

TOSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 12 March 2024 at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall

Present: Cllr Jane Storey (Chair), Cllr Michael Baulby, Cllr David Blundell, Cllr Sarah Cobbold, Cllr Roger Cross, Cllr Julian Kearsley and Cllr Glenn Lebbon.

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

24.03.01 **Apologies for Absence**

Accepted from Cllr Paul Callow who was on holiday.

24.03.02 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

02.1 Interests: None.

02.2 Dispensation Requests: None.

02.3 Dispensation Decisions: None.

24.03.03 **Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting**

It was resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 9 January, be signed as a true record.

24.03.04 **County and District Councillors' Reports**

04.1 County Councillor: Cllr Mellen presented his report. Regarding agenda item 24.03.09.1 he referred to the safety issues along Church Road to the A1088 and the possibility of reducing the speed limit to 40mph. He made known that the report regarding speed and safety along this road, which included data from the March 2022 traffic survey, did not evidence criteria sufficient to warrant such a limit being applied. The Council agreed, especially given the substantial legal fees that would have been involved for which the Council would have been liable. Councillors acknowledged that problems remained but that the present issues were primarily a product of current work to the A14. Accordingly, it was agreed to continue to monitor the situation and reconsider the speed limit in 2025. Referring to agenda item 24.03.06.4 Cllr Mellen noted that there was no decision as yet on consideration by the Land Registry into the dispute over land in Flatts Lane. He also reported that, from the next County Council elections, boundary changes would result in Tostock moving from the Thedwastre North to Thedwastre South electoral division (with Beyton and Thurston).

04.2 District Councillors: Neither Cllr Bradbury nor Cllr Davies was in attendance. Both had sent apologies.

24.03.05 **Public Comment and Questions**

A resident spoke to address concerns about the lack of water accessible to allotment-holders due to one non-working pump and likely issues involved in securing a solution. While it was not a Council matter as such, but rather one for the Poor's Estate, councillors expressed their concern and the Chair agreed that it should be considered further at the Annual Parish

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Meeting, and that it would prove helpful if the costs of a remedy could be identified in the meantime. Mr Langlois, as Village Recorder, noted that he was having to relinquish this key role and would appreciate any help councillors could offer in securing a replacement. Cllr Storey, on behalf of both the Council and village, thanked Mr Langlois for all that he had done and wished him well for the future.

24.03.06 Correspondence

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

- ◆ The latest situation with the Council vacancy, further to which it was expected that a co-option would be effected at the next meeting.
- ◆ That Suffolk County Council had engaged a new contractor, Milestone Infrastructure, to deal with highways maintenance. She had spoken with the local Suffolk Highways engineer to query the recent notice issued about urgent work to be undertaken in New Road which it then transpired had already been carried out; and pressed for further action on potholes on Church Road and New Road.
- ◆ Ahead of the report of the working group which looked at the future of the "Tostock Chronicle" Cllr Storey noted that articles would now need to be limited to one page and expressed her thanks, on behalf of the Council, to those who had previously offered more substantial contributions, especially Mr Derrick Poole for his articles over a number of years.
- ◆ The matter of the Land Registry tribunal had been discussed earlier in the meeting during the report from the County Councillor.

24.03.07 Finance

07.1 Responsible Financial Officer: It was noted that the NatWest current account stood at £22,740.10 and the reserve account at £38,156.99 further to which it was resolved that the reconciliation be approved. Of the £60,897.09 total it was noted that £55,713.87 was Community Infrastructure Levy funding which could not be spent on day-to-day matters.

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

- ◆ Clerk: salary (February) - £359.32;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE (February) - £83.20;
- ◆ Clerk: homeworking allowance (February) - £26.00;
- ◆ Gipping Press Ltd: "Tostock Chronicle" (February) - £313.00;
- ◆ Clerk: salary (March) - £359.32;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE (March) - £83.20;
- ◆ Clerk: homeworking allowance (March) - £26.00;
- ◆ Mr O Holland: litter-picking - £46.87;
- ◆ Clerk: administrative expenses (October-March) - £59.86.

Income received was duly noted as follows:

- ◆ NatWest: reserve (deposit) account interest - £93.81;
- ◆ Mid Suffolk District Council: cleansing grant (October-December) - £270.92; and
- ◆ "Tostock Chronicle": advertising - £80.00.

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07.3 Community Infrastructure Levy: With several options available on which to spend the funding available, and to provide clarity on future spending commitments, it was resolved that £40,000.00 be set aside for the Village Hall project, £4,000.00 for essential highways work and £4,500.00 for an additional speeding device (with accessories) and data loggers, leaving c£10,000.00 for further consideration.

