

Assington Parish Council

Clerk Christine Hargan 4 Northfield Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket IP14 3HF –
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Minutes of the meeting of Assington Parish Council on Monday 27th January 2025

Present: Councillors Simon Thorogood, Andrew Hill, Tony Howcroft, Ian Jordan, Bronwen Stacey and Helen Wallace

In attendance: CCllr James Finch, DCllr Lee Parker and Christine Hargan (Clerk) and one member of the community.

25101 **Apologies** for absence
Councillor David Wiles.

25102 Agree **Minutes** of Assington Parish Council meeting held on 25th November 2024
Minutes were amended – CCllr Finch provided a replacement paragraph to his report: 'Bramford to Twinstead was approved by the newly appointed Secretary of State Ed Milliband despite National Grid not providing to the County Council sufficient information regarding operational Highway plans. However approval was given with the proviso that National Grid provide to Suffolk County Council further information on Highway workflows in advance of Highway work taking place and that Suffolk County Council approval is obtained' the amendment was accepted, and the minutes Resolved accurate and signed by Cllr Thorogood.

Matters arising

There were none

25103 **Declaration of Interests** and **requests for dispensation** from Councillors
There were none

25104 County and District Councillor reports and **public forum**

Suffolk County Council Report James Finch - Highlights:

- Devolution is about bringing organisations under one roof. It is the most significant change in Local government since World War 2. Norfolk and Suffolk leaders had two meetings with the Government and were told that Unitary Authorities will be imposed up and down the country. The choice for Councils was whether to accept Devolution now or later, so both Norfolk and Suffolk elected to adopt it voluntarily. Ten other Counties have also applied at this stage. The aim is to streamline lower government tiers, and avoid the current duplication of work. It is anticipated that cost savings will be made by a reduction in staffing, due to the crossover of workload between District and County Councils. Suffolk and Norfolk have made a joint application because they have an existing collaborative working relationship. The best people will be selected from both CC and DCs and will reduce the number of people who report to the Government, however there will be a cost. The Councils await a response on whether the Government will accept the proposal.
- DCllr Parker added that as yet the detail is unknown, a District Councillor currently looks after 2,500 electors, there will be 90 Councillors across Suffolk. The patch they are looking after will be substantially higher and therefore there will only be one councillor attending the Parish Council meetings. It may be more efficient.
- Questions: will there be county elections? Currently it is unknown: if devolution is to be implemented within 12 months it would be uneconomical to have an election this year. The leader of the District Council has acknowledged that it will cost £1million to hold an election now: if the process must be repeated in 12 months time it could be a waste of public money. However it could also be argued that if there is no election this year, electoral rights are being withdrawn

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- What will happen to Parish Councils? Currently there is no information but the assumption is that no change will be made. Parish Councils should have more autonomy. It is recognised that running rural parishes is more expensive than urban ones and they were therefore allocated extra government funding which has now been withdrawn
- **King's Award.** The Stronger Families Partnership are working with children's charities because it is more cost-effective to provide counselling to help keep families together than to take children into care.
- SEND; while current processes should ensure that no child suffers from a bad education, high numbers in the system may mean that Care Plans at the end of education age will not be done in time

Babergh District Council report: Cllr Parker,

- The District Council has been informed that the National Planning Policy Framework must be updated, placing a significant load on council officers.
- Neighbourhood Plans: a grant of £10,000 is available to parishes to enable plans to be created. If there is no NP the spatial plan will be imposed. The PC were advised to acknowledge that their NP should be updated and to start the pre-planning process. The Plan must conform with the NPPF, which is under review. Cllr Parker agreed to forward information on the number of buildings that the government are imposing on districts as soon as they are available. APC is in the best position, with an NP adopted in the past five years. "Allocations" is the big word, and parishes should consider the location and number of properties it will place in the plan. The acid test is Leavenheath where there are two Planning appeals in place. If their NP is upheld at appeal it bodes well for communities with NPs in place. Building in Sudbury has halted because people can't afford to buy. The FCA relaxed mortgage affordability rules this week.
- Cllr Wallace asked DCllr Parker for information on which parishes are updating their NP as soon as they are available.
- Following a question, DCllr Parker agreed to enquire regarding whether historic housing delivery would be taken into account when Babergh determines the future housing requirements for town and parish areas.

Public forum

- No questions were asked

25105 Planning:

a. **Planning applications:**

[DC/25/00183](#) The Nook The Street Assington Sudbury Suffolk CO10 5LW Erection of detached one bed annex to provide ancillary accommodation for dependent relative.
No comment

b. Consider any planning application received **since the agenda was posted**
There were none

c. Status of **planning applications** were noted

25106 Agree actions on Correspondence and emails circulated to Councillors by the Clerk
Reported in the actions log. No actions were requested.

25107 Agree any actions required after reviewing the Clerk's Report
Reported in the actions log

25108 Finance

- Receive the RFO report.
Acknowledged
- Reconciliation of accounts against budget
Acknowledged
Proposed by Cllr Howcroft to open a 6-month deposit account of £50k. On expiry the funds would be transferred from the current account into the instant access account until

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a decision can be made at the following meeting. (Post-meeting note: the proposal is not possible as minimum investment is £85k)

- **Revised Financial Regulations**
- Two actions required from councillors:
 1. A volunteer who is not a signatory to the bank account to check the Clerk's maths prior to sending the annual file to the internal auditor Cllr Jordan volunteered.
 2. Secondly, the Risk Management report needs to become a Policy it will be presented to the Council in March with the Annual Policies to review.

Resolved by Cllr Thorogood to adopt revised regulations, seconded by Cllr Jordan, carried. Chair thanked Cllr Howcroft and Clerk

- **Budget 2025-26**

- It was proposed by Cllr Howcroft to budget £1100 for donations and to donate only to organisations that directly benefit the majority of residents. Seconded Cllr Hill, carried.
- At the end of the financial year, Clerk will transfer all possible payments to the CIL budget.
- **Precept:** Proposal by Cllr Hill to reduce the Precept demand to £9,600 to avoid contributing to council tax rises. Seconded Cllr Thorogood, carried. This action is only possible because of actions taken to generate revenue by maximising bank interest

25109 Review any issues raised for the Licensed Path, Footpaths and APC's Assets

- In conjunction with Stephen King's aim to retire from maintaining the conservation area, he has accepted voluntary help with owl boxes from two local residents, Brin Edwards and Simon Grimhal. The paths will be cut three times a year at the same time as the grass verges.
- Clerk to request that Hartleys reduce the growth on all the hedges in the conservation area during February, include the additional hedge in the Gurdons, and to request that he contacts Cllr Wiles for work instructions and directions.
- Whilst no quotation has been received to plant the small greens and provide fencing Clerk was asked to request that Hartley's plants Mahonia on one and roses on Rose Green. Maximum budget £500 from CIL was agreed.

25110 Questions to the Chair

Expiry of the Asset of Community Value for the Shoulder of Mutton:, it was resolved to renew the placement of the Asset on Babergh's register. Cllr Hill said that he needed contact details for the owner, land registry details, and the site boundary plan in order to make the application.

Time date and place of next meeting 31st March, to be held in Assington Village Hall at 7.30pm. Preceded by the annual meeting of the Parish at 7pm

The meeting was closed at 9.09pm

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Appendix Actions

Minute	Action	Who	Complete
	Planning comments to BDC	Clerk/AH	✓
	Pay suppliers	Clerk/Cllrs	✓
	Review planning applications prior to meetings	AH/IJ	✓
24709	Contact Hartleys Gardens re advice on planting the two triangles to bear in mind that deer may graze on the plants and that there is a sign post in the centre of the triangle in and that vehicles park on the green close to threeways awaiting response from Hartleys Rose Green	Clerk	✓
25109	Roses in Rose Green hardy shrubs Mahonia Contact Hartley's Gardens to plant Roses on Rose Green and Mahonia shrubs on the other green also to cut the bushes at the wild life / conservation area in February and to add the paths into the cutting schedule for next Financial year.	Clerk	
24904	Request speed survey from SCC	JF	✓
24904	Consider projects requiring the use of Locality Budget	All	
241108	Revise the Financial Regulations prior to the next Parish Council meeting	Clerk / TH	✓
25108	Publish Financial Regs on the website.	Clerk	
241111	Discuss administration of wildlife area and gain outline of duties to enable a new volunteer to be found	AH	✓
25111	Additional volunteers to be advertised in AN	BS	
25108	Send Precept demand to BDC	Clerk	✓
25106	Advise Kernos Centre that no grant is available	Clerk	

Finance

Payments to be made

8 Finance Report

Payments to be made

£45.00 SALC – provision of payroll services
£718.86 Clerk salary
Pre-approve invoice for inspection of play equipment £130

Payments paid since the last meeting

As per the minutes
£267.00 Community Heartbeat Trust
£6.00 bank charges

Income Received since previous meeting
£ 614.62 bank interest

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Bank Reconciliation to Date				
	2023 - 24		2024 - 25	
	Budget	To year end	Budget	YTD
Income				
Balance Brought Forward from year end accounts		84,391.56		£88,874.16
Grants P3 grass cutting	331.40	1,021.40	331.40	385.68
Grants other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bank Interest	10.00	181.19	30.00	1,856.34
Other = Donations, rebanked cheques Jubilee and Allot	360.00	575.00	360.00	360.00
CIL	0.00	20,694.71	0.00	1,599.50
Precept	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
VAT Repayment	500.00	537.86	0.00	1,154.19
Total Income	£11,201.40	£117,401.72	10,721.40	£15,355.71
Expenditure	Figures exclude VAT where paid as it is reclaimed, and is shown as VAT paid			
Staff Costs, salaries, HMRC, Payroll, expenses	3,575.00	4,349.71	4,500.00	2,894.04
Admin	300.00	476.36	300.00	255.19
Subscriptions		252.90	240.00	282.69
Donations	1,000.00	1,500.00	1,100.00	1,100.00
Street Lighting	500.00	636.89	800.00	0.00
CIL	0.00	22,786.73	20,000.00	4,214.17
Insurance	450.00	264.00	300.00	264.00
Audit	350.00	200.00	460.00	170.00
Grass Cutting (P3 Scheme)	330.00	360.00	360.00	1,050.00
Licensed Footpaths	150.00	135.00	150.00	225.00
Cut Allotments and Wildlife Area		135.00	750.00	126.08
Contingency	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00
Maintenance	630.00	1,069.48	750.00	1,050.50
Jubilee/coronation Celebrations	0.00	395.74	0.00	0.00
Water and associated costs Allotments / Conservation	655.00	93.14	400.00	0.00
Neighbourhood Plan	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bank charges				53.40
VAT Paid	500.00	496.88		1,067.43
Total Expenditure	£9,595.00	£33,151.83	30,610.00	£12,752.50
Totals BF+ Income - Expenditure			£61,220.00	£91,477.37
Unity Trust Current Account	31 March 2024	£4,922.97	22 January 2025	£389.53
Unity Trust Deposit Account	31 March 2024	£85,732.05	22 January 2025	£91,087.84
			Total held in bank	£91,477.37

CIL Budget								
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021/22	2022 / 23	2023 / 24	2024 / 25
	Full year	Full year	Full year	Full year	Full year	Full year	Start of year	YTD
Total received in year		£6,224.51	£16,697.14	£27,216.03	£27,719.33	£20,694.71	8,901.31	£1,599.50
Total retained CIL (previous year retained plus new receipts)	£3,221.78	£9,446.29	£22,921.65	£48,014.94	£75,311.27	£85,141.28	71,255.86	£63,718.91
Total CIL expenditure	£0.00	£3,221.78	£2,122.74	£423.00	£10,864.70	22,786.73	9,136.45	£4,664.17
Net retained CIL	£3,221.78	£6,224.51	£20,798.91	£47,591.94	£64,446.57	£62,354.55	£62,119.41	£59,054.74

Assington Parish Council

£ 91,477.37

20485977 • Current T1

£ 389.53

Available: £ 389.53

20485980 • Instant Access

£ 91,087.84

Available: £ 91,087.84

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Date

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