

1. **Apologies for absence** None received.

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.

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 9th January 2024 were agreed and approved as correct records.

5. **Report from RAF Honington:**

Mark Fixter is no longer in post we will await an update on his replacement.

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

A young resident came with his family to ask for permission to metal detect at Heath Woods. After a discussion with the Parish Councillors, during which he shared some of his finds, the Parish Council agreed that, as long as an agreement is in place, setting out some rules and responsibilities, they would be happy for him to metal detect in the Heath Woods. Both him and his family would be interested in joining the Heath woods WhatsApp group and getting involved in works in the woods. The Clerk will pass on their contact information to Cllr Pugson so they can be added to the WhatsApp group. The Clerk will liaise with the family to set up a formal agreement, based on guidelines and advice offered by NCMD (National Council for Metal Detecting).

Action Cllr Pugson/Clerk

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

To receive update regarding possible signage at the playing field and village entrances, Cllr Hopfensperger has set up a meeting with the Clerk and Andrew Moore, SCC Highways Engineer, to discuss options from traffic calming measures at the playing field entrance. They will also look at options for entrance gates and road markings at the entrance to the Village from Honington. Cllr Hopfensperger will liaise with Andrew Moore regarding her budget for any projects. The Clerk will do a 30mph sign audit when in the village. There is currently an option for replacement 30mph stickers and following this audit the Clerk will inform Cllr Hopfensperger of any 30mph signs that need refreshing.

Action Clerk

Confirmation of grant towards VAS. Cllr Hopfensperger is able to make a contribution towards a new VAS from her Highways budget.

Action Clerk

8. **Report from B. Councillor:** A Speed

To confirm any arrangements for grant funding.

Cllr Speed is still waiting to hear from another Parish about a funding request so is unable to commit until he has this information. If he is unable to make a grant this year, he will definitely be in a position to make one in the new financial year. Cllr Speed reported that West Suffolk is nearing the end of the consultation on the local Plan. He encouraged the Parish Council to engage with the process. Cllr Speed reported that the West Suffolk element of the Council tax bill will increase by 5% this year.

9. Finance

9.1 The following payments were approved/noted.

Administration	Various	-£835.64	Payment
Part payment, computer	Barningham Parish Council	-£150.00	Payment
White lines	Vertas	-£180.00	Payment
newsletter	Kalkwik	-£75.60	Payment
Land registry plan	various	-£3.00	Payment
Expenses	various	-£56.24	Payment
Administration	various	£534.14	Payment
WiFi	BT	-£35.99	Payment
Wi-Fi	BT	-£35.99	Payment
Land registry plan	Land registry	-£7.00	Payment
VAS RAF Honington	West Suffolk	£450.00	Receipt

9.2 Bank reconciliation, budget report and accounts update.

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

9.3 To confirm arrangements for the internal audit review.

It was noted that Cllr Bilverstone is carrying out the internal Audit review on Wednesday this week.

Action Cllr Bilverstone/Clerk

9.4 To confirm arrangements for audit.

We are no longer able to use our external auditor as he is reducing the number of smaller Councils he works with. The Clerk is in the process of making arrangements with SALC to carry out our external audit. It is understood that their price is on par with the previous accountant at an estimated £223.

Action Clerk

10. Play Area/Field to include:

10.1 To confirm glass bin arrangements and fly tipping signage.

We now have two large bins, one for clear and one for mixed glass. The fly tipping signage still hasn't been put up. The Clerk will chase this up.

Action Clerk

10.2 To agree type and location for donated tree.

The resident looking to plant a memorial tree is happy for the Parish Council to choose both the tree and location, they would be happy to have it on the field. They are not concerned with having a plaque. It was agreed that, if possible, the corner near the fruit trees would be a good position. An Oak or a cherry Tree would be nice. The Clerk will take some advice from Peter Kerry about what would be suitable within the budget.

Action Clerk

10.3 Play area report, to note any actions.

The Clerk, Cllrs Riddick and Pugson are meeting with the West Suffolk Council Parks Infrastructure Manager to discuss issues of concern highlighted in the monthly play area reports. They will be looking in particular at: The zip wire, wet pour and the slide steps. Advice will also be sought about whether we should be locking the service gate at the play area.

10.4 To confirm works to the football pitch white lines and arrangement going forward.

The white lines have been renewed. It was agreed that all the Councillors would keep an eye on the lines and put in a request for their renewal when required. Cllr Hopfensperger will provide information about an alternative company that do white lining. **Action All/ Cllr Hopfensperger**
Concerns were raised about the condition of the goal mouths. This will be monitored.

10.5 To receive any update regarding the wildlife area.

The planting session at the wildlife area went well, and it was understood that the area will need to be strimmed, Cllr Moffat and Riddick will do this following guidance to be sought from Peter Kerry. The Clerk will order a wildflower mix once Cllr Pugson has confirmed the area to be sown.

Action Cllrs Moffat/Riddick/Pugson/Clerk

10.6 To confirm purchase of A3 Signage for rear of playing field.

It was agreed to leave the purchase of further signage at the moment. Cllr Walton will look at repositioning the current signage, on a longer post, to increase its visibility.

Action Cllr Walton

11. Village Maintenance/matters

11.1 To discuss works at Troston Woods, to include the extent of the Parish Council boundary.

The Clerk has done some work on determining the boundary at Heath Woods and will look into how to register the area. The map provided does not seem to support information held by the Land Registry. She will also contact Graeme Norris to see if he is able to help with any background information. Cllr Hopfensperger has some information that she will share with the Clerk.

Action Cllr Hopfensperger/ Clerk

Status of the WhatsApp group. Cllr Pugson has this matter in hand and will add Cllr Bilverstone and the family as discussed in the public forum. It was agreed a working party needs to get together to carry out some work. These works include dealing with the gouged-out area, potentially moving the noticeboard and reducing the access by the dog bin, so it can not be accessed with a vehicle. A plan going forward will be confirmed. Cllr Pugson will ask Graeme Norris if he has the original maintenance plan for the woods. Cllrs Moffat will head up a working party working with Cllrs Pugson, Bilverstone and the Clerk.

Action Cllr Pugson/Moffat

Cllr Moffat reported that some of the bulbs planted are coming up, he would like some Bluebells, Cllr Bilverstone said she could provide some.

Action Cllrs Bilverstone/Moffat

11.2 To discuss request for metal detecting in Heath Woods.

See under item 6.

11.3 Village Website, to receive any update.

Cllr Pugson has looked at the website. Cllr Pugson asked about the need for a Parish Council website. The Clerk provided the following for information for all. There is a requirement for Parish Councils to have a website, mainly in relation to our obligation under the transparency code and the publication of our minutes and accounts. We are hosted by Onesuffolk, as are many Parish Councils. They offer low-cost hosting. The Clerk felt that immediate work should include making sure the content is up to date. The Clerk has done some work on this and removed some obsolete pages. The Clerk has also contacted the Village Hall and WI to get some up-to-date information. Brenda Burrige will provide some up-to-date information for the Village Hall page and the Clerk and Cllr Pugson will do some work around this. Cllr Pugson now has the details required to access and update the site. He will continue to work on the site, particularly to work on the info piece to try and engage the reader a bit more. He will run any suggested changes past the other Councillors of comments and accuracy.

Action Cllr Pugson/Clerk

11.4 VAS, to confirm grant amounts received and the purchase of a new device.

The Clerk confirmed the prices, previously obtained for a solar powered device, remain unchanged. As discussed above we are waiting for a commitment from WSC Speed before going ahead with any purchase.

11.5 To confirm arrangements going forward for a Christmas tree for the village.

The Clerk has been in contact with The Bull regarding arrangements for the Christmas tree this year. She has asked for an amount to be provided for the tree by September, to inform our budget

meeting. The Bull felt a figure as last year +5% should be close as they won't be able to get a price until closer to Christmas. To save any confusion the Councilors agreed that the Parish Council would be able to make a contribution of up to £200 for the tree this year. This would enable a small increase on last year and enable the Council to have the ability to factor this donation into their budget discussions.

Action Clerk

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

Setting up this scheme for the village is proving to be quite complicated. It was agreed to not pursue this as an option at this time.

11.7. Emergency Plan, to receive any update.

The Clerk is working on producing a briefing on this. Unfortunately, the SCC Emergency Plan coordinator has passed away, so support is limited at this time. This will be put on hold at the moment.

12. Clerks report

12.1 To discuss arrangements for chapter 8 training.

All the councillors are potentially interested in receiving training that would allow them to operate on the highway. There are currently no dates available for the training. The Clerk will continue to pursue this, potentially having some training just for her Parish Councils. Works around the VAS should be covered in the agreement made between the Parish Council and the Safety and Speed Management team at Suffolk County Council, at the time of the original application.

12.2 To review and update ss required:

The following documents were reviewed and updated where required: Standing orders, Financial Standing orders, Risk Assessment, Asset Register, Code of conduct and Clerks contract.

12.3 Devolution consultation

The Clerk attended a webinar on the Devolution deal being considered by Suffolk County Council. She had concerns that some of the money in the deal is not indexed linked, which could potentially result in less money in the future. Also, an elected mayor could be in contrary to cabinet, then the mayor could make a cabinet of chosen members not reflecting electorates votes. Below is some further information about the proposal.

The Government currently controls where and how certain funding is spent in Suffolk.

In December 2022, Suffolk County Council signed an in-principle agreement with the Government to transfer some of that control and funding to Suffolk:

- Level 3 deal
- Additional funding
- More local decision-making
- Greater profile and influence with Government

This is part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

Additional Investment Fund worth **£16m** per year for 30 years, not index linked.

