

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th September 2024.

Councillors present: John Gale (Chairman), Guy Holland Bosworth, Geoffrey Ingham and Helyn Dudley.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (clerk) and one member of the public.

Reports for this meeting are available on the Parish Council website at <https://ousden.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/meetings/meetings-reports/10th-september-2024>

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

Parish Councillors Edward Page Turner and Sylvia Pettitt sent their apologies. County Councillor Bobby Bennett and District Councillor Mike Chester also sent their apologies.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests.

No interests were declared and no dispensation requests were received.

3. Approval of minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 7th May 2024.

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

4. Public session.

No issues were raised.

5. County Councillors Report.

County Councillor Bobby Bennet sent a written report.

6. District Councillor's report.

District Councillor Mike Chester sent a written report.

7. Police issues.

There have been some attempted burglaries in Wickhambrook.

8. Co-option of a new parish councillor.

It was resolved that Fiona Bills would be co-opted onto the Parish Council. She signed a Confirmation of Eligibility for Co-option form and a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

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

There were no outstanding councillor actions.

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 – **£29.03**
- Risby Parish Council -phone costs (15% of cost of clerk's mobile phone) - LGA 1972, s111 – **£22.81**
- Starboard Systems – Scribe subscription - LGA 1972, s111 - **£165.50.**
- HMRC – PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 – **£145.00**
- McGregor Services – grass cutting – Open Spaces Act 1906, ss 9 & 10 - **£156.00**

Geoffrey Ingham and Sylvia Pettitt had reviewed and signed the Schedule of Payments prior to the meeting.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings.

No payments were authorised between meetings.

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

Receipts

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
08/04/2024	VAT refund 2023-24	HMRC	£559.86
09/04/2024	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£2.92
25/04/2024	Precept	West Suffolk Council	£10,115.00
09/05/2024	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£3.03
30/05/2024	Sale of laptop and hard drive	Trinity Mews Management Committee	£255.00

10/06/2024	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£5.79
09/07/2024	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£8.36

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
08/05/2024	416/11a	Clerk's expenses	Joanne Kirk	£18.72
08/05/2024	416/11a	Internal audit fee	Mrs C Whitaker	£75.00
08/05/2024	416/11a	SALC membership	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£181.17
08/05/2024	416/11a	Annual donation	Ousden Village Hall and Playing Fields	£3,300.00
08/05/2024	416/11a	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£156.00
04/06/2024	410/9f	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£234.00
04/07/2024	410/9f	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£156.00
24/07/2024	410/9f	Data protection fee	ICO	£35.00
05/08/2024	410/9f	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£78.00
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook				

Transfers

Date	From	To	Amount
28/05/2024	Lloyds Bank Current Account	Lloyds Bank reserve account	£5,000.00
04/06/2024	Lloyds Bank Current Account	Lloyds Bank reserve account	£255.00

d) **Bank balances as of 30th August 2024.**

Lloyds Bank Current Account	£749.41
Lloyds Bank reserve account	£8,103.73
Total in Banks	£8,853.14

Geoffrey Ingham and Sylvia Pettitt had verified and signed the bank statements prior to the meeting.

e) **Approval of the continued use of electronic banking and BACS payments, the Council's banking arrangement with Lloyds, and the use of variable direct debit or standing order where appropriate.**

It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would continue to use electronic banking with Lloyds and direct debits or standing orders where appropriate.

f) **Sale of Parish Council laptop and hard drive.**

The decision to sell the laptop and hard drive purchased for the new clerk earlier in the year to recoup the cost was authorised by Chairman and clerk between meetings. Payment was received on 30th May 2024.

g) **Six month budget review.**

Receipts

Budgeted	£10,140.00	
Actual	£10,950.00	
Difference	£810.00	VAT refund (£560) and £255 from sale of laptop, bank interest .

Budget overspends

Village Hall Rental		
Budgeted	£100.00	
Actual	£200.00	As agreed at May 2024 meeting.
Difference	-£100.00	

The budget is currently on track.

Reserves

Reserve	Opening Balance	Transfers	Spend	Receipts	Current Balance
Earmarked					
Election costs	£918.09				£918.09

421			
Emptying of bins	£225.00		£225.00
Defibrillator maintenance	-£218.00	£400.00	£182.00
Clerk and councillor training	£123.76	£20.00	£143.76
Maintenance of fixed assets	£200.00	£200.00	£400.00
Village project		£300.00	£300.00
Ousden Bowls Club		£250.00	£250.00
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	£1,248.85	£1170.00	£2,418.85
GENERAL FUND			£6,684.29
TOTAL FUNDS			£9,103.14

h) Email from One Suffolk offering a gov.uk domain name and email addresses.

It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would not pursue this at this stage due to the cost of £168 per year for each councillor to have their own gov.uk email address.

i) Purchase of a poppy wreath and donation and approval of online payment.

It was resolved that Sylvia Pettitt would be asked to organise a wreath again this year and a payment of £50 to include a donation approved.

j) Legacy payment Willett & Co – for information only.

Ousden Parish Council received notification from Willett and Co that the late Thelma Pettitt had left a legacy payment in her will to Ousden Bowls Club with contact details for Ousden Parish Council given. As the Bowls Club does not have a bank account the clerk agreed with them that Ousden Parish Council would hold the funds for them in an earmarked account until they decide what to do with the money. A payment of £250 was received on 21st August. This has been transferred the Parish Council's reserve account and a separate reserve set up in Scribe.

k) Pension automatic enrolment redeclaration of compliance.

The clerk completed the redeclaration of compliance on 12th August 2024. She does not need to be automatically enrolled as her salary is below the threshold, however Ousden Parish Council contributes to a private pension instead.

l) Quote for insurance.

It was resolved that the CAS quote for insurance of £391.44 would be accepted and the payment approved. The VAS is insured under municipal infrastructure as it is only moved once a month.

9. Planning.

a) Government consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which ends on 24th September 2024.

The consultation covers the following key changes to the National Planning Policy Framework:

- Mandatory housing targets and the reversal of other changes made by the previous government.
- A new standard method formula for assessing housing need.
- The use of grey belt land for housing.
- New "golden rules" for land released in the Green Belt
- The aim to prioritise the types of affordable homes communities need.
- Support economic growth
- Deliver community needs
- Support clean energy and the environment.

In addition to these policy changes, the Government are also consulting on whether to reform the way NSIPS (nationally strategic infrastructure projects) applies to renewable energy, commercial and water development, as part of the first steps to their NSIP reform plans, local plan intervention policy and planning fees.

It was resolved that no comments would be submitted.

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

No issues were raised.

11. To review the following policy documents.

a) Updated Financial Regulations.

It was resolved that the updated Financial Regulations would be approved.

b) Standing Orders.

It was resolved that the updated Financial Regulations would be approved.

c) Hedge Policy

It was resolved that the updated Hedge Policy would be approved.

a) Other policy documents

The clerk has reviewed the following policy documents:

- Procedure for the public session at parish council meetings.
- Co-option Policy.
- Complaint's Procedure.
- Email Policy for councillors.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Filming and Recording at Meetings policy.
- Procedure for handling Requests for Information.
- Persistent and vexatious complaints and correspondence policy.
- Procedure for dealing with correspondence.
- Code of Conduct, Subject Access Request Policy.
- Memorial Benches and Trees policy.
- Contact Privacy Statement.
- Procedure for the Public Session.
- Document Retention and Disposal policy.
- Personal Data Breach Policy.
- Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.
- The Role of the Parish Council in Dealing with Planning Applications.
- Planning Applications and how to respond.
- Trees in a Conservation Area.
- Material Considerations.

No amendments are required. All these documents are on the Ousden Parish Council website.

12. To discuss any village issues:

a) Email from Ousden Village Hall Management Committee about a Memorandum of Understanding – for information only.

Ousden Village Hall has started to apply for grants for the new build and the bid writer who is helping them has said that bid authorities would expect a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be in place between Ousden Parish Council as Custodian Trustee and The Village Hall Management Committee. The MOU would set out how both organisations agree to co-operate and manage the project of demolishing the current Village Hall and the construction of the new one. It is an expression of intent to assist each other in bringing the project to fruition and sets out for the bid authorities that the Parish Council agrees that the Village Hall has management of the project and therefore has capacity to submit the funding bids.

As Custodian Trustee Ousden Parish Council, may be required to sign documents alongside the village hall. As Ousden Parish Council has fully supported the proposal to build a new village hall throughout and submitted a response in support of the planning application, the clerk in conjunction with the Chairman used her delegated powers to sign the document.

It was resolved that the Parish Council was happy with this and the wording of the Memorandum of Understanding.

13. To discuss any correspondence.

a) Email from West Suffolk Council about their consultation on improvements to Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre.

It was resolved that John Gale would complete the online consultation.

b) Email from Ron Bailey, researcher for Lord Don Johnson about the safety of lithium batteries.

It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would support the Safety Bill which aims to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal of lithium batteries.

14. Any other business for noting or including on the agenda of the meeting on Tuesday 10th December 2024.

The following dates are for noting:

- SALC West Suffolk Area Forum - Tuesday 17th September online.
- West Suffolk Town and Parish Forum – 8th October 2024 at Haverhill Arts Centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.45pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated