

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 8th November 2022.

Councillors present: John Gale (Chairman), Sylvia Pettitt and Helyn Dudley.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (clerk), County Councillor Bobby Bennett and District Councillor Mike Chester.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Guy Holland Bosworth, Geoffrey Ingham and Alan Johansen and the reason for absence accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda.

No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda and no dispensation requests were received.

3. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th September 2022.

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.

4. Public session.

No issues were raised.

5. County Councillor's Report.

County Councillor Bobby Bennett spoke about Suffolk County Council's *Winter Matters* and *Surviving Winter* campaigns.

6. District Councillor's Report.

Mike Chester presented his report which is available on the Parish Council's website at <http://ousden.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/meetings/meetings-reports/8th-november-2022/>

7. Police issues.

There have been reports of hare coursing in the area. If anyone sees any hare coursing, they should dial 999.

8. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting.

There was one outstanding councillor action.

9. Finance

a) Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- J P Kirk – expenses – LGA 1972, s111 - **£9.50**
- Moulton Parish Council – 1/5 of cost of clerk's Essentials of being a good employer' training - LGA 1972, s111 - **£6.24**
- H Dudley – travel expenses to collect Quiet Lanes signs from Ipswich - LGA 1972, s111 - **£30.60**
- McGregor Services – grass cutting – Open Spaces Act 1906, ss 9 and 10 - **£60.00**

Sylvia Pettitt and Helyn Dudley signed the Schedule of Payments. The Chairman countersigned it.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings

No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting.

It was resolved that the statement of receipts and payments would be approved.

Receipts

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
13/09/2022	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£0.35

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
01/09/2022	361/9g	Electricity St Barnabas	EDF	£8.00
12/09/2022	343/8f	Pension payment	Risby Parish Council	£16.00
14/09/2022	375/9a	Clerk's expenses	Joanne Kirk	£18.10
14/09/2022	375/9a	Phone costs	Risby Parish Council	£15.93
14/09/2022	375/9a	Print cartridge 1/5	Risby Parish Council	£8.88
14/09/2022	375/9a	Insurance	Business Services at CAS Ltd	£338.88
14/09/2022	378/13a	Donation	Suffolk Accident Rescue Service	£50.00

14/09/2022	343/8f	Hedge cutting	McGregor Services	£108.00
14/09/2022	375/9a	Scribe accounting software	Starboard Systems Ltd	£138.00
20/09/2022	378/13b	Donation	The Voluntary Network	£50.00
30/09/2022	361/9g	Clerk's salary	Joanne Kirk	£250.29
03/10/2022	343/8f	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£120.00
03/10/2022	361/9g	Electricity St Barnabas	EDF	£10.00
04/10/2022	361/9g	Website hosting fee	Community Action Suffolk	£60.00
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook				

d) **Bank balances as of 26th October 2022**

Lloyds Bank Current Account	£348.77
Lloyds Bank reserve account	£6,756.52
Total in Banks	£7,105.29

Sylvia Pettitt verified and signed the bank statements.

e) **Signatory to complete the checklist of Internal Controls**

Sylvia Pettitt completed the checklist of internal controls.

f) **Contribution of £100 to Suffolk County Council for the Quiet Lanes project.**

It was resolved that a payment of £100 would be approved.

g) **Budget 2023/24, financial summary and reserves balance**

Outgoings have risen in the last year with costs which used to be covered by Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council now being passed on to parish councils. One example is election costs. The next parish council elections are due in May 2023 and West Suffolk Council has quoted the following costs:

- Uncontested election: approximately £100.
- Contested election with district council elections uncontested £2,000 - £3,000
- Contested election with district council elections also contested £1,500 - £2,000

Ousden Parish Council has £750 in its reserve for election costs.

Ousden Parish Council has also been notified of the new pay scales for local government employees which are backdated to 1st April 2022.

There are also proposals to change the Local Council Tax Reduction scheme and these proposals have been included in the tax base figures for Ousden. (see 9h below). As a result of the Community Governance Review, the tax base for Ousden has increased with 5 properties in Dunstall Green Road moving into Ousden Parish.

Current reserves are:

Reserve	Opening Balance	Transfers	Spend	Receipts	Current Balance
Earmarked					
Election costs	£700.00	£50.00			£750.00
Emptying of bins	£225.00				£225.00
Defibrillator maintenance	£89.00	£50.00			£139.00
Clerk and councillor training	£75.00	£35.00			£110.00
Maintenance of fixed assets					£0.00
Village project	£250.00	£100.00			£350.00
Total	£1,339.00	£235.00			£1,574.00
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	£1,339.00	£235.00			£1,574.00
GENERAL FUND					£5,531.29
TOTAL FUNDS					£7,105.29

It was resolved that:

- Ousden Parish Council would support the changes to the tax base as detailed in 9h below.
- The 2023/24 budget would be approved.

- The backdated pay for the clerk from 1st April – 30th November 2022 would be paid at the end of November and future payments increased in line with the new pay scales. The Chairman had checked the figures prior to the meeting and confirmed that they were correct.
- The precept request would be £9,643. The parish council element for a band D household will be £74.16 per annum an increase from £69.33 which equates to £4.83 per annum per band D household, an increase of 6.97%. The clerk and Chairman agreed to sign the Parish Estimates form once it has been completed by the clerk.

h) Email from West Suffolk Council about proposed changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2023-24.

This is the scheme run by West Suffolk Council to support families in the greatest need by giving them a reduction in their Council Tax (approximately 4,700 families). At the moment this is capped at 91.5% so families pay 8.5% of their CT bill, but the proposal is to change this to 95 or 100%. This would mean that the tax base for Ousden would reduce and the precept payment for other residents would increase.

i) Email from West Suffolk Council about elections costs in May 2023.

See 8g above.

10. To discuss the any planning issues.

The following application came in after the agenda was published:

- a) DC/22/1881/OUT - Land off Dunstall Green Road, Ousden - One dwelling.

It was resolved that a planning meeting would be held on Tuesday 15th November at 6pm.

11. To discuss any highways/Rights of Way issues/tree/transport issues.

a) Update on the Quiet Lanes Project.

Posts have been installed and the signs are due to be collected on 16th November.

b) Update on the speeding forum attended by John Gale and possible measures to tackle speeding in Ousden (Setting up a Community Speedwatch scheme, 20mph speed zone).

It was resolved that this item would be postponed until the next meeting.

c) Update on the damaged road sign in Lady's Green.

The damaged directional signs from Lady's Green will likely be suitable for re-use with a bit of minor panel beating but will need new brackets and fittings as well as a pole. As the signs themselves are the major cost, this will make replacement far cheaper. Suffolk County Council is hoping to reclaim all the costs from the Third Party involved in the accident.

d) East Suffolk Council's Rural Mobility Survey.

The clerk agreed to complete the survey.

12. Update on the "Essentials of a Good Employer" training attended by the clerk.

The clerk attended the training which was very informative and gave updates about current employment law. This includes changes to employment contracts introduced in April 2020 and health and safety information relating to home working. The Parish Council is waiting for updated documents from SALC which it can tailor to meet its own needs.

13. To discuss any village issues:

a) Tree planting on 29th November 2022.

A site has been chosen and a working party will be meeting at 10am on 29th November.

b) Dog bin in Rockall.

There have been two responses to the letter delivered to residents. There has been one objection and one email of support provided it is emptied regularly. It was resolved that the bin would be removed from its current location and a new site found instead of Rockall.

c) Community Governance Review decision notice for Dunstall Green Road – for information only.

Five properties will move into Ousden parish in April 2023.

14. To discuss any correspondence.

- a) Email from Peter Gergely about his photographic service of historical buildings and churches – for information only.

15. Any other business for noting or including on the agenda.

The following items are noting:

The VAS is not working properly. It is possible that the VAS will need to be replaced with the cost split between Ousden, Hargrave and Depden.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.17 pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated