

MINUTES OF TROSTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 7.00pm at Troston Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: S Rose, D Pugson, J Moffat, D. Bilverstone, P Walton, P Riddick, D Cllr A Speed & C. Cllr R Hopfensperger

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Sqn Ldr Mark Fixter

**2. Co-option of new parish Councilor**

**3. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:**

3.1 To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda. Cllr Rose declared an interest in item 14 on the agenda as she is involved, both privately and through the Pear Tree Close Management Committee, with one of the applicants.

3.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None.

3.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. None.

**4. Minutes** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and the extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were agreed and approved as correct records.

**5. Report from RAF Honington:**

Sqn Ldr Mark Fixter was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report: Points from Hon are few: Training rhythm didn't really pause much for Christmas/NY so formal RAF Regt Gunner Training and wider RAF Trg. We had hoped to see some flying activity, but I have now heard that this has been cancelled. Gliders still training their own crews to enable cadet flying hopefully starting in Spring. My last day is now Fri 9 Feb - my post will be gapped until at least 1 Apr but possibly longer, but the mailbox will have some monitoring and we will need to consider covering PC Mtgs.

**6. Meeting open for questions from the public** It is politely requested that this session does not exceed 15 minutes in total.

It had been reported that the dog poo bin at the entrance to Troston Wood (the Honington Lane end) has not been emptied for a while and is overflowing. This was reported to West Suffolk Council, and they will get it checked and emptied, they have had some absences so haven't had the usual operatives available to do the rounds so this may be why it has been missed.

It was asked if we could swap the larger white glass bin for the smaller mixed glass bin at the car park adjacent to the Playing field. The Clerk will make enquiries about this. **Action Clerk.**

A request for a memorial tree has been received. In principle the Parish Council supported this idea and would make further enquires as to a possible location and type of tree, the Playing field and an Oak tree being favoured at this time. It was felt that a plaque is not necessarily a good idea as they require ongoing maintenance. The Clerk will gather further information, update the resident, and include this as an agenda item for the next meeting. **Action Clerk**

**7. Report from County Councilor:** R Hopfensperger.

To include discussion regarding possible signage at the playing field entrance.

Cllr Hopfensperger is looking at a package of measures for, not only the entrance to the village at the playing field but, also at the entrances on Ixworth Road and Honington Road. There is a possibility we could have some entrance gates and additional road markings. A meeting with Andrew Moore, highways engineer will be arranged so that options can be discussed.

**Action Clerk**

Cllr Hopfensperger confirmed that she should be able to make a contribution towards the purchase of a new VAS for the village. The Clerk will submit an official request. **Action Clerk**

Cllr Hopfensperger reported that there will be a 4.99% increase in SCC's element of the Council tax this year. Some very difficult decisions had to be made with a phasing out of funding for the arts programme. This, and other budget items have had to be addressed as SCC have statutory obligations that need to be met. In the main a large amount of funding needs to be allocated to Child and Adult services which has a knock effect with other, non statutory items.

Cllr Hopfensperger asked that the Village Hall send her information about the new sound installation they are looking at for for the hall. Any funding forthcoming would need to be considered in the new financial year. Cllr Hofensperger will follow up on the enquiry sent to SCC officers regarding the condion of the road outside the new garage development.

**Action Cllr Hopfensperger/Clerk**

## **8. Report from B. Councilor: A Speed**

The request for the reduced grant, previously offered, has been submitted and we are awaiting payment. Cllr Speed reported that the local plan is heading towards its final consultation period. This item will be included on the next agenda for discussion. **Action Clerk**

Cllr speed is unable to offer any more funding in this financial year but would be happy to receive requests from the Parish Council, for a contribution towards a new VAS and from the Village Hall for a contribution towards the new sound installation in the new financial year. **Action Clerk**

## **9. Finance**

9.1 To note and agree payments/income.

RBL Wreath donation	Royal British Legion	-£30.00
Grass cutting	Countryside Conservation & Tree Services	-£309.00
recycling credit	West Suffolk	£54.00
Plants wildlife area	Countryside Conservation & Tree Services	-£125.94
Wi-Fi	BT	-£35.99
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Admin	Various	£1,833.41
Christmas tree	The Bull	-£190.00
newsletter	Kalkkwik	-£86.40
bank charges	Unity bank	-£18.00
interest	unity bank	£40.44

9.2 Bank reconciliation, budget report and accounts update.

The Clerk provided a schedule of payments, bank reconciliation and a budget report for the Councilors' information.

9.3 To note acceptance of Precept request and confirmation of taxbase from West Suffolk Council. West Suffolk council confirmed receipt of our Precept request for 2024/25. West Suffolk Council confirmed that provisional tax base figures previously provided, were approved by West Suffolk Council, so there will be no changes to the forms already sent. Also agreed by West Suffolk Council was the continuation of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024-25 for the up 100% discount for working age claimants

9.4 To confirm grant acceptance from West Suffolk Council.

See under item 8 above.

## **10. Play Area/Field to include:**

10.1 To discuss quotes received for new fence for the boundary on the Playing Field.

Requests for quotes for a new piece of fence and repairs to the slide steps, in the children's play area, were sent to Tramar, Richard Balaam and Peter Kerry. The only response we had back was from Peter Kerry. It was agreed to wait on these items at this time.

10.2 To discuss works undertaken to the wildlife area and to make a plan going forward.

It was provisionally agreed to meet on 20<sup>th</sup> January, around 10am, weather permitting, to plant the plants at the wildlife area. Cllr Pugson will make sure the WhatsApp group is set up and will include both members of the Parish Council and residents who are interested in being involved in activities at the wildlife area and at Troston Woods. **Action Cllr Pugson**

10.3 Play area report, to note any actions. Arrangements to meet with an officer from W.S to discuss works required going forward.

### 10.3.1 Monthly play area report

The Clerk is arranging to meet with the Parks Infrastructure Manager from West Suffolk Council to discuss items being flagged in the monthly play area report. Cllr Riddick will join the Clerk for this meeting. In addition, Cllr Pugson has produced an in-depth report following his inspection of the play area and he will meet with Cllr Walton and action any of the remedial matters that they are able to. **Action Cllrs Riddick/Walton/Pugson/Clerk**

### 10.3.2 Wet pour issues.

The Clerk has obtained a rough estimate for repairing the wet pour around the roundabout in the children's play area. This was in the region of £2100. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Riddick would discuss the urgency of this matter and possible alternative replacement surfacing with the West Suffolk Manager at the upcoming site meeting. **Action Cllr Riddick/Clerk**

### 10.3.4 Slide steps.

As above it was agreed to wait until after the visit with the West Suffolk Manager before going ahead with any works. **Action Cllr Riddick/Clerk**

### 10.3.5 Signage, permissive use.

It was proposed that we look at the cost of getting some larger, A3 ,signs to confirm the permission, and associated conditions, for use of the field at the rear of the playing field.

**Action Clerk**

10.4 To confirm arrangements for the football pitch white lines.

It was agreed to monitor the condition of the white lines and, allowing about two weeks' notice, order their renewal on an ad hoc basis rather than on a regular schedule. The Councillors will let the Clerk know when they need to be re-ordered. **Action All**

## **11. Village Maintenance/matters**

11.1 To discuss works at Troston Woods, to include the extent of the Parish Council boundary, the use of stakes to mark out this boundary, and the current status of the WhatsApp group.

### 11.1.1 Parish Council boundary

The Councillors have been provided with some information about the boundary of the woods. The boundary has not been staked out as yet. The Clerk will do some further work on this and look at getting the land registered if this is needed. **Action Clerk**

### 11. 1.2 WhatsApp group

This matter is in hand, see under item 10.2.

**Action Cllr Pugson**

11.2 Emergency Plan, to receive any update.

Cllr Riddick asked if the pub would be willing to act as an emergency information point in the event of an emergency. They did not think that they would be suitable so would be removed from the plan document. It was agreed a brief summary of the plan would be helpful This matter is in hand.

**Action Clerk**

11.3 Village Website, to receive an update from consultant regarding traffic to the site.

A local resident has been analyzing data from the website and it would seem we have had a reasonable number of visitors to the site with the traffic looking fairly consistent. He will continue to monitor traffic and provide updates. The Parish Council were grateful for the work already done and for the continued input. Cllr Pugson and the Clerk will do some work on the site to remove out-of-date content.

**Action Cllr Pugson/Clerk**

11.4 VAS, to receive any update and discuss the purchase of a new device.

Following discussion, and confirmation that funds should be forthcoming from both the District and County Councillors in the new financial year, it was agreed to look at purchasing a new device with solar charging. These cost in the region of £2810. The Clerk will forward this information to the District and County Council for consideration.

**Action Clerk**

11.5 To discuss fly tipping signage for the clothing bank at the playing field car park.

New signage should have been placed on the recycling bins. The councillors will check to see if this has been carried out yet.

**Action All**

11.6 To receive invoice for a Christmas tree for the village and to confirm arrangements going forward.

The invoice for the Christmas tree has been received and agreed. The Parish Council thanked the pub for making the arrangements for the tree, it really did provide a very attractive focal point for the village. The Clerk will politely request that the pub provides a quote for the tree by September. This will enable the Parish Council the ability to include this amount in their budget calculations and will ensure they have enough funds to continue to support this going forward.

**Action Clerk**

11.7 To discuss options for free recycling programmes in the village.

The Clerk is finding it very difficult to find out info, regarding schemes for the village, via the website and is still waiting to hear back if there are any schemes we can support in Troston.

**Action Clerk.**

11.8 To discuss issues of inappropriate parking in the village, to include responses from Police and The Bull public house.

Unfortunately, both the Police and The Bull feel they cannot do anything to help with the inappropriate parking in the village. The Chairman will include a piece in her magazine report asking residents to be considerate when parking and to not park on the pavement or too close to junctions/bends which can reduce visibility for other road users.

**Action Cllr Rose**

## **12. Clerks report**

12.1 To discuss option to attend the West Suffolk Parish and Town Forum

The Clerk intends to attend the next Parish and Town forum, to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 19.00-20.30 in Mildenhall. Other members are welcome to attend if they wish to do so.

12.2 To give feedback on the SALC conference.

The Clerk found this to be a very informative and enjoyable event. The Clerk spoke to officers about the current arrangements for Chapter 8 training. This is a qualification that is required for anyone working on the highway. The Highway includes both the roadway and the pavement. The Clerk will look into arrangements for current training and report back at the next meeting. A report of the event has been produced with a summary overview; this is available on request.

**Action Clerk**

12.3 To discuss fit villages project.

Active Suffolk currently delivers the Fit Villages Project across Suffolk, and they are looking for new projects in villages across West Suffolk. Fit Villages is a well-established and popular project that is now entering its thirteenth year. It plays a vital role supporting Active Suffolk's vision to inspire more people across Suffolk to get active, improving their health and wellbeing. The funding will be used to continue setting up more physical activity sessions for adults aged over 55 by using local facilities such as community centers, village halls, libraries and playing fields.

Organisations who would like to register an interest in having a Fit Village in our area, should contact [fitvillages@activesuffolk.org](mailto:fitvillages@activesuffolk.org). The Clerk will share this information with Cllrs Rose and Silverstone for information.

**Action Clerk**

12.4 To receive information on West Suffolk Councils Cost of living support and advice.

The Clerk has put a link to some up-to-date cost of living advice on the website. This was also circulated to the councillors.

### **13. Village Hall report**

The new bank account has finally been set up successfully. There are some issues with the drive, next to the Village Hall entrance, which has resulted in the lights there not working. This matter is in hand. There is a plan to put up fencing next to the oil tank. The Village Hall has been looking at putting their hire fees up. It was agreed that although the fees would not increase, hirers would be charged for the time they have the hall and no longer have a free period for setting up and tidying away. The Village Hall would like the grant again that the Parish Council provided pre covid. It was suggested that the Parish Council should be charged for the hire of the hall. The Village Hall committee will consider this suggestion. As discussed earlier the committee are looking at sound insulation for the hall and are currently exploring options for funding. These include the previously discussed approach to the District and County Council as well as a request to the Parish Council. Cllr Pugson and the Clerk are still exploring options for Wi-Fi. The Clerk will share the current contract details with Cllr Pugson for information.

**Action Cllr Pugson/Clerk**

### **14. Grass cutting tender 2024/25**

A resolution for this item to be discussed under item 19.2 will be proposed. This is because the information to be discussed is of a time sensitive commercial nature. As at this time there were no members of the public present, the item was discussed here.

Tenders for the grass cutting were sent to Richard Balaam, Vertas, Tramar and Peter Kerry CCT). Richard Balaam informed the Parish Council that he did not wish to tender on this occasion.

Vertas submitted no tender. Tramar and Peter Kerry both submitted tenders. Following discussion it was decided that we would remain with the current contractor as he offered a very competitive price and he was providing a good service. The Clerk will contact both contractors to inform them of the Council's decision.

**Action Clerk**

**15. Planning** to also include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted. DC/23/1671/HH 8 Capel close, to note application **Granted** by West Suffolk Council.

### **16. Councillors reports and items for future agendas.**

16.1 To receive update from Cllr Moffat on free trees for the village.

Cllr Moffat has a number of free trees that are available for planting at either the playing field or Troston Woods. As discussed under item 10.2 a provisional date of 20<sup>th</sup> January was agreed for planting.

**Action Cllrs Moffat/Riddick/Pugson**

### **17. Correspondence for action or information**

17.1 West Suffolk Council - Strategic Priorities for 2024-28, for information.

18. Date for next meetings. 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 7.00pm

19. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items:

19.1 Personnel Issues.

19.2 Legal Issues. To discuss the 2024/25 Grass cutting contract. See under item 14.