

GAZELEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Gazeley Parish Council held on Monday 13th November 2023 at 7.30pm in Gazeley Village Hall

Present: Cllr Paul Kinnon, Chair, Cllr Laurence Chapman, Cllr Kevin Grimwood, Cllr Stuart Jolly and Cllr Judy Moatt.

In attendance Lynne Francis, Parish Clerk, District Councillor Roger Dicker and sixteen members of the public.

23.11.01 Chairman's Welcome

The meeting was opened by the Chairman, Cllr Paul Kinnon, who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

23.11.02 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Connelly.

23.11.03 To receive Declarations of Interest, pecuniary and non-pecuniary, on matters on the agenda.

None declared.

23.11.04 To receive reports from external bodies and to take questions or comments from members of the public on those reports and on any other matter on the agenda.

a) District Council – Cllr Roger Dicker.

Cllr Dicker confirmed that regular updates from West Suffolk Council were forwarded by email to councils. He was pleased to confirm that the new administration had been able to approve the decision to upgrade the existing leisure centre in Bury St Edmunds rather than to replace it at a vast cost and also that the Decarbonisation Initiatives Fund had been launched to cover the cost of the upgrade of streetlights owned by parishes to LED. £1m has been set aside for the scheme.

The quality of grass cutting in the district is causing concern. Since the decision to abandon the use of glyphosate, it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep weeds under control.

The Council is advertising the availability of market stalls in the district. Various incentives are being offered to encourage new stallholders to take a pitch.

WSC has opposed development plans for the Animal Health Trust site. The developers are now expected to appeal to the Secretary of State who will decide the outcome of the application.

b) County Council – Cllr Noble had sent apologies and had sent a monthly report which had been forwarded to councillors.

c) Public Forum

A resident reported that a streetlight was still out of action on Tithe Close. The clerk had reported it to Highways and it was suggested that the Highways reporting tool be advertised on the village Facebook page.

Another resident commented on a deep pothole that had appeared on the road from Ashley Crossroads to Moulton. It was noted that potholes could be reported on Highways section of the County Council website. Debris on the road can be reported to West Suffolk Council

Following comments made by a councillor at the October meeting, the Chairman was asked to clarify the apparent issue of two sets of draft minutes of the September meeting. The Chairman explained that councillors had suggested that some points had been missed off the draft minutes of the September meeting and he had added them by hand. The Clerk explained that she had covered the points raised by the councillors by adding an explanatory addendum to the minutes of the October meeting.

23.11.05 To approve the minutes of the Meeting of Gazeley Parish Council, held on Monday 9th October 2023.

The minutes were adopted as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

23.11.06 To receive the Clerk's report on outstanding issues and any other matters that may have arisen since the publication of the agenda.

1. The clerk reported that she had written to Savills to request an update on the matter of the cricket hut and the allotment site but she had been told that the surveyor had not yet consulted the client on the matter. She would respond in due course. Concern was raised about the present condition of the hut, especially with the recent high winds. The Clerk was asked to contact Savills again for a decision on whether the Parish Council would be allowed to demolish the hut.

2. The clerk had received a report on on-going incidents of unsocial behaviour at Bury St Edmunds bus station and had placed a summary of the report on the village Facebook page. West Suffolk Council is employing security guards to be on duty to safeguard members of the public.

3. The Clerk had written to the owner of Gazeley Stud to bring to his notice the recent complaint about the height of a hedge on his land. It was noted that this had now been rectified.

4. The clerk had received a report about an accident that had happened on a piece of equipment at the play park where a child had fallen and had sustained an injury. The parish council is in the process of sourcing quotes for the renovation of parts of the equipment and will ask contractors to include other items that had been identified as requiring some work. It was noted that the item in question had not been highlighted as presenting a risk in the most recent audit report of the playground.

23.11.07 Finance Matters

a) Authorisation of outstanding payments and the signing of the monthly schedule of payments. The schedule of payments and the latest bank statements were signed by the Chairman and cheques were signed by Cllr Judy Moatt and Cllr Grimwood.

b) The Clerk gave the monthly finance report, which is attached to the minutes.

c) To consider the draft budget for 2024-2025, including applications for grants and donations. The clerk had issued a first draft of the budget. Applications for funding had been received from all Saints' Church, for the maintenance of the churchyard. Mrs Gash had requested that the Council might consider funding the hiring costs of the village hall for the visits of the Coffee Caravan, which is providing a much-needed service for the village. Citizen's Advice West Suffolk had requested a donation to support their work. It was also suggested that the Voluntary Network needed support to enable their community transport service to continue.

The Clerk reminded the council that an up-to-date report on the assets was required before the next meeting and she noted the recent correspondence on the play area. Essential repairs were required to the rubber matting and minor problems had been highlighted on other items of equipment. The Clerk will contact Redlynch, who had already issued a quote for the matting repair, to ask them to update their quote to include the other necessary repairs.

Concern was raised about the application for churchyard maintenance which amounted to a significant increase from the previous year. Items listed in the application amounted to a sum in excess of £1700. Councillors agreed to review this, along with the other applications and quotations before the budget is finalised in December when the precept request will be authorised.

d) To consider a transfer to electronic banking for most of the financial transactions of the parish council.

Councillors approved the transfer to electronic banking and it was resolved that the Clerk should submit the relevant application form to the bank, which was authorised by two signatories, Cllr Chapman and Cllr Grimwood.

e) To approve the purchase of four metal signs to remind residents of the penalty for allowing their dogs to foul the playing field and recreation ground.

Cllr Jolly had sourced some metal signs at a total cost £71.36 for four signs.

Cllr Dicker suggested that Parks department might be able to help with the supply of signs and the Clerk agreed to contact them before placing an order.

It was resolved that the Clerk should obtain the signs if WSC was unable to help and Cllr Jolly agreed to install them. It was suggested that another reminder about responsible dog ownership should be placed on the Facebook page and the Clerk agreed to do that.

f) To confirm that Gazeley Parish Council will apply for a grant from the Decarbonisation Initiatives fund at West Suffolk Council to update the streetlights in the ownership of the parish to LED.

A quotation to upgrade Gazeley streetlights had been received from Suffolk Streetlighting, and councils had been advised that they could source quotations from alternative contractors to carry out the work, but it was felt that as applications must be submitted by 31.1.24, it left very little time to do this.

it was resolved that the Clerk should submit an application with the quotation from Suffolk Streetlighting to start the process.

23.11.08 Highway Matters

Cllr Chapman reported on a meeting that had taken place between parish councillors, Cllr Colin Noble and Andy Moore, SCC Community Engineer.

Matters discussed included continuing difficulties being experienced with HGVs being diverted through the village; debris being left on the road from farm lorries; the poor condition of roads in general and the absence of a weight limit sign on the bridge on Higham Road.

Incidents of flooding and blocked ditches should be reported but it was noted that silage cannot be removed from the road and taken away as it was regarded as contaminated waste, so it was piled on the verge where it would promptly leach back on to the road during another bout of heavy rainfall.

Small potholes are filled with gravel rather than tarmac.

The question was raised about the installation of white gates at the entrances to the village.

In the past they had to be installed by Highways but now a council can apply for a licence to install them and engage their own contractor to do the work. Some councils have used Clarkes of Walsham and it was confirmed that district and county councillors could contribute to the cost of the gates through their locality budgets.

It was confirmed that the 30mph speed signs that were installed on the Higham and Desninghall Roads by Anglian Water will be removed when the current project is completed.

23.11.09 To review the Standing Orders of Gazeley Parish Council

The Chairman asked councillors to review the standing orders and make any suggestions for change in time for the December meeting when it will again be placed on the agenda.

23.11.10 Property Access Licence Agreement between the owner of the Blacksmith's Forge and Gazeley Parish Council.

The Chairman produced a licence that had been prepared by a councillor for signature in front of the Clerk. The Clerk explained that she had previously advised the Council that the resolution to approve a licence prepared by the Council's solicitor and for her to negotiate the agreement on the Council's behalf still stands. That resolution had not been rescinded and the alternative licence had not been discussed by the Parish Council before it had been sent to the owner and on that basis, she declined to sign it. A parish councillor witnessed it instead.

23.11.11 Councillors' Reports

The Chairman reported that the officer who had been dealing with emergency planning had recently died and the Council has been asked to make a submission by email giving the contact details of the councillors and volunteers who had agreed to be involved in the process for the benefit of the officer taking over.

The Chairman noted that the owner of the forge was present at the meeting and he asked him if he would like to give a report on the progress of the project. The owner replied that he would be starting work in a couple of weeks.

Cllr Grimwood reported that he was having some difficulty in retrieving information from the SID but he had noted that readings taken near the school site had revealed that the speed of traffic going out of the village was far higher than entering the village.

Over 2,000 vehicles had been registered as travelling between 40 and 50 mph.

Cllr Judy Moatt reported that there still hadn't been a meeting of the Village Hall Committee. A member of the public informed her that there would be a meeting in December.

The Chairman had received a report from David Southern at All Saints' Church in which he confirmed that donations received towards the chancel roof fund had reached £12,500. The appeal had been featured on Look East, BBC Radio Suffolk and in the Newmarket Journal. The Suffolk Magazine will be carrying an article on the church in January. An Open Gardens event will be held on 6 July, and a fete will be held on Saturday 8th June, all proceeds to go towards the roof fund.

23.11.12 To set a calendar for committee meetings.

The Chairman stated his intention of calling an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council committee on 8th December. When questioned on the purpose of the meeting he said that he didn't have to give a reason, or an agenda. This was disputed by the Clerk and Cllr Grimwood, who confirmed that all committee meetings must be held in public with a published agenda.

23.11.13 To confirm that the next meeting of Gazeley Parish Council is scheduled to take place on Monday 11th December 2023 at 7.30pm in Gazeley Village Hall. Refreshments will be provided from 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Financial Report – November 2023

Payments

Mr P Jaye, Grass Cutting	£645.00
L. Francis, Poppy Wreath	£ 28.99

Receipts

Interest at Bank	£26.75
------------------	--------

Balance of Accounts

Treasurer's Account	£ 4,057.14
Instant Access Account	£29,080.89

Total	<u>33,138.09</u>
--------------	-------------------------

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....