Local control of **£9.4m** Adult Education Budget each year, not index linked.

£5.8m one off funding to develop brownfield housing sites

£3m one off funding to expand Suffolk's Greener Homes 0% Loan Scheme to improve energy efficiency and renewable generation.

An integrated multi-year transport settlement

Control of £9.4m annual Adult Education Budget from 2025 (currently centrally allocated)

Responsibility for commissioning adult education in Suffolk:

- Better targeted
- Closer, more focused collaboration with business and other partners
- Focus on the skills we need in Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council's leader would be directly elected by residents.

First election in **May 2025** in line with next county council elections

No new levels of bureaucracy:

- The directly elected leader would be part of Suffolk County Council
- Existing decision-making arrangements would apply.
- Devolution is a journey, not a one-off event.
- Experience shows devolution opens the door to greater powers and funding over time.
- 4th level of devolution already announced offering multi-year funding and more influence.

A public consultation on the proposed deal will launch in March 2024, giving residents and businesses an opportunity to have their say.

12.4 Free portrait of the King

We have been asked if we would like a free portrait of the king. The Councillors were in favor, the Clerk will contact the Village Hall to see if they would like it to be hung in the Hall. **Action Clerk**

13. Village Hall report

13.1 To include discussion on WiFi arrangements.

Cllr Pugson has done a lot of work around finding a more cost-effective Wi-Fi provider. The Clerk provided the following usage information. Over the last 18 days there has been a small amount of usage. 1gb download, 8gb uploads. The Clerk will share Cllr Pugson findings with the village hall for consideration. **Action Clerk**

Brenda Burridge provided the following report from the Village Hall:

We welcomed Diana to our meeting. Anne, our secretary, is in hospital so Brenda took notes. Bookings were low over the last two months but are picking up again now. We have had no major bills over this period and income has remained steady. Diana has offered to pass on hirers who cannot be accommodated at Gt. Barton. The outside lights seem to be? working again. We are waiting for a quote from Audio Electronic Design for sound insulation. They have worked in a number of local churches and village halls and are well recommended. The Committee thanks the County and Borough Councillors for their support in funding this project. Our next meeting is on 30th April at 7.00pm.

14. Grass cutting tender 2024/25

14.1 to confirm management arrangements for contractor.

It was agreed that we would continue to use the WhatsApp group to communicate with Peter Kerry regarding the grass cutting. Currently Cllrs Rose, Riddick and the Clerk are members of the group. We will notify Peter Kerry when we are nearing the need for a cut.

15. Planning to also include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted.

15.1 To discuss any submission for the West Suffolk Local Plan consultation.

The Clerk contacted West Suffolk council about the current Local Plan consultation. Following a discussion the Parish Council agreed that they would submit the following.

The Parish would like to let it be known that they would support a small development in the village of up to 5 houses. Potentially this would be as infill plots within its housing settlement boundary, or by exploring a rural exception site or exception site for community led development adjacent to the existing settlement boundary.

The Parish Council do not wish to pursue an extension of the village boundary or a change to the village category.

The parish are aware that exploring these options are available outside of the current West Suffolk Local Plan consultation. It was agreed that, if there was an appetite for future development, of this scale, this would be an agenda item for another meeting.

15.2 Suffolk Wildlife Trust, request for more support for nature projects, within the Local Plan.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust is encouraging councils to be ambitious when it comes to getting development to deliver more nature and they have created an online 'e-action' for people to send them their messages in support of asking developers to do more for nature. These messages will then be shared with West Suffolk Council to show them that people want more nature from new development. If individuals and/or as a local council would like to join them in asking for development to do more for nature, your support would be greatly appreciated. You can take the action here: <https://wtru.st/WS-local-plan> The Parish council noted this request.

16. Councillors reports and items for future agendas.

There were no additional reports or requests for future agenda items received.

17. Correspondence for action or information

17.1 To receive information on Connecting Communities, a door-to-door minibus service. Connecting Communities is available for those who find it difficult to use public transport. Services enable passengers to travel locally, for example to visit friends and relatives, attend medical appointments or take a trip to the shops. Access education and workplaces, linking with other scheduled services. There is a central phone number, booking line is open Monday to Friday 8am until 4pm. Call 01638 664304

They are there to assist with any journeys that you are finding difficult to do using public transport – perhaps you have mobility issues or there simply is no service available where you live. The team will look to see if they can offer a transport solution. Connecting Communities operates Monday to Saturday 7 am until 7 pm

17.2 SALC Survey

SALC reviews its business plan and all activities linked with objectives set out in the SALC. Constitution so they can establish their priorities for the next 12 months. This communication is a request to our council, as a member of SALC, to complete our annual survey. The closing date is 29th March 2024. Noted.

18. Date for next meetings. 7th May 2024 7.00pm Annual Parish meeting to followed by the Annual Parish Council meeting.

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.