

Letheringham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 8th July 2024 at 7.00pm
in Easton and Letheringham Village Hall

Members of the council present:

Paul Clarke (PC) (Chairman)
Trevor Gill (TG) (Vice Chairman)
Jan McNeill (JM)
Andrew Maskery (AM)
Malcolm Ross (MR)

Also present: The Clerk Melanie Thurston & 2 members of the public.

2024.37 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Member of the public informed that some of the potholes around the village have been repaired, however the ones in Sandy Lane are still awaiting repair.

Action: JM to chase this up with Highways.

2024.38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ESC Cllr Vince Langdon-Morris & ESC Cllr Owen Grey who are both attending ESC cabinet meetings.

2024.39 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2024.39.01 To declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in items on the agenda.

The Chairman PC declared an interest in item 6a (2024.42.1 below)

JM declared an interest in 10a (2024.46.1 below)

MR declared an interest in 10b (2024.46.2 below)

2024.39.02 Consideration of Dispensation Requests

None

2024.40 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 6th MAY 2024

The minutes were considered as a fair and accurate reflection, and therefore approved and signed by the Chairman. Proposed PC seconded TG.

2024.41 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2024.41.01 Poppies: JM informed that a member of the public is happy to proceed with a workshop and that this is no longer a matter for the Parish Council.

2024.41.02 Easton Neighbourhood Plan: The document has now been endorsed by a referendum in June and ESC is required to consult it when determining planning applications in Easton.

2024.41.03 Pit Road: PC reported that he had asked the landowner what progress he had made on track drainage to prevent sand and stone washing on to the road and asked him to remove the significant accumulation of sand on the road. The landowner said nothing had yet been done on the track and he would get on to both but was currently short of staff.

2024.41.04 Upper Deben Farm Cluster: PC informed that communication had been received from a group of farmers on the freshwater catchment of the River Deben, engaged in improving water and soil quality, biodiversity improvement and flood reduction. They are trying to gather data on all the communities on the Upper Deben that experienced flooding during and after storm Babet and would like to know how many properties were flooded, and whether there was external or internal flooding or both. This information will help them to build a case to take to the majority insurers to engage them in contributing to measures on farmland that will reduce flooding in future heavy rainfall events.

All agreed that to compile this data could be effective and useful.

Action: TG to contact all the residents in Letheringham, face to face basis, whose properties had flooded due to Storm Babet. He will collate the data which will be anonymous and pass on to the group.

2024.42 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

TG took the Chair as PC had declared an interest.

2024.42.01 Highways: Alternative Routes to the B1078 for Horse Riding

JM reported that an initial request had been made by LPC for "Slow Down Horses" signage for the B1078 to cater for horse riding, by Potsford Farm. Josh White of Suffolk Highways stated that Highways are not prepared to provide funding or give a quote for such a sign as it could be seen as an incentive to encourage horses onto the B1078 which they are not in favour of. Highways encouraged JM to discuss alternative routes for horses around Letheringham.

Potsford Farm are asking LPC if there are any alternative routes which could be utilised. JM approached local landowners to see if they would agree to access across their land onto Park Road and the feedback was no. JM then raised a possible upgrade of the footpath - to the north of Potsford Farm - to a bridleway.

TG asked if there was a proposal or plan in place that looks at the concept as a whole and the possible impacts on the wider community, both positive and negative. TG asked would the possible upgrade be seen as a benefit to the community and other horse riders, or if it was just for the benefit of Potsford Farm. No plan was put forward to discuss in detail.

JM, MR and AM agreed that other horse riders use the Letheringham roads and do not think risks will increase with more horse riding. MR and AM proposed the LPC should encourage further private discussions between the respective landowners, and if an agreement could not be achieved, it was no longer a matter for the parish council.

Action: JM to draft a letter to the landowners to see if they are happy to discuss again.

TG thanked JM for what she has done so far.

PC took back the Chair

2024.42.02 Website

TG informed that all audit documents are now on the website. Nothing further to report.

2024.42.03 SALC

PC had attended the recent SALC AGM via Zoom. Parish Councillors can now use the link PC had circulated to request their own access to the SALC portal which provides a lot of useful information. Quality of Place Awards run by ESC are now open for nominations. A representative from Citizens Advice Bureau had addressed the meeting and stressed that CAB relies on grant funding, they do not receive any funding from the government. PC noted that LPC had not received a request for funding as it had done in previous years.

2024.42.04 Community/Neighbourhood Watch

AM attended the recent AGM for Suffolk. Many good points were made. Police encourage Neighbourhood Watch. Letheringham would need to register as an independent parish and he is happy to take this forward. The parish council is happy for him to proceed and pursue.

Action: AM to distribute leaflets around the village to gauge interest. Parish council will need to budget for signage.

2024.42.05 Planning

TG informed that he is currently awaiting further information on East Suffolk Planning Alliance (ESPA), a recently formed action group which is seeking support of parish councils to challenge planning processes and decisions of ESC following a number of decisions that concerned them. PC had concerns that the group had no clearly stated goals/structure/policy. He had spoken with Easton PC chair who had declined an active role in the group due to similar concerns. TG proposed inviting a representative to address the next meeting. All agreed.

Action: TG will invite a representative to come along to the next parish council meeting to give some info.

2024.43 TO ADOPT AND APPROVE THE INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT

The Clerk presented the new document which had been adapted by PC from a standard text to suit Letheringham and circulated to all prior to the meeting.

It was agreed by all to adopt the document, proposed PC seconded MR.

PC has carried out and completed the internal control statement and the report and this was approved by all. Signed by PC and the Clerk.

Action: TG to upload onto the parish council website.

2024.44 DATA PROTECTION

2024.44.01 To consider a Data Protection Risk Assessment.

The Clerk had circulated the document to all prior to the meeting for consideration.

Action: TG will review the document and bring back to the next meeting for adoption.

2024.44.02 To appoint a data protection officer

TG happy to take this on initially subject to his review of the risk assessment above. All agreed

2024.45 FINANCIAL REPORT

2024.45.01 Current Financial Statement – Bank Reconciliation at 30th June 2024.

Community Account	£9,739.03
Business Premium Account	£273.28

PC signed the bank reconciliation.

2024.45.02 Receipts & Payments Schedule for May & June.

	Total Payments	Total Receipts
May	£293.50	£0.00
June	£321.50	£1.02

PC signed both schedules.

2024.45.03 Report from the Internal Auditors' Report 2023-24

The Clerk explained the recommendations to the Parish Council, includes:

- The Council, under the General Data Protection Act, should publish a Privacy Notice on its website.
- To review and adopt a Risk Assessment and Internal Control Statement.

Action: Clerk to obtain the above documents for the parish council to adopt at the next meeting. Internal Control Statement adopted earlier in the meeting.

2024.45.04 Approval of Outstanding Invoices to pay.

Payee	Amount	Detail
Mrs Melanie Thurston	£472.59	Clerks pay
Mrs Melanie Thurston	£15.30	Clerks expenses

Approval proposed PC seconded TG. All agreed

Action Cheques signed at meeting.

2024.45.05 Clerks Hours Update

PC reported to the council that the Clerk's pay will run from the 1st of the month to the 30th/31st of the month. To be paid quarterly. Employment began 15th April and the first quarter ending 30th June was therefore two weeks short. The Clerks first quarter April to June is within the 30 hours remit at 29½ hours. SALC had provided the payslip and fulfilled all legal duties of the employer with HMRC for PAYE & NIC. Future salary payments would be due 30th Sep, 31st December and 31st March.

2024.45.06 To consider approval of payment for finger post replacement signs

PC reported that funding of £1,000 had been secured from the 2 ESC district councillors for the 2 signs. Still waiting to hear back from SCC Elaine Bryce, she has not even acknowledged the parish council's request. MR recommends that the parish council pursue to get the signs without a contribution from the county councillor.

Highways officer has advised that if the Suffolk County councillor makes a contribution, he will not have to charge VAT or overheads on a quote. However, PC had asked him to go ahead and produce a quote including these costs for the parish council.

AM advised that in the recent benefice parish magazine, he had noted that Hoo may be going ahead to replace the finger post sign at the Sanctuary.

Action: MR to investigate if this is the case. He will also contact the Highways officer to advise that the county councillor has failed to respond to the parish council and what more can be done to communicate with her?

PC proposed that the parish council should put in a formal complaint against the county councillor, as she is not looking after Letheringham, ignores communications and has yet to attend an LPC meetings.

Action: PC to find out how to make a formal complaint and JM to try another way of contacting her.

Grant Acceptance form was signed by PC and the Clerk and to be returned to ESC. Total cost for the 2 signs is likely to be £1,800. With the £1,000 grant from ESC, the parish council may need to allocate £800 from its reserves if the county councillor fails to contribute.

2024.46 PLANNING & LICENSING APPLICATIONS

To receive an update on current applications:

2024.46.01 DC/24/1844/VOC The Old Forge, Cooks Hill, Letheringham

JM has declared an interest in this application

TG advised that the application looks ok. The parish council to give no comments.

2024.46.02 DC/24/1135/FUL & DC/24/1136/LBC Barns at Abbey Farm, Pit Road, Letheringham

MR declared an interest.

TG advised that he has looked at the report by ESC Design & Heritage Team. The Parish Council's point has been noted regarding the proposed window which would overlook the graveyard. He read out the amendments/recommendations needed for both dwellings. However, no contact has been made by the planners. PCC has not been engaged in the application and in his opinion, they should be encouraged to make comments to the planners on the proposed window.

2024.47 TRAFFIC ISSUES

To consider designating the single-track roads in Letheringham as Quiet Lanes.

PC said the aim was to work out how to improve current and potential use of roads and rights of way to balance priority and ensure safety of residents and all road users following the last meeting when concerns were raised. PC and TG had briefly discussed this idea since the meeting and PC had circulated information on them ahead of this meeting. A QL designation would not place any restriction whatsoever on the types of vehicles able to use the roads. It was simply a means of warning drivers that they were likely to encounter pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and dog walkers and should drive accordingly because vegetation and steep banks in places make getting off the carriageway quickly difficult and vegetation can obscure views, it. JM was concerned about cost of signage. PC proposed three signs would be required – one each at the junctions of the B1078 with Park Road, Pit Road with the Hoo-Easton Road and Hall Road at the triangle near the Farm Park.

Action: JM to ask Josh White of SCC Highways for a cost of quiet lane signs

2024.48 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

9th September, 11th November 2024, 13th January & 10th March 2025

The meeting closed at 9.03pm.

Paul Clarke

9th September 2024

Signed:

Date: