

# LACKFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the remote meeting held on Monday 8th March 2021

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

**Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk), District Councillor Susan Glossop and two members of the public.**

### Open forum

The following issues were raised during the Open Forum

- Problems with flooding due to the erosion of flood defences along the river Lark which has caused water to flow into the West Stow and Trout fishing lakes. Bury Trout Club would like to build up these banks. The flow of the river Lark is reduced downstream from Lackford because of blockages. These obstructions need to be cleared. It has been a very wet winter and with climate change this is likely to continue. Suffolk Wildlife Trust would also like to try and resolve the issue and be able to graze the land which floods. Bury Trout Club and Suffolk Wildlife Trust is currently in dialogue with the Environment Agency.

#### 1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

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

No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda. No dispensation requests were received.

#### 3. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020

One amendment was made to item 8a in the minutes:

*'The bus service is very poor leading to a reliance on cars 'was amended to 'Although the bus service is good, there is still a reliance on cars.'*

The Chairman amended and signed the correction. It was resolved that the amended minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.

#### 4. District Councillor's Report

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

- The Census which everyone has to complete.
- The Suffolk County Council elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May. There will also be elections for some District Council vacancies and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- The Anglo Saxon cemetery at Rampart's Field
- Problems at Ramparts Field (fly tipping, anti-social behaviour). West Suffolk Council is working with Suffolk County Council to try and resolve the issues.

#### 5. Community safety

##### a) Matters for the Safer Neighbourhood Team

There were no matters to report, and no issues were raised.

#### 6. Update on the list of actions agreed at the last meeting

The vegetation along the verge which has been obstructing the A1101 has been flailed but not been cut back by a metre. The Parish Council has been told that an Enforcement Notice has been issued to the landowner by Suffolk County Council.

The Parish Council has not received a response from Suffolk County Council to its request for a site visit to discuss the problems along the A1101.

## 7. Finance

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

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

Risby PC – print cartridge (1/7) – LGA 1972, s111 - **£6.18**

HMRC – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 - **£146.20**

### b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings

No payments were authorised between meetings.

### c) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting

There is an outstanding VAT claim. The clerk confirmed that she will submit it at the end of the financial year.

#### Payments

One Suffolk - Website hosting fee	£50.00
Starboard Systems Ltd - Scribe accounting software	£129.00
Suffolk Association of Local Councils - Payroll services	£15.00
Staff costs as per confidential cash book	

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

### d) Bank balances as of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and confirmation of bank reconciliation

Barclays current account	£1,553.42
Monmouthshire Reserve Account	£10,491.71
<b>Total in Banks</b>	<b>£12,045.13</b>

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

### e) Councillor to review the confidential cashbook (PAYE and salary information)

Steve Jones reviewed the confidential cashbook and confirmed that the PAYE and salary information was correct.

### f) Review of the income and expenditure for 2020/21 against the budget and the level of reserves for general and earmarked expenditure

Councillors reviewed the income and expenditure for 2020/21 against the budget. At year-end Lackford Parish Council will have a budget surplus of **£1,509**.

#### Budget Summary 2020 - 2021

<b>Receipts</b>	
Budgeted	£5,100
Actual	£7,197
Difference	£2,097
<b>Payments</b>	
Budget	£6,100
Actual	£6,687
Difference	-£587
<b>Predicted over (+) /underspend (-)</b>	<b>£1,509</b>

## Reserves

Reserve	Opening Balance	Transfers	Spend	Receipts	Current Balance
<b>Earmarked</b>					
Village project	£6,665	£0	£0	£0	£6,665
Vehicle Activated Sign	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>£6,665</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£6,665</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>					£5,380
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>					<b>£12,045</b>

Estimated reserve as of 31/03/21: **£12,045** which includes earmarked funds of £6,665. The general reserve is within the recommended guidelines of no more than one year's annual precept.

**g) Review of fixed assets and insurance values and insurance values**

Councillors reviewed the assets register. The following assets were added in 2020 – 21:

- Three benches

The Insurance cover provided is listed as £32,894 for Street Furniture. The replacement value on Asset Register is £27,777.22.

It was resolved that:

- A payment of £3 would be made to Lackford Community Council (LCC) for the three benches which were adopted for a purchase value of £3 in July 2020.
- The clerk and Chairman would be authorised to review the Council's assets and replacement values and prepare a list of individual assets ready for the next meeting.
- The Parish Council would purchase the village sign and add it to their insurance for a replacement value of £3,000. The Chairman agreed to contact LCC to find out the purchase price of the sign.

**h) Review of the levels of liability insurance**

The levels of liability cover under the Came and Company insurance Policy are as follows:

All Risks/	Public Liability	Officers Indemnity	Fidelity Guarantee (Dishonesty)	Business Interruption	Personal Accident	Employers' Liability
£5k	£10m	£500K	£150k	£10k	£50k	£10m

It was resolved that the levels of liability cover were adequate.

**i) Appointment of an internal auditor to check the Council's system of internal controls and review the effectiveness of the internal audit. The internal auditor must be independent from the Parish Council.**

It was resolved that Cathy Whitaker, clerk to Exning Parish Council, would be appointed as internal auditor this year and that a fee of £65 would be paid. The Council reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit. It was resolved that the internal audit was effective and that audit regulations would be met for the following reasons:

- Does the internal audit sufficiently cover all aspects of the financial controls relevant to the council (for example risk management, detection of fraud, internal controls) and are terms of reference in place and approved? Yes, Financial Regulations. New Financial Regulations were introduced in July 2020.
- Is the internal auditor independent (i.e. does not have any role within the Council)? Yes. The internal auditor does not have a role within the Council.
- Is the internal auditor competent to carry out their work ethically, with integrity and objectivity? Is there any evidence to suggest that this may not be the case? Yes, she is a parish council clerk and RFO for

Newmarket Town Council. There is no evidence to suggest that she will not carry out the work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.

- Is the Responsible Officer consulted in the internal audit plan? Yes.
- Are the responsibilities of members of the Council understood and has the necessary training been undertaken? Yes
- Is there a plan in place for when the internal audit will be undertaken and does the plan properly take account of corporate risk? The internal audit will take place in April 2021 prior to the accounts being approved at the Annual Meeting on 10th May 2021. The internal auditor's report will be presented to the Parish Council at this meeting and any issues raised by the internal auditor will be discussed at the meeting and an action plan produced.

**j) Review the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls (from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020)**

The following internal controls are now in place:

- At each meeting a councillor checks bank statements against the Parish Council's accounts to ensure that transactions correspond and that the bank reconciliation agrees with the bank statement
- Where possible payments are approved at meetings and a Schedule of Payments is prepared which is checked by two councillors. Corresponding invoices are checked and signed by two councillors at the same time.
- Regular payments are approved annually, and the invoices paid when they are received. These invoices are checked and signed by two councillors at the next meeting after they have been paid.
- The chairman rules off and signs the Schedule of Payments so that no amendments can be made after the meeting.
- Cheques must be signed by two signatories along with the corresponding invoice.
- A record of payments is kept and checked at each meeting.
- If a supplier changes their bank details, the supplier must supply a written hard copy notifying the change.
- A councillor checks the accounts every year to ensure that they are properly kept, and that the Council's Financial Regulations are adhered to.

**k) Councillor to inspect the Council's property for damage or defects by 30th April 2021 and complete the inspection checklist.**

It was resolved that John Coldwell would inspect the Council's property and report back at the next meeting.

**l) Sale of Parish Council laptop**

It was resolved that this item would be deferred until the end of the meeting when the clerk's temporary employment is to be reviewed.

**m) Update on the progress of the bank mandate form**

The mandate has now been changed with the clerk, Stan Green and Harry (Henry) Lidster added as signatories and John Sadler and Vicky Bright removed.

The clerk explained that she had mistakenly been paid twice on 1<sup>st</sup> March. It was resolved that her salary payment for the end of March would be adjusted to take into account this error and any over payment refunded.

The Parish Council has sent a letter of complaint to Barclays about their poor service and is awaiting a response.

**8. Planning**

**a) DC/21/0298/HH - 21 Holden Road, Lackford - Pitched roof over existing garage and w/c following removal of flat roof.**

It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application.

**b) DC/21/0297/HH - 20 Holden Road, Lackford - a. conversion of existing garage to office with addition of a pitched roof b. boarding to front and side elevation**

It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application.

**c) Email from NALC about a new Government consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the creation of a National Model Design code – for information only**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals>

## 9. Highways/Rights of Way/Tree Issues

- a) **Email from SCC about the possibility of deploying an ANPR camera along the 30mph section of the A1101**  
It was resolved that the Parish Council would pursue this option.
- b) **Village entrance highways gates**  
The vegetation has still not been cleared by Suffolk County Council. The clerk agreed to report it again.
- c) **Footpath and roadside verge clearance by SCC**  
Lackford Parish Council sent an email to Suffolk County Council on 01/03/21 asking if the landowner had been contacted about cutting back the vegetation along the verge and requesting a site visit to look at other problems along the A1101. The edge of the verge has been flailed as detailed above, but no response has been received to the Council's request for a site visit. The clerk agreed to contact SCC again.
- d) **Bury Road (A1101 Safety Improvements) – narrow footpath solutions**  
See 9c above
- e) **Vehicle Activated Speed Camera (VAS) report**  
Although 60% of drivers adhere to speed limit, some very high speeds have been recorded. Lackford had a visit from an Enforcement camera several weeks ago.
- f) **Funding for EV charging points for parish councils**  
Councillors agreed that more information was needed about the scheme before a decision could be made.

## 10. Draft Scheme of Delegation

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has advised parish councils to have a Scheme of Delegation in place to mitigate the impact on meetings having to be cancelled in future due to COVID or any other reason to ensure that parish councils can continue to function.

It was resolved that one amendment would be made to the Scheme of Delegation with one missing word added to the last bullet point. The following bullet point would also be added: *To manage any ongoing contracts. Material changes to contracts can only be made at meetings.*

It was resolved that the amended Scheme of Delegation would be approved and uploaded onto the Parish Council website.

## 11. Village issues:

- a) **Flooding from the River Lark**  
It was resolved that a working group would be set up with Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Bury Trout Club, Stan Green and Trevor Perrior to try and tackle the problem and that the group would work with the Environment Agency if possible.
- b) **Emergency Planning**  
It was resolved that this item would be postponed until a later meeting.

## 12. Dates of meetings in 2021/22

- Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 - Annual Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting
- Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021
- Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021
- Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Remote meetings are only allowed until 7<sup>th</sup> May. After that face-to-face meetings will have to take place which follow COVID guidelines. Councillors will need to sit 2m apart as will any members of the public and everyone will have to wear masks. The Government is being lobbied to allow parish councils to continue to hold remote meetings.

## 13. Correspondence

- a) **Email from CAB requesting a donation**  
It was resolved that no donation would be made.

- b) Email from Arthritis Action giving information about support which is available for people with arthritis**  
It was resolved that the information would be uploaded onto the website.

**14. Any other business for noting or including on the next agenda of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

- The clerk was asked to contact West Suffolk Council to ask them to delay the monthly grass cutting until they have been notified by the Parish Clerk once the daffodils have died back, probably in late May or June.
- The clerk was asked to email Councillor Hopfensperger to express the Council’s disappointment that she did not attend the meeting and that no report was sent through.
- The clerk was asked to report the litter along the verges between Flempton and Lackford to West Suffolk Council.
- The clerk was asked to report the fact that the bus stop on Old Bury Road does not have a safe area to stand on the verge and that passengers have to stand on the road to wait for the bus.

**15. To resolve to exclude press and public under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960: the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information**

It was resolved that the press and public would be excluded.

**a) To discuss staffing matters including a review of the clerk’s temporary appointment**

It was resolved that Joanne Kirk would be appointed as clerk on a permanent basis and that a Contract of Employment would be prepared for the next meeting. As the laptop is no longer required, it was resolved that the Parish Council laptop would be sold, and an email circulated on All@Lackford giving details of the spec and asking for bids in excess of £200 with the highest bid being accepted.

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

**Signed ..... (Chairman) Dated .....**