

Edwardstone Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 January 2024 in Edwardstone Parish Hall

Present: P Baker, M Gibson, T Wood, D Williams, L Smyth, J Morgan, R Norman, R Jones (Clerk)

Guests: B Hurren (Babergh DC)

1. **Apologies for Absence** – J Finch (Suffolk CC)
2. **Councillors' Declarations of Interests in any item on this Agenda** - None
3. **Minutes of the Meeting of 20 November 2023** – Approved.
4. **Reports from Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council**
 - 4.1 Councillor James Finch (SCC) provided a written report which was read and noted'
 - 4.2 Councillor Bryn Hurren (BDC) reported the following:
Budget – Council looking at a deficit of £1.4m meaning controversial issue like Car Parking charges are back on the Agenda.
Affordable Housing – 128 new 'affordable' homes built across Babergh/Mid-Suffolk in 2023. 9 homes sold under Right to Buy. The Council was now asking landowners to put forward potential sites for new development under the 'Call for Sites' initiative.
He encouraged bids for his Locality Budget which, given the budget restraints at District Council level, may not be available in future years.

5. **Questions from Members of the Public** – None

6. **Financial Matters**

6.1 Statement of Finances & Orders for Payment and Q3 accounts were approved as follows:

Business Current Account (Unity Trust) at 31 December 2023	£9,237.67
Total	<u>£9,237.67</u>

*includes £4,480.95. Neighbourhood Plan Grant

Cheque no	Amount £	Payee	Purpose
300057	£490.50	B D Hurren	Supply and Fitting of Noticeboard

6.2 Adequacy of Budget for 2023/24 – Agreed. It was acknowledged that there had been certain unforeseen 'one-off' expenses such as the purchase of a new laptop and Noticeboard

6.3 Precept for 2024/25 – Following discussion about The Council's budgetary needs for the coming year, it was agreed to set the precept for 2024/25 at £6,677.00, increasing the cost for a Band D property by £1.85 for the year.

6.4 Budget for 2024/25 – The budget for the coming year was agreed based on the precept of £6,677.00.

6.5 Other Financial Matters – None

7. **Planning Matters** – None

8. **Neighbourhood Plan Update**

8.1 M Gibson reported that the formal consultation had closed and with 14 fully

Richard Jones Clerk to the Council 23 Glanville Road Hadleigh IP7 5SQ

edwardstoneclerk@outlook.com

01473 828246

supportive public responses received along with responses from Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Fire and Rescue and Babergh DC was in the process of updating its regulations, but this should not delay the process. A comment had been received about the proposed settlement boundary which was different to the one previously published by Babergh DC. As the Babergh DC Joint Local Plan was currently 'on hold', it was agreed to move forward with the proposed settlement boundaries at Mill Green and Sherbourne Street. Consultant was in the process of updating the proposed plan. Next steering group meeting on 19 February with the next draft to be presented to the Parish Council on 18 March.

8.2 Suffolk Wildlife Trust Report – The report had been previously circulated to Councillors and published on the Council's website. It was noted that as a result of legislation now being implemented, developers whose activities resulted in biodiversity loss would be obligated not just to reinstate the loss but add 10% net gain. In circumstances where the net gain could not be added at the site of the development, the Council would be able to require the developer to add 10% elsewhere in the Parish. The SWT report identified two areas currently in need of improvement: Messine Wood and the woodland to the North of Temple Bar.

9. Chairman's & Clerk's reports and correspondence – None

10. Climate Change

10.1 Wildfires and Community Emergency Plan – P Baker presented a Draft Emergency Plan produced in consultation with Groton, Boxford, Little Waldingfield and Great Waldingfield Parish Councils. The plan would serve as a guide and as an initial plan of action in case of a local emergency. The next step would be to recruit volunteers to take up specified roles. The next joint meeting was on 6 February and the proposed plan would be brought back to the next Parish Council meeting. It was noted that the role of Gritting Co-ordinator would not be required.

10.2 Electric Vehicle Charging Points – P Baker had spoken to John Naughton from The White Horse and had been given approval to proceed. He would now go back to Suffolk CC to move the process forward.

11. Defibrillator Update – J Morgan reported that he had purchased the signs which would be placed at strategic points. A further sign to be placed at Telephone Box so that it would be clear that a defibrillator was stationed there.

12. Highway & Footpath Matters

12.1 Footpath Cutting – David Gotts (Garden Arbs) was now operating as a sole trader. He was happy to continue cutting the footpaths providing a couple of sleeper bridges were 'made safe'. As the sleepers were not Suffolk CC responsibility, it was agreed that R Norman would co-ordinate the re-laying of them.

12.2 Footpath Leaflet – T Wood had provided Councillors with a draft copy of the Edwardstone section of the walk and reported that he had not received a response from Suffolk CC regarding reducing the leaflet from 3 to 2 walks. It was agreed that J Morgan would contact Suffolk CC to chase this up. L Smyth agreed to attempt the walk and provide comments.

12.3 Other Highway and Footpath Matters - The Clerk to write to J Finch to enquire about the progress of previously reported pothole repairs.

13. Future Agenda Items – No new items

14. Action Points – P Baker (10.1, 10.2) R Norman (8.2, 12.1) J Morgan (11, 12.2) L Smyth (12.2) R Jones (6.3, 12.1, 12.3)

15. Date of next meeting – Monday 18th March 2024 at 7.30pm

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