

LACKFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Monday 14th December 2020

Councillors present: Stan Green (Chairman), Harry Lidster, Steve Jones, Naomi Palmer, Roland van Wijk, Andrew Ramsay and John Coldwell.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk), County Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger, District Councillor Susan Glossop and one member of the public.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests

Harry Lidster declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7h on the agenda as he is church warden. No dispensation requests were made.

3. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12th October 2020 and the extraordinary meeting held on Monday 30th November 2020 held during a closed session to discuss staff matters.

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.

4. County Councillor's Report

Rebecca Hopfensperger sent a written report prior to the meeting. She also spoke about the following:

- She apologised for missing the last meeting.
- Suffolk is likely to remain in tier 2 during the Coronavirus pandemic, though there is a hotspot in Ipswich which seems to be related to health care workers, not secondary schools as in other areas. There is an outbreak of Coronavirus at Sebert Wood Primary School in Bury St Edmunds. The rules regarding self-isolation are changing. If you can get tested and get a negative result you will no longer be required to self-isolate.
- The Home but Not Alone service is running again.
- SCC has established a hardship fund which people can apply for if there are experiencing financial difficulties.

Becky Hopfensperger asked if the verges in Lackford had been cut as the work has been ordered with SCC.

Councillors said that the village sign and gates are still obscured by vegetation.

The footpath near Breckland Edge is narrowing due to debris and the verge encroaching on to the footpath.

Opposite Pine Cottages (West side A1101) road verge is suffering encroachment of overgrown verge and tree scrub leading all the way to opposite the Oaks, this needs cutting-back behind the telegraph/traffic poles.

David Chenery from the Highways Speed and Safety team facilitated a review of A1101, and this was one of the issues raised. The Parish Council asked for it to be put on record that they are unhappy with the fact that David Chenery has not responded to Becky Hopfensperger's queries. It was resolved that the Parish Council would make a formal complaint about David Chenery's lack of action.

A question was raised about the potholes at Marham Park which have been reported. Becky Hopfensperger asked the clerk to send through the report numbers so that she can follow them up.

The Parish Council asked about damage to the Icknield Way by four wheel drive vehicles. The track is now completely impassable to normal traffic. Susan Glossop agreed to report this on behalf of Lackford Parish Council.

5. District Councillor's Report

Susan Glossop sent a written report prior to the meeting. She spoke about the following:

- Christmas bin collections which have been advertised in the parish magazine.
- West Suffolk Council is working on its budget. They have a million pound deficit at the moment due to the Coronavirus and they are looking at how to manage this shortfall. The Government has given some money to support district councils through the pandemic.
- They are working hard to tackle homelessness. They are expecting to see a large increase in people claiming universal credit and this could lead to increased homelessness.
- They have given grants to support Suffolk businesses through the pandemic.

6. Community Issues

a) Matters for the Safer Neighbourhood Team

The Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association newsletter has been circulated to residents. No local issues were raised.

7. Finance

a) Approval of any payments and signing of schedule of payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- Starboard Systems – subscription to Scribe accounting software for Parish Councils – LGA 1972, s111 – annual cost £129 + VAT

b) Receipts and Payments made since the last meeting

Payments

- Staff costs – salary payments, overtime and leave pay as per confidential cash book

Other payments

20/10/20	Came & Co (Ecclesiastical) - Insurance	£330.00
20/10/20	SALC - Payroll services April - September	£45.00
20/10/20	Mijan Ltd - internal audit fee	£70.00

It was resolved that the statement of receipts and payments would be approved.

c) Approval of regular payments made throughout the year

It was resolved that the following regular payments would be approved:

Payment	Annual cost
Staff costs	
Salaries and PAYE	As per confidential cash book
Admin Costs	
SALC subscription	£141
Subscription to Microsoft Office (1/6)	£10
Phone costs	£23
Rental of meeting room in the church	£230
ICO - data protection registration	£35
Clerk's expenses - mileage, stationery, postage	£60
Internal audit fee	£70
Stationery - print cartridges (1/6)	£20
Maintenance costs	
West Suffolk Council - grass cutting	£200
Other payments	
Lackford Community Council - for village services	£400.00
Footpath licences	£5.00
Lackford PCC churchyard maintenance	£280.00

d) Councillor to check the accounts including confirmation of bank reconciliation

Steve Jones had checked the accounts and bank reconciliation prior to the meeting and confirmed that they were correct.

e) Review of the Parish Council's financial procedures and controls

It was resolved that the following recommendations would be approved:

- That the Financial Regulations be updated in line with the clerk's other councils.
- That the wording of section 4.1 be amended to:

Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- *the Council for all items over £1,000.*
- *the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman, for any items below £1,000.*

Such authority is to be evidenced by a Minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

- That the wording of section 5.4 be amended to:

The clerk, in conjunction with Chairman, may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report such action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- That the clerk would use HMRC's basic PAYE tool from now on and that the Council would cancel the current payroll services with SALC.
- That the payment to the PCC for the use of community room would continue through the current pandemic to help cover the loss of income arising as a result of the room being unavailable for hire.

f) Setting up a Parish Council website

It was resolved that the clerk would set up a Parish Council website with One Suffolk and that the annual website hosting fee of £50 + VAT would be approved.

g) To approve the 2021/22 budget and precept request

It was resolved that the budget would be approved with the following amendments:

- The cost of meeting room hire would be increased from £230 to £235
- The amount allocated for grass cutting would be increased to £280

The precept request will be £5,274. This is an increase of 3.67% which equates to £1.78 per annum per band D household. The parish council element for a band D household will be £50.33 per annum an increase from £48.55. The clerk and Chairman agreed to sign the Parish Estimates form after the meeting.

8. Planning

a) Lackford Parish Council's response to West Suffolk Council's Issues and Option's consultation

It was resolved that the Parish Council would submit the following response to West Suffolk Council:

- That Lackford Parish Council is happy with its current categorisation as countryside in the Local Plan because it is a small rural settlements with few or no services.
- Rural communities need a reliable infrastructure and transport links to larger centres for them to remain sustainable. Broadband provision in the village is variable and is poor in some parts of the village particularly in more outlying properties. For villages to be able to evolve and thrive broadband should be upgraded to FTTP. With more people working from home as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, rural communities and businesses are disadvantaged if broadband is poor. With more online learning taking place it is not a level playing field for , children if they do not have access to a reliable broadband service.
- The same applies to mobile phone provision. Some rural residents struggle to work from home because the mobile phone signal is poor. Rural communities should not be overlooked when infrastructure projects such as broadband and mobile phone upgrades are planned.
- The bus service from Lackford is poor leading to a reliance of cars.
- With the pressure to meet housing targets, new developments are approved without infrastructure improvements to match increased demand. This can be seen in Bury St Edmunds where the road network cannot cope with the increase in traffic and local services are overstretched. Planning for the future should include details of how local services and infrastructure will be improved to meet the demands of new homes.

9. Highways/Rights of Way/Tree Issues

a) **Village entrance highways gates**

This item is ongoing. Beccy Hopfensperger has agreed to follow up with Highways again.

b) **Footpath and roadside verge clearance by SCC**

See item 4 above.

c) **Bury Road (A1101 Safety Improvements) – narrow footpath solutions**

See item 4 above.

d) **Vehicle Activated Speed Camera (VAS) report**

This period logs the highest recorded speed of **90 mph outgoing** on 13/11/20 at 3pm and **88 mph** on 23/11/20 at 1.30pm, further 3 in excess of 80mph, and another 2 in excess of 70mph, with further 10 in excess of 60mph.

The highest **incoming** speed was **71 mph** on 23/11/20 at 8pm, with another 8 in excess of 60mph.

Bury End Camera Summary

During this period our highest recorded speed was **87 mph x 2 incoming** on 19/11/20 at 7pm, and 9pm, another 4 in excess of 70mph, with further 7 in excess of 60mph. The highest **outgoing** was **79 mph** on 6/11/20 at 5am, with another 3 in excess of 70mph and 27 others in excess of 60mph.

Alarming there is a noticeable tendency to speed-up when passing cameras (outgoing), particularly when passing the Bury camera and heading through village towards Mildenhall.

It was resolved that the message which flashes up on the VAS will be changed on a monthly basis.

10. **Village issues**

a) **Roadside nature reserves/green spaces in the village**

It was resolved that the following response would be uploaded onto the Lackford Blog and circulated via the All@Lackford email list.

Lackford Parish Council would like to thank all the residents in Lackford who took the time to respond to the Green Spaces survey. This was a proposal put forward initially by a resident which the Parish Council agreed to consult on. We welcome the fact that the community has engaged in the consultation and we feel it was a worthwhile exercise. Unfortunately, the outcome of the survey (12 for and 19 against) does not mandate sufficient support for managing our green spaces differently particularly as there would not be enough volunteers to help.

11. **Correspondence**

a) **Email from the Office for National Statistics about the 2021 census and asking for help circulating Census information and volunteers and venues where support can be available to those in the community who need help to complete the Census.**

It was resolved that details of the Census would be included on the Lackford Blog and email list along with a request for volunteers to support people who need help to complete the Census.

b) **Email from The Sicon Foundation about tree planting in communities**

It was resolved that the information would be passed on to the PCC.

12. **Any other business for noting or including on the next agenda on Monday 8th March at 7.30pm**

- The Parish Council has received an email from Vince Williams, Community Emergency Planning Officer for West Suffolk Council, asking if Lackford Parish Council would consider preparing an Emergency Plan. This item will be added to the next agenda for discussion and the clerk agreed to email round a template.
- The clerk was asked to contact the Environment Agency about recent flooding from the River Lark in Lackford, which was exacerbated by the fact that the river does flow properly, to find out if there is anything they can do and what their policy for managing rivers.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.26pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated