

**DRAFT Minutes of meeting of
Dennington Parish Council held at the Jubilee Hall
on Monday 14th March 2022 at 7.30pm**



1. Present

Councillors

Matthew Lunn (Chair) Robert Wardley Doris Dearing Sam Steward
John Calver Nick Watts

Resident Shirley Cunningham

Others County Councillor Stephen Burroughes joined remotely, until item 6.

Ward Councillor Lydia Freeman (until item 6) Lydia Kirk (clerk)

There were no apologies for absence.

Absent Rebecca Fox

2. Cllrs Steward and Watts declared an interest in item 8.

3. The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council on 10th January 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

4. There were no matters arising.

5. Chair's Report

The Chair welcomed Ward Councillor Freeman to her first meeting of Dennington Parish Council and thanked her for the grant funding to purchase the village's second speed indicator sign. It is currently installed on Saxtead Road and seems to be working well.

Council tax bills for the next financial year have now been issued and that Chair was sorry to note that there is a 3.1% overall increase. He had hoped all tiers of local government would be showing some restraint regarding increases in the current financial climate. The Parish Council element of the bill is 0.5% lower than the previous year. *RW also noted that he was sad to see the large increase to the Police and Crime Commissioner as he thought that the proposed improvements to the Control Room could have been put back a year or two.*

Public Session

The public session was brought forward so Cllrs Freeman and Burroughes could participate before leaving for other meetings.

Cllr Burroughes reported that Suffolk County Council had had to raise its element of the Council Tax bill but that they were concentrating on children's services, adult care and environmental initiatives. The government has awarded Suffolk a levelling-up County Deal.

Suffolk County Council is cutting its ties with Russian companies and showing support to Ukraine with its current struggles. He advised that more details will be coming out this week as to how UK residents can help house refugees.

He also advised that he should have funding available from April for the villages Platinum Jubilee celebrations if needed.

ACTION LK to inform the Jubilee committee as such.

ML noted how Dennington already carries out significant maintenance and improvement works that should fall to SCC Highways- clearing fallen trees off SCC land, painting entrance signs, cutting hedges etc. He asked Cllr. Burroughes if Parish Councils can replace signage in the village and then be reimbursed for the costs of the

actual signs, noting this would save SCC significant labour costs. Cllr. Burroughes responded that SCC currently does not have funding to replace signs and that Parish Councils aren't insured to replace the signage. County Councillors can use their locality budget to pay for signage, but it is noted that these signs would not become Parish Council assets and would still belong to SCC. Cllr. Burroughes shared Councillors frustrations regarding the state of signage across the county but did stress that this issue is being pushed and that some resolution on this is hoped for later this year. NW asked how there was funding for the Quiet Lanes Project which has limited benefits when there is not funding for fundamental highways signage.

The issue of Frostley Bridge- damaged by a SCC snowplough in February 2021- has again been raised by residents. Temporary traffic lights have been in place since August and it isn't due to be repaired until 2023. It is difficult for wide agricultural vehicles to cross the bridge with the temporary fencing up. Cllr Burroughes will ask Highways about this and see if anything can be done to speed up the repair works.

ML has been in contact with the local MP about his concerns with BT's digital voice roll outs which leave rural residents very vulnerable in power cuts. The back up in place currently only lasts an hour or so but local power cuts can last for days. ML received a response from a government minister which was factually untrue. ML reiterated that Suffolk County Council has statutory responsibility for emergencies and should be concerned about this. Cllr. Burroughes will pass this on to the leaders of SCC and suggested that ML takes his unsatisfactory response from the government minister further.

Cllr. Freeman reported that there are some leftover oak trees from East Suffolk Council's Treebilee scheme. She wasn't aware of the Community Governance Review but suggested Cllr. Maurice Cook is contacted about it.

The resident present had no questions or comments.

6. Clerks Report

The clerk has started working on the year-end accounts and audit preparation. A VAT claim up to 31st January 2022 has been submitted.

The preparing for CILCA briefing from February was postponed until March. The clerk found it very useful and will consider whether she can complete the qualification within the required 12 months before enrolling on the course.

