

Oulton Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 7.00pm in Oulton Community Centre

Parish Councillors (6) present	Jenny Hinton (Chairperson), John Sarbutt, Peter Bryant, Robin Hinton, Tony Knights & Hilary Sarbutt
County Councillors	Keith Robinson
District Councillors	Keith Robinson & Andree Gee
Also in attendance	Rebecca Morris (Clerk)
Members of the public	7

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Edward Back. Absence Cllr Joanne Illingsworth, noted.

To receive any declarations of interest from Members & consider requests for dispensations

Cllr Jenny Hinton and Cllr Robin Hinton declared a non-pecuniary interest as Trustees of Oulton Community Centre

To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd October 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2023 were agreed after a proposal by Cllr R Hinton and second, Cllr J Sarbutt all in favour. The minutes were signed by the Chairperson.

Amendment to last month's minutes, item 12 – Update on bridleways: -

Although the appeal on Suffolk County Councils Bridleway decision has been successful, the recent notices that have been put up stating that Suffolk County Council has been directed to make an order adding the Bridleway routes, have resulted in 2 objections from residents and 1 objection letter of three pages from East Suffolk Council. Next steps and timeframe are to be determined.

Adjournment for Public Participation (15 minutes allowed for)

This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions and comment on items on the agenda before the Council makes decisions.

Visit from Wayne Saunders, Community Liaison Engineer for Suffolk Highways: - Community Self Help Scheme, allows Parish Councils to buy equipment, battery powered has been suggested, for safe storage purposes. This allows jobs for volunteers to do, that the council now don't provide, eg verge cutting, sign cleaning. 3rd party insurance is covered by them, along with training and protective work wear. It has been advised that a couple of people are trained. It has been decided that Cllr P Bryant & Cllr J Sarbutt to be trained. Wayne to be contacted to start proceedings.

Bentley Drive, shrubs that need cutting, also issues with trees that need to be trimmed on Jenkins Green, this can be dealt with by ourselves.

Any queries can be filtered through the Parish Clerk, with the inclusion of Cllr K Robinson.

Jenkins Green Pond CIL money, it has been asked what is now going to happen with this. This will be discussed shortly, as subject is on the agenda.

Injured wildlife on main roads, no one to contact for help. Cllr J & H Sarbutt to look into this and advise.

Reports from:

- **Parish Clerk:** We have been accepted for the Warm Welcome Scheme, which is great news for the Parish. This will be discussed a little later on. A skill sharing session has also been suggested between Councillors and the Clerk, we believe this will be very beneficial. A date to be booked in. Policies is high on the agenda. Clerk being supported by Cllr P Bryant.
- **Adopt Suffolk Code of Conduct** – All in unanimous agreement. NPTS have been contacted to ask for training.
- **Chairmans Report:** The following statement has been read out by Cllr J Hinton.

Statement Oulton Parish Council Jenny Hinton Chairman.

"Dear Councillors,

The last 17 months has been a stressful time for certain Cllrs sitting around this table.

Over the past year and a half an 'individual' has reported some of the Parish Councillors to several statutory bodies including: **HMRC**, the **Monitoring Officer**, the **Police**, the **Small Claims Court**, **ACAS**, **Employment Tribunal**, and our **External Auditor**.

99% of these cases were dismissed as no case to answer, and I am pleased to say the last Code of Conduct cases, mine and Johns, after being interrogated by external solicitors from Grimsby (a process starting last August 2022) finally, this week, we have been cleared of all charges of breach of the code of conduct and exonerated of all accusations.

To ensure this situation does not happen again, we have asked for a full inquiry, ideally a scrutiny committee to investigate the roles of the Monitoring officer and the independent person. Their interpretation of Code of Conduct differs from ours and the legal team the Monitoring Officer brought in to investigate. We have also asked for a total of costs involved as they have ultimately been financed through the taxpayer.”

- **County Councillors:** Cllr K Robinson explained council overspend has gone on SEND and Children in care. SEND up by 62% which is £30 million a year. These are statutory spends. Budgets are released Christmas Eve. Deficit reduced by £10 million, as our waste incinerator now sells the power back to the National Grid.
- **District Councillors:** Cllr A Gee has stated that everything is still quiet. All newcomers with portfolios have either lost or given them up. Very unsatisfactory start to the next 4 years.
- **Oulton Community Centre:** Still waiting for constitution to be rubber stamped. Committee to be selected at AGM, once constitution has been delivered.
- **St Michael’s Church & OPT:** New meeting scheduled for 15th November 2023. Nothing to report at present.

Planning

- **To receive new planning applications and make comment.** DC/23/4245/FUL - Retrospective Application - Changes to porch roof and original property window locations Site address: 29 Chiltern Crescent, Oulton, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 3HQ
- **To receive results and updates on outstanding applications - DC/22/2876/ARM –** Cllr J Sarbutt to work through this and report back his findings. This has been submitted to planning. **DC/23/3191/FUL –** Email sent to planning.

Finance: Income & Expenditure as at 31st October 2023, received.

Payment Schedules

Payee	Value	Description
Olympic Print	£185.00	TOMS Leaflets
Oulton Community Centre	£20.00	October 2022 Monthly meeting Room Hire
Oulton Community Centre	£20.00	October 2023 Monthly meeting Room Hire
Clerk Salary	£569.60	Salary October 2023
John Sarbutt	£60.00	Expenses for Jenkins Green Pond
John Sarbutt	£48.00	Expenses for Jenkins Green Pond
Karl Baker	£118.00	Repairs to noticeboard Lime Avenue
Jenny Hinton	£38.20	Wreath for Remembrance Sunday
Total	£1058.80	

Income Received

Payee	Value	Description
East Suffolk Council	£1200.94	Neighbourhood CIL - 063270
HMRC	£825.05	VAT refund 2022/2023
Total	£2025.99	

To agree payment of invoices and other expenses: Payments – Proposed by Cllr R Hinton second by Cllr H Sarbutt – All approved.

To consider grant applications: None received.

To receive an update of the purchase of assets using CIL money: No invoices received for swing or matting, Cllr H Sarbutt to chase up. Gate still waiting to be installed, but gas lines are proving to be an issue. Swing should be in situ by next week. Been asked for the possibility of installing a bench on Sterling Road by traffic lights, near bus stop. Nearby neighbours to be asked and ESC Licence will be to be obtained.

To discuss environmental health issue on Glebe Crescent: Cllr E Back & Cllr K Robinson have handed it to Environmental Health. Cllr J Sarbutt says nothing has happened yet. Goats are locked in shed and dog barks continually. RSPCA to be contacted regarding the animals welfare, although no one seems to be interested in helping.

To discuss pond clearing on Jenkins Green: Cllr J Sarbutt and his volunteers have stopped all clearing of the pond, as Laura Hack at East Suffolk Council has said they will take over maintenance of the pond, with the help of SWT. This is some 18 months later from initial contact. Unsure when clearing will start again, also waiting for a plan of action. Concerned that it will be left to go to ruin again. Cllr J Sarbutt had some lovely emails from local residents, praising how lovely the area looks.

To discuss Bridleways: Cllr J Hinton & Cllr J Sarbutt met with ROW Officer at ESC. They explained a bit of history since 2007, regarding Wood Meadow development and the then ROW Officer, recommended that all footpaths be upgraded to shared footpath/bridleways. If this can be confirmed, she will withdraw her objections.

East Suffolk Council Warm Welcome Scheme: We have been given the go ahead for funding of Warm Welcome Scheme. As soon as money has been received, room to be booked at Oulton Community Centre, BACT transport can be arranged FOC and Cllr T Knights to help with advertising.

To receive updates from individual Council Members (for information only). Nothing to report.

To receive any items for inclusion on the next agenda (for information only) Jenkins Green Pond update. Budget meeting & Apologies for Cllr J & H Sarbutt as they will be on holiday.

To confirm date of the next Parish Council meeting as Tuesday 5th December 2023 @ 7.00 pm in Oulton Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 20:38

Everyone was thanked for attending.

The personnel and staffing committee met to discuss union agreed rates of pay award, backdated to April 2023. All agreed and this is to be implemented.