

**LACKFORD PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

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

**Also present: Joanne Kirk (clerk), County Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger and District Councillor Susan Glossop.**

**1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from John Sadler and the reason for absence accepted.

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

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

**3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024.**

It was resolved that the minutes would be approved. The chairman signed the minutes.

**4. Public session.**

No issues were raised.

**5. Community safety**

**a) Matters for the Safer Neighbourhood Team.**

The Police have said they will enforce speeding on the A1101 on a monthly basis.

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

There were no outstanding councillor actions. The road signs that were reported along the A1011 have been replaced.

**7. County Councillor's report.**

CLlr Hopfensperger updated the Parish Council about the following issues:

The internal payment for the licence for the hard standing for the bus stop has now been processed by Suffolk County Council. Suffolk County Council should be contacting the contractor Darren Hail to progress things. A funding request has now been passed on the Locality Highways Budget team to cover the cost of the work.

Suffolk County Council is expecting a white paper from the Government about devolution. Suffolk County Council is hoping to be included in the proposal which is for one combined unitary authority with a mayor heading it. The role of mayor may be combined with the role of Police and Crime Commissioner.

She has contacted Rob Clapham at the Environment Agency to give him contact details at Suffolk Highways so that they can liaise about ditch clearing.

**8. Finance.**

**a) Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments .**

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- Starboard Systems - Scribe accounting software – LGA 1972 s111 - **£165.60**
- J P Kirk – expenses - LGA 1972 s111 – **£10.44**
- HMRC – PAYE - LGA 1972 s111 - **£156.60**

Harry Lidster signed the Schedule of Payments.

**b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings.**

No payments were authorised between meetings.

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

**Payments**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	
01/10/2024	323/9f	Footpath licence	Resident	£2.50
01/10/2024	323/9f	Footpath licence	Resident	£2.50
15/10/2024	313/10a	Clerk's expenses	J Kirk	£22.44
15/10/2024	313/10a	Phone costs	Risby Parish Council	£22.81
15/10/2024	315/10h	Printer fee	Moulton Parish Council	£20.00
15/10/2024	315/10h	Donation	West Suffolk Citizen's Advice	£150.00

15/10/2024	323/9f	Website hosting fee	Community Action Suffolk	£60.00
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook				

d) **Bank balances as of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024.**

Barclays current account	£816.28
Monmouthshire Reserve Account	£10,977.87
<b>Total in Banks</b>	<b>£11,794.15</b>

Stan Green and Harry Lidster verified and signed the bank statements.

e) **Budget 2025/26 and reserves balance**

It was resolved that:

- The 2025/26 budget would be approved.
- The precept request would be £6,347. The parish council element for a band D household will be £60.34 per annum an increase from £57.45 which equates to £2.89 per annum per band D household, an increase of 5.03%.

With the budget allocations, the earmarked reserves balance in 2025/26 will be £9,881. The clerk and Chairman signed the Parish Estimates form.

f) **Approval of regular payments for 2025/26**

It was resolved that the following regular payments would be approved for 2025/26:

<b>Payment</b>	<b>2024/25 - ex VAT (Amounts may vary slightly)</b>	<b>2025/26- ex VAT (Amounts may vary slightly)</b>
<b>Admin costs</b>		
Rental of church for meetings	£250	£260
Business Services at CAS Ltd - insurance	£383	£400
SALC membership subscription	£173	£180
Internal audit fee	£75	£80
Scribe accounting software	£138	£150
Risby Parish Council (phone costs - shared cost)	£23	£25
Stationery (print cartridges - shared cost)	£25	£25
CAS Ltd - website hosting fee	£50	£50
ICO - data protection fee	£35	£35
<b>Maintenance costs</b>		
West Suffolk Council - grass cutting	£350	£380
<b>Other payments</b>		
Lackford Community Council - for village services	£400	£400
Footpath licences (standing order)	£5	£5
Lackford PCC churchyard maintenance	£300	£320
<b>Staff costs</b>		
Salary costs, HMRC PAYE and pension costs as per confidential cash book		
<b>Ongoing authorisations (as and when required)</b>		
Defibrillator consumables	£200	£200
VAS consumables	£1,000	£300

g) **To approve the Internal Control Statement for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**

It was resolved that the Internal Control Statement would be approved.

- h) To appoint a councillor to carry out internal control checks and complete the Internal Control Report**  
Cllr Andrew Ramsay agreed to check the Council's accounts.

- i) To approve the document Review the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit.**

It was resolved that the document would be approved.

- j) Appointment of an internal auditor.**

It was resolved that Mrs C Whitaker would be appointed as internal auditor again this year and a fee of £80 paid.

- k) To review any contracts**

Lackford Parish Council has one contract for grass cutting with West Suffolk Council. The quote for 2025/26 is £51.30 per cut (total £359.11 ex VAT) compared to £50.05 per cut in 2024/24.

It was resolved that Lackford Parish Council would accept the quote from West Suffolk Council for another year.

## 9. District Councillor's report.

District Councillor Susan Glossop spoke about:

- Changes to bin collections. In 2025 changes will be made to collections for businesses.
- From 2026 changes will be made to waste collection for residential properties. Households will be given a bin for food waste which will be emptied weekly. There will be a bin for paper and glass and another bin for other recyclables.
- Help for homeless people in West Suffolk.

## 10. Planning

No issues were raised.

## 11. Highways/rights of way matters/tree or transport issues:

- a) Hedgehog warning signs.**

It was resolved that a donation of £200 would be made to Lackford Community Council if they would like to pursue this and can find residents willing to site the signs on their property.

- b) Progress of planning anti-flood works near Lackford bridge, downstream in the Icklingham area and the large reed bed areas at the corner of Sayer's Breck which is managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust.**

The Environment Agency (EA) has cut back a lot of reeds downstream from Lackford along the River Lark and this has improved water levels and flow.

The Environment Agency is also looking at more sustainable long-term solution to manage flooding. Downstream from Lackford towards Mildenhall some properties have been flooded at times and this area is their priority. Annual clearance of reeds helps the water flow but is not a sustainable or cost effective solution.

The main problem for the Lark is that it is full of sediment which has nowhere to go and is continually being added to the river from farms and highway drains. When the Lark was converted to a canal this created problems in terms of sediment being deposited out of the river. Normally some sediment finds its way naturally onto surrounding land, but because of the high banks along the Lark, this is not happening.

The EA's proposal is to create a chalk bed stream which will be good for the environment and wildlife as well as helping with the removal of sediment. This would involve reducing the height of the banks so that sediment can escape. The EA is currently engaging with landowners along the Lark from Fornham to Mildenhall. Once it has the information it needs it will involve other organisations like Highways but at the moment it is too early. Realistically this will take a couple of years at least, providing agreement can be reached with all the parties involved.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) has done a great deal of work downstream near Temple Bridge to take river water onto the floodplain and this will have a positive effect on floodwater levels.

SWT are still cutting access paths (for excavators) to ditch lines and disposing of vegetation to make space for machinery to work, which is a big undertaking.

The path they wish to build up had been submitted for some private funding but Suffolk Wildlife Trust has learned that it will not be supported. Suffolk Wildlife Trust will now be budgeting for work to commence during the next financial year and hope to start the preparation work (retaining walls) before spring.

**c) Flooding at Fornham sewage works.**

Lackford Parish Council has been told that there is another flooding issue from Fornham sewage works. At times of heavy rain the sewerage system cannot cope, possibly caused by the Marham Park development, resulting in water and untreated sewage being released into the Lark contributing to further flood risk and water contamination issues.

**d) Update on the hard standing for a new bus stop.**

See item 7 above.

**12. To discuss any village issues.**

The following issues were raised:

- Replacement trees in Holden Road. The Parish Council has contacted West Suffolk Council who have confirmed that the trees that have been removed will be replaced but they cannot give a timescale or confirm what species will be planted.

**13. Correspondence.**

**a) Email from East Anglian Air Ambulance requesting a donation.**

It was resolved that no donation would be made.

**b) Letter from Headway Suffolk requesting a donation.**

It was resolved that a donation of £50 would be made.

**14. Any other business for noting or including on the next agenda on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025.**

**The following issues were raised:**

- The Government consultation on remote meetings. Councillors agreed that remote meetings and proxy voting should be allowed, especially for additional meetings or short planning meetings and that individual responses should be submitted confirming this. The clerk agreed to do this.

**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**

**a) To discuss staffing matters.**

It was resolved that members of the press and public would be excluded to allow confidential staffing matters to be discussed.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.**

**Signed:** ..... **Dated:** .....