



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 10th July 2023 at the Community Hall

Attendance Robert Grimsey (Chair) (RG) Myles Hansen (Vice-Chair) (MHa) Simon Garrett (SG)
Teresa Davis (District Councillor) (TD) Sarah Clare (Clerk)

Public present at the meeting: 0

ACTPC 23-06-01 Apologies for Absence

Chris Sharpe (CS) had sent his apologies due to family commitments. The Council accepted. Matthew Hicks (County Councillor) (MHi) had also sent his apologies due to work commitments.

ACTPC 23-06-02 Public Forum

None

ACTPC 23-06-03 Declaration of Interests

None

ACTPC 23-06-04 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.

ACTPC 23-06-05 Update from District Councillor


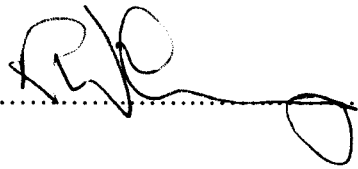
The District Councillor's Report had previously been circulated to the Council and has also been posted on the village website www.ashfield.onesuffolk.net.

TD drew attention to the following:

TD asked whether the Council had any thoughts on the new 'People & Place Plans' which are intended as a light touch version of a full neighbourhood plan. RG stated that the Council had not discussed the People & Places Plans and asked that TD send across a prospectus, so that this could be considered properly at a future meeting.

TD asked about the footpath network in the village, outlining the Green Party's target of linking up existing routes to form a sustainable travel network. The District Council is looking to liaise with Suffolk County Council to arrange for footpaths to be improved for cycling and walking, with the hopes of linking up with bus routes. RG explained that the current network of crossfield footpaths in the parish are fairly well used and already provide valuable links to other villages for residents, but any work to improve surfaces would be welcomed, as long as the routes were not fully metalled. TD agreed that this would not be the case, partly due to costs, but also to keep the rural nature of the network intact.

MHa queried the Electric Bus scheme that was mentioned in the District Councillor's report, asking how this was going to work in practice. TD explained that the idea was to have a circular route with buses travelling continuously in a loop in opposite directions, making the scheme easy and convenient for residents to hop and off and linking up local villages. The footpath network improvements were meant to complement this scheme to get people to places where they can access the bus, which will operate on a demand-based system, rather than having official bus stops. It is hoped that an app will be developed to enable travellers to send requests to bus drivers to be collected from anywhere on the route.

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MHa also asked about the grants that are available for the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points for public use and how this would work, i.e. who would pay for the electricity that would be used. TD explained that the vehicle user would pay for the electricity, so it would not be a financial burden on the community hall to provide the service. SG queried whether there would be sufficient use of an EV point if installed at the community hall, as most people in the village have off street parking anyway and so it would only be used by infrequent passing traffic. RG felt that there was no harm in looking at the scheme if there was no financial outlay, although it would require input from Ashfield Community Council, who manage the hall. Again, TD was asked to send through information about the scheme, so that this could be added to a future agenda for consideration.

TD raised The Tour of Britain cycle race, which is due to come through Debenham in the coming weeks, stating that she was keen to help local businesses take advantage of the opportunities that this may offer. Further information on the opportunities available will be circulated soon.

Finally, RG raised a question about the development at Stonham Barns and asked whether TD had any information on enforcement action. TD has spoken to the Planning Department and they have explained it is a very complicated and difficult situation. Councillors reiterated the concerns raised at the Annual Parish Meeting that Enforcement action should be taken against the developments that have not been granted permission, rather than just 'retrospective' permission being granted. TD asked about dates of when the concerns were first reported, SG confirmed that this would all be on file at District Council and suggested that TD asked for access to the file to understand the major concerns that have been raised. RG outlined some of the concerns, which include traffic problems and schools and doctors in the local area being oversubscribed due to the vast increase in the population of a small village, but stressed that one of the most serious concerns remains the abuse of the planning system by the developers and the lack of effective enforcement action to prevent continued development on the site. SG asked for an official statement from the District Council about the current position on the site for the next Parish Council meeting in September. TD agreed to see what information she could find out before the next meeting and report back.

ACTPC 23-06-06 Minutes of previous meetings


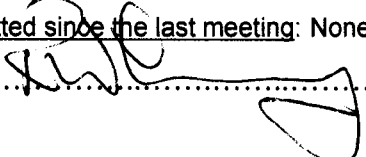
The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th May 2023 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by RG, seconded by MHa all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk

ACTPC 23-06-07 Matters Arising and Action Points from the May Minutes

1. Submit dispensation forms. DISCHARGED
2. Reinstate footpath sign. ONGOING
3. Put together a report about there being three vacancies on the Parish Council for circulation to the village via the Parish Magazine and the email circulation list. DISCHARGED
4. Publish adopted Environmental Policy on village website. DISCHARGED
5. Liaise with new Green Party District Councillor about whether anything can be done to improve the bus service situation. DISCHARGED
6. Circulate results of bus survey to the village, explaining that due to the result the Parish Council will not be taking any further action at this point. DISCHARGED
7. Submit Exemption from External Audit certificate and publish on website. DISCHARGED
8. Publish AGAR information on website. DISCHARGED
9. Contact bank to make changes on mandate as agreed. DISCHARGED
10. Contact bank to set up online dual authorisation. DISCHARGED
11. To distribute payments as approved at the May meeting. DISCHARGED

ACTPC 23-06-08 Planning

a) To consider planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting: None

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- b) To consider any planning applications that have been submitted since agenda was published: None
- c) Updates and outcomes on previous planning applications: None

ACTPC 23-06-09 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.
- b) Consideration of how to recruit new Parish Councillors – After discussion no further ways forward were identified, but it was agreed to continue with publicising the vacancies in the same way as before.
- c) Highways & Footpaths: Report on activity since the last meeting – RG reported there had been some concerns about some paths not being properly marked out within crops, but he has spoken to the landowners concerned and the issue has been resolved.
- d) Consideration of signing up to the 20's Plenty campaign – After discussion it was agreed not to sign up to this campaign.
- e) Update on any meetings to discuss development at Stonham Barns – No further information had been forthcoming. The Parishes closest to Stonham Barns are working to set up meetings and will advise Ashfield-cum-Thorpe when such meetings may take place.
- f) Update on Concerns about increased HGV traffic in the village – RG reported that there had been no further concerns raised, despite the recent changes in permitted HGV routes, so no further action was required.
- g) Re-adoption of Councillor Code of Conduct – The Clerk reported that there had been no changes to the code since it had been adopted in May 2022, but it was good practice for Councils to re-adopt each year. RG proposed re-adoption, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish accordingly on the village website.
- h) Adoption of Revised Privacy Notice – The Clerk had circulated an amended version of the privacy notice for consideration. RG proposed adoption, MHa seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish the policy on the village website

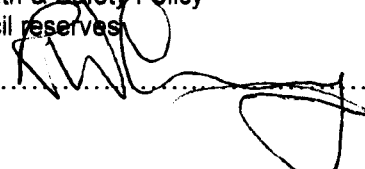
ACTPC 23-06-10 Finance

- a) To review the Financial Statement as supplied by the Clerk – The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Statement. There were no queries. MHa proposed acceptance, SG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chair signed the corresponding Bank Statements to confirm the figures.
- b) To consider application for funding from Suffolk Accident Rescue Service – After consideration it was decided to decline the application.
- c) To agree payments as detailed on the Payment Schedule
RG proposed authorisation, MHa seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will issue cheques accordingly.

ACTPC – 23-06-11 Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

- a) The Clerk advised that the VAT reclaim for Year Ending 31st March 2023 has been submitted.
- b) RG raised a point that Suffolk County Council's website states that the roadside verges should be cut by 30th June – this has not been done in the parish, RG asked Clerk to contact County Councillor to enquire about why Ashfield-cum-Thorpe has not yet been done. SG raised a point that the verges should only be cut where there are issues with sight lines and not cut wholesale to help with biodiversity. The Clerk will email the County Councillor about the issue.
- c) Items for next agenda:
 - Insurance Renewal
 - Review of Council's Risk Assessment & Health & Safety Policy
 - To consider a virement of funds to the Council reserves

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(Clerk) Signed ..  ..


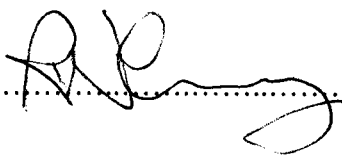
(Chair) 

Items for the September Agenda – please notify the Clerk of any further items for the agenda as soon as possible and by Tuesday 5th September 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 8.28 pm. The next meeting is set for **Monday 11th September 2023** at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall.

Sarah Clare
Parish Clerk

Robert Grimsey
Chair

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