

MINUTES OF TROSTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MONDAY 6TH MAY 2024 AT 7:00PM at TROSTON VILLAGE HALL.

Present: Cllrs D Bilverstone, J Moffat, P, Riddick, P Walton, D Pugson and the Parish Clerk.
Four members of the public present.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hopfensperger and Speed.

Minutes - to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting 7th May 2024 as a correct record.
The minutes were confirmed, approved and signed as a correct record.

Matters arising from the minutes
None.

Followed by:

Introduction and Report from Parish Council Chairman: Diana Bilverstone

Welcome everyone to the Troston Annual Parish Meeting – my name is Diana Bilverstone and I am the Chair of Troston Parish Council. The purpose of this meeting is to be an open forum for the Parish Council, local councillors and local organisations to report on the activities of the past year and for residents of the parish to be able to ask questions.

As a new Chair and new member of the Parish Council this year has been a huge learning curve for me. I came onto the council knowing nothing about how local government works – getting to grips with budgeting and finance as well as the frustrations of realising the snail's pace that things get done. To help everyone understand how the Parish Council works I'll quickly explain – we have 6 Parish Council meetings per year, every other month. The Council can only vote on a decision at a public meeting, we aren't allowed to vote via email or when we meet up while walking the dog or even over a pint in the pub. So, if a resident communicates a request, or a query that needs discussion, to the clerk the day after a meeting there is a 2 month wait before the council can discuss it and take a vote.

We also meet in November for a finance meeting where the Clerk presents her budget which details all of our financial responsibilities and the costs expected for the coming year. At this point Councillors discuss and amend where required. The budget is then voted on at the next Council meeting which could be November or January, this is now referred to as the precept. The Clerk will complete the precept demand from West Suffolk Council; this is paid to the Parish Council in the April.

As you can see if the council get an unexpected cost or request during the year that has not been budgeted for then it might mean waiting for the next financial year for money to be available. The Parish Council can also receive grants from local councillors (County and West Suffolk) from their locality funds for specific projects – but again this is dependent on the funds they have available at the time, so again a wait might be necessary until the next financial year.

So, this brings me to my point – getting things done takes time, and although this is sometimes frustrating, please be assured as councillors we try our best to be as responsive as possible within the constraints of the rules we have to follow.

What's happened this year –

We received a grant of £5000 from West Suffolk Council that could only be spent on a capital asset, so after a village consultation we placed the order for a replacement zipwire which will be installed in the next 4 to 6 weeks, the steps to the slide in the play park have been replaced and the telephone box has been revamped into a seed swap. We have had a couple of very successful community working days, with local

residents helping tidy areas of the playing field and do some maintenance at Troston Wood. Des has been busy updating the village website so it will hopefully be more appealing and easier to navigate. And we have been working to secure funding for a new solar powered speed sign for the village.

Also, we were all sorry to lose Vicki as our Clerk but delighted to welcome Amanda as our new Clerk and RFO. The clerk's job is not an easy one and we appreciate Amanda's hard work and determination to make the transition between Vicki and herself as easy as possible. We also said goodbye to Sue Rose who resigned from the council in March – her contribution to the parish as a councillor and the previous chair is greatly appreciated.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the village hall committee after it was discovered that the village hall roof required extensive repairs it has now been made safe for all hall users – all members of the Parish Council appreciate the effort put in by the committee and time it has taken to complete.

And of course, I cannot forget to thank the councillors themselves – past and present – for giving up their time to attend meetings and contribute to all aspects of the running of the council.

Which brings me onto my final point – we currently have two vacancies for Parish Councillors. I've explained how the Parish Council works and how frustrating it can be, but it can also be very rewarding to feel you are contributing to the local area. Or perhaps you feel you want your voice to be heard and your opinion to matter. Or you might even be sat there thinking to yourself that you could do a better job – well now is your chance to prove it.

It's 6 or 7 evenings a year – there is an online training course to complete of a couple of hours just to cover the basics of being a councillor and you will be expected to communicate by email at times between meetings so a certain level of computer literacy is required (but not a lot!) Even if you don't think you have anything to offer or contribute, I'm telling you now that you're wrong – for the Parish Council to continue moving forward and to serve the residents of Troston to the best of its ability we need to represent everyone in the parish, all backgrounds, all experiences, all skills and by working together we can get things done.

If you are curious, want more information or just want a chat about the council you can contact Amanda or myself at any time.

Report from County Councillor: R Hopfensperger

Cllr Hopfensperger was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report:

Local Government Reform

I've already explained talked to the council about this at previous meetings but just to recap, the government have decided to push the agenda for devolution and local government reorganisation in Suffolk. With regards to devolution Suffolk and Norfolk were successful in being accepted onto the Devolution Priority Programme which will mean the creation of a county combined authority of Suffolk and Norfolk which will be governed by a mayor. The likely powers the mayor will have will be strategic transport, population health, potentially blue light services and economic development. Running alongside this there will be a local government re-organisation which is formation of unitary council/councils in Suffolk and Norfolk. There will elections for the mayor in May 2026. The government asked councils in Norfolk and Suffolk to submit interim business cases of what unitary structures can look like in the areas by the end of January. Suffolk county council submitted a business case for one unitary Suffolk and the districts and borough put one in on multiple unitaries with either two or three but have since come out in favour of three. We have since heard from the government that all proposals will be asked to be developed into a full business case to be submitted to government by the end of September, I've attached the press release and full feedback from the government to this e-mail.

Highways Reporting

If anyone has any highway issues I suggest that they use the highway reporting tool on SCC website but if they feel that they are not getting the answers they expect they can report it to the clerk and then I can chase and escalate the issues.

Locality Budget and Highways Budget

Just to remind any community group that have locality budget that can be used in the village, in the past I've supported the village hall, parish council and the church and also various highways projects.

Report from West Suffolk Councillor: Andrew Speed

Cllr Speed was unable to attend the meeting.

Report from Village Hall Management Committee: Brenda Burridge.

The Committee has continued to ensure the smooth running of the Village Hall on a day-to-day basis. The hall is insured, cleaned, and energy and servicing bills are paid. Unfortunately, bookings have dropped significantly and costs are rising which means our income no longer meets expenditure. We do hope more people will want to hire the hall in the future as this is our only source of income.

Following reports of falling tiles and a Condition Survey reporting the deteriorating state of one side of the Hall roof, major repair work has been carried out. This has been funded by grants from the Government funded West Suffolk Community Fund, and from our Council and Borough Councillors and the Parish Council, and donations from the Church and a village resident. We have also had to use most of the reserve saved by the Management Committee. We are very grateful to everyone involved in making it possible to go ahead with the work and to John Cutmore for carrying out the project so sympathetically.

Many of us on the committee are well past retirement age and feel we need to pass the responsibility for the Village Hall on to the next generation. We do hope that you will want to come forward and help to support this important village asset and further develop its use for our residents.

Thanks to the Committee for their commitment to maintaining the hall during the past year.

Cllr Bilverstone thanked Brenda along with all of the Village Hall Management Committee for their commitment to the village hall especially during these last 6 months. It was agreed that the Parish Council and the Committee would arrange an informal meeting to discuss recruitment of more Committee members and general next steps.

Report from Graeme Norris, The Ixworth Patients' Association.

Graeme Norris was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report:

The Patient Association is a registered charity and has appreciated the donation we have received from Troston Parish Council. With the help of volunteers, we have been able to:

- Continue offering a taxi service to frail patients unable to drive to appointments.
- Fund a health kiosk to take basic health measurements.
- Promote and organise covid and flu jabs.
- Support the development of a Woman's Health App.

Volunteer transport Service

The transport service continues to be busy and we are seeking more volunteer drivers to meet the increasing demand for help. Mileage claims will be met. Please contact Sarah at the Surgery 01359 230252 or Ray 01842 898414 for more information.

Health Kiosk

The “health kiosk” is in the Surgery’s Reception area and offers a walk-in blood pressure reading, body-mass calculation and access to health information using artificial intelligence software.

Artificial Intelligence comes to Ixworth

During this year, all GP practices nationally will be contractually required to adopt digital consultations to improve patient access to services. The aim is for patients not to ring to get an appointment with a GP but to ring and get advice in as short a time as possible - which may then lead to an appointment (that day or later depending on urgency) with the appropriate GP, Nurse or Hospital Consultant.

Ixworth Surgery have already installed a new cloud-based telephone system to speed response. A new website has been launched to make it easier to find the information you seek. The system is called Anima and initially will be used to streamline back-office tasks like the editing of notes and letters received from Hospitals onto patient records. The real power of the AI software is that it can also provide a secure and easy to use online system to help patients get the care they need more quickly and conveniently.

You will still have access to your practice by telephone or in person. We believe that as more patients use Anima it will reduce demand on our phone lines, making contact easier for all. Do not worry if you do not have access to a computer or the internet, if you telephone the surgery, a senior Nurse Practitioner will triage your concern and make an appointment.

Flu Jabs

The Surgery had been proactive in offering flu, covid and RSV jabs as vaccines became available. Alas, about 50% of eligible patients are choosing not to have the jab... Don’t hesitate to use the NHS App to identify other vaccination centres you might find more convenient to reach.

It is estimated vaccine effectiveness against all influenzas is about 65% among children aged 2–17, about 55% among adults 18–64 and dropping to 40% to 50% among adults aged 65 and over.

Women’s Health App

A new App is being launched to give advice and guidance on breast screening, cervical screening, contraception, menopause treatments, pelvic organ prolapse, pre-conception care, sexually transmitted infections and gender identity concerns.

The advice and video clips are written by NHS doctors to provide accurate information to women and girls.

Download from the App Store or visit hciconnectplus.page.link/snee

Update from the Surgery

Two new GPs had joined the Surgery: Dr Claire Brooke, who specialises in women’s health, and Dr Ifeoma Oluhara, who is a registrar and will be with the Practice for six months.

The decision to proceed with the development of some 2000 homes in the Surgery’s catchment area was obviously going to increase the demand for Primary Care - a concern which has been raised with the Suffolk Integrated Care Board - but to no effect it seems?

The lack of adequate parking space at the Surgery was creating problems. Particularly, it seems, on Tuesdays. Residents of Peddars Close were complaining about patients parking outside their houses and on the grass areas. Indeed, West Suffolk Parking Enforcement Officers are intensifying interest in double yellow parking infringements in and around the surgery.

Any other Business the Chairman may allow.

No further business, meeting closed at 7.42pm