

## GREAT LIVERMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Great Livermere Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 7:00 in Great Livermere Village Hall

Present. Cllrs S Charlton, A Norburn, A Johnston & T Redman.

### **1. Co-option of new Parish Councillor**

No candidates at this time.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted by the Councillors from R Charlton and SCC Cllr R Hopfensperger. No apologies, or report, was received from WSDC Cllr A Speed. The Clerk will contact Cllr Speed to check that he is receiving her emails. **Action Clerk**

### **3. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:**

3.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. Cllr T Redman declared an interest in item 13.1 on the agenda.

3.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. Cllr T Redman declared an interest in item 13.1 on the agenda.

3.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. N/A

**4. Minutes** - The minutes of the Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 Parish Council meeting as a correct record.

### **5. Meeting open to the public**

Claire Dickson Suffolk County Council, (SCC) Operations Manager Rights of Way and Access, attended the meeting to provide an update on the bridge and footpath at Ampton Waters. Previously, it was confirmed that repairing the existing structure is not an option. The raised sections of the bridge are not fit for purpose, and their removal and replacement would be a costly, short-term solution. SCC explored the possibility of removing the raised sections and constructing islands, but this is unworkable due to limited access for the excavator required. The causeway's width is insufficient to support the necessary machinery. Further concerns were raised about the remaining lifespan of the current structure and the eventual replacement of the affected sections. Replacing the existing structure along its definitive alignment with a piled, raised design would cost approximately £800,000 due to the extensive engineering required. Additionally, during a site meeting on September 25, 2024, the Estate confirmed they have no plans to dredge Ampton Water, further complicating and increasing costs.

Following on from the initial investigation work earlier this year agreement has been sought to carry out more extensive works on the causeway, that was previously constructed by the Estate. As no set design drawings can be provided the County Council need to explore the construction of the causeway to ensure it is suitable for accommodating a Public Right of Way and weight bearing on a joining structure. The Estate, as landowner has agreed to the surveys and access required for this. Due to the nature of surrounding land this has proved difficult. Initially window sample and probing were explored but due to the causeway construction, including large lumps of concrete which would obstruct this method, this was not successful. Plate bearing testing has also been explored but, due to the heavy machinery required, Milestone, SCC contractor, felt that they were not comfortable carrying this out. Following these discussions with the Milestone, SCC has agreed to use an external company, Norfolk Partnership Laboratory, to carry out the survey works. They are more equipped for remote sites and have the kit for this. They will carry out a combination of probing and plate testing. A purchase order for the works was raised last week, and the surveys are expected to take place within the coming weeks. Claire Dickson wanted to avoid further delays with the SCC contractor and to ensure that the works are moved on and in a practical way, hence the use of the external contractor. The Parish Council will continue to monitor progress and provide updates as the works move forward.

## **6. Report from Suffolk County (SCC) Councillor: R Hopfensperger.**

To include any update on replacement signage/stickers.

Cllr Hopfensperger was unable to attend the meeting and sent her apologies. Cllr Hopfensperger said she would pay for the damaged play equipment removal works at the play area and the path clearing opposite the Village Hall. The Parish council are grateful for this. The Clerk will organise for the quote for the works to be sent to Cllr Hopfensperger to facilitate the grant. **Action Clerk**

## **7. Report from West Suffolk Council (WSC) Councillor: A Speed.**

Cllr Speed did not attend the meeting, see under item 2.

## **8. Progress report Chairman**

### **9.1. Chairman**

The Chairman had no additional report to make.

## **9. Clerk:**

9.1 To receive feedback on Streetlight briefing WSC Parish forum, Streetlight Briefing, SCC flooding and drainage forum, SCC winter maintenance forum and SALC Sole Trustee training. The Clerk attended the West Suffolk forum at Haverhill. There was a session on the Suffolk County Council Transport Strategy, led by Lewis Boudville – Principal Strategic Transport Planner. They are launching the public consultation on the Local Transport Plans and Area Plans for West Suffolk in October. The timing of this was not felt to be great, bearing in mind the issues we are having with our local bus service in nearby villages. The plan was focused on the towns, and a few rural areas. Our area was not even on their map. There was mention of multimodal transport. There was also a discussion about Community Land Trusts. Sue Downs, Rural Housing Officer - Community Action Suffolk and representatives of Lavenham Community Land Trust provided an insight into what can be achieved and the opportunities that these schemes can bring to their communities. This was very interesting.

The SCC Streetlight briefing was interesting and informative. It was reported that the change to part night lighting offered savings of over £750K (over £4m at current energy prices) SCC is recognised internationally for their streetlighting programmes.

The SCC Flooding and Drainage forum included an interesting 'map' that shows the route of funding for drainage works.

SCC winter maintenance forum

Again, an interesting and informative session. It was noted that SCC highways look at road temperatures, not air temperatures to decide when to grit. The road can often be a lower temperature than the air and this is why you sometimes see the gritters out, but the weather forecast is not predicting freezing weather.

SALC Sole Trustee training.

This was a very helpful and informative training. It may prove useful if we ever find ourselves in the position of having to have to take over from a charity, i.e. the Village Hall.

### **9.2 Office for National Statistics. Quarterly Vacancy Survey (QVS)**

Great Livermere Parish Council has been selected to complete a QVS. We are required by law to complete this survey. The Clerk has completed the survey.

## **10. Finance.**

10.1 The following accounts were approved for payment:

<b>customer</b>	<b>Account name</b>	<b>Total</b>
Unity Bank	Miscellaneous Payments	£5.40
Various	Administration	£875.20
Royal British Legion, wreath Donation		£30.00

Cllr A Norburn carried out the additional checks for this meeting.

## 10.2 Bank reconciliation and accounts update.

The Clerk provided a Bank reconciliation and a schedule of payments for the Councilors' information.

## 10.3 Budget to consider items to be included in the 2025/26 budget and precept request, to include correspondence from WSC Council Tax reduction scheme and requests for grants from Citizens Advice and Suffolk Headway

The Clerk had prepared and shared some budget information ahead of the meeting. It was decided to hold a separate zoom working party as meeting as unfortunately dates for a meeting, ahead of this meeting, had not worked out. Also, the Councillors wanted to involve all members of the Parish Council in the budget and precept request and Cllr R Charlton was unable to attend tonight's meeting. A provisional date of Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December was agreed. **Action All/Clerk**

## 11. Play area

### 11.1 Play area report, circulated.

### 11.2 To discuss removal of damaged equipment.

Peter Kerry, Countryside Conservation and Tree Services (CCTS), has quoted £250 plus vat. To remove the damaged piece of play equipment at the play area. The Councillors would also CCTS to remove the climbing wall as this is in a very poor state or repair. The Clerk will confirm a price for this and ask them to go ahead with the work. The Clerk will check to see if CCTS still need a banksman when carrying out the work, or if they able to provide their own. If one is still required, the Clerk will liaise with the Councillors to make the arrangements. As noted under item 6 Cllr Hopfensperger has offered to pay for this work. **Action Clerk**

### 11.3 To discuss any areas of concern

As mentioned above the climbing wall is in a poor state of repair and will be removed ASAP.

## 12. Highway/village matters

### 12.1 Update on Highway matters to include:

#### 12.1.1 To receive any Vehicle Activated Sign/Automatic Numberplate Recognition VAS/ANPR update

The Clerk reminded the Councillors that the ANPR should be coming again on 25/11/2024. They made arrangements to remove the VAS device ready for its arrival.

**Action Cllrs Norburn/Charlton/Redman**

### 12.2 Footpath issues. To include

#### 12.2.1 To receive any update on the issue with bridge at Ampton water. See under item 5.

#### 12.2.2 To discuss skirting of footpath opposite the Village Hall.

It is very unlikely that SCC will carry out any works to clear the path opposite the Village Hall. The Clerk has spoken to CCTS, and they have agreed to carry out the work. They can do this for £200, if they are able to schedule this at the same time as the play area equipment removal. The Councillors would like to receive, in writing, details of the works to be undertaken and the traffic management arrangements, for these works. The Clerk will contact the contractor regarding this. As noted under item 6, SCC Cllr Hopfensperger has agreed to fund these works. **Action Clerk**

### 12.3. Village Matters to include:

#### 12.3.1 Village Questionnaire, to discuss questionnaire responses received.

Cllr Johnston has done some work to pull the questionnaire responses together.

There were 101 questionnaires delivered, and 11 households returned them. From the responses received it would seem they play area is not greatly used. 9 respondents never use the area, 1 used it often and 1 used it sometimes. 4 households felt the equipment was sufficient, 3 households felt it wasn't. 3 respondents felt we should refurbish the equipment, 3 felt we should replace one or more pieces of equipment when they are no longer usable. Overall, the Councillors

did not think there is enough use of the area to warrant any big expenditure on the play area at this time. They will continue to monitor the situation. There seemed to be more interest in having a neighbourhood watch. 1 person would be willing to help run the scheme with 10 people thinking that having the scheme would be a good idea. Cllr Johnston will follow up on this and find out more about what setting up and running a scheme would involve. The Clerk will go through the comments received to see if any further action needs to be taken. **Action A Johnston/Clerk.**

12.3.2 To receive any update on the Biodiversity and Environmental policy.

The above policy is still in hand. Cllr Redman asked if we would consider 're-wilding' part of The Forge area. We would firstly need to ascertain who owns the land before looking at any options to re-wild. It was agreed that we should take some advice on what might be possible, once we have confirmed ownership. The Clerk will make arrangements to meet with CCTS to discuss options in the new year. **Action Clerk**

12.3.3 To discuss response from the Rural Coffee Caravan.

Unfortunately, the Coffee Caravan is too big to site safely at the War Memorial. They will make arrangements to come to the village in the new year with a smaller van. The Clerk will keep everyone updated on this. **Action Clerk**

12.3.4 Grass cutting, to receive any update.

It was decided that no more cuts were needed this year. It was agreed that we should meet with the grass contractor, CCTS, to discuss our requirements for next year. **Action Clerk**

12.3.5 Community Self Help training, update.

The Clerk has been able to offer two sets of dates for the Highways self-help training. Unfortunately, so far these have not been suitable for Cllrs R and S Charlton. The Clerk will continue to work with the training coordinator and the Councillors to find a suitable date. **Action Cllrs S Charlton/R Charlton/Clerk**

12.3.6 Dog bin, to note issues with collection.

There was an issue with the dog waste bin, at Callowhill Lane, not being emptied. This was resolved. West Suffolk have had some changes in staff and the operative who has been doing that round for years has retired which has resulted in some villages being missed on the odd occasion.

**13. Planning Matters** to include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted.

13.1 DC/24/1510/LB | Application for listed building consent - replace five windows. The Cottage, Barton Road, Great Livermere.

Cllr T Redman declared an interest in the above application and did not take part in the decision. The Parish Council **Support** this application.

**14. Councillors reports and items for future agendas.**

The contract for next year's grass cutting and the potential re-wilding of The Forge area, will included as agenda items for the next meeting

**15. Correspondence for action/information**

15.1 WSC, Capital funding grant. Circulated.

15.2 Suffolk care directory, requirements for 2025. It was agreed to get 10 copies to distribute if required. **Action Clerk**

15.3 WSC Air quality update. Circulated.

15.4 SCC Transport plan consultation. Circulated.

15.5 SCC, Warm Homes Suffolk Loans. Circulated. This information will go in the Parish Magazine and on the Parish Council website. **Action Cllr A Norburn/Clerk**

**16. Date of next meeting.** Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 7.00pm

**17. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items:**

17.1 Personnel Issues. To discuss a potential increase in Clerk's hours.

After discussion, it was agreed to increase the Clerk's weekly hours from the current 3 hours and 30 minutes to 5 hours. The Clerk appreciates the impact this increase will have on the budget but felt that, unfortunately, the growing workload—due to both gradual increases over the years and heightened legal and governance requirements—makes it impossible to meet the expected standards within the current time allocation. The Clerk thanked the Councillors for agreeing to this increase. It will start from the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024

17.2 Legal Issues. None.