

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF
PARHAM PARISH COUNCIL
PARHAM VILLAGE HALL**

Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 7.15pm

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Stephen Burroughes.

Councillors Present

Michael Block (Chair)	Claire Adams	Jonathan Cottrell	Michael Gray
James Rogers	Charlotte Stanley	Jason Wood	

In attendance

District Councillor Owen Grey, 9 residents Lydia Kirk (clerk)

2. There were no declarations of interest.

3. The minutes of the meeting of 12th September 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

4. There were no matters arising.

PUBLIC FORUM

Residents raised various points regarding the recent flooding in the village during Storm Babet. There were concerns that infrastructure is not maintained with some ditches, gullies and culverts needing attention and the River Ore no longer being dredged regularly. There were also concerns that the design of the bridge at The Pound restricts the flow of water due to the two arches in the river, and it was suggested that the Environment Agency considers removing these. One resident was very concerned that the B1116 is less than four feet from the river edge opposite Bridge Farm and would like a survey of the river wall to be carried out urgently. With the increasing weight and number of vehicles on this road plus the saturation of the ground and water flowing under the road recently, he is concerned there could be a serious accident here if the road slides into the river. **ACTION** Clerk to send a photo of this to Cllr. Burroughes.

Another resident commented that they had only recently moved into Parham, and that they weren't flooded by the river, but by the water flow from Hall Hill, worsened by blocked drains. He asked who is responsible for clearing the drains. The Chair responded that SCC is, and that these blocked drains have been reported numerous times with no action frustratingly.

Another resident noted that the Environment Agency is responsible for drainage of the river and urged the different agencies to work together to ensure all necessary action to reduce the risk of future flooding is carried out.

A resident pointed out that the ditch from the Gull is culverted four times, with two of these having 90 degree bends which then get blocked. This needs redesigning and then regular clearing out - he cannot recall them being cleaned out for 30 years. Further towards the Pound, trees are growing in the ditch and the pipes from the bungalows here are insufficient.

Residents were frustrated that routine maintenance is not carried out and that agencies seem to be passing on their responsibilities. A resident urged the PC to seek answers and suggested contacting the East Anglian Daily Times in the hope this brings about action

D. Cllr. Grey reported that details of how residents apply for the government flood relief grants haven't been released yet, but it's likely SCC will take the lead on this and ESC will make the payments. He noted that there has been confusion and duplication with residents having to report flooding issues via SCC's online reporting tool and also ESC's paper forms. Cllr Grey is producing a ward-wide report with sections on damage incurred at each village and seeking a response from government officials.

The public forum ended at 20.15

5. Chair's report

The Chair expressed his sympathy with all those across the village who had suffered damage or distress during the flooding. 34 residents met in the village to discuss the damage and ask what can be done to prevent future flooding of this scale.

The Chair was pleased to welcome the District Councillor to the meeting and thanked him listening to residents and being keen to help. He also thanked Cllr. Grey for writing to Low Carbon after the meeting of the 3 parishes in September to discuss the proposed solar farm. He reported that due to a hold up with the substation, Low Carbon are not likely to develop this site for another two years and as consequently, the division of any funds between the parishes was not considered further at this point.

6. **Clerk's report**

The clerk has reported the overgrown hedges near North Green and SCC will see if this requires any action. The silt and soil at the bottom of Hall Hill was reported prior to the flooding but no further action was deemed necessary in this regard.

The missing subscription payment to SALC was erroneously paid to SLCC, who have now returned the payment. Mandates setting up online payments are reminded to check the account names match and ask the clerk if they have any queries.

NALC's pay claim for 2023-2024 has just been agreed and under the terms of the clerk's contract the new pay figure is to be backdated to 1st April 2023.

7. **Responsible Financial Officer's report**

a) The following payments were approved:

Reference Number	Amount	Payee	Details
P20 23-24	£10.00	L. Kirk	Statutory declaration & certification fee (reimbursement)
P21 23-24	£7.65	J. Cottrell	Special delivery postage for Growth Bond application 18/09/23
P22 23-24	£22.80	SALC	6 months payroll Ref 27798
P23 23-24	£40.00	G. Whiting	Cut & strim September
P24 23-24	£40.00	G. Whiting	Cut & strim October

b) Funds received since the last meeting were noted:

£158.78 SLCC return of funds

c) As at 30.10.2023, the bank balances were:

Community account £11,604.51

Deposit account £12,060.66

This includes £900 in an Emergency Fund.

