

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 10th December 2024.

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

Also present: Joanne Kirk (clerk), County Councillor Bobby Bennett, District Councillor Mike Chester and three members of the public.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from parish councillors Geoffrey Ingham, Guy Holland-Bosworth and Edward Page Turner.

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 10th September 2024.

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

4. Short presentation by John Whitefield about the continuation of Lidgate and Ousden Cricket Club.

John Whitefield spoke about the cricket club which has been running since 1978. Unfortunately the number of cricket clubs in the area has reduced and it is one of the only cricket clubs left. He would like to step down and is looking for more people to get involved. They have approached people in Lidgate and Wickhambrook without success so are now looking to Ousden to publicise the need for new volunteers. Parish councillors agreed to promote the club locally.

5. Public Session.

No issues were raised.

6. County Councillor's Report.

County Councillor Bobby Bennett spoke about the following:

- Suffolk County Council's pothole prevention programme. Additional funding has been made available. They are using new technology called a dragon patcher which fills potholes more quickly. They are reliant on people reporting potholes online using Suffolk County Council's online Highways Reporting Tool.
- Flooding should be reported online and escalated via Cllr Bennett.
- They have been lobbying the Government for additional funding after Storm Babet.
- The devolution deal for Suffolk has been taken away however the new Government is in the process of producing a white paper looking at options for local government.
- Suffolk County Council is consulting on its budget.
- Special Education Needs. The provision is improving but there is still a long way to go.

7. District Councillor's Report.

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

<https://ousden.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/meetings/meetings-reports/10th-december-2024/>

District Councillor Mike Chester spoke about the following:

- Devolution. The new Government wants to simplify local government and is looking into the possibility of establishing unitary authorities.
- West Suffolk Council is also setting its budget at the moment. They are heading towards a balanced budget but there may be a looming deficit in 8-10 years.
- There was a Corporate Peer Review recently. West Suffolk Council was given a clean bill of health.
- There are plans to change bin collections in the next couple of years. Glass will be included in the bin collections.

8. Police issues.

No issues were raised.

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

There was one outstanding councillor action.

10. 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 - **£37.20.**
- Moulton Parish Council – one-off rental fee for clerk's new work printer - LGA 1972, s111 - **£20.00**
- HMRC – PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 - **£156.60**

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	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
09/10/2024		Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£6.17

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
01/10/2024	410/9f	Hedge cutting	McGregor Services	£144.00
16/10/2024	410/9f	Website hosting fee	Community Action Suffolk	£60.00
06/11/2024	410/9f	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£120.00
		Staff costs as per confidential cashbook		

d) Bank balances as of 1st December 2024.

Lloyds Bank Current Account	£187.64
Lloyds Bank reserve account	£7,074.94
Total in banks	£7,262.58

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

e) Budget 2025-2026

The following amounts have been allocated in the 2025/26 budget:

- Village project - £1,000
- Ousden VH –use of the hall for meetings - £200.
- Maintenance of fixed assets - £400
- Defibrillator maintenance - £200
- Election costs - £300

With the budget allocations, the earmarked reserves balance in 2025/26 will be **£4,639.**

It was resolved that the precept request would be £11,082. The parish council element for a band D household will be £81.20 per annum an increase from £77.53 which equates to £4.75 per annum per band D household, an increase of 4.75%.

f) Approval of regular payments for 2025 – 26.

It was resolved that the following regular payments would be approved for 2025-26.

Payment	2024/25 - Amount ex VAT	2025/26 - Amount ex VAT
Admin costs		
Village Hall rental.	£200	£200
Community Action Suffolk - Insurance	£392	£400
SALC subscription	£182	£185
Internal audit fee	£75	£80
Scribe accounting software	£138	£150
Risby Parish Council - phone costs	£23	£25
Stationery (print cartridges - shared cost)	£25	£25
CAS Ltd - website hosting fee	£50	£50
ICO - data protection fee	£35	£35
Maintenance costs		

Grass cutting	£770	£800
Hedge cutting	£120	£140
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) Approval of the Internal Control Statement for the year ended 31st March 2025.

It was resolved that the Internal Control Statement would be approved.

h) Appointment of a councillor to carry out internal control checks and complete the Internal. Control Report.

It was resolved that Guy Holland Bosworth would be asked to carry out the internal control checks and complete the Internal Control Report.

j) 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) Appointment of an internal auditor.

It was resolved the Mrs Cathy Whitaker would act as Internal Auditor again this year and a fee of £80 paid.

k) Review the Council's contracts.

The current grass cutting contract runs until March 2025. It was resolved that the clerk would contract McGregor Services to find out if they would like to renew the contract for another three years and to confirm the rate for 2025-26.

11. To discuss the any planning issues.

The following application came in after the agenda was published:

- **DC/24/1702/FUL - Malandra, Dunstall Green Road - one self-build dwelling (following demolition of existing bungalow).**

Letters were delivered to the applicant and neighbours adjacent to and opposite the property notifying them of the application and inviting them to the meeting on 10th December to discuss any concerns or to email any comments to the Parish Council. No comments have been received and no one attended the meeting. As none of the parish councillors present had any objections to the application, it was resolved that the clerk would submit a response of 'no objections' using her delegated powers.

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

The following issue was raised at the meeting:

- Vehicle damage to byways.

13. To discuss any village issues.

No issues were raised.

14. To discuss any correspondence.

a) Government consultation on whether remote meetings and proxy voting should be allowed.

Councillors agreed to submit individual responses.

b) Email from West Suffolk Citizen's Advice updating Ousden Parish Council about the services they provide to support West Suffolk residents and requesting a donation.

It was resolved that a donation of £100 would be made.

c) Email from West Suffolk Council about their winter toolkit and support that is available – for information only.

d) Letter from Headway Suffolk requesting a donation.

It was resolved that a donation of £50 would be made.

15. Any other business for noting or including on the agenda of the next meeting on Tuesday 11th March 2025.

No issues were raised.

16. To resolve to exclude press and public under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960: the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information
- a) To discuss staffing matters.
- It was resolved that members of the press and public would be excluded.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated