

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

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 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**

Lydia Kirk (clerk)      Phil Simmons (until item 5)  
District Councillor Vince Langdon Morris (from 7.55pm)

2. **There were no declarations of interest.**  
3. **The minutes of the meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**  
4. **There were no matters arising.**

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Mr Simmons advised that the village used to have a flooding group, and asked that the Parish Council considers resurrecting this in light of the recent flooding in the village, and the likelihood that this will happen again. In order to mitigate the impact of such large volumes of water in the future, he stressed the need to hold water back and also to slow it down. A scheme to do this has been carried out at Debenham and he will send the clerk details of this. Flood defences that houses can install should also be considered. He urged the Parish Council to instigate a local area flood plan, rather than waiting for ESC or SCC who may or may not do this.

5. **Chair's report**

The Chair wrote a letter to the Chief Executive of East Suffolk which was passed to Andrew Cook at Suffolk County Council regarding recent flooding in the village. In his letter he explained that significant damage in Parham was caused by blocked drains and not Storm Babet. Sadly he has only received a short email from his PA to date. He also informed SCC on 19<sup>th</sup> December that the online reporting tool was not working correctly but he is yet to receive a response to this email either.

The Chair has tried clearing the drains at the bottom of Hall Hill but the main problem is a drain further up which cannot be cleared manually. He has also attended a meeting with residents from cottages along The Street to see if there is anything they can do to alleviate future flooding and also to discuss possible projects using flood prevention grants.

The Chair and clerk attended SALC's annual forum which was interesting and there was a presentation on a CCLA deposit fund which is specifically for local authorities. Other local Councils who have one of these funds spoke highly of them. SCC's new highways contractor was also introduced although the Q & A session with them was not overly promising.

6. **Clerk's report**

The clerk is attending a day's Community Self Help training tomorrow.

The clerk shared the dates of additional Councillor Basics Sessions ran by SALC and encouraged Councillors who have not yet had any training to let her know if they could attend.

The clerk has now heard that SLCCs payment for Cllr. Stanley's training was erroneously made to SLCC. SLCC will be refunding this, and then the payment must be re-issued to SALC. The clerk noted how easy it was to make this mistake with just the one letter

difference in the account names and urged Councillors to double-check all payments to either of these companies.

The hedge that was overgrowing the road opposite the triangle at North Green has now been cut back.

The clerk has asked the contractor to trim and cut the closed churchyard when it is drier.

The clerk has reported debris in the river near the Pound to the Environment Agency. She has also sent Cllr. Burroughes photographs showing how close the road is to the river edge opposite Bridge Farm as he requested, but has not had a response as yet.

The pothole opposite Meadowside on the B1116 has today been repaired.

No replacement editor was found for the *Slice of Suffolk* magazine. A resident is currently producing a short monthly newsletter with items solely about Parham, but he is looking for someone else to take this on.

## 7. Responsible Financial Officer's report

a) The following payments were approved:

Reference Number	Amount	Payee	Details
P25 23-24	£1,283.70	L. Kirk	Pay to 31.12.2023 & backdated pay rise from 01.04.2023
P26 23-24	£83.20	HMRC	PAYE to 05.01.2024
P27 23-24	£28.56	SLCC	Annual subscription (shared between 5 Councils)

b) Funds received since the last meeting were noted:

£1,949 Rural Payments Agency- Higher Level Stewardship Scheme  
funding for biodiversity  
£55.34 Barclays Interest

c) As at 31.12.2023, the bank balances were:

Community account £3,195.74

Deposit account £22,116.00

Of this, £21,886.65 is reserved.

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 tried to open a Natwest deposit account as agreed at the last meeting, but too many personal details were required from Councillors named on the account. Information on the CCLA's Local Authority's Account, as promoted at the recent SALC conference, was circulated. It was noted that only triple A rated companies are used, that funds can be released on the day they are requested and that once open, there is no minimum amount that must remain in the account. Cllr. Adams proposed that the Council open an account with CCLA with an initial investment of £25,000, and then reduce this down to £20,000 in the account. This was seconded by Cllr. Wood and carried unanimously. In order to reach the minimum investment figure of £25,000, the account will be opened in April after the next precept has been received.

## 8. Grant requests received July to January were considered.

Headway Suffolk

Citizens Advice Bureau

Suffolk Accident Rescue Service

After discussion, Cllr. Block proposed donating £50 to each charity. This was seconded by Cllr. Gray and carried unanimously.

9. **After a discussion on the benefits to the clerk and the Council, Cllr. Block proposed subscribing to Scribe software at a cost of £120 per annum.** This was seconded by Cllr. Rogers and carried unanimously.
10. **The budget for 2024-2025 was discussed and agreed.**
11. **Noting the balance of general reserves, it was agreed to request a precept of £7,000 for 2024-2025.** This was likely to equate to a 10.57% increase to a Band D property due to the decreasing number of chargeable properties in the village. This increase would amount to £5.50 per annum for a Band D property.
12. **Recent flooding in the village was discussed again.** Framlingham is holding a public meeting to discuss local flooding on 21<sup>st</sup> January and the Chair, clerk and Mr Simmons will all be attending.  
 A proposal for a possible joint parish funded meeting with a flooding consultant was discussed but as the village proposing this joint working is in a different river system, it was likely to be of limited use. It was agreed that it would make more sense for Parham to work in with Hacheston which is the next village along the River Ore.  
 It was agreed that the Chair would arrange an informal meeting with a water expert in the village to discuss possibilities for making the village more flood-proof.  
 The Chair noted that some houses that were flooded in the village have received their relief grant from SCC, but others haven't. It was agreed to ask Annette Gray to circulate the joint Storm Babet update from Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency and also to ask that people who haven't yet received their government grant contact the clerk.  
 Cllr Gray said he thought the drainage issues at Willoughby Close were likely caused by a ditch having been filled in. He will have a look and report back.
13. **Correspondence was considered.**
14. **Receive Councillors' reports & updates**  
 Village Hall Committee- the Committee are looking into installing solar panels on the roof and raised area outside  
 The Committee will be meeting again on Monday 21<sup>st</sup>. They are looking for a new treasurer. The penultimate bar night was very successful due to Dan Poulter MP attending it. Dr Poulter stayed for the whole evening and took time to speak to each table.  
 Biodiversity group- trees near the triangle at Silverlace Green will soon need some more works. Cllrs. Rogers and Gray will have a site meeting to discuss this. The group will meet before the Council's next meeting and bring ideas for discussion to that meeting.
15. **Matters to be raised at the next meeting**  
 Tree works at Silverlace Green  
 Flooding  
 Drainage issues at Willoughby Close
16. **The remaining meeting dates for 2024 were confirmed as being:**  
 5<sup>th</sup> March  
 7<sup>th</sup> May (the AGM of the Council and also the Annual Parish Meeting- to start at 7pm)  
 9<sup>th</sup> July  
 10<sup>th</sup> September and  
 12<sup>th</sup> November plus additional ones as required.
- There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.35pm.

**Signed:** ..... **Date** .....

**Chair**