

Acton Parish Council

Fiona Mullins, Clerk Tel: 07931 381751 Email: clerk@actonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7:00pm on Wednesday 17 July 2024 in Acton Village Hall

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Nick Antill, Roberta Caradine, Eleanor Clark, Carol Dyer
Christine Johnson, Steve Le Grys, Graham Round (chairman)

In attendance: Fiona Mullins (clerk), County Cllr Philip Faircloth Mutton and 3 members of the public.

Minutes

Apologies

- 1 Cllrs received apologies from Cllrs John Gibbens and Katie McSweeney and resolved to approve their reasons for absence.

Minutes

- 2 Cllrs resolved to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2024, correcting the date in item 2 to May 2024 and the £500 payment in the schedule p11 which was for opening the Acton Field Trust bank account. The minutes were signed by the chairman.

Declaration of interest

- 3(i) There were no declarations of interest or requests for a dispensation.

District, County reports

- 4(i) County Cllr Faircloth Mutton commended the work that has been done on the village gateways and asked whether Speedwatch has noticed a reduction in speed. The chairman reported that there has been some indication of a reduction in the number of reported speeding cases. The PRow team is working on the airfield rights of way which have been mapped and are all acceptable. Rural kissing gates will replace the existing devices to discourage motorcycles. The pedestrian access work on dropped kerbs at 3 locations will be carried out on 29 July. The proposed signage for the school has not been agreed as it is considered that there is sufficient signage already. If rationalisation of all of the signs for the school were carried out then it might be possible to make a proposal. 20mph signs for Vicarage Lane were not approved previously because there is no housing on one side of the Lane. However, the policy has been called in. Cllr Faircloth Mutton said he would take forward the suggestion of a village 20mph scheme. Cllr Johnson noted that when the school was initially built there was discussion of a sign to indicate pedestrian access, but because it was only a footpath SCC were not able to put up signs at that time.
- 4(ii) District Cllrs Malvisi and Nunn sent a written report which was circulated to Cllrs.

Signed: Chairman Date.....

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Acton Field Trust

- 5 Cllrs received a report on the Acton Field Trust. Acton Field is registered with the Land Registry, with Acton Parish Council as custodian. The Innominate Trust has transferred £83,608.36 to the Trust and has held back £10,000 in case of issues arising which should come to the Trust in due course. The Trust is investing £80,000. The Trust is holding a meeting soon which will include maintenance of the meadow. All committee members will be made signatories and HMRC will be informed that the charity has been registered.

Cllrs noted the clerk's clarification that £500 was transferred to Acton Field Trust bank account on 14 May which was the initial opening balance required to open the bank account. Cllrs approved this as an addition to the grant paid to support the Acton Field Trust.

Clerk's report

- 6(i) Cllrs noted the clerk's report on significant matters not on the agenda and not already drawn to councillors' attention. Comments and updates noted were:
- 23/06 9(viii)c 8 Gotsfield Close overgrowth now completely covers the path. Hedge letters are being sent.
- 6(ii) The clerk reported on decisions taken under delegated powers since the last meeting
- Additional play area work to replace a rotten post - £120 +VAT.

Public Forum

- 7 Members of the public commented as follows:
- (i) A resident commented on insufficient grass cutting of footpaths and verges, many are now impassable. The chairman has written to the PRow officer at SCC who will visit the Acton routes and oversee the cutting. The second cut is due to start imminently.
- (ii) A resident commented that the gateways and speed signs are obscured by overgrown foliage on Melford Road.
- (iii) A resident commented regarding signage for the school that years ago a children warning sign was on the High St, but was not replaced when it fell down.
- (iv) Cllr Round reported that in response to a question by a resident at the May meeting about the attenuation pond at Marsh Walk possibly having a blocked culvert pipe leading from the pond. SCC Highways are responsible for highway culverts. The highways team visited the location and assessed it against the SCC Highways Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP), do not think it requires intervention and will continue to monitor it as part of their routine inspections.
- (v) Cllr Round updated the meeting following recent questions in the public forum relating to the proposed gym trail. The council has been informed that the planning case officer is checking about the necessary lease for placing of one piece of equipment on BDC land at Marsh Walk as this is required before the planning application can be approved. The BDC lease could form a template for a lease with the village hall for the other two pieces of equipment. Village Hall committee meetings (September 2022 and February 2023) confirmed the plans to allow the

installation of the equipment. Once the planning process is complete the administration for placing the equipment on the playing field will be carried out.

Planning

- 8(i) Cllrs considered the following planning applications:
- a) DC/24/02910 7 Post Office Row Application for Listed Building Consent - Remove cement render to side elevation and replace lime render. Cllrs resolved to defer to the heritage officer's decision on this, assuming that the work will be an improvement as it is putting right previous issues.
- 8(ii) Cllrs noted planning validations, parish council recommendations and local planning authority decisions made since the last meeting.

Governance

- 9(i) Cllrs approved the following policies:
- a • GDPR Policies (Privacy, Subject Access requests)
 - b • Data Management Policy
 - c • Cookies
 - d • Complaints
 - e • Social Media
 - f • Press and Media
 - g • Grievance
 - h • Disciplinary
 - i • Equality and Diversity Policy (new)
 - j • Anti Harassment & Bullying
 - k • Training policy
 - l • Publication scheme
 - m • Investment strategy
- 9(ii) Cllrs resolved to approve the following supplier accounts held by the Council:
- a • Huws Grey Ridgeons (Sudbury)
 - b • Clarkes of Walsham (Bury St Edmunds)
 - c • Sudbury Office Supplies (Sudbury)
 - d Cllrs resolved to close the parish council account at A&D Fayers (Lavenham).
- 9(iii) Cllrs resolved to approve the Council's regular subscriptions to the following organisations:
- a • Suffolk and National Associations of Local Councils (£681.41 for 2024/25)
 - b • Countryside Protection for Rural England (£36.00 in 2023/24)
 - c • Society of Local Council Clerks (£146 for the clerk in 2023/24)
- 9(iv) Cllrs reviewed the parish council's Statement of Internal Control and resolved to confirm that the council's internal control arrangements are adequate, efficient and effective to address the risks associated with the management of public finances and authorised the chairman and RFO to sign the Statement.

- 9(v) Cllrs resolved to approve the Council’s continued use of BACS transfers for electronic payments in line with its Financial Regulations (Financial Reg 7.10)
- 9(vi) Cllrs resolved to approve the Council’s continued use of a pre-paid card for online payments in line with its Financial Regulations (Financial Reg 9.1)
- 9(vii) Cllrs resolved to authorise the following Cllrs to carry out internal verification of the accounts with the clerk which is required at least 3 times per year: April to June - Cllr Johnson; July to September - Cllr Antill; October to December - Cllr Carradine; December to March - Cllr Antill
- 9(viii) Cllrs resolved to approve the clerk’s annual leave for the month of December, noting that the clerk will be available remotely for urgent matters.
- 9(ix) Cllrs received a verbal report on village hall management and approved further steps. The chairman moved to take this item later in the agenda after Cllr reports to enable fuller debate. Cllrs noted that Acton Parish Council as a corporate body is committee member and must act to ensure that the charity is managed effectively. Cllr Round has sought guidance from Community Action Suffolk and proposed to bring a proposal to a future meeting, including changing the APFVH governance document with the support of Community Action Suffolk in order to enable a wider pool of committee members and increasing the amount of paid support. Cllr Round hopes that a meeting will be held in early August with the village hall committee (APFVH) chairman, with Cllr Johnson.
- 9(x) Cllrs resolved to appoint SALC as the Council’s internal auditors for 2024/25 governance and accounts.

Finance

- 10(i) Cllrs resolved to approve the payments made in June and payments to be made before the next meeting and authorised the chairman to sign the schedule of payments (p 7).
- 10(ii) Cllrs noted that items of expenditure over £500 and the tender and selection process used for items over £5000 for the year-to-date are on the website.
- 10(iii) Cllrs received a budget report detailing the year-to-date accounts compared to budget.
- 10(iv) Cllrs resolved to approve the bank reconciliation as at 30 June 2024 and authorised the chairman to sign it.

Environment

- 11(i) Cllrs resolved to approve a proposal for new dog waste signs and ask the clerk to purchase these within a budget of £300 plus VAT.
- 11(ii) Cllrs decided to put on hold the request from the school for signage to advertise the school and contribute to traffic calming in the village due to the county council not approving additional signage at this stage.
- 11(iii) Cllrs received a report on the wildlife area from Cllr Le Gryns and resolved to approve the removal of the vandalised shed. Cllrs noted Cllr Le Gryns proposal to spend some of the agreed wildlife area budget on annual maintenance and a skip. Cllr Johnson asked for it to be minuted

that the Acton Field Trust will discuss maintenance of the Field at their next meeting. Cllr Le Grys asked Cllrs and residents to watch out for Japanese knotweed and Giant hogweed anywhere in the parish.

- 11(iv) Cllrs noted that a response has been received from BDC on the trees at Babergh Close and asked the clerk to write to District Cllrs to request their support for more urgent work on these trees. BDC did not agree that volunteer work could be done on the ground level growth.

Councillors’ reports and items for future agendas

- 12(i) Cllr Caradine reported dying Elm trees on Waldingfield Road. Cllr Round noted that this has been reported and concern has been raised about the apparent disease moving to nearby trees.
- 12(ii) Cllr Round reported that Suffolk County Council planned work to upgrade PRow15 will begin soon and to be complete by the end of August.

The chairman closed the meeting at 8:20pm

Acronyms used:

- APFVH Acton Playing Fields and Village Hall committee
- BDC Babergh District Council
- Cllr Parish Councillor
- HMRC His Majesty’s Revenue and Customs
- Mph miles per hour
- PRow Public Rights of Way
- SALC Suffolk Association of Local Councils
- SCC Suffolk County Council

Next meeting Wednesday 18 September 2024 7pm (no meeting in August)

Schedule of payments for approval

Payments made under delegated powers or under Financial Regulation 4.1 since the last meeting: none

Payments authorised for settlement before the next meeting:

Direct debits, standing orders and other contractual payments approved by the Council

Salaries and HMRC payments

Payments arising from previous Council decisions

Payments authorised by clerk or clerk and chair under delegated powers or Financial Regulation 4.1)

Schedule of all income received and payments made in June 2024:

Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Gross
June litter picking	Litter picker	-91.67	0.00	-91.67
Street light maintenance	Pearce and Kemp	-18.75	-3.75	-22.50
Allotment 2C rent /deposit	Allotment 2C	15.00	0.00	15.00
Banner for referendum	Auto Innovations	-144.00	-28.80	-172.80
Brushcutter	R R Garden Machinery	-5,625.00	-1,125.00	-6,750.00
VAT recovered	HMRC	13,966.66	0.00	13,966.66
Grant for summer fete	Acton Playgroup	-350.00	0.00	-350.00
June interest on savings	Lloyds Bus Bank	98.09	0.00	98.09
	Savings			

These payments were be authorised at the Parish Council Meeting dated 17 July 2024

Councillor Signature: *G Round* (signed in the meeting)

Signed: Chairman Date.....

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