

SAXTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual General Meeting Held at Dennington Village Hall

Thursday 18th May 2023, at 7.45pm after the Annual Parish Meeting

1. To appoint a Chair

As retiring Chair, George Cullingford, called for nominations for a Chair. Cllr. Hordern proposed Cllr Wale as Chair and this was seconded by Cllr. Colchester. There were no other nominations for chair and this was carried. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed. George Cullingford then left the meeting.

2. Cllr. Wale proposed Cllr. Horden as Vice-Chair and this was seconded by Cllr. Colchester and carried.

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed.

3. Cllr. Colchester signed her Acceptance of Office form.

It was noted that Cllr. Sullivan will need to sign her Acceptance form at the next meeting.

4. Apologies for absence were received, and accepted, from Cllr. Sullivan (family emergency).

County Councillor Burroughes also sent his apologies.

In Attendance

Liz Wale (Chair) Simon Hordern Tracey Colchester

Present

Christina Darell-Brown Sarah Rimmer and Jonathan Sullivan (all until item 10.d)
District Councillors Langdon-Morris and Grey Lydia Kirk (Clerk)

5. There were no declarations of interests.

6. The Minutes of 8th March and 27th April 2023 were approved as true records of the meetings.

PUBLIC FORUM

One resident questioned a footpath sign that has been erected recently in front of a hedge. The Chair will send the resident the link to report this issue to the SCC Rights of Way team online. The two recently elected District Councillors introduced themselves.

7. Chair's report

Cllr. Wale provided introductory information on herself and her working background. She was grateful for the active engagement and aspirations of the District Councillors and looks forward to working with them. She is keen to hear residents' views. She is conscious that the village has so few assets and hopes that the the village green can be used again for the benefit of the village. She also hopes to utilise the land behind the public layby.

The Chair noted that she was sorry to see the current clerk go and thanked her for all she has done for the Council.

8. Clerk's report

The clerk reported that both the Winterbourne extension and the Wood Hall dwelling planning applications have been permitted since the last meeting. She reminded the newly elected Councillors that they need to complete their expense returns and to complete their online declarations of interest.

The clerk confirmed that this was her last Council meeting and thanked Councillors for their support over the last five years. She wished the Council well for the future.

9. Appointment of Officers and Representatives:

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Responsible Financial Officer | L. Kirk* | Proposer: | Seconders: |
| Examining Councillor | Tracey Colchester | TC | SH |
| | | LW | SH |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----|----|
| Footpath Officer | Liz Wale | SH | TC |
| Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator | Paul Wale | SH | LW |
| SALC Representative | Evelyn Sullivan | SH | TC |

* The Council are currently in the process of recruiting a new RFO/Clerk

These nominations were all carried unanimously.

10. Responsible Financial Officer's report

a) The following payments made since the last meeting were noted:

| Reference Number | Amount | Payee | Details |
|------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| P1 23-24 | £123.68 | Evelyn Sullivan | Items for coronation celebrations |
| P2 23-24 | £203.47 | SALC | Annual subscription |
| P3 23-24 | £120.00 | Paragon Parts Ltd | Printing of newsletter |
| P4 23-24 | £160.00 | Trevor Brown | Internal audit |
| P5 23-24 | £90.00 | Mr & Mrs Barlow-Shepherd | 20 bottles of wine for the Coronation |
| P6 23-24 | £30.00 | Dennington Village Hall | Hall hire 2 x meetings in May |

b) Receipts since the last meeting were noted:

East Suffolk Council Precept £5,700

c) The bank balances were noted as:

Community account £6,435.62 and

Premium account £4,308.73 as at 28th April.

d) The Examining Councillor reviewed the bank statements and bank reconciliation as at 31.03.2023 [*This still needs to be signed*]

11. Procedural

a) The Internal Auditors' Report on the 2022-2023 annual paperwork was reviewed.

Councillors were pleased to note that there were no causes for concern or recommendations and congratulated the clerk on a clean audit.

b) The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023 were considered and Cllr. Hordern proposed accepting them. This was seconded by Cllr. Wale and agreed unanimously.

c) Section One (Annual Governance Statement) and Section Two (Accounting Statements) of the Local Councils' Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2023 were approved by the Council and signed by the Chair and RFO.

d) The Statement of Significant Variances had been previously circulated and was accepted.

e) The Council resolved to opt out of an External Audit as an exempt council. The Certificate of Exemption was completed and signed by the Chair and RFO.

12. The following procedures were reviewed:

a) Standing Orders – a minor amendment to the tender value at item 18, as recommended by NALC, was accepted.

b) Assets Register- there were no changes to this.

c) Financial Regulations- a minor amendment to footnote 11 regarding the amended tender value was accepted.

d) The Statement of Internal Control was considered fit for purpose and effective, as supported by the Internal Auditor's report.

e) Risk Assessment – with the change of Councillors, this will need further consideration at another meeting.

f) Financial Risk Assessment- there were no changes to this

g) Insurance Policy – this was considered fit for the Council's needs, which have not changed since the premium was purchased.

h) Data Protection Policy - there were no changes to this. Councillors were reminded of the need to password-protect any devices which have Parish Council emails and documents on, and also to periodically delete emails that are no longer needed.

i) Data Publication Policy - there were no changes to this

14. **Cllr. Wale proposed re-adopting the Local Government Association’s Model Code of Conduct.** This was seconded by Cllr. Colchester and carried.
15. **Councillors appointed Vicky Waples as the internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2024.**
ACTION Clerk to contact Ms Waples and seek a quotation for the work.
16. **A written report on the Coronation weekend had been provided by Cllr. Sullivan and shared on the website.** Cllr. Wale formally thanked Cllr. Sullivan for all her efforts in organising the village Coronation events.
17. **It was agreed to postpone discussion on commemorating George Cullingford's decades of service to Saxtead and Saxtead Parish Council until the next meeting when all Councillors would be present.**
18. **Cllr. Wale proposed that all future Parish Council meetings should be held at the Old Mill House pub which is within the village and hopefully more residents would then attend.** This was seconded by Cllr. Hordern and carried.
ACTION Cllr. Horden will speak to the landlord about hire costs before 26th May and report back.
19. **Cllr. Sullivan had sent a written suggestion that the Parish Council has an information stand at the village fete in June.** It was agreed that any Councillors available for this would be welcome to but it was not compulsory.
20. **Correspondence was discussed.**
Rural Coffee Caravan 20th Anniversary letter- after discussion, Cllr. Wale proposed donating £200 to this appeal. Cllr. Hordern seconded this and it was carried. It was agreed that leaflets should be delivered to houses to better advertise this useful resource and hopefully increase uptake of residents. **ACTION** Clerk to send Chair contact details of RCC to request leaflets
Elancity Speed Indicator Device promotion – this was noted and Councillors will look into possible grants to fund this. District Councillor Langdon-Morris advised that SCC has a SID that Parish Councils can borrow.
21. **Councillors’ reports and updates were received:**
The Chair reported on the clerk’s vacancy. She has been pleased by the level of interest in the position and Councillors hope to conduct interviews and finalise this soon. The Chair will contact unsuccessful candidates.
22. **The following items will be raised at the next meeting:**
Physical assets risk assessment
Quiet Lanes project
Neighbourhood Plan
Councillors’ aspirations
Parish Council email addresses
Renovation work to the former toilet block site
23. **The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 12th July.**
There being no further business, the Chair thanked Councillors for attending and ended the meeting at 9.05pm.

Signed
Chair
Date