07.4 Banking: Given a history of problems with NatWest it was proposed that Council accounts be moved to a bank which better understood the needs of a parish council and which delivered a more customer-friendly, flexible service. A review of information available suggested that Lloyds Bank might be the best option as it offered a facility targeted at parish councils. Whilst aware of the problems, the Council noted that the present position was now, at least, stable and workable so resolved to defer any action for six months to see how matters progressed.

07.5 Internal Audit: Further to the consideration of three quotations obtained for conducting the internal audit of the Council for 2023-2024, it was resolved that Heelis and Lodge be engaged to carry out the work at a cost of £170.00.

24.03.08 "Tostock Chronicle"

Cllr Kearsley presented the report of the working group which had been set up to review the governance and financing of the newsletter. The Council resolved to accept all the recommendations within the report which, principally, included keeping the same format as now but with the maximum number of pages per issue restricted to 16 at a reduced cost of £258.00, and a small increase in advertising rates which would be advertised in the publication itself. The importance of the newsletter to the village was emphasised and it was felt that the changes would have no detrimental impact upon its value whilst delivering some vital cost savings.

24.03.09 Ongoing Matters

09.1 Speeding Concerns and Speedwatch: The issue of the speed limit along Church Road to the A1088 had been discussed during the report from the County Councillor. In relation to speedwatch there was no further news.

09.2 Wayleave (The Green): This matter was now being pursued by Cllr Kearsley. The need to try to move this forward was emphasised.

09.3 The Leys: Cllr Cross reported that he would be undertaking work there as soon as the wet weather abated sufficiently to enable him to go ahead.

09.4 Village Drainage Plan: Cllr Blundell noted that he hoped to make progress further to an imminent meeting about flooding issues which was being hosted by Beyton Parish Council and which both he and Cllr Storey would be attending.

09.5 Village Sign: Councillors were extremely grateful for the work of a resident of The Green who had removed the damaged sign, repainted it and reported that a replacement post was now being sourced, hopefully at no cost. Although an alternative village sign had been offered to the Council

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it was decided that, given the remedial work being undertaken, the offer should no longer be considered further.

24.03.10 Planning

10.1 New Applications:

None.

10.2 Decisions: The following application results were noted:

DC/24/00104 12 Pamment Close - application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a proposed larger home extension. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A - erection of single storey rear extension. APPROVED;

DC/23/05512 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. GRANTED; and

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. WITHDRAWN.

10.3 Applications Awaiting Decision:

DC/24/00145 and DC/24/00202 The Gardeners Arms, Church Road - application for advertisement consent - replacement signage including one front and one rear on render illuminated fascia sign, one illuminated hanging post sign, one post chalkboard sign and one pavement chalkboard sign. New signage including one car park disclaimer, one post amenity board, and two car park directional signs; and Listed Building Consent. The Council SUPPORTED the application; and

DC/24/00784 Willow Cottage, The Leys - works to trees in a Conservation

Area - to remove branch overhanging towards property on pine tree, remove one branch growing towards property on pine tree, a two metre reduction to top and sides of birch tree, reduce and re-shape as well as a one metre reduction on a few lateral branches on oak tree, remove dead birch tree and a one metre reduction of birch tree. The Council had NO OBJECTION.

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.

24.03.11 Asset Management

11.1 Asset Register 2024: Confirmation of the accuracy of the updated and corrected Register was deferred pending ownership queries with the Village Hall Committee over several items which Cllr Storey would investigate. It was also reported that the noticeboard by The Croft was in

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need of repair. Cllr Bauly and Cllr Cross kindly offered to deal with the latter.

11.2 Inspections: With the need for formal inspections of Council assets to be conducted, Cllr Cross and Cllr Storey agreed to undertake the task before the next meeting.

24.03.12 Council Governance

12.1 Code of Conduct: As recommended by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, the Council adopted the Local Government Association (LGA) Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 in place of the Suffolk Local Code of Conduct adopted in 2016 and hitherto applicable to the Council.

12.2 Dispensations: The Council adopted Dispensation Procedure, as presented, and in so doing resolved that all requests for dispensations would be determined by the Council itself.

12.3 Policies and Procedures: Further to work to revise and update policies and procedures, as per the detailed report presented, the Council resolved to

- ◆ adopt those now revised and completed;
- ◆ agree those for revision and adoption as soon as reasonably possible; and
- ◆ to accept those for potential adoption as and when required.

24.03.13 Matters for the Attention of the Council

None.

24.03.14 Next Meeting

It was noted that the Annual Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 14 May at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall prior to which the Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Tuesday 9 April at 7.30pm in the same venue.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.03pm.