



Starston Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mrs Libby Alexander, 25 Hill Farm Road, Long Stratton, Norfolk, NR15 2WA
Tel: 07943 279946 Email: starstonparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk

Minutes of Starston Annual Parish Council Meeting held in the Jubilee Hall at 7.30 pm, Monday 18th September 2023

Present: Cllr P Astor, Cllr A Knowles and Cllr S Griffin
Clerk to the Parish Council: Libby Alexander
Members of the public: 0

2023/77 To consider accepting apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllrs J Broadhurst, C Sparrow and K O’Keeffe due to being away from the Parish and Cllr A Leitch due to work commitments were considered and accepted.

2023/78 To receive any declarations of personal or prejudicial interest from members on any item to be discussed and consider any dispensations.

No declarations were made.

2023/79 To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2023.

Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting and for them to be signed by the Chairman.

2023/80 The Clerk to provide an update on the matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting and provide any other information on actions that have been undertaken since the last meeting.

- Draft Minutes from July meeting written and uploaded to village website.
- Draft Minutes from Annual Parish Meeting written and uploaded to village website.
- Parish Council report for the September and October editions of Pigeon Post written.
- Various updates made to the Parish Council area on the village website along with notices of interest to residents.
- General admin and filing tasks.
- Made bank payments approved at previous meeting.
- Liaised with Councillors and SNDC re proposed signage for Quiet Lanes and contacted SNDC for update on progress prior to meeting.
- Reported various highways issues to NCC (potholes, signs etc).
- Liaised with Cllrs Sparrow and Leitch re booking Councillor training.

2023/81 To receive reports on matters of interest to the parish from District and County Councillors.

Resolved for the meeting to be closed to allow reports from the District and County Councillors.

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Chairman.....



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The County Councillor, Cllr M Wilby, was not in attendance but had sent his report in advance of the meeting and it had been circulated to all members – see Appendix 1.

District Councillor, Cllr D Thompson, reported the following (see Appendix 2 for full report):

- SNDC have lodged formal objections as part of the recent consultation for the Pylon project to the west of the A140.
- Central Government have provided £1.4 million towards purchasing 10 new homes for housing Afghan and Ukrainian families. The remaining funds will come from Council finances, but the Council will own 100% of the properties bought.
- An in-person Town and Parish Forum will be held on 9th November.
- Applications for the Community Action Fund close on 22nd September.
- Funding routes are being explored to support the Starston Warm Welcome.
- There had been a costly delay in the proposed sale and likely development of the former Council building in Long Stratton, while an application by Long Stratton Town Council for the property to be declared an asset of community value was considered, and in the event rejected.

District Councillor, Cllr C Hudson, reported the following:

- Despite the inclement weather, he had enjoyed the successful fete held on the Glebe Meadow in August; sincere thanks to all the volunteers.
- South Norfolk Council are running a scheme for group-buying solar panels and battery storage – details can be found on the Council website.
- The 36A Bus service has improved significantly with hourly buses and buses on a Saturday. Two buses run in the morning due to demand. The new service needs to be used to be retained.
- He was uncomfortable with the decision by South Norfolk Council regarding South Norfolk House. The Council was not impartial, and there is no right of appeal for unsuccessful applicants.

Resolved for the meeting to be reopened.

2023/82 Parishioner open forum.

The Clerk reported she had received the following comments from a resident:

- The footpath along Bunns Lane was becoming very overgrown and was in need of trimming back to allow pedestrians to pass.
- Following the increased service of the 36A Bus, it would be useful for residents to have a copy of the timetable published in the Pigeon Post. The Clerk confirmed she would put this suggestion to the Pigeon Post committee.

Action: The Clerk

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2023/83 To receive and ratify matters relating to the finances including the following:

a) Clerk's time sheet for July-September 2023

Unanimously agreed.

b) Finance statement for July-September 2023 and agree Councillor authorisation for payments:

i. Clerk's Wages for September 2023: £237.44

Unanimously agreed.

ii. Tax on Clerk's Wages for September 2023: £59.40

Unanimously agreed.

iii. SNDC Dog Bin Annual Charge: £148.64

Unanimously agreed.

iv. Information Commissioner's Office data protection renewal fee: £35

Unanimously agreed.

