

MINUTES OF TROSTON ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday 9th May 2023 7.30pm
at Troston Village Hall

Present: Cllrs J Moffat, S Rose, P Walton, S Woodward, P Riddick, R Balaam, WS D. Cllr A Speed & SCC Cllr R Hopfensperger.

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Moffat nominated Cllr Rose for the role as Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Walton.

2. Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Chairman completed their Declaration of acceptance of office.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Woodward nominated Cllr Balaam for the role of Vice Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Riddick.

4. Apologies for absence None received.

5. Co-option of new Parish Councillor

No requests received.

6 To elect Council Officers and Representatives to outside bodies and confirm areas of responsibilities

Cllr Woodward was elected as the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Committee.

7. Apologies for absence

None received.

8. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

8.1 To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda. None.

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

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

9. Minutes The minutes of the Tuesday 7th March 2023 meeting were agreed and approved as a correct record.

10. Report from RAF Honington: Sqn Ldr M Fixter

To discuss attendance at the Annual Formal Reception on Thursday 15 June. The Chairman has been invited to a formal reception at RAF Honington. Unfortunately, Cllr Rose is unable to attend. The invitation was extended to the Councillors, and it was agreed that Cllr Riddick will attend the event in her place. The Clerk will ensure that both Sqn Ldr M Fixter and Cllr Riddick have the necessary information to facilitate this.

Action Cllr Riddick/Clerk

To receive update on VAS at RAF Honington.

We are still waiting for a date for the installation of the VAS at RAF Honington. It was agreed to pay the outstanding invoice once the device has been installed. Unfortunately, the agreed grant, from our previous West Suffolk Councillor, was not forthcoming at the time of the meeting. This matter will continue to be pursued with WSC with the Clerk copying in our new District Councillor, Andrew Speed, on any correspondence. Unfortunately, it was felt we could not afford to fund another device in the village at this time. It was agreed that this was something we would look at again when preparing the budget for next year.

Action Clerk

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

A resident expressed disappointment that they felt that they had not been thanked for delivering the newsletter when deliveries were stopped. The editor of the newsletter will be asked to address this matter. It was suggested that the newsletter should be self-supporting, by the inclusion of advertisements. Although the Parish Council fund the printing of the newsletter and submit a piece for inclusion, we do not produce or edit it. It was understood that this change could potentially increase the work involved, for what is a voluntary role. This suggestion will be passed on to the editor for their consideration.

Action Chairman

A discussion was had about disseminating information to the residents in the Parish regarding Parish Council matters. Notices of the meetings and various information are advertised on the noticeboard, Parish Council website and Facebook. It was suggested that contact details for the Parish Councilors, District Councillor and Suffolk County Councillor should be made available on the noticeboard, in addition to being available on the Parish Council website. The Clerk will arrange for this to be done.

Action Clerk

12. Report from County Councillor: R Hopfensperger.

It was noted that potholes have been particularly bad this winter. SCC have changed their contractor and they will have a new approach to dealing with potholes which will hopefully see them dealt with more efficiently. Cllr Hopfensperger asked that any potholes, which had been reported, and had not been filled, are highlighted to her so she can escalate the matter. Cllr Hopfensperger confirmed that she had contributed towards the cost of the new VAS that is going to be installed at RAF Honington. Cllr Hopfensperger has also granted £75 towards the cost of some litter-picking equipment. This is still to be purchased. Cllr Ballam offered to do this as the Clerk had not had an opportunity to do so at the time of the meeting.

Action Cllr Balaam

Cllr Hopfensperger asked the Councillors to revisit the requirement for signage at the play area. Cllr Hopfensperger will look at possible options and this will go on the next agenda for a further discussion.

Action Clerk

The Councillors were asked to if they still wished to pursue the options to improve the passing places on Ixworth Road. Cllr Balaam will liaise with Cllr Hopfensperger regarding this project to see if we are able to formalise the passing places after Cllr Balaam has addressed the matter with the landowner. He will also investigate the costs of this potential project. Cllr Hopfensperger will look at potential costs and funding, from SCC, for the project. **Action Cllr Balaam/Hopfensperger**
The overgrown condition of the verge at Forge Corner and the ditches at Caple Close was brought up. Cllr Hopfensperger will investigate this matter further.

Action Cllr Hopfensperger

13. Report from West Suffolk Councillor: Andrew Speed

Andrew Speed was elected as the new District Councillor for the ward that Troston sits in. He is looking forward to working with the Parish Councils he has been elected to represent and feels that working with other agencies, particularly Suffolk County Council and Cllr Rebecca Hopfensperger, and fostering good relationships, will be important when trying to get things done. Cllr Speed will act as a point of contact for West Suffolk Council issues and will try to facilitate grants where he is able to do so.

Cllr Speed has asked to be kept up to date with any correspondence regarding outstanding grants, previously agreed, by our former District Councillor.

Action Clerk

14. Finance.

14.1 The following accounts were agreed/noted.

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Payment | Various | administration office | £735.62 |
| Payment | Trevor Brown | Audit | £210.00 |
| Payment | Mijan | administration office | £72.00 |
| Payment | Community Action Suffolk | Website | £60.00 |
| Payment | SALC | subscription | £290.56 |
| Payment | Kalkwik | Newsletter | £54.72 |
| Payment | West Suffolk Waste | Bins | £732.16 |
| Payment | Troston PCC | Churchyard Troston PCC | £700.00 |
| Receipt | West Suffolk | Precept | £14,000.0 |
| Payment | BT | BT | £35.99 |
| Payment | Countryside Management Services | Grass cutting/Playing Field | £750.00 |

14.2 Bank reconciliation and accounts update.

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

14.3 End of Year Accounts.

14.3.1 To discuss the Report by the Internal Auditor.

The internal audit report was accepted, it was noted that there were no recommendations made this year and the accounts were all in order.

14.3.2 To approve and sign section two of the AGAR, Certificate of exemption.

Parts one and two of the AGAR was approved and signed by the Council as was the certificate of exemption. The Clerk will ensure that all the relevant documentation is submitted to PKF Littlejohn, the external auditors and that the publication requirements, under the Transparency act, are met.

Action Clerk

14.4 Update on banking arrangements.

The bank account has now been set up for dual authorisation with the Clerk setting up payments and either Cllr Rose or Cllr Moffat authorising them.

14.5 To receive update on funding for VAS from West Suffolk Council

The Clerk has been in correspondence with West Suffolk Council trying to secure the funding agreed by our previous District Councillor. She will continue to pursue this.

Action Clerk

14.6 To agree automatic payments to HMRC.

It was agreed that the Clerk will make arrangements for HMRC to automatically collect any tax contributions due by direct debit going forward.

Action Clerk

14.7 VAT claim update

The Clerk has written to HMRC to ask them to provide or update her of the Unique Ref for Troston Parish Council that is required to make an online claim for the repayment of VAT. A postal claim has been submitted for the amount of £1013.25

Action Clerk

15. Play Area/Playing Field to include:

15.1 To discuss placement of trees on the playing field.

Some work has been done working towards a compromise on the position of the trees, planted on the Playing field, that is agreeable to all parties. Some further work is still required on this matter. Once further information is gathered an email to all the Councillors will be circulated for approval, before contacting the residents to update them on the situation.

Action Clerk

15.2 To confirm position and required works to wildlife area.

An area, on the field, behind 'Fleetwood' was agreed as the area for the new Wildlife area. Cllr Balaam will trim the area as the first step towards preparing the area for the planting of some wildflower seeds.

Action Cllr Balaam

15.3 Play area report, to note any actions.

It was noted that some of the wooden play equipment requires some treatment. In particular the upright posts on the zip wire need treating where they go into the ground. The Clerk will ask the grass cutting contractor to carry this maintenance out as this forms part of his annual contract.

Action Clerk

15.4 To discuss damage to car park fence.

The damage, by a vehicle, to the playing field fence was noted. It was repaired quickly and reported to the police for their information.

11.5 To receive an update on the leaking water pipe/tap for the Playing Field

Cllr Moffat has checked the tap and it is no longer leaking.

11.6 Grit bin filling update.

A request that the grit bins located on Garden Fields is refilled was made to SCC. They have responded by saying that unfortunately, due to other commitments operationally they have not been able to do this. They have now taken the decision that Ad-Hoc grit bin refills will not be scheduled for a refill as part of this season. These will be picked up as part of the 23/24 blanket refill program.

16. Village Maintenance/matters

16.1 To receive update on defibrillator training.

The Clerk has asked for some defibrillator training, from The Community Heartbeat Trust, in June or July. The Councillors felt a Saturday session would be most popular. The Clerk has confirmed with the village hall what Saturdays are currently available. Once a date has been confirmed they Clerk will share this information so the event can be advertised.

