

TOSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council
held on 9 January 2024 at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall
(Approved 12.03.24; minute 24.03.03 refers)**

Present: Cllr Jane Storey (Chair), Cllr Michael Bauly, Cllr David Blundell, Cllr Paul Callow, Cllr Roger Cross, Cllr Julian Kearsley and Cllr Glenn Lebbon.

In Attendance: County Cllr Andrew Mellen and District Cllr David Bradbury; Seven members of the public; and Parish Clerk: Doug Reed.

Prior to the start of business the Chair expressed her heartfelt sadness, on behalf of the Council, on the death of the Vice-Chair, Cllr Vanessa Malcom who had been ill for some while. It was noted that she had served on the Council for many years and, in that time, had been an especially hard-working member who had earned the respect of all she encountered. She would be seriously missed both by the Council and the village as a whole. A minute's silence was observed in her memory.

24.01.01 Apologies for Absence

Accepted from Cllr Sarah Cobbold who was unable to attend due to a prior family commitment.

24.01.02 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

02.1 Interests: Cllr Bauly declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 24.01.09.1 concerning planning applications DC/23/05328 and DC/23/05329 (minute 24.01.09.1) as he was a friend of the applicants.

02.2 Dispensation Requests: None.

02.3 Dispensation Decisions: None.

24.01.03 Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 14 November, be signed as a true record.

24.01.04 County and District Councillors' Reports

04.1 County Councillor: Cllr Mellen presented his report. He was able to confirm that data from a March 2022 survey of Church Road vehicle speeds was still valid so he had been able to commission a report on speeding to be presented to the County Council Cabinet Member responsible for highways with the aim of reducing the speed limit to 40mph.

04.2 District Councillors: Cllr Davies had given his apologies as he had to attend another parish council meeting. Cllr Bradbury, therefore, presented their report. There were no matters arising.

24.01.05 Public Comment and Questions

Residents spoke to support the budget report to be discussed later in the meeting and to address planning applications DC/23/05328 and DC/23/05329. It was also pointed out that 2025 would see the 70th

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anniversary of the first edition of the "Tostock Chronicle" and that it might appropriate to find a way to celebrate its longevity.

24.01.06 Correspondence

Cllr Storey reported on items both sent to and received by the Council. She noted the following in particular:

- ◆ Suffolk Highways had confirmed that '20's Plenty' schemes had been shown to be effective around schools but had had far less impact in other areas. Nonetheless, the potential for implementation in the village would be kept under review.
- ◆ Suffolk Highways had started remedial work to address the problems along Church Road, not least the issues with multiple and serious potholes. Currently, a completion timescale was not available.
- ◆ Regarding the Land Registry tribunal in relation to land off Flatts Lane, Suffolk County Council had received an amount of evidence from residents which, it was reported, might yet lead to requests for witness statements. However, it was noted that the situation might change given planning application DC/23/02229 had been refused.

24.01.07 Finance

07.1 Responsible Financial Officer: The Clerk reported that ongoing problems in securing statements from NatWest meant that information about accounts was available only up to and including 27 December. To that point, it was noted that the NatWest current account stood at £26,268.42 and the reserve account at £38,019.38 further to which it was resolved that the reconciliation be approved. Of the £64,287.80 total it was noted that £55,713.87 was funding received through the Community Infrastructure Levy which could not be spent on day-to-day matters. The Council revenue budget for the final quarter of the financial year thus stood at £8,573.93.

07.2 New Pay Scales: The Council resolved to adopt the newly agreed NJC pay scales, as contractually applicable to the Council post of Clerk, to be applied retrospectively from 1 April 2023 with the resultant salary implication (increase of £1.00 per hour).

07.3 Payments and Income: It was resolved that the schedule of payments be approved. The schedule comprised the following:

- ◆ Clerk: salary (December) - £374.52;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE (December) - £93.70;
- ◆ Clerk: homeworking allowance (December) - £26.00;
- ◆ Gipping Press Ltd: "Tostock Chronicle" (September) - £368.00;
- ◆ Gipping Press Ltd: "Tostock Chronicle" (November) - £313.00;
- ◆ Mid Suffolk District Council: loan repayment - £2,416.77;
- ◆ Mr A Jones: reimbursement of mower repair plus diesel - £210.56;
- ◆ Mr O Holland: litter-picking - £48.75;
- ◆ Clerk: salary (January) - £333.22;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE (January) - £83.30; and
- ◆ Clerk: homeworking allowance (January) - £26.00;

Income received was duly noted as follows:

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- ◆ NatWest: reserve (deposit) account interest - £45.26;
- ◆ HMRC: reclaimed VAT 2022-2023 - £90.44; and
- ◆ "Tostock Chronicle": advertising - £102.50.

07.4 Community Infrastructure Levy: Councillors noted the completion and signing of the 2022-2023 Community Infrastructure Levy monitoring report for submission to Mid Suffolk District Council and publication on the village website.

07.5 Budget Working Party/Budget and Precept 2024-2025: The Working Party report was received. In considering the present financial position, the Working Party had been conscious of the need to try to minimise increases in the budget and precept yet faced serious challenges in meeting not only expected rising costs but also, and more immediately important, needing to deal with issues left from the 2022-2023 financial year which had impacted negatively upon the current year finances. The lack of any reserves was also deemed a serious omission which needed urgent remedial action consistent with recommended best practice for parish councils. The proposed rise in the precept was, thus, determined with some reluctance but felt to be the minimum necessary to manage expected expenditure whilst also dealing with the inherited problems. The Working Party also identified several areas where further investigation might lead to possible savings. Taking everything into account, the Council resolved to approve the recommendations as follows:

- that the precept for 2024-2025 be set at £12,323.00;
- that the budget (as presented) be approved for 2024-2025; and
- the Budget Working Party be retained to review the 2023-2024 end-of-year situation and to make adjustments (as needed) to the proposed 2024-2025 budget heads.

07.6 "Tostock Chronicle": In examining Council expenditure the Budget Working Party had looked at areas for potential savings including the village newsletter. It was resolved that its governance and financing be reviewed with a report and any proposals for change to be presented to the Annual Parish Meeting (April). A group was set up for the task comprising Cllr Storey, Cllr Kearsley, Sharon Burman, Adrian Malcom and Kim Mars.

24.01.08 Ongoing Matters

08.1 Standing Orders: Cllr Callow proposed the adoption of Standing Orders based upon the model version offered by the National Association of Local Councils. This was agreed. He added that he would now seek policies published by other local parish councils with a view to their customisation and adoption at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

08.2 Speedwatch: Cllr Storey reported on information supplied by Kathy Sharkey which showed, disappointingly, that the evidence of speeding from three sites (Leys Road, New Road and Norton Road) had proven insufficient to warrant enforcement attention.

08.3 Wayleave (The Green): This matter, previously being progressed by Cllr Malcom, would now be followed up by Cllr Blundell and Cllr Kearsley.

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24.01.09

Planning

09.1 New Applications:

DC/23/05512 Tostock Village Hall - installation of external insulation with durable over cladding, replacement windows and doors, construction of rear extension to replace existing external store. Installation of photovoltaic panels, two electric charging points and additional overflow carpark area.

This application had only just been received. Given previous discussions about the proposals it was agreed that councillors would submit individual comments to Mid Suffolk District Council in response to the application.

DC/23/05328 and DC/23/05329 Oak Cottage, The Green, Tostock - erection of rear extension (following demolition of garage and link) and Listed Building Consent. The Council OBJECTED. Further to detailed discussion, the Council voted (five in favour with two abstentions) to object.

It was considered that the proposed new extension would represent overdevelopment of the site, being a significant and prominent addition which would dominate the original building and detract from its architectural and historic character. In addition, the extension would result in an overbearing impact on the existing neighbouring dwellings to the detriment of their amenity and an adverse visual impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area. Thus, it is considered that the harm to the listed building would outweigh any identified benefits.

09.2 Decisions: The following application results were noted:

DC/23/04647 Old Rectory, Norton Road - application for Listed Building Consent - insertion of external vents, construction of veranda and internal alterations as detailed in the schedule of works. GRANTED.

DC/23/02229 Land fronting Flatts Lane - application for outline planning permission (access points to be considered, appearance, layout, landscaping and scale to be reserved) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - erection of three self-build dwellings with garaging. REFUSED.

09.3 Applications Awaiting Decision:

DC/23/05815 1&2 The Lodge, Norton Road - Listed Building Consent - erection of rear extension and treatment of beams. Works to reinstate the two dwellings into one dwelling, as per Heritage Statement. The Council had NO OBJECTION; and

DC/23/05826 1&2 The Lodge, Norton Road - erection of cart lodge with log store. Erection of rear extension. Reposition oil tanks. Reinstatement of the two dwellings to one dwelling. The Council had NO OBJECTION.

24.01.10

Matters for the Attention of the Council

Items for the agenda for the next meeting were identified, these being the "Tostock Chronicle", wayleave (The Green) and village drainage plan.

24.01.11

Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 12 March at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.53pm.