

# TOSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 16 July 2024 at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall

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

**In Attendance:** County Cllr Andrew Mellen;  
Five members of the public; and  
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed.

### 24.07.01 **Apologies for Absence**

Accepted from Cllr Michael Bauly who was unavoidably delayed at a business meeting and Cllr Sarah Cobbold who was unable to attend due to work commitments.

### 24.07.02 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

**07.1 Interests:** Cllr Storey declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 24.07.06.2 (minute 24.07.06) as the owner of offices in Ticehurst Yards.

**07.2 Dispensation Requests:** None.

**07.3 Dispensation Decisions:** None.

### 24.07.03 **Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting**

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

### 24.07.04 **County and District Councillors' Reports**

**04.1 County Councillor:** Cllr Mellen presented his report. In particular, he was asked about potential repairs to Church Road, following completion of the highways works to the A14. He noted that he would look into what options there might be for remedial action.

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

### 24.07.05 **Public Comment and Questions**

None.

### 24.07.06 **Correspondence**

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

◆ Regarding the availability of land for potential office and industrial development in Mid Suffolk, and a query from District Cllr David Bradbury as to why Ticehurst Yards had not been included, Cllr Storey reported that both this site and others in Tostock had been omitted as they were not new and were already known about.

◆ A resident of The Leys had contacted the Council to apologise for the delayed removal of soil which had been left by workmen further to work on the relevant property.

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- ◆ Some councillors had been contacted by a member of the public concerned about a perceived safety incident involving cows on the Black Bourn Valley Nature Reserve in the mistaken belief that this was within the village boundary. Cllr Storey reported the matter to Suffolk Wildlife Trust who then dealt with the matter.
- ◆ Further to concerns about trees next to the Apple Store which were cut down, Cllr Storey discovered that they were removed due to concerns that youngsters were using the trees to climb on to the roof of the Store.
- ◆ A 150-year-old oak tree at the eastern end of Perkins Way has also been removed, seemingly because it was shading a nearby garden. Given that the Council now has a Biodiversity Policy which demands observance, it was agreed that the Mid Suffolk District Council Arboricultural Officer be asked to visit the site to consider if other trees might be at risk and so warrant the application of Tree Preservation Orders.

24.07.07

## Finance

**07.1 Responsible Financial Officer:** It was noted that the NatWest current account stood at £2,679.49 and the reserve account at £59,165.06 further to which it was resolved that the reconciliation be approved.

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

- ◆ Clerk: salary (June) - £359.32;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE (June) - £83.20;
- ◆ Clerk: homeworking allowance (June) - £26.00;
- ◆ Information Commissioner: data protection registration - £40.00;
- ◆ Mr A Jones: reimbursement of mower diesel - £67.01;
- ◆ Gipping Press Ltd: "Tostock Chronicle" (June/July) - £313.00;
- ◆ Clerk: salary (July) - £359.32;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE (July) - £83.20;
- ◆ Clerk: homeworking allowance (July) - £26.00;
- ◆ Suffolk Cloud: e-mail provision - £30.00;
- ◆ Mr A Jones: reimbursement of mower diesel - £67.80;
- ◆ Clerk: administrative expenses (April-July) - £40.48;
- ◆ Mr O Holland: litter-picking - £78.75; and
- ◆ Mid Suffolk District Council: dog and litter bin emptying service - £546.60 + £112.92 VAT.

Income received was duly noted as follows:

- ◆ NatWest: reserve (deposit) account interest - £55.37; and
- ◆ NatWest: reserve (deposit) account interest - £65.74.

**07.3 Community Infrastructure Levy:** The funding total remained at £55,713.87 but it was noted that further income of £3,417.12 was due to be received in October.

**07.4 Internal Audit 2023-2024:** The recommendations in the internal audit report carried out by Heelis and Lodge were reviewed in detail together with the actions taken by and responses from the Clerk. It was agreed that all matters had now either been satisfactorily addressed or had been identified for imminent remedial attention. Councillors were, thus, content that all matters in the report had been fully and properly addressed.

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## 24.07.08 Ongoing Matters

**08.1 Speeding Concerns and Speedwatch:** With works to the A14 now completed, it was felt that there should be no further implications for Tostock but that relevant speeding matters should continue to be monitored and then reviewed once the situation had had time to settle down.

**08.2 Wayleave (The Green):** Cllr Storey reported that she was awaiting advice from a surveyor whilst Cllr Kearsley, further to a recommendation, noted that he had approached a Suffolk-based firm of chartered surveyors to find out how much it might cost the Council to handle this matter.

**08.3 Land Registry Tribunal:** Cllr Storey confirmed that there was no further news. The situation was being progressed by legal professionals.

## 24.07.09 Planning

### 09.1 New Applications:

None.

**09.2 Decisions:** The following application results were noted:

DC/24/02074 and DC/24/02075 Old Rectory, Norton Road - erection of orangery and entrance gates; and Listed Building Consent. GRANTED; and DC/24/02307 and DC/24/02308 Oak Cottage, The Green - erection of single-storey rear extension (following demolition of existing garage and lean-to link extension); and Listed Building Consent. GRANTED.

### 09.3 Applications Awaiting Decision:

None.

**09.4 Hedge Removal - Oak Cottage, The Green:** The Council had received comments from some residents who were concerned about the removal of the hedge which formed the boundary of Oak Cottage and was adjacent to the footpath which led from The Green to the playing field. Also, given its Biodiversity Policy and the fact that the property was both within the Conservation Area and a listed building, the Council felt it was right and proper to ask questions about the removal. The owners had subsequently written to the Council to explain their position, noting that they were acting with the best of intentions and wished to do everything they could to work with both neighbours and the Council. The owners kindly attended the meeting and were given the opportunity to expand upon their position. In turn, Cllr Storey explained all that the Council had to take into account - particularly as the most recent planning application had stated, "No existing trees will need to be felled to accommodate the proposed extension". The owners stated that the trees were found to be rotten *after* they were felled. Some concerns remained, for example about the concrete posts being out of keeping with the Conservation Area, but the owners noted that they intended to plant a mixed heritage hedge in the newly-exposed site and indicated that they would consult with the Council in future before undertaking any further hedging/tree work. Concern was raised about the hedge that was the boundary with the playing field and the owners indicated that they had no plans to do any works to it, *at this time*. The Council also heard that now the area between the boundary of Oak Cottage and The Croft was wider, it had the potential for vehicular access. Whilst this had not yet caused a problem, it was suggested that a bollard or some other restriction might be required in the future.

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## **24.07.10 Asset Management**

Two new items (speed indicator posts) had been identified for addition to the Asset Register. Otherwise, the inventory was considered to be complete. The need to monitor the condition of assets was emphasised by the Chair for potential action by all councillors. Cllr Kearsley referred to the Council defibrillator and the need to ensure it was ready and available upon demand. He also suggested that it would be worthwhile to organise some training in its use and to encourage volunteers for training to come forward. It was agreed that the Council would seek a provider to deliver a suitable session or two for interested residents.

## **24.07.11 Council Governance**

Further to continuing work to revise and update policies and procedures the Council resolved to adopt new Financial Regulations based upon the model produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

## **24.07.12 Matters for the Attention of the Council**

- ◆ Cllr Kearsley reported problems with Leys Road and the deteriorating sides of the road which had the effect of narrowing the width available to vehicles. Cllr Storey offered to contact Suffolk Highways to see if this could be addressed.
- ◆ It was reported that the speed indicator device in New Road appeared not to be working as it should. Cllr Callow to contact the resident who managed the devices.
- ◆ Some concern was expressed about a dead tree on the corner of Spring Cottage in Flatts Lane. It was felt that the Council should write to the owners to request their help in ensuring it was made safe.
- ◆ Various comments were raised about the increasing amount of dog mess being left around the village. The Chair would aim to highlight the problem through the "Tostock Chronicle".

## **24.07.13 Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 10 September at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.24pm.**