ACTION MB to transfer excess funds from community account to deposit account for safekeeping.

d) The Examining Officer signed the bank reconciliation and statements.

e) The year-to-date report on payments and receipts was noted and considered in line with the budgeted figures.

f) Cllr. Cottrell provided an update on the NS&I Growth Bond application. Sadly it is not possible for a Parish Council to hold this type of account and Natwest has withdrawn their deposit account that was being considered as an alternative option. He is looking into the Public Sector Deposit Fund which is currently paying 5% interest and does not require any notice period to withdraw funds. He will circulate details of this to all Councillors with a view to applying if the PC is eligible and Councillors are in agreement.

8. **Recent flooding in the village and comments from the public forum were discussed.**

The village response was praised, with the community coming together to help one another during the flooding. Cllr. Burroughes offered to co-ordinate a meeting with Suffolk County Council, the Environment Agency and East Suffolk Council for residents to raise their concerns and get answers. The PC gratefully accepted this offer, and agreed that it might

be practical to join the public meeting with external agencies that Framlingham Town Council is currently organising.

Councillors will look at the current design of the bridge and will try to get an informal quotation from a structural engineer regarding changing the design of the bridge. It was noted that any work to the bridge would likely be very costly and would be the responsibility of Suffolk County Council or the Environment Agency. It was agreed that the Chair and Cllr. Burroughes would meet before the Council's next meeting in January to discuss progress.

ACTION Clerk to contact the Environment Agency asking them to clear debris from under the bridge and remove trees that are partially blocking the flow of the river.

The Parish Council used to have an emergency plan with a list of residents and village resources that would be useful for a variety of difficulties. However it was difficult to keep these details up-to-date. **ACTION** Clerk to advertise the village emailing list to try and get as many residents signed up to this service as possible to help pass on urgent communications.

9. Highways and footpath issues in the village were discussed.

9.1 The recent flooding has resulted in silt and soil deposits helping to reinforce the verge near The Church Farm. A contractor has visited the site but is unable to give a quotation until SCC has confirmed specific kerbing requirements and the permitted length.

9.2 Having identified and discussed concerns about the Community Self-Help Scheme, it was agreed that Cllr. Block will draft a letter to Suffolk County Council in this regard. Cllr. Burroughes was pleased to report that County Councillors will be allocated a budget to replace highways signage in their area.

10. All of the houses at Flaxen Fields are now occupied or the sales are near completion.

Data on where people have moved from could not be given due to GDPR. The Orwell Housing representative noted that water ingress in the houses came from the road side, not the river side, during the flooding on 20th October.

11. With the resident at Corrance Close only wishing to plant daffodils near her house, it was agreed not to proceed with any wildflower planting initiative in the village at present.

12. Correspondence was considered. The Village Hall Committee has written and thanked the PC for its grant for external improvement works.

13. Receive Councillors' reports & updates

Village Hall Committee

The Village Hall Committee met yesterday. They will be putting up a new sign to help people locate the hall. Grant-funding for solar panels and battery storage on the hall roof and/or the raised grassed area to generate an ongoing income is being looked into. The recent jumble sale raised over £400 and the Committee is hosting a quiz night on Saturday, to which Councillors are encouraged.

Biodiversity group

The biodiversity group has not held a meeting yet. Meetings tend to be held over the winter months when Cllr. Gray is less busy. Meetings ceased during Covid and group numbers have declined since then. The Chair urged the group to try to meet before the Council's next meeting in January.

Other

Cllr. Adams has spoken to the homeowner at the bottom of Willoughby Drive regarding shingle spreading on to the B1116 and causing a skid hazard. Adams will send photos to the clerk to report to SCC if this is not resolved.

14. Matters to be raised at the next meeting

Update on multi-agency meeting to discuss village flooding

15. The next meeting was confirmed as being at 7.15pm on Tuesday 9th January 2024.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.05pm.

Signed:

Chair

Date