



**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2023 at 7:00PM**

Present: Cllr J Bell, Cllr I Urwin, Cllr L Tacey, Cllr S Alexander,
Clerk – J Challis, RFO – S Budd, DC Cllr Warboys

Apologies: Cllr Mew

1 Chair's welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence

Cllr Bell welcomed everyone to the meeting, and apologies received from Cllr Mew were approved unanimously. It was also noted that CC Cllr Fleming had advised she may be unable to attend due to an earlier meeting on the same night.

2 To receive Declarations of Interest on Agenda items

None received.

3 To received Requests for Dispensations on Agenda items

None received.

4 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 21st August 2023 are a true and correct record

Cllr Bell proposed approval of the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st August 2023, as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Tranter and approved unanimously.

5 Report from County Councillor

CC Cllr Fleming sent her report in advance of the meeting, a copy of which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

6 Report from District Councillor

DC Cllr Warboys read highlights from his report, a copy of which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

Cllr Bell thanked DC Cllr Warboys for his report.

7:20pm DC Cllr Warboys left the meeting.

7 Public Participation Session (15 minutes set aside)

No members of the public present.

8 Chair's Report

- Model Financial Regulations consultation free events - Cllr Bell reported that she will be attending one of the two free events being hosted by NALC in October, as part of the consultation regarding an update to the Financial Regulations. The events will provide an opportunity to speak directly with Steve Parkinson from The Parkinson Partnership LLP, who is working with NALC to update this essential document for local town and parish councils.
- The winners of the Suffolk Community Awards have been announced; unfortunately Gislingham did not win Small Village of the Year [Suffolk Community Awards 2023 | SALC Website](#).
- A resident raised concerns with the Clerk regarding dogs being exercised off lead on Charity Meadow reporting that they have witnessed attacks on wildlife. This was forwarded to Gislingham United Charity as the landowner, for discussion at their meeting on 15th September 2023, and will be discussed further under agenda item 16.

9 Clerk's Report

- Planning application update: DC/23/03098 and DC/23/03099; both granted.
- No grant or donation requests have been received (as per the Grants and Donations Policy the Council accepts requests biannually in March and September).
- War Memorial; the grant application process is ongoing.
- Verges opposite the Lovells Development: Suffolk Highways are now looking into this. Awaiting further update from them.
- CC Cllr Fleming has advised that she will be conducting a drive round of her division with Suffolk Highways next week, and will look at the viability of an extension to the 30mph limit on Thornham Road by the Lovells Development, in order to ascertain whether the County Council and Highways would support it.
- A call was received from a resident regarding dogs being let off their leads on Charity Meadow, which was forwarded to Gislingham United Charity, and as already advised in agenda item 8, will be discussed further under agenda item 16.
- A resident made contact to request the Council speak to the proprietors of the village shop as it is a community asset. The Council has no responsibility for the village shop and it is not registered as an official ACV (Asset of Community Value), so anyone with any concerns needs to speak to the proprietors directly. An ACV may be applied for by a community group with at least 21 members: [The-Community-Right-to-Bid-Guidance-for-Nominators.pdf \(midsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#).
- The volunteer responsible for the maintenance of the triangle garden expressed thanks for the £30 expenditure agreed at the last meeting for spring bulbs.
- The bridge on Mill Street has now been repaired by Highways.
- Footpath 59 which was missed when the footpaths were cut by the council's contractor, has now been cut.
- S106 Application for new VAS devices; no update as yet.
- Street Furniture Licence for a bench by the bus stop – ongoing.
- No response has been received from the Village Hall Committee to the Council's request for confirmation that the defibrillator is now fully operational, or a purchase date for the dishwasher for which CIL funding was provided in August 2020. The Clerk will speak to them again regarding both items.
- Mid Suffolk District Council are running a 'Pride in Your Place' campaign which will give every town and parish the opportunity to apply for funding for projects which improve the appearance and cleanliness of your town or village. Parishes with a population over 1,500 are eligible to apply for up to £400, and those under 1,500 can apply for £250. All applications must be received by 31st October 2023.

- NALC have launched a consultation to update the model Financial Regulations and are seeking views on the technical aspect of the regulations. The responses will inform the revision and content of these regulations and must be received by 5th November 2023. [NALC Model Financial Regulations Consultation \(office.com\)](https://www.office.com)
NALC will be hosting two free events next month as part of the consultation to inform an update to their Model Financial Regulations. The events are taking place on Monday 2 October at 12noon - 1 pm and Thursday 12 October 6.30 - 7.30 pm. The details and booking links have been shared with councillors.

ACTION

- **Clerk to pursue response from Highways regarding verges outside the Lovells Development**
- **Clerk to pursue street furniture licence and S106 funding for new VAS devices.**
- **Clerk to contact Village Hall Committee as above**

10 RFO's Report

- The accounts to 31st August 2023 were prepared by the RFO and sent to councillors prior to the meeting.
- The Notice of Conclusion of Audit has now been received from the External Auditor. It was agreed unanimously to set the payment at £1 for anyone who requests a copy.
- The updated Asset Register was sent to councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Bell proposed approval, seconded by Cllr Tranter and approved unanimously.
- The redeclaration to the Pensions Regulator has been submitted.
- The second half of the precept has been received from MSDC.
- A meeting will be arranged in November with Cllr Bell and Cllr Tranter, to discuss the draft Budget 2024/25.

