

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

Tuesday 12th September 2023 at 7.15pm

1. **The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.**
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Wood (prior engagement).

Councillors Present

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

In attendance

Lydia Kirk (clerk)

2. **Cllr. Gray declared a pecuniary interest in item 8.**
3. **The minutes of the meeting of 11th July 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**
4. **There were no matters arising.**

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of public present.

5. **Chair's Report**
The Chair and two other Councillors are meeting members from Great Glemham and Marlesford Parish Councils on Thursday to discuss division of the solar farm community funding.
The garden party held on Saturday for the Church roof raised just over £3,000.
6. **The clerk had several items to report**
There will be a joint evening with Hacheston to receive a presentation from Sizewell C's Community Relations Manager and ask questions on 16th January 2023 at Parham Village Hall.
The clerk has signed up to a 1 month's free trial with a Scribe, a Parish Council specific accounting software company. They also run very useful free training sessions and webinars throughout the year. After the trial it would cost £12/month and the clerk would recommend that the Council considers subscribing. *Cllr. Block asked how easy it is to cancel and how much notice is required. The clerk will find out.*
The ICO has now processed and accepted the Council's direct debit mandate. The clerk thanked Cllr. Cottrell for helping to clean the telephone kiosk. She has set up the seed swap and litter pick station in the phone box. Unfortunately, 2 litter pickers and 1 hi-vis have gone missing already. She will do a sign to remind people that equipment is to be used on a walk and then returned, and also another sign asking people to close the kiosk door. *Cllr Stanley suggested that a logbook is put in the kiosk for people to sign out the equipment. This could also be used to thank people who have carried out litter picks. The Clerk will do this.*
Books are being taken very quickly from the phone box but are not being swapped.

SALC has not received our membership subs for the year but their invoice was paid on 25th May. A copy of our statement showing the payment has been sent and they are liaising with their bank.

Barclays Bank has now shut in Framlingham and is due to close in Woodbridge in December. If this causes difficulties, the Council may have to consider an alternative bank. The clerk advised that several Parish Councils are now moving to Unity Trust which provides accounts for community groups.

Councillors were reminded to let the clerk know of any new people moving into the village so that they can be given a welcome letter. *Cllr Gray suggested that the new houses at Flaxen Fields are likely to be occupied in the next couple of weeks .*

7. Responsible Financial Officer's report

a) The following payments were approved:

Reference Number	Amount	Payee	Details
P11 23-24	£1,000	Parham Village Hall	Grant towards external damp proofing works
P12 23-24	£110.00	Suffolk Cloud	Web hosting and domain
P13 23-24	£56.44	L. Kirk	Litter picking equipment & seed envelopes
P14 23-24	TBC*	L. Kirk	Pay to 30.09.2023
P15 23-24	£500	Parham Village Hall	Annual donation- agreed at July's meeting
P16 23-24	£80.00	Gary Whiting	2 x cut and strim grass at the Pound
P17 23-24	£78.54	East Suffolk Council	Uncontested election fees
P18 23-24	£409.92	BHIB	Insurance policy from 1 st October 2023

*It was agreed to pay this invoice and HMRC's PAYE invoice when received by SALC as these payments will be due before the Council next meets.

Regarding P18 23-24, the renewal policy was considered fit for the Council's needs. It was noted that the Council paid £385 last year and that there is a long term undertaking in place until September 2025.

- b) Funds received since the last meeting were noted:
£60.18 interest
- c) No payments had been made since the last meeting.
- d) As at 30.08.2023, the bank balances were:
Current account £2,932.27
Savings account £23,841.70
It was noted that £18,857 of this is reserved.
- e) In the absence of the Examining Officer, Cllr. Stanley signed the bank reconciliation and statements.
- f) The year-to-date report on payments and receipts was noted and considered in line with the budgeted figures.

8. **Cllr. Gray left the meeting whilst planning application DC/23/3067/FUL regarding installation of underground cables associated with the B-17 Solar Farm (DC/21/1001/FUL) was discussed.** There were concerns that the plan did not show the full route of the cable and that it should run near Rachel's Wood near Silverlace Green. The Council agreed to support the application but to ask that that no vehicles, spoil or aggregate are to be stored on the village greens or verges at any point, due to our Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

ACTION Clerk to respond to ESC as such and to ask that all residents along the proposed route are notified.

