

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 9th January 2024.

Councillors present: John Gale (Chairman), Guy Holland-Bosworth, Geoffrey Ingham, Edward Page-Turner, Helyn Dudley and Sylvia Pettitt.

Also present: Amanda Whaley (clerk) and District Councillor Mike Chester.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from County Councillor Bobby Bennett.

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 11th November 2023 and the planning meeting held on Wednesday 3rd January 2024.

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.

- Suffolk County Council's response to the local government finance settlement.
- More money is to be made available for Adult and Children's Care but difficult decisions need to be made to balance the books.

A written report was received and is available on the Parish Council website at

<http://ousden.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/meetings/meetings-reports/9th-january-2024/>

6. District Councillor's Report.

The following issues were raised:

- West Suffolk Council's budget and medium term financial Strategy.
- West Suffolk Council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme will continue, with an 100% discount available to local families in need.
- The West Suffolk Local Plan.
- Rough Sleeping. With an increase in people and families facing homelessness, actions and investments aimed at helping to reduce the number s of people sleeping rough and preventing homelessness have been implemented.
- Provincial House Haverhill – Up to two million pounds to be invested in Haverhill Town Centre.
- Flooding – reports are being collected and assessed.
- Precept survey request from Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner.

A written report was received and is available on the Parish Council website at

<http://ousden.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/meetings/meetings-reports/9th-january-2024/>

7. Police issues.

No issues were raised

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

There were three outstanding councillor actions.

9. Finance

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

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- A Whaley – expenses – LGA 1972 s111 – **£16.00**
- HMRC – PAYE - LGA 1972 s111 - **£87.80**

Geoff Ingham and Sylvia Pettitt 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
10/10/2023	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£7.10
09/11/2023	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£6.29
29/12/2023	Refund EDF. Account now closed.	EDF	£135.99

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
01/11/2023	385/10f	Electricity St Barnabas	EDF	£20.00
15/11/2023	404/10a	Clerk's expenses	Joanne Kirk	£58.08
15/11/2023	404/10a	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£72.00
15/11/2023	408/1a	Clerk's laptop and hard drive	Curry's Business	£351.96
20/11/2023	407/15c	Donation	The voluntary network	£50.00
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook				

d) **Bank balances as of 4th January 2024.**

Lloyds Bank Current Account	£430.44
Lloyds Bank reserve account	£3812.14
Total in Banks	£4242.59

Geoffrey Ingham and Sylvia Pettitt verified and signed the bank statements.

e) **Update on registration for online banking**

Cllr Edward Page Turner has registered for online banking and can now authorise payments.

f) **Approval of regular payments for 2023 – 24.**

It was resolved that the following regular payments for 2023-24 would be approved.

Payment	2023/24- Amount ex VAT	2024/25 - Amount ex VAT
Admin costs		
Village Hall rental - amount may vary depending on number of meetings	£72	£80
Community Action Suffolk - Insurance	£345	£360
SALC subscription	£161	£170
Internal audit fee	£70	£75
Scribe accounting software	£138	£150
CAS Ltd - website hosting fee	£50	£50
ICO - data protection fee	£35	£35
Maintenance costs		
Grass cutting	£700	£750
Hedge cutting	£100	£120
Ongoing authorisations (as and when required)		
Consumables for defibrillator	£200	£200
Maintenance of fixed assets	£200	£200
Maintenance of VAS		£200
Staff costs		
Staff costs as per confidential cash book (salary costs, PAYE and pension costs)		

g) **Councillor appointed to conduct internal control checks.**

Guy Holland Bosworth agreed to check the Council's accounts and complete the Internal control report.

h) **Review the effectiveness of the internal audit.**

Councillors reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit. It was resolved that the document would be approved.

i) **Review the Council's contracts.**

The current grass cutting contract runs until March 2024. It was resolved that the clerk would contact Tom McGregor to discuss the renewal of the contract and report back at the next meeting.

j) **Appointment of an internal auditor.**

It was resolved the Mrs Cathy Whitaker would act as Internal Auditor again this year.

k) **To approve the Internal Control Statement**

The internal control statement for the year ending 31st March 2024 was approved.

10. **Planning Issues.**

a) **DC/23/1875/HH –White Shutters, Front Street, Ousden. Detached Garage.**

It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application.

b) **Planning applications received between meetings and after the agenda was published.**

- **Planning application DC/23/1951/FUL.**

A separate planning meeting was held on 3rd January 2024. It was agreed that Ousden Parish Council would object to the planning application. Following the planning meeting, as none of the concerns raised have been addressed, there will be no change to the original objections raised.

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

It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would not respond to County Councillor Richard Smith's letter at this time.

12. **To discuss any village issues.**

No issues were raised.

13. **The correspondence.**

a) **Email from West Suffolk Council giving strategic priorities for 2024-2025 – for information only.**

b) **Email regarding West Suffolk District Councillor Roger Dicker attending a meeting.**

It was resolved that an invitation would be offered later in the year.

c) **Email from West Suffolk Council cabinet member Ian Shipp regarding changes to grass cutting in 2024 – for information only.**

d) **Email from Headway Suffolk requesting a donation.**

It was resolved that no donation would be made.

e) **Email about the Parish and Town forum in Mildenhall.**

No councillors wished to attend.

f) **Email about the Local council tax reduction scheme for 2024/2025 – for information only.**

14. **Any other business for noting or including on the agenda of the next meeting on Tuesday 12th March 2024.**

The following items are for including on the next agenda:

a) **Email from SALC about the 80th D-day celebrations this year on 6th June 2024 and two events, the Lamp Light of Peace and Ringing Out for Peace – for information only.**

b) **A prospective purchaser of an agricultural tied cottage contacted the Clerk asking for information regarding the legal liability details relating to the possible purchase.**

The clerk agreed to signpost the prospective purchaser back to West Suffolk Council for the legal standpoint.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated