

FARNHAM WITH STRATFORD ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 9 September 2024 at the Riverside Centre

Councillors present: Ian Norman (Chair), Rosemary Conibeer (Vice Chair), Jill Pass, Richard Sayer, Annabel Warne and Jeremy Williams.

In attendance: Katherine Abbott (Parish Clerk)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and approved from Councillors Richard Ayres and Tim Plant.

2 Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest related to the agenda.

3 Review of the latest data from the analysis of water samples in the Parish

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr David Findley, Chairman of Ufford Parish Council and member of the Deben Climate Centre and thanked him for agreeing to explain how to interpret the test results.

Mr Findley provided the Parish Council with a very informative presentation that explained the role of the Deben Climate Centre and its 30 volunteers who sampled over 50 locations and, as such, mirrored the efforts of the Alde and Ore Association, of which the Council was a member. Mr Findley outlined the main causes of issues within local rivers as climate events, housing and infrastructure development, water pollution and abstraction, and some farming practices. The Council was advised that E. coli colonies were indicated on sample plates by blue dots – each dot being a colony – and more than nine dots on a plate meant it was unsafe to enter the water as stipulated by the Environment Agency’s guideline for safe bathing (9 colonies per 1ml). Mr Findley shared with the Council details of typical upstream, outfall (e.g. from sewage works) and downstream E. coli testing results. He stated that test samples were taken from the same location, at the same time, approximately two hours after low tide and the weather conditions and level of nearby vegetation were noted.

Mr Findley provided the Council with their test results for 2024 in a bar code chart and this indicated that, except for four occasions at Stratford St Andrew and one occasion at Langham Bridge, results had remained below the Environment Agency’s safe limit.

Mr Findley then updated the Council on similar issues with excess phosphates levels which caused weed growth and oxygen starvation in water, thereby impacting wildlife. This was a particular issue in summer months and in non-tidal waters. It was noted that Anglian Water was to install some phosphate stripping technology in some locations.

The Chairman thanked Mr Findley for his useful and informative presentation.

Signed(Chair)

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4 Minutes of the Meetings held on 8 July and 12 August 2024

The unconfirmed Minutes of both Meetings were approved without amendment.

5 Matters arising

(a) 8 July 2024

At the request of Councillor Sayer, it was agreed that his suggestion for the establishment of a **Sub-Committee on Communications** be put on hold. The Chairman suggested that the Council continue to use *Ebb and Flow* as its main means of communicating with its parishioners. He referred to the number of public present at the August meeting as an example of this approach working well, in addition to the WhatsApp group.

The **training in the use of a defibrillator by SARS** was scheduled for 14 September and some 15 people had signed up to take part.

(b) 12 August 2024

It was noted that the noisy rattling **drain cover** had been fixed by SCC.

Councillor Conibeer referred to the removal of the **average speed cameras and return to a 50mph limit** on the southern approach into Farnham. There was an issue with drivers accelerating at this stage and then taking the right-hand bend at the bottom of the hill at speed. The Chairman said he had highlighted road safety with Sgt O'Neill, Sizewell C Community Policing Team, Suffolk Constabulary, and she had undertaken to request additional patrols through the villages. Sgt O'Neill had also provided details on how best to report incidents and this had been sent to *Ebb and Flow* for the information of residents too.

The Clerk was asked to contact the participants from ESC, SCC and SZC who had attended the **Delivery Group** meeting on 12 August to seek an update on actions agreed.

6 Reports of the County and District Councillors

Councillor Sally Noble, East Suffolk Council

Councillor Noble reported on the proposed **Four Rivers Recovery Programme**, Which was being funded from her portfolio, and aimed to help train communities, farmers and other stakeholders to test their own stretch of river. It was also hoped that, jointly, solutions for recovery of waterways could be identified and implemented. The Programme was not yet ready to launch but this would involve community workshops.

Councillor Noble also outlined the **new recycling regime** which would commence in Spring 2025. There would be weekly food collections, as decreed by the Government, the grey bin would be collected three-weekly, and contents burnt for

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(Chair)

energy, and the green bin would remain the same. It was noted that bottle banks would be phased out and, instead, collections of glass, tetrapaks, cans, plastics, cardboard and paper would be added. The Parish Council agreed that it would need to be positive advocates of the new regime to residents.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council had sent apologies to the meeting but provided a written report which was noted.

