

SAXTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of Annual General Meeting Held in the Restaurant of the Old Mill House Pub, Saxtead on Thursday 9th May 2024, at 7.50pm after the Annual Parish Meeting

1. To appoint a Chair

As the current Chair, Simon Hordern, called for nominations for a Chair. Cllr. Colchester proposed Cllr Hordern continue as Chair and this was seconded by Cllr. Sullivan. There were no other nominations for Chair and this was carried. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed.

2. It was agreed to defer appointing a Vice-Chair until the next meeting.

3. Margaret Baumbach and Nick Barlow-Shepherd were both willing to stand as Councillors.

They were co-opted as members and signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office. Both members also consented to being summoned to meetings electronically.

ACTION Clerk to notify East Suffolk Council and give them induction packs.

4. Apologies for absence were received, and accepted, from Cllr. Slater (work).

District Councillor Grey also sent his apologies.

5. Present

Simon Hordern (Chair)

Nick Barlow-Shepherd

Margaret Baumbach

Tracey Colchester

Eveyn Sullivan

In attendance

County Councillor Stephen Burroughes

Paul Johnson

Lydia Kindred (Clerk)

6. There were no declarations of interests.

7. The Minutes of 8th March were approved as a true record of the meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM

Cllr. Burroughes gave a précis of his written annual report. He also advised that he comes to Parish Council meetings when he can but this is difficult with his mobility and the number of meetings there are across his division.

He was pleased that the village's speed reduction project has been approved and that the public consultation has now been completed. A response from the police is now awaited and the design work should be signed off later this month. The legal advertising of the scheme will start on 31st May.

Paul Johnson asked if the Council would be purchasing a Speed Indicator Device now that the speed limit reduction is imminent. The Chair confirmed that this is being looked into. The Council may look into sharing one with another local Council due to financial constraints.

8. Chair's report

This has been an active period, with the recent litter pick and work at Little Green including the removal of scrub and overgrown vegetation and the bench being sanded by the Green Saxtead group. The walking group is continuing to meet and the book club has now met three times and membership is growing. Damaged signage and posts have been removed from the Green and the Saxtead sign has been straightened. The Chair stressed that the Council could do more if it had more people and he was pleased to welcome the two new Council members.

9. Clerk's report

The VAT Claim submitted for 2023-2024 was rejected as it was for less than £100. The clerk will resubmit this later in the year.

An application to the East Suffolk in Bloom scheme has been submitted and it was noted that the local Community Partnership group is contributing extra packs of bulbs to organisations within the Framlingham area whose applications are not successful.

The end-of-year accounts and work for the internal auditor has now been completed. The clerk wished her gratitude to the Internal Auditor for expediting this work to be recorded. A wreath for Remembrance Day has been ordered and the clerk has passed this on to Cllr. Sullivan who will look after it. The Council's A Frame to display notices has also been ordered and will be delivered on Friday.

10. The following appointments of officers and representatives were confirmed:

Responsible Financial Officer	L. Kindred
Examining Councillor	Tracey Colchester
Footpath Officer	Simon Hordern
Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator	Jonathan Sullivan
SALC Representative	<i>Defer until next meeting</i>
Community Partnerships	<i>Defer until next meeting</i>

10. Responsible Financial Officer's report

a) The following payments were approved:

Amount	Payee	Details
£199.80	SALC	Membership subscription 2024-2025
£36.50	L. Kirk	Share of McAfee and Microsoft 365 subscriptions
£175.00	T. Brown	Fee for completing internal audit

b) Payments and receipts since the last meeting were noted:

£120.60	Sign Holder Sales	A Frame <i>including VAT</i>
£35.00	ICO	Data processor fee <i>Direct debit</i>
£8,000	East Suffolk Council	Precept
£16.25	Barclays	Interest

c) As at 31st March, the bank balances were noted as being:

Community account £930.42 and
Premium account £4,360.68. Of these funds, £948 funds are earmarked.

d) The Examining Councillor checked the bank statements and bank reconciliation as at 31.03.2024.

11. Procedural

a) The Internal Auditor's Report on the 2023-2024 annual paperwork was reviewed. Councillors noted that the Public Rights Period form for Councils having a Limited Assurance Review was erroneously used. Adopting a gov.uk domain name will be considered at the next meeting. Current councillors all have an email address solely for Parish Council business and councillors co-opted at this meeting are encouraged to do this also.

b) The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2024 were accepted.

c) Section One (Annual Governance Statements) and Section Two (Accounting Statements) of the Local Councils' Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2024 were approved by the Council and signed by the Chair and RFO.

d) The Statement of Significant Variances 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 – these were readopted without any changes

b) Assets Register- it was agreed to add the A-frame and wreath to this and to remove the older flag which is damaged beyond repair. Also to ask Cllr. Slater for an update on when the new noticeboard and bench will arrive.

c) Financial Regulations- it was noted that new ones will be coming in imminently. The current regulations were re-adopted and this will be considered again at the next meeting

- d) The Statement of Internal Control was considered fit for purpose and effective, as supported by the Internal Auditor's report.
- e) Risk Assessment – this was agreed as fit for purpose. The Risk Assessment with details of checks completed during 2023-2024 will be filed with the annual documents.
- 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 data and documents on, and also to periodically delete emails that are no longer needed, especially those that contain private data such as email addresses of residents.
- i) Data Publication Policy & Privacy Policy - there were no changes to this
13. **It was agreed to re-adopt the Local Government Association's Model Code of Conduct.**
14. **Councillors thanked Trevor Brown for his hard work completing this year's audit.** They would very much like to re-appoint him as the Council's internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2025, if he is willing to continue.
15. **The Chair gave a summary of the Council's 2024-2025 Action Plan for the benefit of the new Councillors.** Cllr. Sullivan has been working hard in preparation for the Classic Car Meet on 25th May and has prepared a risk assessment and started publicising the event. The event will be advertised on the new A Frame and the website. Cllr. Shepherd kindly agreed that the A Frame could be kept at the pub.
17. **Cllr. Sullivan gave a report on the litter pick in March.** It is hoped that these events will be carried out regularly and that the numbers of helpers will increase. A small amount of people collected a significant amount of rubbish and they were encouraged by motorists and dog walkers as they worked.
18. **The clerk had circulated information on the Good Neighbour Scheme.** It was agreed to mention this in the next residents' newsletter and to see if anyone is interested in running this scheme in Saxtead.
ACTION Clerk to write an article on this. Other Councillors to send articles and topic ideas for the next newsletter to Cllr Colchester who will start working on the next edition with a view to it being published in July.
19. **There were concerns that transport issues could be a barrier preventing some residents from attending local events such as the Rural Coffee Caravan.** Cllr Colchester is looking into a car-share scheme, and this could fall under the Good Neighbour Scheme.
20. **Correspondence was discussed.**
The clerk has received a letter from HMRC regarding employment allowance but this does not appear to apply to local authorities.
21. **Councillors' reports were received during the Annual Parish Meeting.**
22. **The following items will be raised at the next meeting:**
Appoint a Vice-Chair
Consider latest version of Financial Regulations
Consider using a gov.uk web domain
Appoint SALC and Community Partnership Representatives
Action plan
Next newsletter
23. **The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 4th July.**
There being no further business, the Chair thanked Councillors for attending and ended the meeting at 8.50pm.