

DENNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of meeting held on Monday 13th November 2023 at 7.30pm



1. **Councillors Present**

Robert Wardley (Vice Chair) Doris Dearing Nick Hopewell-Smith
Vashti Mouncer Kevin Shelver Sam Steward

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr. Matt Lunn (working) and Cllr. John Calver (prior engagement). In the Chair's absence, Cllr. Wardley chaired the meeting.

In Attendance

Lydia Kirk (clerk) Shirley Cunningham Jo Denton Kate Viscardi

County Councillor Burroughes, District Councillor Langdon-Morris (both at a Flood Resilience Group Meeting at Framlingham) and District Councillor Owen (ill) also sent their apologies.

2. **Cllr. Steward declared an 'other interest' in the payments as a representative of the Village Hall and Sports Club.**
3. **The Minutes of the meeting of 4th September 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Vice Chair.**
4. **There were no matters arising.**
5. **The Vice Chair read the Chair's written report.** The Mini-300 speed indicator device has been returned to the manufacturer. They have not been able to replicate the fault but the charge controller settings have been amended and the unit appears to be working satisfactorily.
6. **Clerk's Report**

The clerk thanked everyone who helped out during the recent flooding and noted how well the village came together in the crisis. Up-to-date guidance on how to claim government flood assistance and information regarding Flood Re is on our website. The planning application regarding the amendment to the fence at Little Oak's Playschool has been permitted.

The Council's insurance with Zurich has been renewed.

A printed copy of the definitive map has been placed in the meeting file to help when discussing rights of way issues.

The clerk is looking forward to attending SALC's annual conference at the end of the month.

NALC's pay claim, submitted in February 2023, has now been agreed. This equates to a £1/hour pay rise and, under the terms of the clerk's contract, this is to be back-dated to April.

SALC's Councillor Basics training sessions are now fully booked until March. New Councillors are encouraged to sign up for this training.

7. Responsible Financial Officer's Report:

a) The following payments were approved:

Reference	Amount	Payee	Details
P19	£20.00	Dennington Village Hall	Venue hire November
P20	£200.00	Dennington Village Hall	Donation
P21	£55.00	East Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau	Donation
P22	£450.00	Dennington Church	Donation for village lighting
P23	£55.00	East Anglian Air Ambulance	Donation
P24	£700.00	Dennington Sports Club	Donation
P25	£350.00	Tree Incarnate	Replacement oak posts for gateway signs

b) Receipts and payments since the last meeting were noted.

Payments:

P16	£960.20	L. Kirk	Pay to 30.09.23
P17	£168.20	HMRC	PAYE to 05.10.23
P18	£22.80	SALC	6 months payroll

Receipts:

04/09/23	£17.68	Barclays	Interest
04/09/23	£20.06	Barclays	Interest
29/09/23	£5,400	East Suffolk Council	Precept
20/10/23	£1,000	Consolidated Charities	Donation towards next tractor mower

c) The bank balances as at 30.10.2023 were:

Current account	£ 9,294.64
Equipment account	£ 7,507.36
Savings account	£ 6,617.37

It was agreed to transfer £2,000 to the Equipment account, comprising the Consolidated Charities' donation and the Council's annual reserved funding. It was also agreed to remove G. Schofield from the banking mandate and to add Cllr. Shelver.

ACTION Clerk to obtain required forms from the bank in this regard.

d) The bank statements and bank reconciliation were reviewed by the Examining Officer.

e) The year-to-date receipts and payments account was noted.

8. Highways and Footpaths Issues

8.1 Cllr. Wardley has ordered the required oak posts and he and Cllr. Steward will carry out the repairs and refurbishment to the gateway signs shortly.

8.2 Councillor Steward proposed the Council purchase a speed radar from Framlingham Town Council for £500, subject to inspection and service history. This was seconded by Cllr. Hopewell-Smith and carried unanimously. It was agreed to seek volunteers for a Community Speed Watch scheme and it was noted that at least 6 volunteers are required.

8.3 Cllr. Hopewell-Smith noted that signs throughout the village are in a poor condition. The clerk advised that County Councillors should soon be awarded a budget for signage in their areas.

ACTION Cllrs to circulate photos of any signs that need urgent attention for the clerk to collate.

Cllr. Wardley was disappointed to report that the damaged sign near the Church still has not been replaced, despite SCC confirming that they had received the insurance payout in May. He will continue to chase this. He has reported several blocked drains in the village and encouraged other Councillors to report these issues online too.

9. Recent flooding in the village during Storm Babet was discussed.

The Vice Chair sent his thoughts and best wishes to those who had had flood water enter their homes or damage their property or cars. He thanked everybody who helped out in various ways and was pleased that the village pulled together again during this emergency.

The Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr. Steward met with District Cllr Grey to see first-hand the damage in the village. The Chair and Vice Chair have produced a joint report on Dennington, and Cllr. Grey has produced a report on each village across the ward, including Dennington. He is sending this to various agencies and government ministers pressing for urgent action to ensure that this does not happen again.

