

RICKINGHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held Thursday, 1 February 2024
Rickinghall Village Hall

Present: Cllr Gillian Crossley-Holland Cllr Andy Gordon
Cllr Ian Patterson Cllr Brian Rhodes
Cllr Geoff Short (Chair) Cllr Sally Smith

Parish Clerk – Leeann Jackson-Eve
County Cllr Jessica Fleming
2 Members of the Public

7.30pm The Chair welcomed those present and opened the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence:** District Cllr Gilly Morgan.
2. **Casual Vacancies:** There were no applications for seats on the Council, but a member of the public expressed an interest.
3. **To confirm the minutes of the Meeting held on 9 January 2024:** The minutes, circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed as a true record.
4. **Magazine Input:** Cllr Smith.
5. **Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:** Cllr Patterson declared an interest in item 7.1.1 as the owner of the property and was not required to leave the room during the discussion. Cllr Rhodes declared an interest in items 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 as the owner of the property and left the room during the discussion. Cllr Gordon declared an interest in item 7.2.1 as the owner of the property and was not required to leave the room during the discussion.
6. **Public Forum:** County Cllr Fleming reported that the Floods team was in the process of assessing flood reports received during Storm Babet. Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 required that councils investigate significant flooding. The need to investigate was decided on a case-by-case basis considering factors such as source and number of properties affected. Rickinghall had reported at least five residences experiencing internal flooding and therefore qualified for support. Due to the exceptionally high number of qualifying cases, there would be a lag time before further action was taken.

SCC's Cabinet had agreed its draft budget for 2024/25 and final approval would take place at full council on 15th February. The budget responded to cost pressures from inflation and increased service demand and some difficult decisions had been necessary. Arts funding was one element which had been in jeopardy but £7.2m of additional funding had been received from central government and some of that would go on arts.

SCC's Health Scrutiny Committee at its January meeting received an update on progress with the new West Suffolk Hospital building scheduled to open in 2030. Currently archaeological assessment was underway with trial trenching on the Hardwick Manor site. There had been some minor finds of archaeological interest.

County Cllr Fleming had been in touch with SCC's Transport Officer and the Mid Suffolk District Council Communities Officer, and they had confirmed that RBGNS needed to be properly constituted and a viable entity in order to receive significant funding for a new Community Transport bus. As previously noted, one option was for Rickinghall PC to retain ownership and Cllr Fleming confirmed that the registered keeper could be the RBGNS. It was noted that the number of Trustees on the RBGNS needed to be confirmed.

Cllr Rhodes reported that he was unhappy with the planning application process. Delays and mishandling by MSDC had forced him to withdraw his application, an extension to the deadline having been denied, and incur additional architects and planning application fees. County Cllr Fleming advised him to file a complaint.

7. **Planning:**
 - 7.1 **Planning Applications:**
 - 7.1.1 **1 Hillside Meadow.** Ref. DC/24/00416. Householder Application - Conversion of existing cartlodge (first floor) to living accommodation. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.

- 7.1.2 **Bridge House, Bury Road.** Ref. DC/24/00419. Householder Application - Erection of single storey extension to existing kitchen (following demolition of existing conservatory). Installation of new external boiler. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
- 7.1.3 **Bridge House, Bury Road.** Ref. DC/24/00418. Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of single storey extension to existing kitchen (following demolition of existing conservatory). Installation of new external boiler. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
- 7.2 **Notice of Intent to prune/remove tree(s) in the Conservation Area:**
- 7.2.1 **5 St George's Drive.** Ref. DC/24/00177. Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce by 1/3rd and re-shape Beech Tree (T1). It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
- 7.2.2 **4 Brook Park.** Ref. DC/24/00449. Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - To dismantle No.2 Limes (T1 and T2) to ground level and poison roots due to root invasion of building. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
- 7.3 **Notification of Planning Decisions by Mid Suffolk DC:** None.
8. **Progress Reports:**
- 8.1 **Chair:** None.
- 8.2 **Clerk:** The Clerk reported that with regard to the proposed second VAS on Bury Road, the PC had written to the two landowners adjoining the suggested verge siting for the post. SCC required their agreement before evaluating the site. It was noted that one landowner had already replied positively.
9. **Correspondence:**
- 9.1 **MSDC:** The PC noted the Joint Local Validation List Consultation - Monday 22 January 2024 to Monday 4 March 2024.
- 9.2 **RBR PCC:** The PC received the annual request for churchyard funding having already agreed an amount in the January budget setting. The request for an increase would be kept in mind for the following year.
- 9.3 **MSDC:** The PC noted that the increase in the annual cost of emptying dog/litter bins had been lowered to 25% and was now from £37.13 to £49.66 per litter bin and £43.49 to £58.16 per dog bin. Four and 11 bins respectively would cost £838.40.
10. **General Items:**
- 10.1 **Review and Update of Council Documents:** The PC reviewed the documents and it was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to accept the unamended Health and Safety Policy and the new Complaints Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy. These would be reviewed every three years.
- 10.2 **Internal Auditor:** It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to appoint Trevor Brown as internal auditor at a cost of £300.
- 10.3 **Flooding:** It was agreed to share fees of £100 with Botesdale PC towards a two-page flooding article in an upcoming parish magazine. It was noted that the evidence form compiled by Cllr Rhodes had been accepted by SCC and Rickinghall was on the Section 19 list of areas which qualified for further support from the County Council. It was reported that the storm drains had not yet been cleared and Cllr Rhodes had contacted County Cllr Fleming with further information about what needed to be done. It was noted that SCC had sent out information to qualifying residents about £5,000 grants for flood protection. However, prior to making a claim application, residents were required to obtain a survey from a suitably qualified building surveyor. The claim could include up to £500 towards the cost of the surveyor but it was felt that this amount was inadequate.
- 10.4 **Street Sweeping and Path Cutting:** It was RESOLVED, with 5 for and 1 against, to continue a contract with Tim Gaddis for the work in 2024-25 with an annual increase from £10.52/hour to £11.22/hour. This was a rise of 6.7% in line with the state pension increase for 2024-25.
- 10.5 **Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan:** The PC agreed the request by Mid Suffolk District Council for the PIIP to be used as an example of a well-written Plan in their Community Led Planning guidance.
- 10.6 **Community Transport (RBGNS):** Following County Cllr Fleming's report during the Public Forum, it was noted that the Chair would discuss the matter further with Gordon Lawrence.

11. **Finance (as of 31/01/24):**

11.1	Account Balance:	£	31,062.97	
	Bank Balance:	£	31,062.97	
	Income:	£	0.00	

11.2 **Accounts for Payment:**

Admin Payments	£	1,013.86	Not itemised due to GDPR
Street Sweeping etc.	£	182.35	St Clean February 2024
Community Heartbeat Trust	£	72.00	Defib Emergency Phone 2024-25
Community Heartbeat Trust	£	162.00	Defib Support Cost 2024-25

RESOLVED, with all agreed, to approve payment of the accounts above.

Payments by Direct Debit:

HMRC	£	636.79	PAYE for 3 rd qtr 2023-24
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12. **Highways Issues:** None.

13. **Welcome Pack:** None.

14. **Councillors' Reports:**

- Local Charities – A meeting was due to be held in March.
- Local Transport – Cllr Smith had responded to consultation on public bus services by Suffolk County Council and had suggested changes to the timetable servicing students at West Suffolk College which would allow them to take an earlier bus. SCC had responded saying that they would make the request of Simonds Coach & Travel in Diss, who provided the local service.
- Website/Facebook – It was agreed to establish an account on Nextdoor and add the flooding information.

15. **Matters to be brought to attention of the Council:** None.

16. **Next Meeting:** 7 March 2024

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:50pm.