



Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council

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Minutes of the Environment and Services Committee meeting held on Thursday, 14th November 2024 at 7.30pm at Tower Hall

CHAIRMAN: Cllr J Wright

PRESENT: Cllr J Wright, Cllr B Ward, Cllr M Odam, Cllr K Driver, Cllr D Francis, Cllr R Whiting; Cllr R Nunn

APOLOGIES: Cllr S Taylor (another commitment) Cllr J Westrup

CLERK: Mr Massey (Clerk). Mrs S Stannard (Assistant Clerk). Minutes taken by Mr Massey.

ALSO PRESENT: Members of the Public 2.

1. APOLOGIES & APPROVAL OF ABSENCE, PROTOCOL AND CONDUCT REMINDERS

Cllr Wright reminded Councillors of the Code of Conduct, protocol for debate and statutory rights to film, record, photograph or otherwise report on the proceedings of the meeting.

Cllr Whiting proposed approval of the apologies as listed above. Seconded by Cllr Francis. Resolved with ALL in favour.

2. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2nd OCTOBER 2024

Cllr Ward proposed acceptance of the Environment and Services Committee minutes held on Wednesday, 2nd October 2024 with the correction of the word 'able' in 6c to 'unable'. Seconded by Cllr Odam. Resolved with ALL in favour. The minutes were duly signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLOR INTEREST

Cllr Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest in SCL, Acorn Trees and Greenways.

Cllr Driver declared a non-pecuniary interest in the allotments as an allotment holder.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

a. To Identify Public Participation with Respect to Items on this Agenda

A resident expressed interest in item 8. The chairman declared that the resident would be able to speak for 3 minutes prior to the item being raised.

b. Public Forum – Members of Public/Parish Councillors May Speak on Any Matter

Cllr Francis raise boundary concerns over the works taking place adjacent 693 Foxhall Road. The Chairman explained that the Officers were aware of the situation and a letter will be sent to the occupiers.

5. ALLOTMENTS

a. Report by Allotment Manager

Cllr Westrup was not present to report. The Chairman explained that there has been no significant business since the last meeting.

No matters arising.

b. To Consider and Agree Formation of Allotment Working Group to Action National Allotment Society Recommendations

Cllr Wright reported that an allotment tenant wrote to the Council about the increase in rents and the notification given to allotment tenants on rent increases. Following the receipt of the correspondence legal opinions were obtained from SLCC and the National Allotment Society. The legal opinions were that the Parish Council acted reasonably and in accordance with the tenancy agreement but to conform to national best practice the Council ought to move from charging fees in arrears to charging fees in advance. To change the system Council agreed at the meeting on 7th November 2024 that a Working Panel be formed to make recommendations to the Environment and Services Committee about the best way to implement the recommendation. The Terms of Reference was distributed prior to the meeting. Councillors discussed the Terms of Reference.

Cllr Wright proposed that the Terms of Reference for the Allotment Rents Working Group be approved. Seconded by Cllr Driver. Resolved with ALL in favour.

6. ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

a. To note appointment of consultant to carry out Tree Safety Report for land transferred from East Suffolk Council to the Parish Council

Cllr Wright informed Councillors that the consultant that will carry out the Tree Safety Report for the land recently transferred from East Suffolk Council to the Parish Council has been appointed. It is anticipated that the report will be carried out in the Spring when the canopy condition can be assessed accurately. The amount and consulted was agreed at Parish Council. Councillors noted this.

7. ROADS, VERGES AND FOOTPATHS

a. To Report on Speed Indictor Devices and Speedwatch

Cllr Wright provided Councillors with a report on SIDS and Speedwatch in the parish. Councillors were informed that the Road Safety Banner will be erected soon. Councillors noted this.

b. To Report on ANPRs in the Parish

Cllr Wright informed Councillors that there is no report on ANPRs in the Parish as they never appeared in the Parish from SCC. Councillors noted this.

c. To Agree Inspections of Land Transferred to Parish Council from Chater Land Holdings Ltd and East Suffolk Council

Cllr Wright provided Councillors with background on the various issues and suggested that a site inspection be carried out on all the land transferred to the Parish Council in the last three years.

It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Clerk and Assistant Clerk and any other Councillors that would like to carry out site inspections of all the land transferred to the Parish Council in the last three years and make recommendations to the Council regarding the land.

d. To Agree Submission of Funding Proposal for Widening of Footpaths along The Street

Cllr Whiting provided Councillors with an update on the footpaths along The Street and funding proposal to widen and improve the path. The Assistant Clerk informed councillors that a funding proposal has been submitted to Cllr McCallum and Cllr Lawson for funding from their Suffolk County Council Highways budget for a total of £6,600. Councillors noted the funding.

Cllr Whiting proposed that in principle £6,600 be allocated to the works on The Street with delegated authority given to the Chairman, Vicechairman, Clerk and Assistant Clerk to implement the project. Seconded by Cllr Wright. Resolved with ALL in favour.

8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND AGREE ACTIONS

a. To Consider Correspondence Received Regarding Allotment Tenancy Fees for 2025

An allotment tenant spoke on this item and expressed concerns over the change in rent and notice periods given to allotment holders.

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk informed Councillors about correspondence received regarding the rent increases at the allotments. One of the tenants did not pay the full amount due for the 2024 with an email stating that they are not paying any rent increases since 2019 as according to the tenant the Council did not give enough notice on the increases, and this is not in accordance with the tenancy agreement. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk advised that legal opinions were obtained from the SLCC and National Allotment Society. The opinions stated that the Council acted reasonably and in accordance with the tenancy agreement. The correspondence and legal opinions were discussed.

Cllr Whiting proposed that the tenant be informed that the Council has acted reasonably and in accordance with the tenancy agreement and that the outstanding rents due should be paid before the end of November 2024 as per the tenancy agreement. Seconded by Cllr Wright. Resolved with MAJORITY in favour.

9. DETERMINATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

No Matters Arising

10. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20:03pm.