7 Questions from members of the public

Mr Withey had enquired about ancient oak trees in or around the location of the future by-pass.

The Clerk reported that the Arboriculture Officer at East Suffolk Council had stated that the short stretch of oaks and field maples approaching Farnham Hall Farmhouse and the corner of Foxburrow Wood fell within the red line that now had consent under the Development Consent Order and, on that basis, those trees would be lost. He had stated that these trees were not covered by Tree Protection Orders, but, even if they were, it could now not make any difference because this was a consented project. He had added that replacement planting was being agreed with SZC. He had also stressed that where trees could be retained, they would be and protected during construction according to the guidance contained in British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction. Lastly, a preliminary tree survey was carried out for the DCO stage, and this would be updated prior to commencement of works onsite.

The Clerk had also asked SZC for comment, but a reply had not yet been received.

The Parish Council noted the response and asked the Clerk to reply to Mr Withey.

8 Water Monitoring Warden's report

The Clerk advised that the Warden for the two villages had reported that the only change was, on advice from the Environment Agency, testing for phosphates had been added. Practically this meant going a bit further downstream at Langham Bridge to take the sample. The report was noted with thanks.

9 Reports from external meetings

(i) Community Partnership meeting on 25 July 2024

Councillor Williams updated the Council on the main topics discussed at the meeting held in Peasenhall. In summary, the issues discussed had included addressing social isolation, encouraging skills and knowledge sharing, mental and physical health, the environment, grant opportunities including for the maintenance of village halls, and suicide prevention in the farming community. The full minutes were available on the East Suffolk Council website.

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(ii) Sizewell C Southern Transport Forum on 14 August 2024

Councillor Norman updated the Council on the most recent meeting of the Forum. Topics discussed included update and overview of the project, road and rail updates, freight management facility, the southern park and ride, the two villages bypass, A12 improvements at Wickham Market, Marlesford and Little Glemham, and traffic movements. The minutes were available on the Sizewell C website.

10 To consider options for an adult outside gym proposal

The Clerk had, as requested, explored the costs and available options for capsule gym equipment from three providers and these were provided to the Council for discussion and decision. The Clerk had also included in the costs an outside table tennis table, the cost of a small opening event, and the cost of additional hours the Clerk would incur connected to the project.

Councillor Conibeer, on behalf of the Riverside Executive Committee, stated that the Centre remained very keen to have a gym facility. There was general agreement that the proposal would be a success and looked to the future demographic of the parishes once the bypass was completed.

It was proposed, seconded and by unanimous vote agreed that the gym proposal, to include a table tennis table, proceed. The Clerk was tasked to prepare an application to the Sizewell C Community Fund.

11 Options for renewal of insurance cover in 2024/5

The Clerk provided the Council with quotes for renewal of insurance cover from three companies, including the one which currently provided cover.

It was proposed, seconded and by unanimous vote agreed that the Council would take out a long-term agreement with Zurich for three years to try and keep costs low when premiums, generally, were high. It was noted that there was a small saving this year on the premium paid last year.

12 Installation of a bicycle rack

The Clerk referred to the opportunity to install a bicycle rack at the Riverside Centre using funds allocated to the parishes under the Open Space Play Fund. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously voted to proceed and the Clerk was asked to submit the application form for £99.88 (inc. VAT).

13 Responsible Finance Officer's (RFO) report

The RFO stated that the current balance, before any invoices were considered, was £5207.42.

Submitted for consideration for payment were the salary for the Clerk/RFO salary of £318.60 and the related payment to the HMRC of £79.60. Both were payments under the

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Local Government Act 1972, section 112. The two payments were authorised for payment and the RFO stated that the new balance was £4809.22. The payments made in August were reconciled against the bank statement and signed as correct.

14 Clerk's report

The log of correspondence received since the August meeting had been circulated to the Councillors. The Clerk advised that the Council had been successful in its bid for free varieties of native bulbs attractive to bees and butterflies and will receive one bag. The bulbs would be available for collection and planting in October.

15 Urgent business for discussion

There were no items raised.

16 Items for the next meeting

The next scheduled meeting, on 14 October, would include the annual review of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, the Q2 income and expenditure report, and consideration of pension reenrolment (as recommended by the internal auditor).

The meeting concluded at 21.30hours

Signed(Chair)

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