

Langley with Hardley Parish Council

Minutes No: 2024/1

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 9 January 2024 at 7.30pm in Langley with Hardley Village Hall

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Parish Councillors (6) present | Nigel Sullivan (Chair), Tibby Bunn, Garry Moore, Stuart Adcock, Michael Caston, Kimberly Adcock and Rob Baldwin. |
| County Councillor | None. |
| District Councillors | None. |
| Also in attendance | Emma Webster (Clerk). |
| Members of the public | Seven |

1. Signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office by Cllr Adcock (K).

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed and witnessed by the Clerk.

2. To receive and approve apologies for absence.

None.

3. To receive any declarations of interest from Members & consider requests for dispensation.

Members are invited to declare disclosable interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Langley with Hardley Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

4. To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7 November 2023.

Agreed as an accurate record of the meeting, signed by the Chair during the meeting for the minute book and copy will now be published on-line with the DRAFT watermark removed. **Clerk to action.**

5. Adjournment for Public Participation (15 minutes allowed for).

This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions about and comment on items on the agenda before the Council make decisions.

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting.

A resident said that dog fouling was a particular issue in Langley Green and asked for a dog waste bin to be provided. Cllr Baldwin responded that 'Bag it and Bin it' signs have been ordered and will help. Ideally the Parish Council would seek to get the cost of the bin or the regular emptying sponsored but if this is not possible money will be set aside in the budget for the provision of a new bin.

A resident asked how the initiative to lower the speed limit along Langley Street and Langley Green is going, and reported some near misses with fast moving traffic and the need to wear high-viz to be noticed. The Chairman reported that progress is being made, but slowly, and an ex-Parish Councillor is providing the Parish Council with updates.

A resident asked why the public participation session has been moved around the meeting – inviting people to speak at the end of the meeting. The Chairman responded that the public participation section is always at the beginning of the meeting, however residents could also talk after the meeting was closed and their comments would be noted.

A resident said that there was an incident on 30 December with a reasonably large discussion on Face Book, without going into detail. There was a lot of attitude and ill feeling expressed towards a Landowner on Face Book, and he has been sworn at face to face. The Landowner said that he would enforce his legal rights with whatever force necessary, and wanted to raise this with the Parish Council to demonstrate what he had to deal with as a Landowner. The Landowner also expressed frustration with dog waste fouling left on a footpath across his land.

A resident bought up the Parish Council's last Tree Warden's report which criticised the management of the new plantation on the Langley Abbey Estate and asked did the Tree Warden go into the wood to do his

report? – if he didn't then he couldn't have done a report – if he did go into the wood then it was trespass. The resident said that he had engaged a professional arboriculturist who recommended not to coppice the willow as allowing the willow to grow forces the trees to grow. The Chairman responded to say that he did not know if the Tree Warden did or didn't access the wood concerned.

The flooding of ditches was also raised and the Landowner made a point that all flooding in the Parish should be discussed, not just that at High Barns – referring to the flooding at Cross Stone Road, Staithe Hill and Bradshaw Corner. Cllr Baldwin said that he has recently met with Gary Overland from Highways. Gary was not aware of any culverts under the road in this location which they were responsible for, but he would check on Highways maps and report back to the Parish Council. Cllr Baldwin said that Gary mentioned there may be some old clay drainage pipes under the road, but if so these were not recognised by Highways as they would have been laid when the road was a basic track. A resident representing Langley Abbey Estates agreed to pump out the ditch (at their cost) which is full top to bottom and side to side because of blockages in the culverts and was thanked by the Parish Council.

6. To discuss the appointment of Tree Warden. Agree on a course of action.

The Council had sent details of the Tree Warden Vacancy to a member of the public who had expressed an interest in the vacancy at the last meeting. The member of the public was at the meeting and it was unanimously resolved to appoint them to the role. The Clerk will write to the previous Tree Warden to thank him for his service.

7. To discuss the appointment and training of Speed Monitor signs (SAM2) Volunteer. Agree on a course of action.

Cllr Adcock (K) expressed an interest in this position, as did a resident via Cllr Bunn. After a short discussion it was unanimously agreed to appoint Cllr Adcock (K) to the role. Clerk to pass on the details of training to Cllr Adcock and to write to the resident to thank him for his interest.

8. To discuss the current status of Langley with Hardley Parish Trust Charity (registration number 1117975). Agree on a course of action.

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item. Cllr Sullivan reported that the Parish Council are the Trustees of the Charity and that the Charity profile needs to be updated on the Charity Commission website. Cllr Sullivan has received advice from Community Action Norfolk to say that they could assist in managing the Charity, including dissolving the Charity, for a fee. Cllr Sullivan said that he had contacted the previous Clerk and a submission was made every year to the Charity Commission showing zero income and expenditure. Cllr Sullivan went on to say that he has written a letter to the current lessee to ask in the broadest terms if he would like to continue with the land lease agreement then the Council would consider this favourably. Cllr Moore asked that a copy of letter is given to the Clerk for the records. Cllr Bunn asked who actually benefitted from the rent money received? Cllr Sullivan said that the next steps were to regain access to the Charity Commission website to update the profile. There was a debate around was it the Parish Council as an entity that was responsible for the Charity or The Chairman and Vice Chair as listed Trustees? Cllr Moore commented that the drawing up of a new agreement without consulting legal advice would be unadvisable and where would the money come from to do this? He went on to say that he was not happy about the situation, with the responsibility he took to look at all the documents and prepare the report tabled at the last meeting he felt that the Council is still no further forward. There was no known bank account associated with the Charity. There was general consensus that the Parish Council has still not sorted this, despite making every effort. Cllr Baldwin suggested that working groups have resulted in positive ways forward in the past (ie the budget) and proposed a working group for this issue too. All were in agreement and Cllr Sullivan agreed to convene a working group with proposals being brought to the March meeting, with one of the options being to appoint Community Action Norfolk to take the work forward. Action: Cllr Sullivan.

9. To consider the Parish Council Budget. To agree the budget for 2024/25.

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item. There was no further discussion and Councillors unanimously agreed with the budget proposal.

10. To complete and sign the Parish Precept Requirement Form for 2024/25.

The form was completed by the Clerk and signed by the Chairman. Clerk to return the form to South Norfolk District Council.

11. To discuss the Parish Council's response to D Day Beacons. Agree on a course of action.

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item. Cllr Baldwin led the discussion and three options were discussed. It was agreed that the Parish Council should mark D Day in some way. Venues such as the Village Hall, St Margarets Church and the Play Area were discussed. There was general agreement to purchase a Lamp of Peace. A working group will be convened to discuss the next steps (which must include a risk assessment). Clerk to schedule on the agenda for the March meeting to discuss the report from the working group.

12. To discuss and agree the Council's biodiversity policy.

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item. It was unanimously agreed to adopt the policy and the Clerk was asked to publish the policy on the Council's website. Cllr Baldwin said that there are named councillors with responsibility to deliver particular actions. Clerk to publish.

13. To discuss and agree the Parish Pride initiative, bulb planting, bat boxes and litter pick and agree on next steps.

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item. The Chairman said that since the report was published confirmation has been received from South Norfolk Council that the grant application for £300 has been successful and the money has been paid into the Parish bank account. Cllr Baldwin said that the initiative had been designed to bring the Community along with the Parish Council. Advertising will be put into Chet Contact, Facebook and the Parish noticeboards. Clerk and Cllr Baldwin to take forward.

14. To discuss the issue of ditch flooding and agree on a course of action.

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item, and there was discussion in the public participation session on the topic. Cllr Baldwin and Langley Abbey Estates will work collaboratively to remedy the flooding at High Barns. Cllr Adcock (S) asked all present to report as many highway issues, such as flooding, to Highways directly. Cllr Baldwin and Gary Overland met and walked the roadway, the ditch was full due to extreme rainfall (as were other ditches in the parish) and around 2in of water had overspilt the ditch onto the road.

15. To discuss the e-mail dated 6 December 2023 from Norfolk County Council regarding the Bird Hide and agree on a course of action.

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item. It was agreed that neither option would be ruled out and responsibility was delegated to Cllr Adcock (S) to engage with this work going forward. With the agreement of Council the Clerk handed over the Parish Council paper file relating to the birdhide to Cllr Adcock (S).

16. Banking. To discuss adding another signatory to the Unity Bank account. Agree on a course of action.

The Clerk explained that in addition to herself there was only one other active signatory on the account which left the Council open to risk. The Council's Financial Regulations state that payments should be authorised by two members of the Council. Cllr Baldwin offered to be a signatory and this was unanimously agreed. Clerk to action.

17. Banking. To discuss opening a Unity Bank savings account. Agree on a course of action.

Cllr Sullivan said that it was the duty of the Council to receive interest on Council funds if such interest was available. The Instant Access Savings account attached to the Unity Bank Current Account pays around 2.5% interest. After a short discussion it was agreed to instruct the Clerk to move the Council's reserves, of £7k, into an Instant Access Savings account.

18. To note progress against the Parish Action Plan, and discuss issues arising.

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item. Cllr Baldwin asked for positive confirmation that the assets had been checked, as required by the Parish Insurance. Cllr Sullivan agreed he had checked the telephone box community library and the two War Memorials. Cllr Adcock agreed he would take over the weekly check of the play equipment (Clerk to send check sheet). Regarding

the Local speaker it was agree to invite Cllr Kay Mason-Billing and a representative of the Police to attend the next meeting. Clerk to action.

19. To consider moving the date of the May 2024 meetings from 7 to 21 May. Agree on a course of action.

Councillors agreed to the date change.

20. To consider maintenance issues in the Play Area and agree on a course of action.

It was noted that the budget for 2024/5 included funds for a canopy to be retro-fitted over the slide to help reduce bird mess on the slide.

21. To agree on the next steps for the memorial for a local resident and ex-Parish Councillor.

It was agreed that Cllr Adcock (S) will work together with Cllr Bunn, on behalf of the Village Hall Organising Committee (VHOC), to fundraise towards a memorial. A bench was discussed to be purchased and placed in the Play Area, land which the local resident was instrumental in securing for the Parish. Cllr Bunn said that she had spoken to his family who were happy for such a memorial. There was discussion around a joint unveiling ceremony between the VHOC and the Parish Council. It was noted by Cllr Moore that £150 has been set aside in the 2024/25 budget towards the memorial.

22. Reports from;

a. Parish Clerk

The Clerk said that that she has recently corresponded with HMRC regarding the outstanding matter concerning the fine payment. The complaint has been upheld, but the return of the fine paid is yet to be credited back into Parish Council funds.

The Clerk said that she has passed another unit toward her Certificate in Local Council Administration, with 23 out of 30 units completed, and is on track to become fully qualified by May 2024.

Cllr Adcock (S) took the new tree plaque and the playground sign to put up in the Play area.

b. County and District Councillor, Kay Mason-Billig

None received.

c. District Councillor, Jeremy Rowe

Circulated by e-mail.

d. Police

None received.

e. Tree Warden

None.

23. Planning:

To receive new planning applications and make comment, To receive results and updates on outstanding applications.

None.

24. Highways:

To receive a report on outstanding highways issues.

The Chairman said that no update had been given by the District Authority on the lowering of the speed limit along Langley Street and Langley Green, however as soon as a result was received it would be circulated.

25. Finance

Councillors agreed that they had all read the report circulated in advance for this item. The Clerk said that there was one additional invoice payment to be added to those circulated;

| To/For | Amount £ |
|---|----------|
| Clerk salary and expenses | 328.25 |
| Trainers expenses – Norfolk Association of Local Councils | 3.60 |

26. To receive updates from individual Council Members (for information only)

None.

27. To receive any items for inclusion on the next Parish Council meeting agenda.

- IT Update.

28. To confirm date of the next Parish Council Meeting as Tuesday 5 March 2023 in Langley with Hardley Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

Confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8.46