Cllr. Gray returned to the meeting.

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

The clerk has reported various issues around the village to SCC Highways, including blocked drains, overgrown hedges and roads that need sweeping.

The clerk has met with the County Councillor and Local Highways Engineer and a quotation for SCC to carry out the kerb reinstatement has today been received. Cllr. Block has asked the contractor previously contacted to re-quote for the work but, despite chasing, has had no reply. Cllr. Stanley recommended a local company who might be able to provide a quotation.

ACTION Cllr. Block will strive to get an alternative quotation for the works.

It was agreed that if the residents and Councillor Burroughes can contribute, as previously agreed, the Parish Council would be willing to spend up to £3,000 on this, to be carried out by an approved contractor or, failing this, SCC.

ACTION Clerk to ask Cllr. Burroughes how much of his Highways Budget he can allocate to the project.

The hedge towards North Green from the village centre direction needs trimming as it is overhanging the road and forcing traffic over the centre of the road. **ACTION** Clerk to take photos and report this.

There was a lengthy discussion on the SCC's Community Self-Help Scheme with Councillors concerned that these tasks should all be carried out and funded by the County Councillor, instead of pushing them to volunteers from the village or relying on the Parish Council paying other contractors to do the work.

The clerk is doing the required training for Parish Councils to participate in the SCC's Community Self-Help volunteer scheme. This would then allow the Parish Council to carry out maintenance jobs such as path skirting, sign clearing and hedge trimming in 30mph areas, subject to other conditions such as risk assessments and seeking a license. Parish Councillors agreed to sign up to the CSH Community Volunteers programme on the proviso that this doesn't adversely affect the number of jobs that SCC will then undertake in the village.

10. Councillor Cottrell has researched various bank accounts in order that the Council can earn higher interest rates. He recommended opening a Guaranteed Growth Bond with NS&I, having been advised that it is possible for Parish Councils to hold this type of account. It was agreed to apply for this Bond and invest £10,000 which will be tied up for 12 months. If this application is unsuccessful it was agreed to instead open an RBS Liquidity Manager Notice Account. **ACTION** Cllr. Cottrell will speak to an advisor and complete the forms.

11. Correspondence was considered.

A request for funding for community daffodils at Corrance Close was discussed at length, and considered alongside village biodiversity aims. **ACTION** Cllr. Gray will speak to the resident to discuss widening the planting proposals. This will then be discussed again at November's meeting.

The Council has the opportunity to adopt the telephone kiosk at North Green. Cllr. Gray suggested that, because this kiosk is listed, the Council should not adopt it as it would then have a duty to maintain it to a certain standard. It was agreed not to adopt the kiosk.

A letter from the Pensions Regulator regarding auto-enrolment will be actioned by the clerk within the prescribed period.

The Council did not wish to support the 20's plenty scheme.

12. Receive Councillors' Reports & updates

Village Hall representative: Cllr. Block was pleased to report that the external improvement and maintenance works have now been completed. The jumble sale in July raised £700 and another is planned for 28th October. A quiz night is also planned for November. The Village Hall has a new weekly hirer, and also a new bookings manager. All hirers will soon be given a key as Village Hall will not be using the key safe system moving forwards.

Biodiversity Group: Cllr. Gray reported that there are four barn owl chicks in the barn at White House Farm. Cllr. Block asked that the group meets before the next Council meeting in November so that some plans can be agreed to allocate some of the biodiversity funds.

13. Matters to be raised at the next meeting

Occupancy of the new houses at Flaxen Fields

Response regarding flower planting discussions at Corrance Close

Progress on NS&I Growth Bond application

Update on kerb replacement quotation and County Councillors pledged grant

Report from biodiversity meeting

Report from meeting regarding division of solar farm community funds

Consider subscribing to Scribe

14. The next meeting was confirmed as being at 7pm on Tuesday 7th November. There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

Signed:
M. Block Chair

Date