

SHELFANGER PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 16 May 2024 at 6.30 pm at Shelfanger Village Hall.

Councillors Present: Cllr S Groom (Chair), Cllr Marion Paines, Cllr M Hurst, Cllr Mick Paines, Cllr P Ross and Cllr P Chambers

In attendance: Elaine Tinsley (Clerk), Sarah Hollingham & Will Todd from the Environment Agency and 7 members of the public

1. **Election of Officers** – The Chair, Mr Groom, was asked by Mrs Paines (Vice Chair) if he would like to re-stand as Chair to which he agreed. The Chair then asked Mrs Paines, if she would re-stand as Vice Chair, Elaine Tinsley as Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, Mr Paines, Mrs Hurst, Mr Chambers and Mrs Ross as the remaining Councillors and all agreed to re-stand.
2. **Chairman's Welcome:** The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present, and received apologies for absence from County Cllr Catherine Rowett, who was unable to attend, but who did send in a report (as attached).
3. **To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7 March 2024** - The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7 March, previously circulated to all members, were proposed for approval by Cllr Marion Paines and seconded by Cllr M Hurst and unanimously agreed.
4. **To record declarations of interest and approve any requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests or other interests:** None were received
5. **To receive the report from the Environment Agency on proposed flood monitoring in the village:** Sarah Hollingham & Will Todd outlined the Environment Agency proposed flood monitoring scheme. At various points around the village (plan attached) they are proposing to position cameras and gauges to monitor the speed and depth of the flood water when flooding occurs. Questions were received and answered from members of the public. SG thanked Sarah and Will for attending and confirmed they had the backing of the Parish Council and he looked forward to meeting with them again to visit each location to determine the individual validity.
6. **To hear from members of the public:**
 - A member of the public requested that the Parish Council use funds to clear ditches to ensure no flooding would take place in the future. It was generally agreed that this was not a good use of Parish funds, due to their limited nature, but unlimited ditches to be cleared. It was suggested to await the outcome of the monitoring proposed by the Environment Agency.
7. **To receive the Clerk's report** - The Clerk's report was previously circulated that there were no further updates available on the day of the meeting.

8. **To receive Chairman's Report:** Cllr S Groom reported two meetings he had during the preceding month:
- **Diocese** - SG reported he had had a very productive meeting with the Diocese.
 - They discussed the drainage on the 4 acres on Wash Lane, which had been completed and all appeared to be flowing well. Also on the corner of this field, the very tall tree was discussed as during recent flooding, erosion had occurred at the roots and it was highlighted as a potential fall hazard. If the tree fell, this would cause problems to the near housing. The Diocese agreed to get their tree surgeons to investigate.
 - Also discussed was the verges on Rectory Road, which had grown out extensively and needed trimming back. This would be dealt with, but would need to wait now until the nesting season was over.
 - On Church Walk the horse chestnut tree needed trimming and again will be investigated by the tree surgeons.
 - **Heywood Road Ford** – SG met with the local resident at the ford site. It appeared that the fault may lie with the ditch on the other side of the road and investigations would take place via Highways and the local farmer to ascertain whose responsibility it was. **Clerk to Action.**
9. **To receive updates from individual Council members:** None were received.
10. **Boyland Common Report** - Cllr P Ross went through her report (attached).
11. **Planning:** Application No: 2024/1203 – single storey extension to The Gables, Common Road. Whilst there were no apparent objections to this, and Cllr M Hurst confirmed the Village Hall Committee had made no objection, the clerk was requested to print the plans. **Clerk to Action.**

12. FINANCE REPORT

12.1. To approve payments (C):

PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	PAYE
Online	Elaine Tinsley	Salary (May & June)	437.84	0.00	
Online	Roger Canwell	Auditor	30.00	0.00	
Online	Norfolk PTS	Annual Subscription	55.00	0.00	
Online	Zurich Insurance	Annual Insurance	460.17		
		TOTAL £	983.01	0.00	

Payments proposed Cllr Marion Paines, seconded Cllr Mick Paines

13. **Signing of AGAR Form** – the Clerk presented the completed AGAR form for signing. This had already been signed by Mr Canwell, Auditor. This was signed by S Groom and will be forwarded to Littlejohn. **Clerk to Action.**

14. **Pylon Objection:** A general discussion took place about whether the Parish Council should put in an objection to the impending Pylon project in the village. The Clerk was requested to find out from Richard Bacon MP the impact felt by the objections put in by local organisations. **Clerk to Action.**
15. **Next meeting of the Parish Council is on Thursday 4 July 2024 at 6.30 pm at Shelfanger Village Hall.**

Meeting closed at: 8.05 pm.

Clerk's Report – Meeting 16th May 2024

1. **Accounts** – I am pleased to report the accounts have been finalised and audited for year ending 31 March 2024 – as attached. The surplus at the end of the year is £8,172.36.
2. **Insurance** – the insurance for the village assets has been received from Zurich Insurance. The premium has come in at £460.17 – this is a 1.75% increase on last year.
3. **Church Road Flooding** – Correspondence received from Steve Kenny Planning Compliance Manager – update awaited.
4. **Portrait of King Charles** – This has been received and it will be hung in the village hall.
5. **NALC Subscription** – A communication was sent to all Parish Councillors to ask their opinion on the NALC subscription. The Clerk received face-to-face training with Norfolk Parish Training & Support and wishes to take their subscription as there is now a relationship with them. No objections were received and as the subscription was £100 cheaper, the membership has been moved to them.
6. **Sewerage into ditch on Wash Lane** – this was brought to the attention of the Parish Clerk by a member of the public, so it was reported to the Environment Agency Hotline. Letters have been sent to local residents to check their discharge is clear of sewerage.
7. **Village Hall Accounts Year Ending 31.03.24** – We await these.
8. **CILS Payment** - £3,530.92 payment has been received from SNDC. This is to be used for the betterment of the village. Previous payments have purchased dog bins and speed signs, so any suggestions for this money?
9. **Saffron Housing Ditch on Common Road** – Saffron Housing will be sending out a team to clear the vegetation from the ditch on Common Road and report back on any further works required.
10. **Bank Account as below:**

Shelfanger Parish Council Current Account

		Net	VAT	
01.04.24	Opening Balance - Savings Account			£6,173.97
01.04.24	Opening Balance - Current Account			£1,998.39
	Receipts			
10.04.24	Interest			£0.25
19.04.24	SNDC CILS			£3,530.92
26.04.24	SNDC Precept			£2,741.50
	Total Receipts			£6,272.67
	Payments			
29.04.24	Employer contribution	£7.40	£0.00	£7.40
29.04.24	Clerk Salary	£211.52	£0.00	£211.52
	Total Payments		£0.00	£218.92
	Bank Balance			£14,226.11
	Funds held for Friends of Boyland Common			£531.62

Parish Council Meeting Thursday 16th May 2024
Boyland Common Report

On 21st March Jen Celerier was able to report that she and Rob Aves had removed the encroaching twigs and branches from round the Owl Box, and hopefully this will keep the flight path to the box clear and help to ensure that the box is used by the Barn owls again this year.

The dead Ash tree has been removed and further work has been done on the coppicing of the willows in corner of the northern section of the Common. Many thank to Jen and Rob for all the work they have put in.

Thanks, as ever, to Ivan who keeps the paths cut, a mown path is a very obvious indicator that the Common welcomes visitors.

Stella has set a date for her wild flower walk, Sunday 26th May, meeting at Boyland Common at 3.00pm. The walk will take about an hour, and there will be some hand lenses and plant identification keys for people to borrow. Notice of the walk has been posted on the Shelfanger Website and a poster displayed on the notice board, plus other interested parties, Quaker Wood volunteers etc. have been notified.

The preparatory work on the replacement 'Information Board' is still ongoing. Once the final format has been decided there is also the question of whether it would be better positioned near the road, thus inviting visitors to explore the area. We are much indebted to Sandy and Rita for the work they have put into this project.

Pam Ross, Chairperson of the 'Friends of Boyland Common'

Work in Progress

I received the official results letter for my applications for the Road Safety Community Fund, which was puzzling. It seems to imply that we're getting all or some of the 30 mph speed limit requests in Bressingham and Fersfield under one Traffic Regulation Order, which is a good precedent. I believed that we had got nothing for Bunwell, but they now say they've funded a Vehicle Activated Sign for Bunwell (Which I am sure I didn't ask for, or even consider, so I don't know what this is or where this is to go. Meanwhile, believing I had nothing to assist with the dangerous crossing point on the Turnpike, I have commissioned a feasibility study for a safer crossing there, using part of my 2023 highways budget.

In Aslacton, I've been chasing and got promises for action on the speed limit (long approved but never installed) on Pottergate Street, which should be done by June this year. Elsewhere I've ordered, and will fund or partially fund, various signs, paint, and chevrons for some of the roads with problems of dangerous bends and misleading junctions. I'm co-funding with Councillor Wilby a solution for the unmarked and neglected Furze Green Hamlet that crosses two parishes/divisions and highways officers. This is now in progress. I've commissioned designers to recommend signs to stop long lorries from using Tabernacle Lane in Forncett. I'd like to get a UK-wide solution to change the way Sat Navs work, when it comes to tiny single-track lanes to eliminate the problem of delivery vans and lorries taking short cuts at speed due to delivery targets and carbon reduction targets.

In addition to work on drainage problems in the Street in Bunwell, the Environment Agency has been researching natural flooding solutions for the feeder tributaries for the Tas and for the area around Shelfanger. They're reporting to Shelfanger in May. I've been looking into better signage at the steep and deep Ford in Forncett, and I'm told that the Council is undertaking a review of all the County's fords, to improve safety. This is promising, but I fear it will take a long time before we get action.

The new route for the FP6 in Gissing is now official so we need to put pressure on to get it opened up.

Norwich to Tilbury Pylons

I had to submit my input to the County's response to the Statutory consultation by Wednesday 8th, so I've done a lot of work on that. Many thanks to residents who've already sent me local information about effects in their area. I can still send on more info, so if you know things I might not know about your own village/amenities/wildlife and flora or the problems with the access roads do get in touch. I've attended briefings with other councils/councillors from Suffolk and Essex, and I went to an East of England Local Government Association conference about infrastructure projects and the problems with the planning process for them, in Bury St Edmunds on Wednesday. My response focuses on the call for a better solution for these cables, and a better way of ensuring that government planning systems work with local people to place important infrastructure in appropriate places, without destroying the environment in the process. I attended the wonderful art exhibition in Forncett, highlighting the beauty of the local area. I am concerned about the damage that preparing for and erecting the pylons will cause, not just their long-term presence. Undergrounding would also damage local ecologies, roads, and hedges. Upcoming National Grid consultation events are in Ashwellthorpe (Thursday 9th May), Tibenham (Friday 10th May), Diss Town Football club (Wednesday 15th May), all afternoon-early evening.

The attempt to silence local voices is not a good look on the part of the current government, nor is the blithe assumption that we can just build more and more and never ask whether less would be better—less demand, less consumption, more economical ways of living, more nature, more happiness. This was one of my key asks in the motion I brought to Council on Tuesday. Unfortunately, the Conservatives passed an amendment to the motion that cut out the objections to the planning process and the desire for demand reduction and local off grid energy schemes to prevent ever more costly upgrades in future.

Norfolk County Council Full Council meeting, Tuesday May 7th.

This was the Council AGM so we reappointed the same leader and cabinet etc for the coming year and a new Conservative Chair was appointed unopposed. Same old thing goes on for another year.

At long last my motion about rural speed limits was discussed and voted on. I proposed that we should have a cross-party working group to review the Norfolk Speed management so that it would promote pro-active safer speeds (on roads without white lines that are currently 60 mph in particular), instead of waiting for deaths and injuries before agreeing to requests for speed reductions. The responses from the Conservative benches were, to my mind, appalling, with every speaker arguing against intervening to improve safety and make rural roads safer for children to walk or cycle to school and so on. There were many patronising attempts to suggest that I should work with the highways officers to deliver things that I am asking for--as though I and others hadn't been doing that constantly, and meeting the brick wall that is the Speed Management Strategy and the huge cost of one-off TROs. Despite all the opposition parties voting in favour, the Conservative majority ensured that it fell. My motion about the National Grid Pylons scheme (see above) was not debated, but was put to the vote. It passed because the Conservatives had amended it so that it no longer said what I had said but what they wanted to say.

Norfolk things:

Long Stratton Bypass

Construction has begun. This is affecting all side routes that the road will cross. For details on road closures [view the Long Stratton Bypass works public information notice \(PDF\) \[173KB\]](#). You can subscribe to Long Stratton Bypass e-news via the county council website [here](#).

National Government things

Prime Minister's "moral mission" to reform disability benefits

Mr Sunak is proposing reforms to disability benefits. He plans to change the eligibility criteria, assessment process and types of support, and remove the cash that people are allowed to spend on what they need on a regular basis, including things that they might enjoy.

The information about the proposed changes can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/modernising-support-for-independent-living-the-health-and-disability-green-paper/modernising-support-for-independent-living-the-health-and-disability-green-paper>

If you know anyone who struggles with their disabilities or mental health or receives these PIP payments, I would strongly encourage you to respond to this consultation, if you care about the values that this country has lived by over the last century, in trying to care with compassion for those who've received a hard lot in life, including people waiting for non-existent NHS treatment or other kinds of help.

Fit Note Reform: government call for evidence

Another related issue is this call for evidence to inform a programme of work the government announced in 2023, about reforming the "fit note" process. The government says this is "to support those with long term health conditions to access timely work and health support". What they mean is that they don't want doctors to assess whether you're fit to go back to work. I imagine they want a system that allows them to set targets for cutting people off from sick pay, to force them back into work (or starvation), as they do with other benefits. They are looking for "enhancements that stakeholders would require for the fit note to better support people to start, stay and succeed in work". Please consider contributing to this evidence-gathering process. They want to hear from employers, healthcare professionals, patients, carers and those who access fit notes, representatives of local systems or local system partners (e.g, local authority, community social enterprise), interested academics and stakeholder organisations

To participate in this call for evidence use [this online form](#). Further information about the call for evidence is available [here](#)

Contact me on

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Catherine Rowett

9th May 2024