

# SPARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Sparham Parish Council held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023, in the Old School Room, Sparham.

Present: Cllr Adam Pryke (Chair)  
Cllr Charles Sayer  
Cllr David Chapman  
Cllr David Gerrie  
Cllr David Sayer

District Cllr Gordon Bambridge  
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

## **1. Welcome and apologies for absence.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr McConnell were approved.

## **2. To receive any declarations of interest.**

There were none received.

## **3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023.**

Cllr Pryke proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Charles Sayer and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

## **4. To note the resignation of Cllr Neale and the vacancy for a new member.**

Council noted the resignation of Cllr Neale and the ongoing process to fill the vacancy. Council was urged to encourage anyone interested to come forward.

## **5. County & District Councillor Reports.**

D/Cllr Bambridge updated Council on the following matters:

- A decision regarding approval of the development site for the 'new town' should be known by the end of the year; there is a legal process which must be followed. However, if it is not approved there is nothing to stop the developers submitting as many applications for the site as they wish, all of which must be considered by Breckland.
- The dualling of the A47 has commenced but mainly affects Hockering and North Tuddenham.
- The D/Cllr will be meeting with George Freeman, MP, to discuss flooding issues which Council agreed was one of the most concerning problems affecting Norfolk. More

resilience needs to be built into the system, rivers and ditches maintained and better management of water from new building developments.

- In response to a question, the D/Cllr confirmed that major infrastructure is not required until any new developments reach set milestones. Planning regulations need changing and Council was urged to raise this with their MP.
- In response to a question, the D/Cllr confirmed that Breckland will be required to have food waste collections in the future. They have been considered in the past but proved too costly, particularly in rural areas.

The Chairman thanked D/Cllr Bambridge for his input.

## **6. Meeting open for public participation.**

There were no members of the public present.

## **7. Planning issues.**

### **a) Applications for consideration.**

There were no applications to consider.

### **b) Decisions to note.**

Council noted the following application has been approved and was pleased to note that swift friendly measures are required as part of the approval.

- 3PL/2023/0814/HOU – 18 Carrstone Cottage, The Street - demolition of carport and construction of a 2 storey rear extension.

## **8. Highway & Footpath issues.**

### **a) To receive an update regarding speeding issues on A1067 and the response from Norfolk County Council.**

No update had been received from Norfolk County Council and Council agreed to request enforcement once again. Council will also try to obtain accident records for the area.

### **b) To consider locations for bus stops at Sparham Hill, for review by the NCC Transport Team.**

Council was pleased to note that the bus operator will now stop at extra stops in Sparham, but only if there are proper bus stops in order for people to safely get on and off the buses, out of traffic. Council agreed that a stop should be requested at Sparham Hill, which was within Sparham Parish, and there was a large layby outside the houses, heading east. It was envisaged there may be difficulties heading west but a request will be submitted to Highways.

### **c) To receive an update regarding the Church Lane flooding drainage scheme.**

Council agreed that the drainage was much improved despite there being other works which could have been done, however, it had coped very well in the recent heavy rain and this item will now be removed from the agenda.

**d) To receive an update regarding any issues reported to Highways and to report any new highway issues.**

- Damaged Whitwell Road sign – reported to Breckland but no action to date.

**e) To consider any action which can be taken to address speeding through the village (Whitwell Road etc).**

Council noted that no response had yet been received from Highways to the request for a 30mph speed limit in the village and this has been chased up.

**f) To consider any application under the Parish Partnership Scheme.**

There were no suggestions for any application under the scheme.

## **9. The Village Green**

**a) To receive an update regarding the wildflower project.**

Council noted the update from Cllr McConnell who reported that some of the wildflower areas have been cut back and cleared away, half has been left to see how it develops next year. Bulbs have been planted around the oak tree and bug hotel will also be installed under the tree. A wood pile has been left and there appears to be life in it. Humming-bird hawk-moths have been spotted this year which is encouraging. There is a large quantity of wildflower seeds remaining for next Spring.

**b) To receive an update regarding planting a Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Orchard.**

Council noted that free trees are available through a Busseys Scheme, via NCC, and this will be considered.

**c) To consider quotes received to repair a section of the wall.**

Council noted that three quotes still need to be obtained and it is a challenge to find contractors able to do the specialised work.

**d) To receive a report regarding the grass cutting contract.**

The Chairman informed Council that the contractor has advised that the cost is likely to rise next year. However, Council agreed that the contractor did a good job and was reliable.

**e) To receive a report regarding event parking on the Green.**

The Chairman had raised a query regarding insurance cover when vehicles are parked on the Green for events. Council agreed that as the area was regularly inspected for any safety issues, it would be sufficient for notices to be displayed, both at the Old School Room and the Church, advising anyone using the Green for parking that it is at their own risk.

**f) To consider any new issues relating to the Village Green.**

There were no new matters raised.

## **10. To receive an update regarding works to the Sparham Phone Box.**

The Chairman reported that the window has been fixed.

Cllr Gerrie suggested that the box could be used for better purposes, such as a plant exchange, food bank, clothing recycling etc. The Chairman said that the phone box had not been used for a long period of time and the current recycling schemes had been welcomed. Council will check to see how much use the current recycling gets.

**11. To receive an update regarding the village defibrillator.**

There were no matters to raise in respect of the defibrillator and this item will be removed from the agenda.

**12. To consider a policy to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Sparham, in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.**

Council was advised to consider ways in which to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Sparham, both those which are carried out at present and any new ideas. These will then be brought together in a policy in the new year.

**13. Finance & Governance Matters**

**a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.**

The financial report was noted.

**b) To appoint a third bank signatory.**

Council noted that Mr Neale could no longer be a signatory, following his resignation from Council and Cllr Pryke proposed that Cllr Chapman be appointed as the third signatory, this was seconded by Cllr Gerrie and unanimously agreed by Council.

**c) To consider the draft budget and set the precept for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**

Council considered the draft budget and, given increased costs in respect of grass cutting for both the Village Green and the Church and a higher charge for the permissive paths, an increase in the precept was required. Cllr Pryke proposed that the precept be set at £7,000 for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, this was seconded by Cllr Chapman and unanimously agreed by Council.

**d) To authorise financial payments as set out below and note any receipts.**

Cllr Pryke proposed that the following payments be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Charles Sayer and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipts were noted.

PAYMENTS

P24	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) Oct	£118.86 (SO)
P24	HMRC PAYE	£27.20*
P26	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) Nov	£118.86 (SO)
P26	HMRC PAYE	£27.20
P27	Grass Cutting – October	£85.00
P28	Breckland – Election Charge	£75.00

RECEIPTS

	Bank Interest	£23.52
R4	Precept (2 of 2)	£3,250.00

#### 14. Correspondence for circulation

Council noted the following correspondence and no action was proposed.

- Notice of Consultation on the Greater Norwich Local Plan Proposed Main Modifications

Council noted receipt of a request to insert a notice in the Hill and Vale regarding dog mess in the permissive field. Council agreed there was a problem but agreed new signage was required, setting out the fixed penalty charge for offenders. New signage will be purchased and installed.

#### 15. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

There were no new items received for the next agenda.

#### 16. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 in the Old School Room.

Council noted the date of the next meeting and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Signed:

Date:

FINANCIAL REPORT - NOVEMBER 2023							
BUDGET UPDATE	Budget	To date	%				
	2023/24						
<b>PAYMENTS*</b>			<b>Paid</b>				
Admin	2,472	992	40%				
Salary	1,799	1,088	61%				
Open Spaces	665	618	93%				
Permissive Pathway	160	-	0%				
Bus Shelter/BT Box	100	23	23%				
Donations	781	681	87%				
Defibrillator	10	-	0%				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,987</b>	<b>3,403</b>	<b>57%</b>				
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			<b>Received</b>				
Precept	6,500	6,500	100%				
Admin	150	-	0%				
Bank Interest	-	43					
PAYE Refunds	-	38					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,650</b>	<b>6,581</b>	<b>99%</b>				
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>3,177</b>					

  

<b>Balance as at 01.04.2023</b>	<b>9203.83</b>
Less Payments @ 30.10.2023	3270.54
Plus Receipts @ 30.10.2023	6889.82
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,823.11</b>
<b>Balance as at 30.10.2023</b>	
Current Account	1,087.86
Business Account	11,735.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,823.11</b>
less outstanding payment	0.00
	<b>12,823.11</b>
Including the following reserves:	
Wall Repairs	4,603.00
<b>GENERAL RESERVE</b>	<b>8,220.11</b>