Action Clerk

16.2 To discuss grass cutting, to include verge cutting. On corner near the Old forge

So far there don't seem to be any major issues with the new grass contractor. A couple of items were raised to be brought to their attention. These were to ensure the area around the village entrance sign, coming from Ixworth, is cut a bit shorter. Also, they will be asked to cut closer to the hedges on the playing field. A map showing the areas of concern will be shared with the contractor. Cllr Rose is happy to meet with the contractor if any further confirmation is required.

Action Cllr Rose/Clerk

16.3 To discuss option to set up speed watch group.

Unfortunately, no residents have come forward to support the Speed Watch initiative in the village. As such it was agreed that unfortunately this project could not go ahead at this time. Cllr Walton will download the data from our VAS sign so this can be shared with the police. The Clerk will liaise with Cllr Walton regarding this.

Action Cllr Walton/Clerk

16.4 To discuss the option for a new dog litter bin, Ixworth Road.

It was noted that if we install a new dog waste bin there will be an increase in costs from West Suffolk for emptying it. Cllr Ballam offered to empty the new bin. He further offered to empty all the dog waste bins going forward. It was agreed that, as we had already paid for the bins to be emptied this year, that we would revisit this as an option when we discuss our budget for next year, in November. Cllr Moffat and Ballam will arrange for the new bin to be installed, by the footpath on Ixworth Road, and Cllr Ballam will empty it for the time being.

Action Cllrs Moffat/Balaam

16.5 Village Hall update.

Following a quiet couple of years, the Village Hall is again being well used for regular and one-off events. Bookings are gradually increasing, and users are very complimentary about the facility we have to offer. Members of the Committee have worked tirelessly to ensure that the Hall is maintained to a good standard and attractive to visitors.

During the year, the oil tank has been moved to meet statutory requirements and interior and exterior decorating has taken place. The Hall is cleaned regularly, and repairs are carried out as necessary. Fire extinguisher and electrical testing are kept up to date and insurance is renewed annually.

Our finances are still in a good state, although monthly income barely covers expenses as yet. Government Covid grants help to meet any shortfall.

We have welcomed Suzie Woodward to the committee as the Parish Council representative. Once again, thanks to all committee members for the part they play in helping to sustain this valuable community asset. Moving forward the Village Hall are looking to fund some works to help with the acoustics in the hall. The Clerk will share some possible areas of funding with Brenda Burridge.

Action Clerk

17. To receive an update on the village lottery.

Cllr Woodward is still working on this. She tried to use the Clerk's address details to set up the license. Unfortunately, as the Clerk does not live in the West Suffolk Area, this was not possible. The license is required to enable any draws to be made. Cllr Woodward will continue to pursue this matter.

Action Cllr Woodward

18. Planning To also include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted.

18.1 DC/23/0577/FUL | Planning application - (a) change of use of agricultural land to garden land (b) detached double garage | Land Adjacent to Wayside Bungalow Honington Road Troston. The Councillors raised **No objections** to this application.

19. Councillors reports and items for future agendas.

19.1 Councillor Training.

The Clerk provided the Councillors with some information about some new training for Councillors that SALC are going to be running. SALC recognize that the option of having six modules of training is a big commitment, a lot to take in and put into practice especially when new to the role. Their new Councilor development page instead offers a staged approach and, they believe, makes the best use of resources that are available for the sector such as national guidance, publications, networking, news bulletins and training. The new Councillor Basics workshop consists of two x 2-hour sessions. Cllr Riddick would like to sign up for this workshop. The Chairman would like to undertake some Chairmans training once this is available. The Clerk will arrange the training for Cllr Riddick and look at options for the Chairman's training for Cllr Rose.

Action Cllrs Riddick/Rose/Clerk

Cllr Balaam would like to get a team together to clear some wood at Troston Woods, put it through the chipper and use the wood chips on the path. The Clerk will contact Peter Kerry regarding this.

Action Cllr Balaam/Clerk

20. Correspondence for information

None received.

21. Date for next meetings. Tuesday 4th July 2023

A request was received from Cllrs Woodward and Balaam to move the meeting to a Monday. It was therefore agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 3rd July. **Action Clerk**

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

22.1 Personnel Issues. It was agreed to pay the Clerk two weeks' pay, as overtime, to cover the extra work she did following time taken off ill with Covid.

22.2 Legal Issues. None.