It was noted that 12 cars got stuck in the floods and local farmers', including Cllr. Steward, assisted greatly. Ten people had to sleep in the Village Hall on the night of the flooding, and Cllr. Wardley also hosted 4 people. Cllr. Lunn suggested that the Council considers purchasing 200 sandbags and camp beds for use in the Village Hall during future emergencies. There were issues about where to store these items and vermin control as well as concerns about the efficacy of sandbags and difficulty filling them. It was agreed that Cllr. Wardley, as the village's Emergency Adviser, and the Clerk will work on a questionnaire to go to all residents asking what resources they have to help in future emergencies, and whether they might be able to accommodate people. It is hoped that the Parish Council could then contact residents from the Emergency list and the camp beds would not be necessary. Cllr. Mouncer offered her assistance with this.

10. Draft budget figures for 2024-2025 were discussed and will be ratified at January's meeting.

There was a suggestion to make a donation to the Royal British Legion, but Councillors felt this charity was already well supported by residents within the village. It was instead agreed to increase the Citizens Advice Bureau's donation to £100 as this service is of huge benefit to many people locally. The clerk's increased pay rate was considered, as well as other costs that are likely to increase next year such as insurance. It was agreed to budget £1,500 for asset maintenance again.

ACTION Clerk to ascertain what precept increase would be per Band D property based on the draft budget figures discussed and report back, for further consideration at the Council's next meeting.

11. Discuss playing field:

11.1) It was agreed to donate all Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds currently held, £3095, towards a replacement swing for the play area subject to the Sports Club having sufficient funding for the balance of the costs. Cllr. Mouncer reported that D. Cllr. Grey would also provisionally donate £750 to this project.

11.2) Cllr. Wardley reported issues with dogs messing on the playing area and other communal village areas and suggested that the Council considers applying for a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) that all dogs here are kept on leads. Cllr. Hopewell-Smith was concerned that this penalised responsible dog owners, and that extra signage about picking up dog waste might be more appropriate. He asked if that the PSPO's restrictions could be regarding clearing up dog mess rather than being on leads. **ACTION** Clerk to look into whether PSPOs can be used for different controls, how they are established and enforced and whether there are any costs involved.

12. **It was noted that Nick Watts has kindly offered to donate a Christmas tree for the village green this year and Cllr. Mouncer has lights for the tree.** With the growing costs of electricity, Cllr. Steward offered to pay for the electricity used in this regard. **ACTION** Clerk to thank Nick Watts on behalf of the village.

13. **Correspondence**

Letter from the Consolidated Charities Trust regarding a possible Coronation Memorial in the village- it was noted that the Council holds £211 in its Coronation fund. It was suggested that the proposed replacement swing at the play area could be a commemorative item for King Charles's Coronation. Cllr. Wardley will report this back to the Consolidated Charities and ask if they would also consider supporting this.

An email from Denham Parish Council regarding bus network improvements – it was agreed to support their approach and it was noted that several residents in the village would benefit from the bus service to Diss being restored, particularly on market days.

Zero Hour requesting Parish Council support for Climate and Ecology Bill- it was agreed not to support this.

Complaint regarding the height of the soil mound outside Little Oaks Playschool- the Chair and Vice Chair have met with the Consolidated Charities in this regard. The Charity has sent a letter to the playschool but no response has been received to date. It was agreed that the Council will write to East Suffolk Council to request enforcement of the planning conditions set out in DC/20/5019/FUL.

A request to plant narcissus bulbs around village signs- Cllr. Wardley advised that the County Council's permission might be required to plant bulbs here as this land is not owned by the Parish Council.

A resident has asked the Parish Council to intervene with 3 sycamore trees that are due to be felled near Bardolph Cottages against their wishes. The Chair has contacted East Suffolk Council in this regard but the trees are not eligible for a Tree Protection Order. **ACTION** Clerk to contact Housing Association asking them for the reason for the felling and to report the Council's actions to the resident.

PUBLIC SESSION

Shirley Cunningham asked for confirmation on which items from this meeting the Council would like publishing on the website.

Kate Viscardi reported on two upcoming events at the Village Hall, to which everyone is welcome.

14. **Councillor Reports**

Cllr. Mouncer has set up a Facebook page for the village and has been sharing relevant posts on there.

Cllr. Steward reported that the Village Hall Committee has not held any meetings recently. The Sports Committee has held a meeting to discuss the deteriorating condition of some of the play equipment.

15. **Matters to be raised at the next meeting.**

Agree budget and precept for 2024-2025

Consider Public Space Protection Order further

Update on purchase of speed radar and Community Speed Watch scheme

16. **The next meeting was confirmed as on Monday 8th January 2023.** There being no further business, the Vice-Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.30pm.