ACTION – RFO to send the Notice of Conclusion of Audit, and updated Asset Register to the Clerk to publish.

11 Neighbourhood Watch Report (Clerk)

Nothing to report.

12 Footpath Warden's Report (Martyn Bryant)

The Footpath Warden's Report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

13 SID (Speed Indicator Device) Report

The SID report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

14 Approval of Speed Watch Team as Parish Council Volunteers

Deferred.

15 Grass Cutting Contract 2023/24

Following the 21st August 2023 meeting, the Clerk contacted the PCC (Parochial Church Council) to advise that the Council is unable to carry out any more grass cutting of the churchyard, now that it is aware that this falls outside of its spending authority. An invitation was extended to members of the PCC to attend the meeting tonight, but unfortunately no one was able to do so. The Clerk will request a break down from the current contractor to see how much each area is costing individually, and clarify the frequency of cuts. Once the areas to be included on the cutting list are agreed by councillors, new quotations for 2024 will be sought.

ACTION – Clerk as above

16 Village Signage

The Clerk has conducted a new audit of the signage and will raise reports with Suffolk Highways. The ex-councillor who agreed to update the village map before standing down, has confirmed that they are happy to complete this, and will make a start with the work.

The concerns raised by a resident regarding dogs being exercised off their leads on Charity Meadow were forwarded to Gislingham United Charity by the Clerk, and discussed at their meeting on 15th September. As the Parish Council's GUC nominee, Trustees agreed that Cllr Bell take this subject to the Parish Council meeting to be held on 18th September for discussion, and to erect signage on Charity Meadow stating that dogs must be kept on a lead at all times. This is to protect both the wildlife and other users of the meadow and Playground. The Clerk shared quotations for the signage, and after discussing, councillors agreed that as Charity Meadow is for recreational use by the community, and the location of the Council's play equipment, it would fund the cost of the signs up to a maximum expenditure of £100.00. Proposed by Cllr Bell, seconded by Cllr Tranter and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange purchase of the signage.

17 Quotations for new bus stop bench

The Clerk obtained three quotations for wooden 1.8 metre hardwood benches, which were shared with councillors prior to the meeting. After discussing the quotations, Cllr Bell proposed proceeding with a bench from Sloane & Sons at a total cost of £349.00, including delivery, seconded by Cllr Urwin and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange purchase of the bench upon completion of Suffolk Highways Street Furniture Licence, and contact MSDC who have confirmed they can install it. This piece of land will also then be included on the grass cutting list.

18 Parish Council Website

The clerk has been removing archived documents from the website to make it more user friendly, and easier to maintain. CAS (Community Action Suffolk) who host the Council website and email accounts, have also checked and updated the Website Accessibility Statement. Once the Clerk has finished removing old documents and links, and ensured all necessary documents are accessible and in the current folders, then other ways to update and refresh the site will be looked at.

ACTION – Clerk as above

19 Charity Meadow update, including

- **Occupation Licence between the Parish Council and Gislingham United Charity for the play equipment**– GUC have confirmed they are happy to extend the lease by 30 years, whether this be 30 years from now, or 30 years from 2030 which is the current end date of the lease, with all cost implications being the responsibility of the Parish Council. The Clerk has contacted SALC for legal advice on how to proceed with this, including when the 30 years will start from.
- The wood chips have been delivered and spread underneath the zip wire; however the level is still too low. The Play Inspection report states that the level required is determined by the fall height, so the Clerk will calculate the additional amount required to bring it up to the correct level, and advise the extra quantity of chippings required at the next meeting.
- Cllr Urwin asked for an update on the DBS checks. It was agreed at the 19th June 2023 meeting for Cllr Bell and Cllr Urwin to proceed with basic DBS checks at a cost of £84 each. These would need to be applied for as individuals and an expenses claim submitted for

reimbursement. The RFO said she thought it was possible for the applications to be made by the Council, rather than as individuals, and will check and advise further.

- Cllr Urwin reported prior to the meeting that a 'For Sale' board had been left by the slide in the play area. The Clerk contacted the estate agent who arranged for the board to be collected, and upon viewing the CCTV footage found that the sign was taken into the play area on Sunday 3rd September 2023 at approximately 7:16pm by four youths. The footage is not very clear and will be viewed further to see if the individuals can be identified. The Clerk will speak to the CCTV providers to advise them that the zoom aspect does not appear to pick up images in enough detail.
- When looking at the Council's insurance renewal, it was stipulated that the CCTV tower, as an item of high individual risk, should be recorded as routinely checked and maintained. After discussing, Cllr Urwin, as Health and Safety and Playground Lead, indicated that he was happy to do this, reporting back to the council every 3 months, which would be minuted by the Clerk.

ACTION

- **Clerk to calculate additional amount of wood chips required for underneath the zip wire**
- **RFO to look into DBS checks which can be applied for by the Council**
- **Clerk to look at CCTV footage further, and speak to CCTV provider, as above**
- **Cllr Urwin to conduct 3 monthly checks of the CCTV tower, as above**

20 Insurance Renewal 2023/24

The Clerk forwarded the insurance renewal to councillors prior to the meeting, with additional quotations for comparison because the 3 year long term undertaking has now expired.

After discussing, it was agreed to renew with the current provider for the Parish councils liability insurance, at a cost of £824.66 for the twelve months 1st October 2023 – 30th September 2024. This is based on a 3-year LTU (long term undertaking) to 2026. Proposed by Cllr Tranter, seconded by Cllr Urwin and approved unanimously.

Councillors were concerned that the Cyber insurance, quoted for separately at £370.25, was very high. The RFO indicated that she may be able to obtain a lower quotation. It was agreed to proceed with the quotation for Cyber insurance from BHIB/Clear Councils at £370.25, unless the RFO was able to obtain a lower quotation, on a like for like basis, prior to the renewal date of 1st October 2023.

ACTION

- **Clerk to advise BHIB/Clear Councils to proceed with the main public and employers liability insurance, but to wait for the quotations from the RFO before proceeding with the Cyber insurance.**
- **RFO to obtain Cyber insurance quotation on a like for like basis with renewal provided by BHIB/Clear Councils as above**

21 Finance

Payment	Amount	Proposed by	Seconded by	Approval
Admin Payment for September 2023 (Clerk & RFO)	£630.95	Cllr Alexander	Cllr Bell	Unanimous
Clerk mileage expenses (Sept 2023 PC meeting meeting)	£8.55	Cllr Urwin	Cllr Tacey	Unanimous
Hire of Village Hall (August 2023 PC meeting, 8 th august (RFO) and 15 th August (Clerk) 2023 appraisal meet- ings)	£55.00	Cllr Tacey	Cllr Alexan- der	Unanimous
PFK External Auditor	£378.00	Cllr Alexander	Cllr Bell	Unanimous
MSDC (Parish Election recharges for 4 th May 2023 uncontested election)	£156.52	Cllr Bell	Cllr Tranter	Unanimous

Material Change (bark for zip wire Charity Meadow Playground)	£330.67	Cllr Tranter	Cllr Urwin	Unanimous
IHT (InnHouse Technology – Sept 2023 monthly sim charge for CCTV) – DIRECT DEBIT	£25.00	Cllr Urwin	Cllr Tacey	Unanimous
BHIB/Clear Councils – PC insurance 2023/24	£824.66	Cllr Bell	Cllr Tranter	Unanimous

The RFO raised cheques for all payments, except HMRC which is paid online, and the IHT direct debit, which were signed by Cllr Urwin and Cllr Bell as all cheques need to be signed by two signatories. The Material Change cheque was raised prior to the meeting by the RFO, as approved at the meeting on 21st August 2023, in order for the wood chips to be ordered and delivered, and signed by Cllr Bell and Cllr Tranter.

22 Training – approval for Clerk to attend Essential Time Management online session

Cllr Bell said that after checking the SALC portal, Essential Time Management is for councillors only.

Cllr Bell requested approval to attend the following 3 online courses, at a cost of £30 plus VAT each:

Essential Time Management
 Chairperson Leadership Training
 Dealing with difficult People

Approval proposed by Cllr Tranter, seconded by Cllr Urwin and approved unanimously with 1 abstention.

ACTION – Cllr Bell to book courses as above

23 Volunteer Risk Assessments

The Clerk has created a Volunteer Risk Assessment form for the Speed Watch Team, but cannot find one for the Footpath Warden or the volunteer who looks after the triangle garden. Cllr Urwin said that this is because they complete their own. However as volunteers of the council, they do need to complete a risk assessment on behalf of the council.

The Clerk will create two new ones and ask for the Footpath Warden and volunteer to complete them, and then all volunteer risk assessments will be reviewed annually.

ACTION – Clerk as above

24 Policies and Reports

- **Disciplinary Rules**
- **Disciplinary Policy**
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy**
- **Grants & Donations Policy**
- **Grievance Policy**
- **Health & Safety Policy**

The above policies were circulated to councillors prior to the meeting for review. Approval proposed by Cllr Bell, seconded by Cllr Tranter and approved unanimously.

- **Approval of amended policy review dates**

Cllr Bell forwarded proposed amended review dates prior to the meeting. The amended dates are to ensure policies do not fall for review at financial year end/audit time.

Cllr Bell proposed approval of amended policy review dates, seconded by Cllr Urwin and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Cllr Bell to amend policies and forward to Clerk to publish

9pm The Clerk and RFO left the meeting.

25 IN CAMERA

Minuted separately due to the confidential nature of what was being discussed.

26 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to be held on Monday 16th October 2023 at 7pm in Gislingham Village Hall.

Meeting Closed at 9.20pm