As per recent emails, there are several events coming up to which Parish Council representatives are invited.

NALC has confirmed this week that clerks will be due a 1% pay increase to be backdated from 1st April 2021.

7. Responsible Financial Officer's Report:

a) The following payments were proposed by RW, seconded by JC and carried unanimously:

Reference Number	Amount	Payee	Details
P31 21-22	£22.80	SALC	6 months payroll
P32 21-22	£863.20	L. Kirk	Pay to 31 st March, including backdated pay rise
P33 21-22	£8.60	HMRC	PAYE

b) Funds received since the last meeting were noted:
VAT reclaim £927.37

A payment made since the last meeting was noted:

P30 21-22 £119.88 wildflowers for Jubilee

In addition, £1,000 was transferred from the active saver account to the current account on 03/02/2022 and again today, 14th March, to cover the payments above.

c) The bank balances as at 28.02.2022 were:

Current Account £322.34 Active Saver £7,851.66

Equipment Account £7,460.44

- d) The bank statements and bank reconciliation, as at 28.02.22, were reviewed by Councillor Steward in the absence of the Examining Officer.
- e) The year-to-date receipts and payments account was considered alongside the budgeted figures. It was noted that the speed sign expenditure had erroneously been allocated to the wrong category and will be amended and reissued.

8. Planning

Cllrs Steward and Watts left the meeting.

White House Farm Saxtead Road Dennington Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 8AW

Ref. No: DC/22/0628/FUL Proposed general purpose agricultural building

Councillors agreed that this proposal was in keeping with neighbouring buildings and sited in an unobtrusive location. RW proposed supporting the scheme. JC seconded this and it was carried unanimously. **ACTION LK** to respond to ESC.

Cllrs Steward and Watts returned to the meeting.

9. Highways and Footpaths Issues

- i) RW had a site meeting regarding a possible vehicle charging point. The provisional location near the bus stop was not logistically suitable but the company is now in discussions with the Village Hall Committee about locating a charger at the Village Hall car park.
- ii) RW has reported several potholes in the village to SCC Highways.
- iii) RW will paint the two finger signs in the village and noted that the name plate on the gateway sign is rusting.
- iv) The Parish Council has cleared six trees that fell on Boxbush Lane during the recent storms.

ACTION NW will see if the fallen tree on Footpath 20 still needs removing.

10. **The Platinum Jubilee oak tree and plaque from East Suffolk Council has been received.** The parish council will hold the funds, and include a ring-fenced Jubilee category on the accounts. SC reported that the school is getting involved in the event and that children at the school will each be given a Jubilee mug. The Jubilee plans will be detailed in the next newsletter. There will be a Jubilee bench on the village green but this is being funded by someone else. The committee are next meeting on 1st April. ML will speak to RF who is the Parish Council's representative on the committee but hasn't yet attended a meeting. ML wanted to thank the committee for their efforts in organising the Jubilee events.

11. **East Suffolk Council's Community Governance Review was discussed.** The review is currently in stage 1, the consultation with its stakeholders, and reports from the review will be expected in autumn.

There were concerns that it would be difficult for the parish to have a voice if merged with other local councils.

Dennington Parish Council considered that there is no need to change its boundaries or be amalgamated and that it should carry on as it is. Two new Councillors are needed to fill the recent vacancies and ML urged Councillors to help canvas residents.

ACTION ML will submit a response to the review on behalf of the Council.

There were also concerns about the number of forums and meetings that Parish Councils are currently being asked to attend, and concerns that some of these events provide limited value and are not a good use of public money.

12. **Correspondence received since the date of the last meeting was considered.**

Mary Mann passed her thanks to all Councillors who had contributed to her retirement gift, which was very much appreciated. The clerk has re-taxed the tractor mower.

13. **There were no matters to be raised at the next meeting**

14. **The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 7.00pm on Monday 9th May 2022 which will be the Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.** *There being no further business, the Chair thanked Councillors for attending and closed the meeting at 8.45pm.*