Position

<b>Receipts: UT Current Account - August 2024</b>		<b>Sep-24</b>	<b>Year to date</b>
Cemetery Reservations/Interments		£ 400.00	£ 1,350.00
Transfer from UT Instant Access Savings Account		£ -	£ 5,000.00
		<b>£ 400.00</b>	<b>£ 6,350.00</b>
<b>Payments UT Current Account - September 2024</b>			
Grounds Maintenance Contract (incl. VAT)	SCL Landscapes	£ 1,008.00	£ 4,311.00
Salary, PAYE & NI	Employee/HMRC	£ 1,169.89	£ 6,264.23
Banking Service Charge: Quarter 1 2024/5	Unity Trust Bank	£ -	£ 18.00
Audits/Legal: Internal Audit	SALC	£ -	£ 328.80
Training	SALC	£ -	£ 179.00
Membership/Subscriptions: 365	Microsoft	£ -	£ 692.17
Clerk/PC Mobile	Lebara	£ -	£ 29.40
MUTs: cash float top up	Volunteer	£ -	£ 755.00
MUTs: Lunch	Caterer	£ -	£ 699.00
Bench x 1 for Yoxwood	Yoxwood	£ -	£ 315.95
Bench x 1 for Teenage Shelter	Teenage Shelter	£ -	£ 315.95
Youth Club Funding	Youth Club	£ 1,202.24	£ 1,202.24
		<b>£ 2,177.89</b>	<b>£ 15,110.74</b>
<b>Total Funds: Bank/Cashbook Balances</b>			
Unity Trust Current Account as of 25 September 2024		£ 3,457.57	
Unity Trust Savings Account as of 25 September 2024		£ 39,129.57	
United Trust Bank Business Bond as of 15 September 2024		£ 7,995.50	
United Trust Bank Business Bond as of 21 February 2024		£ 5,668.09	
		<b>£ 56,250.73</b>	
<b>Earmarked Reserves:</b>			
Strickland Manor Hill Play Area		£ 1,170.85	
Mulberry Park		£ 4,425.00	
Youth Club		£ 2,922.17	
ECBS		£ 1,125.00	
CIL 2020-2021		£ 5,293.43	
CIL 2021-2022		£ 17,090.94	
CIL 2022-2023		£ 3,732.47	
CIL 2023-2024		£ 5,293.43	
Meet Up Tuesday Grant		£ 38.05	
Teenagers' Shelter Grant		£ 287.59	
		<b>£ 41,378.93</b>	
<b>General Reserves (=Total Funds – Earmarked Reserves)</b>		<b>£ 14,871.80</b>	

**Appendix C: Revised Councillors' Responsibilities. October 2024**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Councillor Responsible</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Tower		
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Patterson		
<b>Art &amp; Culture</b>	Thompson	Patterson	Walford
<b>Community Projects</b>	Thompson		
<b>Energy</b>	Tower	Patterson	Walford
<b>Funding</b>	Gardner	Roper	Thompson
<b>Green Spaces</b>	Patterson	Thompson	
<b>Parish Comms.</b>	Greenberg		
<b>Sports Group</b>	Greenberg		
<b>Traffic &amp; Speed</b>	Tower		
<b>Village Hall</b>	Tower	Wheeler	
<b>Village Hall Refurb</b>	Childs	Tower	Wheeler
<b>Volunteers</b>	Thompson		
<b>Website</b>	Tower		
<b>Youth Club</b>	Gardner	McCallum	
<b>Yoxwood</b>	Childs		



Draft