

COTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the full Council meeting held on 9 November 2022 held in Cotton Village Hall

Councillors Present: Sarah Wenban (SW) (Chairman), Peter Gibbs (PG) Sue Cox (SC), Beryl Ellis (BE), Trudy Winder (TMW), Trevor Woods (TW).

In Attendance : David Rayner (Clerk) and three members of the public.

091122/01 **Apologies for absence:** Paul Howlett (PH) offered apologies for absence.

091122/02 All councillors accepted PH apologies.

091122/03 **Declarations of Interest:** None received.

091122/04 **Dispensations:** No requests for dispensation were received.

091122/05 **Minutes of previous meeting:** All Cllrs confirmed receipt of the draft minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 5 October 2022 prior to the meeting.

SW wanted the noticeboard to be chased up as there were issues with dampness inside the notice boards on both sections. PH to be asked to follow up.

All Councillors resolved to accept these as a true record of the decisions made at the meeting. SW signed the minutes (ref 051022/1 to 051022/33).

Public Forum:

091122/06 **District Councillor Andrew Mellen (AM):** AM was not present due to still testing positive for Covid but did send a report which was circulated. SW asked if any councillors wanted to raise any points contained in his report. SW enquired if anyone knew what CIFCO stands for. SW also referred to the last item regarding AM's locality budget which he still has available to spend. He has mentioned this could be spent by the Council and/or the village hall. These allocations could be around the £1,000 mark.

091122/07 **County Councillor Andrew Stringer (AS):** AS was not yet present at this point but his report had been previously circulated.

It was decided that discussions would wait until AS arrived.

091122/08 There were no comments from the public.

Planning: Councillors considered the following applications made to the Local Planning Authority (MSDC) relating to Cotton:

091122/09 DC/22/05215 Amendment to plans at Meadowcroft, Dandy Corner, Cotton, Stowmarket IP14 4QX.

After discussion all Councillors agreed to support the amendment as the original application was supported.

091122/10 DC/22/05437 Application for non-material amendment Old Cock Inn, Cock Road, Cotton, Stowmarket IP14 4QH.

Strictly speaking this item should not be discussed as it's not on the agenda as it only came in today, but, as it's only an amendment of an already supported application, rather than circulate the info to the councillors and canvas their opinions, it was unanimously agreed to approve the amendment.

091122/11 DC/22/05027 Land off Brook House Road, Cotton.

Statutory Undertaker, UK Power Networks, upgrade 4 Spans of existing overhead line to 95 Aerial Bunched Conductor construction.

MSDC: Decided

Finance:

091122/12 Parish Clerk confirms that he now has full banking access to both the accounts.

091122/13 The retained cash balance is £16,879.27 as shown by the bank statements.

091122/14 Councillors resolved to approve the following gross payments, confirming a full schedule supported by invoices and receipts had been received prior to the meeting.

	Payee	Description	£
091122/15	David Rayner	Salary 5 weeks	303.40
091122/16	Cotton Village Hall	Hire of hall for council meetings 05/10/2022 and 09/11/2022	27.00

091122/17 The Clerk's salary reflects the new rates agreed by National Association of Local Councils (NALC) back dated to 1 April 2022 and includes backpay to the start of his

Signed: *Sarah Wenban*

Date: *14/12/2022*

employment. The increase amounts to additional £1 per hour. Also, there is a PAYE refund due to the Clerk, but this will not be claimed until it is received from HMRC.

091122/18 SW stated that the council has about £8k of funds available without using our reserves and asked councillors to bear this in mind when discussing expenditure during the meeting.

091122/19 **Defibrillator:** London Defibs offer grants to communities of £300. Advice from another Council locally is not to have a locked cabinet but one that is heated and alarmed. A defibrillator makes very little difference to our insurance premium, so it's not a factor in the decision. After discussion, the councillors agreed to order the Defibrillator. TMW to ask what training dates are available.

091122/20 **Streetlighting:** This item was deferred until AS joined the meeting.

091122/21 **Correspondence:**

A - Dr Dan Poulter MP is to visit the Community Café on 21 January 2023.

B - Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) have requested funding detailing how many families have been helped. After discussion it was decided to give £100 to the CAB as agreed by all councillors. Proposed by SC and seconded by TMW. Parish Clerk to sort out where to make payment to.

091122/22 **Lord of the Manor and land ownership:** PG summarised his report circulated to all Councillors. PG's concern is that the land is unregistered, and some enterprising developer could try to develop the land. The land has been registered as a common since 1958 but we need to make sure that it cannot be built on as it's a green space. It would be difficult to build on as it is a common, its maintained by the cutting of the grass, its used as it has a footpath across it, and we have applied to Suffolk County Council for wildflower seeds to plant next year. PG has spoken to SALC who advised that, although we don't own it should be on the asset register and the insurers agree it, it should be valued at £1 as land for public amenity. The land will be treated as a wildflower area from next year, a sign will be erected showing the land's name as "The Green" which it has been known as since the Middle Ages, and the Parish Council will cover the grass cutting. This puts an expense in the Parish Council's accounts showing further that the land is maintained.

There is a big sycamore tree standing next to Elm Farm which is a bit limby and a bit old and we should get it properly surveyed. All Councillors agreed and PG will arrange for a tree survey to be carried out and documented.

All Councillors are happy to accept some small additional costs regarding the grass cutting and the tree survey, and to follow PG recommendations.

Community reports

091122/23 **Road Safety:** Martyn could not be with us this evening so no update on the traffic situation.

091122/24 **East Anglia Green:** Jonathan Smith could not make it this evening. He has been in touch with SW and will update her when he has been through the latest correspondence.

091122/25 **Cotton Village Hall:** Steve Winder (SteveW) advised that funding had been obtained from Suffolk County Council for 2 EV charging points at the front of the hall. These will be fitted and connected, then handed over to the hall who will collect the charges when vehicles are charged.

As mentioned earlier, the defibrillator will also need to be connected to the front of the hall.

A grant has also been applied for from Morrisons for solar panels and batteries. Morrisons will only fund whole projects so that they can advertise that they funded the entire project. SteveW is now waiting on the outcome.

Wi-Fi is now available in the hall.

The hall has just held their first "Pub" and had takings of £384.50. Two more dates are planned, 2 December and 31 December.

The hall finances are not great. There is money in the bank, but costs are greater than income now by about £100 per month. Our insurance costs are about £100 per month.

There has been the hire of the kitchen and the wellbeing class organised by the NHS and the Council for 3, 6-week sessions.

For the Queens Jubilee there were various fundraising events undertaken and, as a result of those, there is a cash float of £710 left over but we need to decide the ownership of this money.

After discussions it was agreed that the funds are for events of the Parish and that this should be run through the Village Hall accounts as the hall organises events for the parish. It was agreed that the money belongs to the Village Hall and should be ring fenced for future events.

SW suggested to SteveW to think if he had any projects that be funded from Andrew Mellor's budget also SW would ask for a contribution for the defibrillator.

SteveW mentioned that some work to the eves were needed, and it was suggested that he spoke to Rick Roper, who did the partial work earlier, for a quote. PG was keen to keep the building in good shape now that a lot of work has been done to improve the building.

SW asked SteveW to report back quickly so that we can decide what we ask Andrew Mellor to support in Cotton.

091122/26 Andrew Stringer entered the meeting.

091122/27 **Tree Warden:** Nothing to report.

091122/28 **Neighbourhood Watch officer:** PG stated there are no takers to be the Neighbourhood Watch officer. The Parish Council have been nominated as the Neighbourhood watch coordinator and this has been agreed to, despite being a little unconventional. The Parish Council is registered so that a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is in place. SW suggested this should be in the next Cotton Courier and PG said it will be on the Grapevine as well.

091122/29 **Emergency Plan:** PG has revised again. PG to talk to SteveW as the Hall is the most important point in the plan if there is a major incident in the area.

091122/30 **Welcome Pack:** SW said whilst PG has the floor, he is about to withdraw the welcome pack and reissue as there were numerous mistakes and revisions needed. SW has asked for councillors to keep an eye out for new people moving into the area.

091122/31 AS pointed out they are having major problems with providing adult social care from the budget allocated.

We are in an area with an Avian Flu outbreak and people can report issues to him as, although DEFERA are in charge, it is the County Council who have the boots on the ground.

- 091122/32 Training: SW stated that some of the longer serving councillors have been trained in the roll of a councillor, but the newer ones had not, and nor had the clerk. Clerk had details of short courses which will be circulated round for those who are interested.
- 091122/33 **Items for a future agenda:** The two items SW suggested were, A - The King's Coronation and B - Bacton F C letter.
- 091122/34 **Date of next meeting:** It was decided that the December 14 meeting would not go ahead due to the closeness of the October and November meetings following the September meeting being postponed until October due to the death of the Queen, unless there is a planning issue to deal with. Next meeting 11 January 2023.
- 091122/35 Chairman closed the meeting at 20:50.