

Minutes from the Winston Parish Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 16th January 2024
at Winston School Room

Present: Will Haag (Chair), Lizzie Taurozevicius (Acting Parish Clerk),
Parish Councillors: Lucy McKenzie and Julie Nightingale
County Councillor: Matthew Hicks
Five members of the Public

1. Apologies received from: Leonora Faggionato (Clerk) and Teresa Davis (District Councillor)
2. Co-opting New Member for Parish Council - The vacancy for post of Parish Councillor has been advertised. Jim Longfield has indicated he would be willing to be Co-opted onto the Council. As no other person had come forward, Will Haag invited Jim to come forward and join the Council and Jim accepted.
3. Declaration Of Interests - None
4. Approval of Minutes from 13th November 2023. The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting, had been displayed on both Parish Council noticeboards and on the Parish Council website. Approval Proposed by Will Haag and Seconded by Lucy McKenzie.
5. Matters Arising - Concerns over Windwhistle and Sunny View. Suffolk County Council have looked into this and have said there are no concerns and the matter is settled. Enquiries are ongoing regarding the query around the fence at the Red House. The landowner responsible for the hedge on Fenn Street, obstructing the 40mph sign, has been contacted and the hedge will be cut by the end of January. Teresa Davis has informed us that the Public Forum on Flooding will be on Friday 26th January 2024 at Debenham Community Centre, with two identical sessions, at 1-3pm or 5-7pm. As regards issues at Stonham Barns it is believed that a planning application due to be heard by the planning committee is recommending refusal and there are ongoing enquiries regarding other matters.
Justification for proposed Donation to The School Room - The Council have heard from Mrs Branch, who said that, if agreed, the donation would help towards the cost of re-oiling the floor of The School Room and the re-painting of the floor in the toilets, and would be much appreciated. The Council agreed that the donation should be made to the PCC.
Maintenance of the Willows on the Green, to be dealt with under Item 11.
Resignation of Tina Denny - the vacant post has been advertised and Jim Longfield has now been co-opted onto the Parish Council.
Retrospective Planning Permission for Rogers Farm - a response was sent to Planning but the application has now been suspended. It is known that the property is currently occupied by Tenants.
6. Report from Matthew Hicks - Matthew explained the huge pressure on the County Council's budget due to the requirements of Children's Services and Adult Care. 76% of the budget is needed for these services. The number of children with Special educational Needs has risen from 5,000 to 8,500, due to increased diagnosis. This means difficult choices have to be made, such as cutting the Arts and Museums grants, but the Council believe the needs of the children must come first. Regrettably, Council Tax will have to be increased and £16 million is to be taken out of Reserves. Jim asked if this would leave the Council in a difficult position? Matthew said that there would still be plenty left, so we would not be in the position of other Councils that have gone bankrupt.*

Matthew was pleased to report that Foxhall Road Recycling Centre has re-opened, after an £8 million pound re-fit. All bins are at ground level and there are many more options for recycling.

Julie mentioned concerns over the potholes at the bottom of Debenham Road. Matthew said he was familiar with the road and that the potholes are caused by frequent freeze/thaw conditions. It is not helped by water run off from fields. Mathew said he would speak to Highways.

*Prior to leaving, Matthew was able to check the amount of money remaining in reserve, and was pleased to reassure the meeting that it amounted to £44million.

7. Report from Teresa Davis. As Councillor Davis was unable to attend the Meeting, the Acting Clerk read out her January 2024 Report.
8. Finance Report - The attached Finance Report was reviewed for the period ending 31.12.23.
9. Budget and Precept for 2024/25 - The attached Budget was reviewed. The Precept will need to increase by £50 but as there are now more houses in the Parish, this won't affect the amount paid. By the end of this financial year, we are expected to have a deficit of £57 but will have a reserve of £1,671.00. Approval of the Budget and Precept was Proposed by Will Haag and Seconded by Lucy McKenzie.
10. Review of Risk Register - The current Risk Register had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The Risk Management criteria was discussed. It was then agreed and approved with the understanding that the Council will follow the guidelines. Jim Longfield suggested that the yearly Litter Pick should also be included. It was agreed by the Council that the Risk Register should be amended accordingly.
11. Village Green Maintenance - Will has been in touch with the contractors. They will grind down the tree stumps and clear the area around them, as soon as it is dry enough to do so. It will cost £500 + VAT. The Green is so waterlogged, there is no possibility of the grass being cut yet, so it was agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.
12. Litter Pick 2024 - Subject to weather conditions on the day, it was agreed to hold the Litter Pick on Saturday 23rd March from 2-4pm. Acting Clerk to contact Mrs Branch, to ask for use of the School Room and to source the necessary equipment from Mrs Walton.
13. Any Other Business - Following on from the discussion about potholes, the meeting was reminded that these need to be reported to Suffolk County Council via their website, using the Highways Reporting Tool.
Green Suffolk are asking for nominations for their Greenest County Awards by 31st January. The Early Bird Christmas Market raised over £500 and the Carol Service collection was over £260.
Dates are not available yet, but the Parish are hoping to hold a Quiz, a Summer Fete and a Pet Service during the year.
14. Date of next Meeting - Monday 22nd April 2024 at 7.30pm in The School Room
The meeting ended at 8.05pm