



ASHFIELD-CUM-THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

All Councillors are reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct Regulations.

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 15th May 2023 at the Community Hall

Attendance Robert Grimsey (Chair) (RG) Myles Hansen (Vice-Chair) (MHa) Chris Sharpe (CS)
Simon Garrett (SG) Sarah Clare (Clerk)

Public present at the meeting: 0

ACTPC 23-05-01 Appointment of Chair & Vice-Chair

RG was nominated as Chair by CS, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**

It was decided not to have a formal vice-chair for this session.

The acceptance of office form was signed

ACTPC 23-05-02 Apologies for Absence

None

ACTPC 23-05-03 Public Forum

None

ACTPC 23-05-04 Declaration of Interests to include applications to be considered for Dispensation for Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as Received

The Clerk disclosed that dispensation applications had been received for all Council members as listed:

- i. Councillor Simon Garrett (SG) – The setting of Budget & Precept for Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council - MHa proposed permitting the dispensation, RG seconded, all in favour
- ii. Councillor Robert Grimsey (RG) - The setting of Budget & Precept for Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council - CS proposed permitting the dispensation, SG seconded, all in favour
- iii. Councillor Myles Hansen (MHa) - The setting of Budget & Precept for Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council - SG proposed permitting the dispensation, RG seconded, all in favour
- iv. Councillor Christopher Sharpe (CS) - The setting of Budget & Precept for Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Parish Council - RG proposed permitting the dispensation, MHa seconded, all in favour


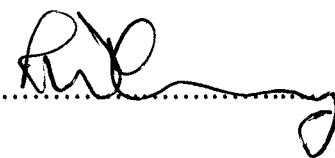
with reasoning given in each case that:

- a) Without dispensation the number of persons unable to participate in the transaction of business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business, and;
- b) The dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area

In a sequence of four separate votes, it was proposed, seconded and agreed that dispensation be granted to SG, RG, MHa and CS as requested. The Clerk will process these applications accordingly and inform the Monitoring Officer at the District Council

ACTPC 23-05-05 Update from County Councillor

The County Councillor's Report had previously been circulated to the Council and has also been posted on the village website www.ashfield.onesuffolk.net.

Signed  (Clerk) Signed  (Chair) 1

ACTPC 23-05-06 Update from District Councillor

Clerk read out a report received from the District Councillor earlier in the day. The new District Councillor had been invited to attend the meeting, but no reply had been received.

ACTPC 23-05-07 Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th March 2023 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by SG, seconded by CS all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk

ACTPC 23-05-08 Matters Arising and Action Points from the March Minutes


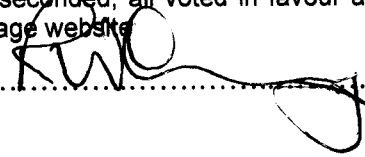
1. Circulate information about the Debenham Dementia Project. DISCHARGED and to be discussed later in meeting.
2. Reinstate footpath sign. ONGOING
3. Contact bank to discuss setting up dual authorisation online banking. To be discussed later in meeting.
4. Submit responses to Planning Department at District Council as agreed. DISCHARGED
5. Publish re-adopted Standing Orders on village website. DISCHARGED
6. Circulated amended Environmental Policy for consideration at the next meeting. To be discussed later in meeting.
7. Conduct survey of village residents to find out about demand for buses. To be discussed later in meeting.
8. Report rotted and fallen footpath sign on Online Reporting Tool. DISCHARGED
9. Invite village organisations to report to the Annual Parish Meeting. DISCHARGED
10. Publish re-adopted Financial Regulations on the village website. DISCHARGED
11. To distribute payments as approved at the March meeting. DISCHARGED

ACTPC 23-05-09 Planning

- a) To consider planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting: None
- b) To consider any planning applications that have been submitted since agenda was published: None
- c) Updates and outcomes on previous planning applications:
 - i) DC/22/06260 – Householder Application – Erection of single storey extension (following demolition of garage). The Nook, The Street, IP14 6LX - Granted
 - ii) DC/23/00323 – Full Planning Application – Erection of Extension to Existing Grain Store. Stonehouse Farm, Cretingham Road, IP13 7RR - Granted
 - iii) DC/23/00667 – Application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a Proposed: Erection, Extension or Alteration of a building for Agricultural or Forestry Use. Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2, Part 6 – Erection of storage building. Ashfield Place Farm, Main Road, IP14 6LU - Granted

ACTPC 23-05-10 Parish Council Activities

- a) To consider co-option to fill vacancies on Council – No members of the public were present. The Clerk confirmed that there are now three vacancies on the Council and these are listed on the village website. RG will also put an item into the Parish Magazine. RG will put together a report that can be circulated to the village on the email system to see if a volunteer could be encouraged to come forward.
- b) Consideration for adoption – Environmental Policy – The Clerk had circulated an amended version of the policy for consideration. SG proposed adoption, MHa seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish the policy on the village website.

Signed ...  (Clerk) Signed ...  (Chair)

- c) Report on the results of the Bus Survey poll and agreement on next steps – CS had circulated a collation of the responses received prior to the meeting for Councillors to consider. RG thanked CS for the work that had been put in to the report. There had been sixteen responses, which equates to about 20% of the village, which was unfortunately quite poor. About half of the responses had been completely negative about the buses, showing no interest in using them at all, of the other about half that responded about 10% indicated they would use the bus if it were better timetabled, priced etc.

The main outcome from the survey is that there is a large part of the village with complete apathy about the use of the bus service. The foreseeable future is that because the bus service is badly timetabled for the few that would potentially use it, the service is likely to be used less and less, become financially unviable for the operator and ultimately may be withdrawn altogether.

The only small hope that CS expressed would be whether the new influx of Green Party Councillors at District Council level may be able to offer some help in reversing this trend. CS volunteered to talk to the new Green Party councillor and see if she has any realistic power to do anything about the issue.

SG noted that Suffolk County Council have been providing subsidies to help operators, particularly over the pandemic period, but this subsidy is coming to an end. Unfortunately, the loss of bus services is a pattern that is occurring across the country. Essentially anywhere outside of a major city does not have a frequent reliable bus service, which leads to people feeling uncertain about using the few buses that do still run.

There was a short discussion about whether alternative destinations would be more popular – currently all the buses in the village go into Ipswich – but this would be an operational decision by an operator and it is unlikely given the poor interest in using a bus service that a change in destination would increase usage dramatically. It was also noted that Ipswich has trains and buses that would link to other destinations, such as Stowmarket or Norwich.

CS, who had designed the survey, said that the results that had been returned had prompted him to think of other questions that could have been included and speculated whether to survey the village again with these ancillary questions. SG suggested that perhaps a survey done annually may be the best solution as bombarding people with questions may build resentment, whereas asking a similar survey again in a year's time may give some useful data on how attitudes may have changed.

In conclusion it was decided that although sympathetic to the few that would use a bus, due to the poor interest in the bus service from the village in general the Parish Council would not take any further action on this matter. CS will circulate the final results of the survey back to the village via the email system to explain the situation to all concerned and thank those who did contribute.


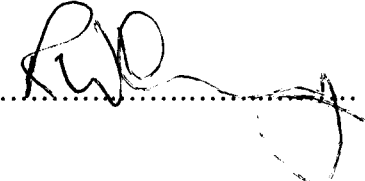
- d) Highways & Footpaths: Report on activity since the last meeting – RG noted that there was nothing specific to report regarding Ashfield-cum-Thorpe, but he had reported some flooding in Low Road at Earl Soham. Unfortunately, when the engineers came out five weeks later no water present, so nothing was done, but the heavy rain in recent weeks had resulted in flooding again. RG also noted that this problem has only arisen since the drains were serviced at Christmas! RG will take the matter up with MHi.

RG also reported that the work done on the ditch at Waddlegoose Lane seemed to have resolved the local flooding issues, although there was some flash flooding on the Bedingfield Road during the recent extreme heavy rain it had all cleared easily by the following morning.

- e) Consideration of ways in which to further support the Debenham Dementia Project (following presentation in March) – After discussion it was agreed that all publicity that could reasonably be done has been carried out. Further information will be circulated in the usual ways as and when received.

- f) Consideration of ways to address concerns from parishioners about the development at Stonham Barns
The Clerk reported that fellow Clerks in Stonham Aspal and Crowfield had been contacted to see if any liaison meetings were planned. Currently there is nothing scheduled, but the fact that Ashfield-cum-Thorpe residents are also concerned had been welcomed and it is understood that future meetings will be sought, particularly after the changes at the District Council.

- g) Concerns about increased HGV traffic in the village – RG reported that a 7½ ton weight limit has been imposed on all roads in Eye, which has resulted in more large vehicles coming through the village as Sat Navs are directing drivers to avoid Eye. RG urged all Councillors to keep an eye on this and inform him of any feedback from residents.

Signed  (Clerk) Signed  (Chair)

ACTPC 23-05-11 Finance

- a) To review the Financial Statement as supplied by the Clerk – The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Statement. There were no queries. SG proposed acceptance, RG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chair signed the corresponding Bank Statements to confirm the figures.
- b) To confirm Exemption from External Audit for Accounting Period 2022-2023 – Following circulation and consideration, RG proposed the submission, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chairman and Clerk signed the forms on behalf of the Council, the Clerk will submit the Exemption Certificate.
- c) To approve Annual Governance Statement for Accounting Period 2022-2023 – Following circulation and consideration of the Governance Statement, CS proposed approval, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chairman and the Clerk signed the forms on behalf of the Council and the Clerk will publish the AGAR on the village website.
- d) To approve the Accounting Statements for 2022-2023 following Internal Audit – Following consideration of the Accounting Statements as provided by the Clerk, MHa proposed approval, RG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chairman and the Clerk signed the forms on behalf of the Council, the Clerk will publish the Accounting Statements on the village website.
- e) To accept Internal Auditors Report – RG proposed acceptance, SG seconded all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.
- f) To appoint Internal Auditor for 2023-2024 – It was agreed to appoint J. Shea Auditing as the Internal Auditor for 2023-2024. SG proposed, RG seconded all voted in favour **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.
- g) To agree payments as detailed on the Payment Schedule
SG proposed authorisation, CS seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will issue cheques accordingly.
- h) To consider amendment to signatories on bank mandate
As Councillor Hart had not opted to stand for re-election, she would need to be removed from the bank mandate, leaving only three signatories on the account – the Clerk and two Councillors. RG proposed the removal of Ruth Hart as a bank signatory, to be replaced with RG, CS seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will make contact with the mandate team to make the changes.

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to the bank and the account is now ready to have Dual Authorisation online banking activated. Councillors Hansen and Garrett, as current bank signatories will need to ring the bank individually to ask for online access. It was recommended that at least three people are required for Dual Authorisation to be successful, but more could be added if required.

ACTPC – 23-05-12 Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council


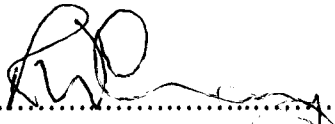
- a) Items for next agenda:
 - Stonham Barns
 - HGV routes

Items for the July Agenda – please notify the Clerk of any further items for the agenda as soon as possible and by Tuesday 4th July at the latest, with any accompanying paperwork ready to be circulated with the agenda upon publication.

There being no further business requiring the attention of the Parish Council, the meeting was closed at 8.56 pm. The next meeting is set for **Monday 10th July 2023** at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall.

Sarah Clare
Parish Clerk

Robert Grimsey
Chair

Signed  (Clerk) Signed  (Chair)