

EDWARDSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Edwardstone Parish Council held at Edwardstone Parish Hall on Monday 15 May 2023 at 8.00pm.

Present: P Baker, M Gibson, T Wood, L Smythe, J Morgan, R Jones (Clerk)

1. The Chairman welcomed new Councillors L Smythe and J Morgan to the Council.

2. **Election of Chairman of the Council** – P Baker was re-elected as Chairman of the Council. Proposed by M Gibson. Seconded by T Wood

3. **Election of Vice-Chairman of the Council** – T Wood was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council. Proposed by M Gibson. Seconded by P Baker

4. **Election 2023 and Co-Option of Councillors**

The Clerk reported that, following the recent election, the Council had two Councillor vacancies still to be filled. Former Councillor D Williams had expressed his interest in returning to the role but was unable to attend. It was agreed to co-opt D Williams to the Council, pending his acceptance and to seek another person to fill the remaining position.

All elected Councillors completed an Acceptance of Office form.

It was agreed that the Chairman would send letters of thanks to the two outgoing Councillors - Sharron Norman and Paul Clarke in recognition of their long service to the Council.

5. **Apologies for absence** – None

6. **Councillors' Declarations of Interests in any item on this Agenda** - None

7. **Appointment of representatives, if required:**

- **Babergh Area Committee of SALC** - None
- **Boxford Community Council** - None

8. **Minutes of the Meeting of 20 March 2023** – Approved.

The following updates were given: Bus Shelter - The contractor (Bartsw) who had been awarded the contract had failed to respond to e-mails or calls and the Chairman had now contacted two alternative contractors. He had received one quote and was waiting for the second.

Defibrillator: It was agreed that J Morgan would now be responsible for monitoring the defibrillator. He had spoken to Paul Clarke, the outgoing Councillor responsible, who had undertaken to transfer relevant forms and emails to him. J Morgan would contact the Community Heartbeat Trust on the matters of the emergency phone.

9. **Questions from Members of the Public** – None

10. **To consider Planning Matters:**

10.1 Planning applications received – DC/23/02128 Land West Of Mill Green - Full Planning Application - Erection of 4No dwellings (revised scheme to that approved under DC/20/02755 and DC/21/03820) – The Council raised no objection to the revised application on the understanding that the plot was of sufficient size to accommodate the planned dwellings and that access to land at the rear was not compromised. There was also concern over whether the properties would meet an 'affordability' criteria.

10.2 Planning Decisions received – None

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10.3 Other Planning Matters – None

11. Neighbourhood Plan Update –

11.1 Report from Working Group – M Gibson reported that the working group had been looking at the following:

Housing - it was felt that it should be left to future developers to prove that any proposed development would fulfil a local housing need.

Environment – the group had revisited the part of the plan dealing with solar farms and wind turbines, to make sure that there were enough safeguards against major development proposals.

Landscape – the group would be looking again at the protection of rural and agricultural sites, in the event of developments such as, for example, equine or dog kennel projects.

Bio-Diversity – Subject to funding being available, the group was proposing to ask Suffolk Wildlife Trust to survey the Parish and report on opportunities for further action to protect and enhance biodiversity - for example, the development of new wildlife corridors.

11.2 **Draft Plan.** Councillors had seen the first draft of the plan and been asked to comment on it. The main discussion focused on (1) the proposal not to allow private development outside the 'settlement boundary', apart from exception sites for affordable housing, and (2) whether a Housing Needs survey should be commissioned from the consultants who had prepared the Design Guide, to be incorporated into the final draft for community consultation. Councillors referred the following back to the working group:

1. The Council supported the working group's proposal, subject to funding being available, to ask the Wildlife Trust to survey the parish, so that the outcomes could be taken into account in preparing the final draft for consultation.
2. The Council feels it is important to include an element of flexibility outside the settlement boundary to allow private development by existing residents with family housing needs.
3. The Council asked the working group to commission a Housing Needs Assessment (subject to funding being available) to enable the Neighbourhood Plan to be based on factual information and housing need projections, rather than leaving the issue unaddressed. Councillors were mindful of the needs of young people growing up in the village, and of ageing residents, whose future housing needs should be recognised and taken account of in the plan before the final draft was presented to the community for the second round of consultation.

12. Highway & Footpath Matters

12.1 Footpath Cutting – It was formally agreed to continue to use Garden Arbs Ltd to carry out footpath cutting.

12.2 Footpath Leaflet – Still awaiting feedback on the draft from SCC representative.

12.3 Other Highways & Footpath Matters – The Clerk had received correspondence from Aldham PC regarding a campaign to introduce a local 20mph speed limit. The Clerk to forward the information to Councillors.

13. Chairman's & Clerk's reports and correspondence - None

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14. Climate Change –

14.1 Report from the joint meeting on Wildfires and Community Emergency Plan - The Chairman reported that a joint response regarding the provision of emergency facilities such as the Parish Hall was being prepared and he was awaiting feedback from other Parish Councils and Suffolk County Council.

14.2 Current State of Projects – Edwardstone White Horse had agreed in principle for two EV charging points to be installed there. The Chairman was authorised to complete the full application form so that the project could proceed to site survey.

15. Financial Matters:

15.1. Statement of Finances & Orders for Payment - Approved

15.2. End of year accounts – Due to an anomaly in the receipts and payments section of the accounts, it was agreed that further work was required, to be completed by the Chairman and Clerk following the meeting.

15.3. Annual Governance Statement (s 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) – Approved and signed

15.4. Annual Accounting Statements (s 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) – Approved and signed

15.5. Renewal of Insurance from 1.6.23 – it was agreed to renew with Zurich Municipal at a cost of £343.98

15.6. Applications for charitable donations – The following donations were agreed:

Edwardstone PCC - £600.00

Edwardstone Millennium Green Trust - £750.00

Edwardstone Parish Hall - £700.00

Boxford Playing Fields £ 300.00

All donations to be paid in two equal amounts.

15.7. Annual increment to the Parish Clerk's salary w.e.f 1 April 2023 – It was agreed to approve the increase of the Clerk's Annual Salary by one spinal point on the National Pay Scale

15.8. The Clerk to complete an annual Community Infrastructure Levy return to Babergh DC

16. Future Agenda Items – Councillor vacancies, Defibrillator

17. Date of next meeting – Monday 17th July 2022 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 10.30pm