

**SAXTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**held at The Old Mill House Pub on**  
**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm**

1. **The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended his best wishes for the New Year to all.**

**Councillors Present**

Simon Hordern (Chair)      Evelyn Sullivan (Vice Chair)      Tracey Colchester  
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Paula Slater (illness).

**In Attendance**

Lydia Kirk (clerk) District Cllr. Langdon-Morris (until item 9) Sarah Rimmer (until item 8).

2. **There were no declarations of interest.**
3. **The Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were approved as a true record.**
4. **There were no matters arising.**

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Sarah Rimmer asked what the Council's relationship is with Pembroke College. The Chair responded that the whole green came under the ownership of Pembroke College, but the Council are looking to develop a closer relationship with the college and their agent to address any issues that arise concerning the green. It was hoped that relations with the College would increase over the next year and the Council is looking into options to make the green a more usable asset for the village. He advised that historically the Bursar would come to look around the village with the Council's Chairman at least annually but that this has not happened for many years.

The central triangle of the green is not in the College's Stewardship Scheme and the Chair advised that this was still an area being considered by the Council to see if they could take on ownership of this part of the green.

The clerk advised the resident that previously the Council used to have this area cut regularly, but last year it was agreed that it would only be cut annually for hay. The Council acts as 'eyes and ears' for Pembroke College and reports important information or any issues to them. The College also informs the Council when they will be carrying out work such as felling trees.

The resident and Councillors commented on how wet and marshy this area is and that this limits what activities can take place there.

5. **Chair's Report**

There have been many changes to the Council recently, with three very long-standing Councillors standing down. The Council has also had three Chairs in six months following the regrettable resignation of Liz Auty. He wanted to reiterate his thanks to these Councillors for all the time they have given to the Council. He was delighted to confirm that since the last meeting, the clerk has chosen to stay and her experience will help the Council to move forwards. With the Council now down to four Councillors, it is imperative to get new Councillors to join would help spread the workload and help increase the Council's capabilities and presence within the village.

He was pleased to confirm that the notice board at Little Green has now been refurbished and he extended his gratitude to David Colchester for doing such a fantastic job and agreeing to do this voluntarily.

The carol singing at the pub went well and was very well attended. He thanked Cllr. Sullivan for organising this and Nick Barlow-Shepherd for hosting it.

A further positive event was the planting of over 500 narcissi bulbs across the two greens which the Council had secured from East Suffolk Council. He thanked all those who volunteered their time to help with this. He was optimistic that this showed that with sufficient planning and notice, there are people in the village who are happy to help out with various initiatives.

The Council has several ideas and initiatives for the coming year, but the biggest challenge it faces will be funding these. He has met with D. Cllr Langdon-Morris and a trustee from the Townlands Trust to discuss areas where help may be given to realise these projects.

It was commented that a regular newsletter and more visible projects should help to raise the Parish Council's profile within the village and help show everyone what can be achieved. He concluded by noting that this is an exciting time for the Parish Council and he encouraged Councillors to speak to residents to try and encourage more to join to have a say on the Council.

## 6. Clerk's Report

The clerk has been into the pop-up bank in Framlingham and asked for the Council's correspondence address to be reverted to her address.

SCC Highways had hoped to start the residents' consultation on the speed limit reduction in autumn, but this has been delayed due to the changeover of the Highways' contractor.

The clerk is attending her Community Self Help Training day next week. This will allow the Parish Council to carry out work parties and maintenance near the highway under SCC's CSH scheme.

## 7. a) The following payments were approved:

Amount	Payee	Details
£1,108.45	L. Kirk	Pay to 31.12.2023 & backdated pay rise from 01.04.23
£88.20	HMRC	PAYE to 05.01.2024
£14.28	SLCC	Share of membership 2024
£60.00	David Colchester	Materials to refurbish Little Green notice board

b) No payments have been made since the last meeting.

£15.07 interest was received on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

c) The community and premium account balances were £3,353.45 and £4,344.43 respectively on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. This includes £993 of reserved funds.

d) The bank statements and reconciliation were reviewed and signed by Cllr. Colchester.

## 8. The Physical Assets Risk Assessment drafted by Cllr. Sullivan was agreed with some minor amendments regarding the frequency of some of the inspections. Councillors will let Cllr. Sullivan know each time that they have carried out their checks and she will note this on the master copy. This will be handed to the Clerk annually in May for filing.

## 9. In the absence of Cllr. Slater, discussions on the 2024-2025 Action Plan were limited.

9.1 Cllr. Colchester confirmed that her husband has finished refurbishing the notice board at Little Green. He had inspected the main green noticeboard and confirmed that it was beyond repair. He will check whether the posts could be reused or if they will also need replacing.

Councillors agreed to purchase a new notice board for the Green and will look at the options available including a design suggested by the District Councillor. It was noted that the board must be lockable, large enough for several notices, robust and attractive.

9.2 It was agreed to purchase a bench to go around the Jubilee Oak tree on the green subject to Pembroke College's permission and costs.

**ACTION** Cllr. Colchester will research some alternative round benches. If they are over £500 this will need to be considered at another meeting.

- 9.3 It was agreed to carry out a village litter pick on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. This will be advertised on the website, in the newsletter and via the digital mailing list. Cllr Sullivan will request litter picking equipment from East Suffolk Council.
- 9.4 Cllr. Sullivan suggested some events to bring residents together and also raise funds for Parish Council projects. She offered to organise a Morris Minor show, possibly to be held in May. She also suggested holding a car boot sale in the pub's car park. She will carry out some initial research for further consideration at the next meeting. Other Councillors agreed to come up with other possible events for discussion at the next meeting.
10. **Outline proposals from the Green Saxtead Group for works to Little Green as recommended by Suffolk Wildlife Trust were considered.** These include digging out the pond and cutting back brush and felling some trees. This was agreed in principle but a Schedule of Works will be prepared for the Council's further consideration.
11. **Forecasted figures for 2023-2024 were noted.** The Council's year-end balance is likely to be around £5,000, of which £993 of this is reserved. Draft budget figures for 2024-2025 were discussed. With £500 held in reserved funds for a contested election, it was agreed not to budget any additional funds for this purpose currently. It was agreed that at least £1,500 would be needed for asset maintenance and improvement projects such as replacing the noticeboard and benches. A budget totalling £8,737 was agreed for 2024-2025.
12. **It was agreed that unless the precept is significantly increased, the Council will remain very limited in what it can achieve.** It was noted that unless the precept is raised, there are insufficient funds for the Council to carry out basic improvement projects. This is further exacerbated once the Parish Council's share of costs associated with the speed reduction works have been taken into account.  
After discussion, Cllr. Sullivan proposed setting the precept for 2024-2025 at £8,000. This would be an annual charge of £62.67 for a Band D property, compared to £45.08 for 2023-2024. This would be an annual increase of £17.59, or £1.47 per month. This was seconded by Cllr. Colchester and carried unanimously. It was noted that whilst this is a large increase to the Parish Council's element in percentage terms, from a monetary perspective it equates to an increase of between £1 and £3 per month depending on the Council Tax band.
13. **It was agreed to change meetings to Thursday evenings and to start meetings at 7pm.**  
The following dates for meeting in 2024 were agreed:  
7<sup>th</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 4<sup>th</sup> July, 5<sup>th</sup> September and 5<sup>th</sup> November.
14. **Cllr. Colchester has produced a draft newsletter.** Some additional items to include were suggested. Councillors agreed to proof read the newsletter promptly for the clerk to then print. Councillors will collate the printed copies and distribute to each house. It was also agreed to print 10 spare copies to be left at the pub to help increase distribution and awareness within the village.
15. **The Chair advised that the current Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator would like to relinquish this role.** A replacement will be asked for in the newsletter and if there is no interest the Parish Council could consider taking on this task. There have been two thefts from outbuildings in the village recently. It was agreed to spend up to £30 on Neighbourhood Watch signs as a reminder of the scheme to residents and hopefully to also act as a deterrent.
16. **Correspondence received was discussed:**  
East Suffolk Council's Local Validation List Consultation was noted.  
A resident has asked why details of the recent thefts in the village have not been circulated from the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The clerk has responded.

A request from Headway for funding was considered. With the strain on funds, Councillors decided not to agree a donation on this occasion but they noted the excellent work that this charity carries out.

**17. Receive reports from Councillors**

Cllr. Sullivan reported on an area of land between the post mill and the former toilet block site where the pond is not being maintained which is causing flooding at the outbuilding of a neighbouring property. **ACTION** She will provide a map of the area to the clerk, for her to approach Pembroke College to see they own it. If they do, she will ask them what they can do to resolve this issue.

Cllr. Slater sent a written report on her actions. She confirmed that the thermal imaging programme will run for three weeks from the end of January and that 23 houses have now signed up. She will be attending her Councillor training with SALC on 10th and 17th January. She has reported two issues with footpaths in the village. One of the issues is has been marked as resolved on Suffolk County Council's website but as this isn't the case, she has reported this again and will continue to chase action on this.

She also asked if Councillors could try to use her Parish Council email address for all communications.

**18. Matters to be discussed at next meeting**

- Consider purchasing a Remembrance Wreath to be used annually
- Fundraising initiatives- to remain as a rolling agenda item
- Purchasing a hanging board to advertise Council meetings, news and events
- Consider schedule of works for Little Green

**19. The next meeting will be held on 7<sup>th</sup> March.**

*There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.45pm.*

**Signed** .....

**Chair**

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**Date**