

## SAXTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ONLINE ON

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021, at 7.40pm after the Annual Parish Meeting

#### 1. To appoint a Chair

The clerk called for nominations for a Chairman. Graham Ward proposed George Cullingford to continue as Chair, and this was seconded by Jonathan Sullivan. There were no other nominations and this was carried unanimously.

#### 2. To appoint a Vice Chair

Jonathan Sullivan nominated Lisa Handley as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Graham Ward. There were no other nominations and this was carried unanimously.

Declarations of acceptance of office to be signed when cheque signatories are signed.

#### 3. Ward Councillor Maurice Cook sent his apologies.

##### Present

George Cullingford (Chair)      Graham Ward      Lisa Handley      Jonathan Sullivan  
David Johnson      Lydia Kirk (Clerk)      Simon Hordern

GC introduced resident Simon Hordern to the meeting. SH expressed his interest in becoming a Parish Councillor then waited in the online meeting room whilst Councillors briefly discussed this. GC proposed co-opting SH. This was seconded by GW and carried unanimously. SH was welcomed back to the meeting as a Councillor.

**ACTION** LK to notify ESC of the new Councillor and SH to complete his online register of interests. LK to write to SH with introductory information and links to our policies and procedures.

#### 4. There were no declarations of interests.

#### 5. The minutes of the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were approved.

#### 6. There were two matters arising.

The fly-tipping has still not been addressed. GW will be meeting with the landowner's agent over the next week or so and will raise it with them. Suffolk County Council have not provided a satisfactory response to our complaint regarding recent road repairs to the A1120 opposite Church Farm. GW wondered if complaints from other local Parish Councils might help action more substantive repairs.

### PUBLIC FORUM

Reports were received from Cllr Cook and Suffolk Constabulary and have been shared with Parish Councillors before the meeting and on the website.

#### 7. Chairman's report

The Chairman observed how much our lives have changed over the past year during the Covid 19 pandemic but that the vaccination programme is helping to restore normality. As per his Annual Parish Report (*on website*), everything seems to be going well in the village and people are going out of their way to help each other with buying food, collecting prescriptions etc. He thanked everyone for their continued assistance.

The Chair has heard from one of the prospective new Ward Councillors for Framlingham, Lydia Freeman, regarding Ladies Smock flowers on the village green. Due to their rarity locally she has asked East Suffolk Council to mark these out and GC has asked our mowing contractor not to mow this area until after they have seeded.

#### 8. The clerk reported on actions since the last meeting.

The government has now discussed online meetings of Parish and Local Councils and they will not be permitted after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The clerk has finished the accounts and auditing paperwork for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and wished to thank Trevor Brown for carrying out a thorough audit and producing such a comprehensive report.

Another Prior Notification regarding building three dwellings at Wood Hall Farm has been submitted.

The clerk has enquired about hall hire rates at two local village halls, Dennington and Earl Soham which both offer discounts for regular users and vary between £9.50 and £11 per hour.

The site meeting with the landowner regarding the pavement extension is happening later this week.

<b>9. Appointment of Officers and Council Representatives</b>	Prop.	Sec.
Responsible Financial Officer	Lydia Kirk	GW
Examining Councillor	Lisa Handley	GC
Footpath Officer*	Graham Ward	GC
Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator*	Graham Ward	GC
Webmaster	Lydia Kirk	GC
		JS
		JS
		JS
		LH

These nominations were all carried unanimously.

\* GW is happy to continue these roles for now but it was noted that, sadly, he will be moving out of the village later this year and these positions will then need re-filling.

**10. Responsible Financial Officer’s report**

a) The following payments were approved and the cheques will be signed as soon as practicable.

Reference Number	Amount	Payee	Details
P1 21-22	£120.00	Trevor Brown	Internal Audit Fee
P2 21-22	£193.40	SALC	Annual Subscription

*Invoices with full details of items above were shown online.*

With Graham Ward soon moving away from the village, it was agreed that as Vice-Chair, Lisa Handley should become a cheque signatory. As she is also the Examining Officer, cheques will normally be signed by the other two signatories, but having a third signatory would be useful in the case of illness, absence or cheques that are payable to those Councillors.

b) Receipts since the last meeting were noted:-

08.03.21	£0.01	Interest	Barclays
30.04.21	£5,160	Full Precept	East Suffolk Council

d) The bank balances were reviewed as being £9,485.06 and £2,296.71 as at 4<sup>th</sup> May. The reserved funds stood at £1,163.61.

e) The bank reconciliation as at 31.03.2021 had been shared prior to the meeting. LH will sign hard copies of bank statements when we next meet collectively.

**11. Procedural**

a) The Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 were considered. JS proposed accepting the accounts, this was seconded by LH and Councillors agreed unanimously.

b) **Section One** and **Section Two** of the **Local Councils’ Annual Return** were approved by council and will be completed and signed by the Chairman over the next day or so.

*Meeting time-limit reached and ended automatically. A new meeting was started using the same log-on details.*

c) The **Statement of Significant Variances** was explained and accepted.

d) Council resolved **to opt out of an External Audit** as an exempt council. The **Certificate of Exemption** was completed and signed by the RFO will be completed and will be signed by the Chairman over the next day or so.

e) As per her contract, the clerk is to move up a scale point, from SCP 9 to 10, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 for another year’s service. There has been no information from NALC as to recommended pay increases for the 2021-2022 year as yet.

**12. The Internal Auditor’s Report for the 2020-2021 annual paperwork was reviewed.** It was noted that donations to advisory organisations such as the C.A.B can be made under Section

142 of the LGA without having to resort to using Section 137, although the Council is well under its S137 limits (£8.32 per elector for 2020-2021 and £8.41 for 2021-2022).

GW added that he would like to congratulate the clerk on another successful internal audit and positive report from the auditor. This was echoed by the Chair.

**13. The following policies were reviewed:**

a) Standing Orders

b) Assets Register

c) Financial Regulations *Minor amendments to footnotes in section 11 of the Financial Regulations, as per NALC's recommendations in Legal Topic Notice F02-21, were adopted.*

d) Statement of Internal Control. This was considered fit for purpose and effective and was backed up by the Internal Auditor's report.

e) Risk Assessment. *GC has conducted monthly safety checks on the equipment. Record sheet filed with the minutes.*

f) Financial Risk Assessment.

g) The insurance policy was considered fit for the Council's needs.

**14. The 2012 Suffolk Model Code of Conduct was re-adopted.** It was noted that at NALC's assembly in March, it was agreed to support the Local Government Association's model code of conduct and to cease production of the NALC code. Implementation of this code is under review.

**15. Council resolved to continue using Trevor Brown as its internal auditor for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.**

**16. Village welcome signs were briefly discussed although not much progress could be made without County Cllr. Stephen Burroughes in attendance.** Whilst the exact layout of the signage is not yet known as it may alter depending on the success of the speed limit reduction, Councillors were keen to try and progress this matter. *See item 17.*

**17. The results of the traffic survey along the village green were not available.** A meeting with Cllr. Burroughes will be set up to discuss the results of the traffic survey, the entrance signage and the pavement extension.

**18. Correspondence received was considered.** Parish Councillors had no objections to the request for an additional £385 from the community sports pot for Framlingham's new boules green, following an increase in costs since the original quotation was obtained.

**19. Councillors' reports**

The Chair was sad to note that online meetings for Parish Councils cannot continue in any form beyond 7<sup>th</sup> May. *DJ asked if it would be possible to have digital attendees at physical meetings.*

DJ reported that sadly Saxtead Green would not be eligible for the Department for Sports, Culture and Media's new fibre broadband scheme as its postcode was not rural enough. Saxtead sits in band 2, but it needs to be in band 3 to get the funding presently. He will continue to monitor this in case the eligibility criteria changes.

DJ asked if the Parish Council could be more active in organising village events such as fetes or providing new amenities such as tennis courts or outdoor gym equipment. GC said that before Covid-19, there was an annual church fete and the *Celebrating Saxtead* festival was a large and successful event for such a small village. There is due to be a village picnic besides the pub in July and he will let Councillors know when he has more information about this. The children's playground that was on the village green many years ago was removed due to lack of use, high insurance costs and maintenance responsibilities and costs, as well as fencing requirements for safety.

**ACTION** LK and DJ to look into what local grant funding is available before the next meeting to see what projects might be viable.

GW reported that the broken highways sign at Dial Lane on the A120 has been removed but that the stub of the post remains and the sign has not been replaced.

**20. Items to be raised at the next meeting**

Village entrance signs, traffic survey results and report from site meeting regarding pavement extension

21. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> June depending on Dennington Village Hall's availability and Councillor Burroughes' availability. *There being no further business, the Chairman thanked Councillors for attending and ended the meeting at 21.25pm.*

Signed *G. Cullingford*  
Chairman

*9<sup>th</sup> June 2021*  
Date