

GREAT LIVERMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Great Livermere Parish Council meeting held on 15th November 2023 7:00 in Great Livermere Village Hall

Present. Cllrs H Johnston, R Charlton S Charlton A Norburn WS Cllr Speed & SCC R Hopfensperger

1. Co-option of new Parish Councillor

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllrs T Redman, A Johnston and the Clerk, Vicki Gay.

3. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

3.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None.

3.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None.

3.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. None.

4. Minutes - - Minutes of Wednesday 20th September 2023 Parish Council meeting were agreed and approved as a correct record.

5. Meeting open to the public None present.

6. Report from County Councillor: R Hopfensperger.

To discuss options/receive update on: A possible extension of bus service to Thetford.

See under item 8.1.2

The tree at Mere view has been Inspected again, by SCC and has been reported as being of no danger and not needing emergency work at this time. It will be monitored regularly.

Traffic calming measures.

Cllr Hopfensperger agreed to the costs associated with the proposed traffic calming measures at the Junction of the Street and Bury Road. This will include new 'Slow' markings on the road and additional signage. The Clerk will write to Cllr Hopfensperger with an official request for these works.

Action Clerk

Ampton Bridge. Following enquiries made at the September meeting it has been confirmed a temporary repair is not an option as the struts into the water are beyond repair. Since its closure in Feb 2021, we have seen no progress at all with a plan to reinstate the crossing so that the public right of way is once again passable. This is despite frequent time frames offered by SCC for its resolution being passed. The first was by August 2021 and then it seems at 6 monthly intervals following this. Currently the signs showing that the footpath is closed direct walkers to an alternative route. There is no "alternative" route other than to turn back. This footpath is important to the village, the crossing has been in place since the late 18thC and then clearly shown as a footpath by the late 19thC. About 20 years ago, Suffolk County Council decided to upgrade the footpaths, building new bridges behind Wadgate Cottage and the Black Barn on what now became designated footpaths throughout the village, and refurbished the footpath across the Longwater. Oak was used for the two new footbridges behind Wadgate Cottage and the Black Barn, and these are sound. Softwood was used for the Longwater bridge, and this has decayed. From about 2018, SCC have actively encouraged their use by giving grants to the parish councils to provide footpath maps. In 2019 with one of these grants we produced our own footpath leaflet. We make these leaflets available in the church and replenish them regularly. This circular walk that is now closed is one of two walks featured on this leaflet. Since lock down in 2020 our village has been discovered by many who have enjoyed the history, countryside, and space. This public right of way is an integral part of both the history and the countryside of Great Livermere. It would appear that having taken responsibility for the bridge maintenance and encouraged and financially supported the publicising of the route, it is now not a priority to SCC to keep it open.

It was understood that the shoot has built their own pontoon, it was unknown if SCC Rights of way are aware of this. It was recognised that this sort of structure would probably not meet the correct

spec for use by Suffolk County Council but was felt that this was an option for SCC to investigate. It was agreed to write to Rights of Way and to invite them to our meeting in January to try and find a resolution to this issue. The questions to be addressed at this meeting would include:

Is SCC going to fund a new bridge crossing to complete this public right of way?

What "alternative" routes are SCC discussing with the landowner as an option of redirecting this public right of way?

What timescales are in place for a solution to be achieved?

Is SCC committed to finding a solution to maintain this public right of way?

As always members of the public would be welcome to come to the meeting to express their views.

Replacement signs/stickers

It was understood that the replacement faceplates, currently being offered by SCC cost in the region of £250 each. The Clerk has been provided with some information for replacement signs, at a considerably lower price. The Clerk will share this information with Cllr Hopfensperger so she can check for compliance. Cllr Hopfensperger will then source best deal for the County Council. Cllr Hopfensperger told the Councillors that broken and leaning signs need to be reported on SCC Highways portal. Cllr A Johnston has details from a sign survey of broken signs, and he will be asked to report these. The following stickers/signs are required for Gt Livermere, subject to funding 2 x 300mm 30mph stickers and 2 x 600mm national speed limit stickers. The Clerk will ensure Cllr Hopfensperger has this information.

Action Cllr Johnston/Clerk

Cllr Hopfensperger provided a SCC monthly report which is available upon request.

7. Report from B. Councillor: A Speed.

Cllr Speed reported that protesters led to a meeting being suspended recently. The plan for the Western Way development has been halted as future costs are considered to be too high.

Cllr Speed reported that there was still time to be involved in the emerging West Suffolk Local plan for housing coming into fruition in new year. Cllr Speed asked if we want more housing in Great Livermere, and if so where, what demand and what infrastructure would this need? Cllr Speed supports small tasteful developments in small villages. Cllr Speed is pushing parishes to have more influence over small developments being included in the plan, taking in to account our aging population and also needs of young families. Cllr Speed thought any representations needed to be made by end of December but as he was unsure of this, he would check the deadline date. Cllr Speed felt that the Parish Council should make an initial request for us to be considered with details of what type of development and what benefits this could bring for local residents and section 106 benefits. Those attending the meeting did not feel there was any obvious location to consider and would not want to pursue this at this time.