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BANK RECONCILIATION & FINANCE DETAIL SHEET as at 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

Date	Bank balance		Payments Total	Receipts Total	Bank Actual
12-Sep-23	11,288.86				
		Balance B/F			11,288.68
		12 July - 12 September 23 Sub-total payments	613.11		10,675.57
		12 July - 12 September 23 Sub-total receipts		20.00	10,695.57
		Bank Closing Balance			10,695.57
		Earmarked Reserves			
		Norfolk Community Foundation Covid 19 Grant	£ 862.70	paid £19.43 Resident support	
		CIL Money	£ 589.35		
		Neighbourhood Plan	£ 1,613.01		
		Warm Spaces Grant	-		
		Sub-Total - Money Held	£3,065.06		
		General Reserves i.e. Bank reconciled balance less monies held			7,630.51

Payments Details			
26-Jul-23	Mr S Griffin Mrs E Alexander	Resident Support (Covid)	19.43
28-Jul-23	HMRC	July Wages	237.44
28-Jul-23		Tax on Clerk's Wages	59.40

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14-Aug-23	HMRC	Tax on Clerk's Wages	59.40	
	Mrs E			
25-Aug-23	Alexander	August Wages	237.44	<u> </u>
		Sub-total payments		<u> 613.11</u>

Receipts Details

25-Aug-23	SNDC	Litter Pick	20.00	
		Sub-total receipts		<u> 20.00</u>

Future payments to be approved by Council

Mrs E				
Alexander		September Wages	237.44	
HMRC		Tax on Clerk's Wages	59.40	
SNDC		Dog Bin Annual Charge	148.64	
ICO		Data Protection Renewal Fee (Direct Debit)	35.00	<u> </u>
		Sub-total future payments		<u> 480.48</u>

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2023/84 To consider matters relating to village maintenance, PROW and Highways, including the Parish Partnership bid.

The Clerk reported that she had received an update from SNDC regarding the Parish Partnership project for Quiet Lane signs. They were likely to send a plan with proposed locations for the signs to the Council in the next few weeks to agree the positions. Once agreed, the work would be planned into the works programme aiming for completion before Christmas 2023.

2023/85 To receive an update from the Emergency Plan Co-ordinator.

Nothing to report.

2023/86 To receive an update on tree planting matters.

Nothing to report.

2023/87 To consider any planning applications received.

None received.

2023/88 To receive an update on the 'Warm Welcome' initiative.

Cllr P Astor reported that sources of grant funding were being explored to support the continuation of the 'Warm Welcome' lunches, which had proved extremely successful and were appreciated by residents.

2023/89 Correspondence received: SNDC Community mental health support; and Formal Consultation regarding a proposed Public Spaces Protection Order – (vehicle-related anti-social behaviour).

The correspondence received from SNDC was noted, but it was agreed that no action was necessary.

2023/90 The Clerk to provide and receive items for the next agenda, and confirm the date and time of the next Parish Council meeting, to be held on 20th November 2023 in the Jubilee Hall at 7.30pm.

Date noted.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm.



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Appendix 1

September Report

Fares on all Norwich park & ride services will be even cheaper from this September, making it easier and more affordable to travel car-free into the city centre by bus. The new fares will be introduced, thanks to money that Norfolk County Council has secured from the Department for Transport (DfT) to help improve bus services across the county. From Monday 4th September, passengers will be able to travel for one price at any time of the day. The new fares have been designed to provide more flexible fare options for those choosing to travel independently, as a couple, as a family or with friends. The new fares coincide with the re-opening of Postwick park & ride, which further enhances the service, providing five out-of-town sites for those wishing to visit Norwich, from all major routes into the city.

Seventy new electric buses will be arriving in Norwich this autumn as part of a multi-million-pound investment in greener vehicles. Work has started to convert First Bus Eastern Counties Roundtree Way depot into an all-electric depot, which will make it just one of three of its kind in the country, outside of London. The new electric buses – 11 single-decker and 59 double-decker will be made by Northern Ireland company Wrightbus. The buses will save 60 tonnes of tailpipe emissions each year. First Bus have invested £22.5m into the new fleet while Norfolk County Council secured a further £14.7m from the governments Zero Emission Bus Regional Area Scheme.

Encouraging more people to use bus travel and other sustainable options is key to our ambitious aims of achieving net-zero in Norfolk by 2030. NCC has committed to achieve 'net zero' carbon emissions on its estates by 2030, but within its wider area, to work with partners towards 'carbon neutrality'. This also supports the government's ambition for a net zero country by 2050. We will achieve this by implementing carbon conscious ways of working across our buildings and supply chain, putting in place the right infrastructure across the county to support the move towards net-zero; and by working together with partners to lead and inspire our colleagues, citizens, communities and businesses to take action and play their part in protecting Norfolk for future generations.

NCC Hazardous Waste Events are back for 2023. A series of free drop of days are set to start in September to allow people to dispose of hazardous waste at some of Norfolk's recycling centres. Visitors to seven participating recycling centres will be able to drop off items including wood preservatives, insecticides, weed killers, paint, thinners, varnishes and special cleaning products. To determine if a substance is hazardous, check product labels for words or symbols that indicate caution, warning, danger, poison or toxic. The first event is on the weekend of September 9th and 10th 9am-4pm at the Norwich South Recycling Centre which is the nearest for us in the south of the county. For all details and dates for the other events please visit www.norfolk.gov.uk

Congratulations to all of the youngsters across the county (over 9,000) that signed up and took part in the Summer Reading Challenge organised by our library service during the Summer Holidays. The Summer Reading Challenge takes place every year during the

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summer holidays and aims to support children's reading for pleasure and prevent a dip in reading over the six-week break. As well as supporting literacy, reading is a fantastic way to promote mental wellbeing and have fun.

Billingsford Mill is having an open day to the public on Sunday 24th September, it's well worth a visit to find out more about this local landmark in the Waveney Valley.

Best Wishes
Martin

October Report

Along with many others I recently attended the official opening of The Toddler Play Area on Harleston rec. It was opened by The Lord Lieutenant for Norfolk, The Lady Dannatt MBE who made the day very special by commenting about Harleston's resilience throughout the Covid pandemic, the tremendous community spirit in the town and thanking the many local volunteers for what they do. There were many toddlers there to help Lady Dannatt with the cutting of the ribbon and to show us all how they use and enjoy the new equipment. A special thanks to Harleston Town Council all of its staff and everyone else involved with this project.

The final round of LED upgrades to Norfolk County Council's Street Lighting is underway, cutting CO2 emissions by over 200 tonnes a year. The work, which will replace traditional High Intensity Discharge (HID) lighting with the latest generation of LED lanterns, will take place over the next 24 months, and involve replacing 16,800 HID lights with LEDs. When complete, 100% of NCCs streetlighting will use low energy LEDs. The final phase of the move to low energy LEDs will save an estimated 1,099,032 kWh of energy per year, equating to approximately £380,000 p.a. at current electricity prices. This represents an estimated carbon saving of 227 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year as a result of the final stage of switching from HID to LED streetlighting.

With the bird nesting season over, people across Norfolk have a chance to do their bit to stop flooding and keep water flowing across their properties. Small, simple steps that ensure water can drain away from your home can cut down the likelihood of flooding, starting with tasks as simple as keeping drains, ditches, and watercourses clear and able to flow freely. After a year's growth, many ditches and watercourses will benefit from clearing branches, and cutting back new undergrowth. Now bird nesting season is over, early autumn is the prime time for property owners to put in a little work to keep their properties safe. Outside the home, if residents spot any blocked or broken drains on Norfolk's highways they can report it via www.norfolk.gov.uk/flooding allowing Norfolk's Highways Team to clear them and keep our roads open. Also now is the time of year to cut back your hedges and trees away from footpaths and the roadside so that people can use the footpaths safely and that vehicles can use the whole width of the roads.

Norfolk's £3bn tourism industry is to get an annual boost of more than £100,000 a year in the hope this will inject millions of pounds more into the county. County Hall agreed to the

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increased spend as part of hopes to become part of a new initiative that could unlock more Westminster cash which the county cannot currently bid for. Pete Waters, executive director of Visit East of England, said: "I'd like to thank NCC for this investment in tourism services. This will ultimately benefit and support our local destinations and businesses, the stars in our tourism firmament". It is hoped the new initiative could create 9,700 further jobs connected to tourism and help make Norfolk one of the top destinations in the country for visitors.

NCCs award-winning Adult Education Services offers free part-time one year courses for students aged 19 or over who do not have a 1-9 in GCSE English and/or Maths. Last year 111 people took GCSEs with the service, 84% of maths GCSE students achieved Grade 4 or above and 73% of English GCSE students achieved grade 4 or above. The service also offers a range of other courses including access courses for learners of all ages which are available on a flexible basis during the day, evening, or online. Find out more by visiting the Adult Learning Website.

Best Wishes
Martin



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Appendix 2

Cllr Delme Thompson

Report for Starston Parish Council September 2023.

Congratulations to Youth Club on a successful camp out!

Pylon Consultation

SNDC have lodged formal objections as part of the recent consultation, and will continue to fight the current plans.

Ukrainian & Afghan Families Scheme

Central Government has provided 1.4 million pounds towards purchasing up to 10 new homes for the purposes of housing Afghan and Ukrainian families. That money provides 40% of the total cost, with 60% coming from council finances. But after purchase we will own 100% of the properties that have been bought. The proposal is to buy a small number of properties in a number of different locations.

Town and Parish Forums

In-person Town and Parish Summit at The Horizon Centre, November 9th from 9:30am – 12:30pm.

Funding for Community Projects

Applications for Community Action Fund close on 22 September. Application window for next season TBC.

Starston Warm Welcome

I will be very happy to work with Councillor Broadhurst to explore funding routes for this important initiative, and am confident will find some support, one way or another!

Background awareness - Sale of South Norfolk House £250K+ Impact of recent events.

Given the level of wider interest in this matter and potential knock on effects for all South Norfolk residents, I wanted to update the Parish Council on some important recent developments.

Background / Recap

In May 2022 the decision was taken to sell South Norfolk House as part of the relocation to the Horizon Centre. The rules required the property to be marketed for use as an office for 6 months, before bids for alternative use could be considered. This was done, and no bids were received. Bids for other uses were then invited.

Throughout the process Long Stratton Town Council were kept fully informed and declined to bid for the property. In April 2023, 11 months after the decision to sell, a meeting was held to recommend acceptance of a bid to develop the property. At this meeting the town council requested additional time to scope a bid for a community hub – which would sit

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alongside two existing community centres in Long Stratton. SNC agreed to a 90 day extension for the community bidder to present their proposal.

During this period additional bids from other parties were received.

While the 'concept' document circulated to neighbouring parish councils by Long Stratton was appealing, the no details were provided on budgeting, project management, or the ongoing sustainability of the project - leading an external reviewer assessing all bids received to conclude that the community project was unproceedable.

A deadline of 30 June 2023 was set for all bidders to provide the required information so South Norfolk Councillors and officers could make a decision on the most appropriate bid to accept, at the full council meeting on 24th July. Following the issuing of this deadline, Long Stratton Town Council submitted a formal application to have the building declared an asset of community value. On receiving such an application, the Council was duty bound to pause any sale, and undertake an 8 week process to consider the application.

On 15 September 2023 it was announced that the application to have the offices deemed an Asset Of Community Value, had been unsuccessful, on the ground that ' ..There is insufficient evidence to suggest that a primary use that furthers the social interest or wellbeing of residents is realistic within the next five years.'

Financial Impact

Tax payers have funded £100K additional running costs from April-August 2023 during grace period for the community bid, and ACV application. With the value of development land declining, risk of current bidders withdrawing due to the delay, estimated 4-5 months required to close a sale from this point, and loss of interest on funds that would have been received from the sale last April, the true cost is likely to be in excess of £250K.

In light of the ACV decision, proceedings will resume to review the remaining (and any new) bids, to allow full council to vote on the most appropriate option for repurposing South Norfolk House, ending the £20,000 monthly burden on taxpayers.

Kind Regards
Cllr Delme Thompson