8. Progress reports. For information, from:

8.1. Chair

8.1.1 to confirm the laying of the Remembrance Day wreath -

The Parish Council thanked Cllrs S & R Charlton for laying the Remembrance Day wreath on behalf of the Parish. It was a lovely occasion that marked this important day.

8.1.2 to receive feedback from Suffolk Enhanced Partnership Passenger Interest Group

Cllr H Johnston attended the Passenger Interest Group meeting but felt this was not of any great benefit to the village. Following correspondence from SCC Councillor J Spicer, it has been asked if there was a need to improve the route from Great Livermere in to Thetford. The 339 bus currently stops at Euston for 20 minutes, rather than carry on into Thetford. It is being asked if there is any demand for this bus to carry on in to, and pick up from Thetford, at these times. Cllr H Johnston will write an article for the newsletter and put a post on Facebook to ascertain if there is any in interest improving this current bus service to Thetford.

Action Cllr H Johnston

8.2.1 To receive report on new policing model. The Clerk attended this recent briefing and submitted the following report.

Redesigning the Local Policing Operating Model To Keep Suffolk Safe

Aims: Officers to be where needed; Public safety; Criminals brought to justice

With the Suffolk Police, the new Chief Constable, Rachel Kearton, Crime Commissioner -Tim Passmore at new Police and Fire Station HQ in Stowmarket. Changes come into effect December 2023. Councillors from parish, local and county council present.

New Model -Three parts

Community Policing Teams 50 new areas/80 Community Officers in specific areas

Response Investigation Teams set up with more officers for both emergency and non-emergency calls as well as high-volume crime.

County Partnership and Prevention Hub -co-ordinating frontline policing across Suffolk -Anti-social/ hate crime/ children and young people and Neighbourhood Policing

Tim Passmore - the arguments for ensuring the Suffolk Constabulary has sufficient resources are well rehearsed. Very concerned the county does not receive an equitable financial settlement from the Home Office. Committed to achieve fairer funding for Suffolk. Council tax precept for policing went up this year - gave an extra £3.9 million to help cope with increased demands. Will be monitored quarterly c.f. his website. Total policing budget this year £168.4 million.

8.2.2 To give feedback on NSIPs event.

There was a lot of information discussed and it would seem not much support for local councils concerned with big infrastructure developments. Local Authorities play a different role in the NSIP process - acting more as a facilitator and enabler and not having any decision-making powers.

8.2.3 To discuss ideas from the time management training.

Although an enjoyable session the Clerk didn't think that she gained any really helpful information to help with her time management. A suggestion to turn of emails when working on more complex matters will be actioned when appropriate.

8.2.4 To discuss option to purchase new computer equipment.

The Clerks current computer equipment will be out of date within the next year and will not be able to receive any updates. In addition to this the storage is almost full so a new machine will need to be purchased in the near future. Following a consultation with a local IT specialist it was agreed to purchase a bespoke Build Machine for £440.00 + VAT / Delivered. In addition, it was agreed to take advantage of the migration service at a further £125 + VAT. These costs will be shared with the Clerks other Parish Councils. The associated costs have already been factored into this year's budget. There are still ongoing issues with the Wi-Fi and phone line at the Clerk's address, this matter is in hand.

Action Clerk

8.2.5 To confirm attendance at SALC conference.

The Clerk will attend the SALC Conference 29th November. The Clerk will take forward following question to the new SCC highways contractor.

Standards of repairs/works completed – how will they ensure quality and value for money. Eg. Skirting works on Troston Rd not adequate and potholes in Church Rd now needing more repair before the end of the winter and flooding on Bury Road which has made this road impassable for weeks despite previous works being completed. It does not seem like a good use of funds to have to do things twice.

Action Clerk

8.2 Clerk:

8.2.6 To discuss requirements for additional Suffolk Care directories.

The Clerk has asked for an up-to-date copy to be sent over once they have been re-printed so we can see if we need the updated version. It was suggested that we hold 20 copies of the new version and put them in church for people to take away. They could also be made available through Cllr H Johnston; we would advertise to community where they are there if they would like one.

Action Clerk

8.2.7 To note flood advice provided by Clerk.

The Clerk has provided some flooding advice for residents. This is available in the noticeboard and website. Although it seems no properties in the village were affected by the flooding there was considerable surface water and access issues on Bury Rd at the corner that floods badly.

9. Finance.

9.1 To approve/note payments/receipts.

Bus shelter cleaning	Payment	Jeff Wells	-£20.00
Grass cutting	Payment	Tramar	-£307.00
Website hosting	Payment	Community Action Suffolk	-£60.00
Replacement batteries	Payment	Elan City	-£138.67
Computer support	Payment	Bailiwick	-£7.82
Expenses	Payment	Vicki Gay, office	-£27.03
RBL Wreath	Payment	Royal British Legion	-£30.00
Administration	Payment	Various	£598.02
Compensation	Receipt	Barclays Bank	£75.00
Play area refurbishment	Transfer		-£600.00
Play area refurbishment	Transfer		£600.00

9.2 Bank reconciliation and accounts update.

The Clerk provided the Councillors with a budget report, bank reconciliation, schedule of payments and copy of the invoices for information.

9.3 To confirm direct debit arrangement with ICO.

The direct debit has been set up for collection of the payment to the Information Commissioners Office for our Data protection fee.

9.4 To discuss and agree Budget and Precept 2024-25

In principle it was agreed that the precept should at least equal the budget for 2024, so based on the current figures this would be £9365. However, following problems experienced this year by the contractor with the grass cutting, (see also under item 10.2.1) it was recognised that this figure may need to be increased. Therefore it was agreed that the grass cutting figure needs to be confirmed before finalising the budget and final precept figure. This can wait until the January meeting as the deadline for applications is the 22nd of January 2024. Once this figure is secured then we should precept for that total including revised grass contract costs. To note the rest of the budget figures were all agreed including the increased cost for the Clerk's use of her home as an office, the contribution towards the cost of the purchase of a new computer. Noted also was the increase in salary costs in line with terms and conditions.

9.5 Issues with Barclays Bank

Barclays bank have written to apologies for the mistakes they made whilst collecting data. They have made a payment of £75 in compensation. This is in addition to the £50 already received.

10. Highway/village matters

10.1 Update on highway matters to include:

10.1.1 VAS update.

The current post – base needs to be extended. It had been marked as completed but still needs to be done. We are awaiting date from the Speed management department for works to be completed. The Clerk will write to Jon Shaw Road Safety SCC to ask for timescales for work to be completed. We will stress that currently we are unable to use our VAS equipment in a location that needs it most.

Action Clerk

10.1.2 Highway issues.

10.1.2.1 To note removal of duplicate village sign.

The duplicate sign has been removed and will be stored by SCC in case there is a need for a replacement in the future.

10.1.2.2 To receive information on requirements for replacement sign stickers.

See under item 6.

10.1.3 Footpath issues. To include

10.1.3.1 Problem with bridge at Ampton waters.

See under item 6.

10.2.1 To receive any update on 2023/24 grass cutting tender and grass cutting issues.

Tramar have indicated that will not be looking to carry out grass cutting for Great Livermere 2024 on the basis that the time between cuts this year was too long, and length of the grass has damaged their equipment. The frequency this year was reduced to 6 cuts due to the unavoidable, late change of contractor and the fact that we had based our budget on his costs. It was not possible to achieve more cuts, with the new contractor on the budget we had previously agreed. It was agreed to re look at the tenders previously submitted by other companies and check value against Tramar costs. If we agree that Tramar represent best value, we will discuss with Tramar whether they would undertake work based on 10 cuts at a potential £2100 a year contract. We also need to discuss the churchyard with Tramar, which would only be 3 cuts max and whether this would cause their equipment a problem. Tramar will be VAT registered from January 2024; this however will not affect our budgets as we are able to reclaim VAT. A meeting with Tramar is being set up.

If Tramar agrees to proceed based on 10 cuts and three for church, then we can budget for £2100. If not, then we will need to re tender for agreement at the January meeting and adjust the budget accordingly.

The re tender would need to go out for the 2025 season as soon as possible to ensure best value. It was agreed that decisions could be delegated for action ahead of the January meeting by Cllrs H & A Johnston and the Clerk, regarding this matter, on behalf of Council.

Action Cllrs H & A Johnston, Clerk

10.2.2 WSC invite to share views as part of a review into their grass cutting in the village.

Concerns about grass cutting had been raised early on in the season, but these seem to have been addressed and so no further comments were deemed necessary.

10.3 To receive update on potholes in Church Road.

Potholes that were filled previously in church Road have now broken up again. Cllr R Charlton will report these again on the SCC Highways portal. The filling stopped at the park gates and did not go any further. It is understood that this road is all SCC responsibility. Cllr R Charlton to report again those potholes that were past park gates that were never addressed.

Action Cllr R Charlton

10.4 To discuss options for signage re Church Road trees.

The Clerk has done some work around signage in Church Road and received some advice.

However, Although the Parish Council did not feel this was applicable in our situation as we do not want to put up signs in Church Rd. – No further action will be taken

10.5 To discuss a possible extension of bus service to Thetford.

See under items 8.1.2

11. Play area

11.1 Play area report, circulated. Cllrs A Johnston & T Redman will do a review of potential works in the playground.

Action Cllrs A Johnston & T Redman

11.2 To note any works required/completed.
See above.

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

12.1 DC/23/1668/TCA Trees in a conservation area notification - one Weeping Willow tree, fell. 35 The Street Great Livermere.

No objection. No comment to be made.

13. Councillors reports and items for future agendas.

No extra items received.

14. Correspondence for information

No extra items received.

15. Date of next meeting. 17th January 2024 7pm Gt Livermere Village Hall

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

16.1 Personnel Issues. To discuss option to increase payment for the use of the Clerks home as an office. To note NALC pay award Increase agreed.

16.2 Legal Issues. None.