

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 31st March 2025

Present: Councillors Simon Thorogood, Andrew Hill, Tony Howcroft, Bronwen Stacey, Helen Wallace & David Wiles.

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

25301 **Apologies** for absence

None

25302 Agree **Minutes** of Assington Parish Council meeting held on 25th January 2025
Minutes were resolved accurate and signed by Cllr Thorogood.

Matters arising

There were none

25303 **Declaration of Interests** and **requests for dispensation** from Councillors
Cllr Hill declared and interest in his own planning application should it be discussed.

25304 County and District Councillor reports and **public forum**

Suffolk County Council Report CCllr James Finch:

- A senior cabinet member Richard Rout has been appointed to lead on Devolution. He has recommended the election of a mayor in 12 months' time. The mayor will have responsibility for both Norfolk and Suffolk. Currently the recruitment process is unclear.
- This year's County Council elections have been cancelled. CCllr Finch will retire at the end of the extended term.
- Fire service: there are 35 stations and 45 engines and specialist turntables within Suffolk, which need additional investment to ensure the safety of residents.
- Libraries will continue to operate, but recent news has been quite unfortunate. Delivery of the service is excellent, but leadership was problematic with 33% of the budget spent on management. Additionally, an extra £750k was contributed by the CC to keep libraries running. A number of issues were identified and the negotiation on both sides had broken down. SCC have been permitted to disclose the receipt of a letter from the charity's auditors saying that the charity would be insolvent within 6 months, this resulted in cabinet voting for the service to be brought back in house on 1 June.
- Council Tax has been increased by 4.99% to cover additional costs for adult and child social care. While the government has compensated for the additional costs of employing direct staff, care staff are employed indirectly, so additional costs here are a challenge for the budget.
- Question on libraries: how long is SCC committing to keeping the service running, and will it be run to the same standard? There are no plans to reduce services, libraries will continue to run.

Babergh District Council report: DCllr Lee Parker

- National Planning Policy Framework and what it means for the community: over 20 years from 2024, BDC will have a target to deliver an additional 775 plots new homes annually. For Assington it means an additional 83 dwellings over a 20 year period. Cllr Parker advised that it is important to keep Neighbourhood Plans updated to control where future developments may be built.
- Questions: if a new bungalow for retirees starts at £500k it is unsustainable because pensioners want to reduce costs. Is there a disconnect between the government and housebuilders? Houses have to be sold.

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- How can the Parish Council make house building fit requirements? Ensure that NPs have allocations for certain tenures and designs.
- Will there still be CIL under the new organisation? Currently there is no plan to scrap it.
- What is the government policy toward infrastructure such as dual carriageways on country roads? The planning regime must be to create need and then supply the infrastructure,
- The Parish Council were always going to have to review the Neighbourhood Plan but it needs to be reviewed now.

Public forum

A question re public footpath was deferred to later in the meeting

25305

Planning:

a. Planning applications:

- [DC/25/00606](#) Land East Of Meadow Way Assington Suffolk
Application for Outline Planning Permission (Access to be considered, all other matters reserved) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - For the Erection of 6no. Dwellings.
Chair mentioned that the applicant had contacted him in advance of the meeting, offering help if required.
Resolved to strongly object for three reasons: the timing for the development set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, the density of the proposed development, and the impact of access arrangements on the Public Right of Way.
- Extension and garage to Squirrell House, The Street, Assington
The extension was not discussed as the planning authority had not yet published it.

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

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

25306

Agree actions on Correspondence and emails circulated to Councillors by the Clerk
Reported in the actions log.

25307

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

25308

Finance

- Receive the RFO report.
Acknowledged
- Reconciliation of accounts against budget
Acknowledged
Cost for emptying dog and litter bins has risen to £996.

25309

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

- Clerk to contact Chris Mortimer Contracts re surfacing the footpath along The Street with a view to him meeting Cllr Wiles to discuss options.
- A request has been made to upgrade the gate on the Path into the Thicks to allow it to be wheelchair accessible. Cllr Thorogood to speak to the landowner to seek agreement to proceed, before potential solutions and quotes are sought

25310

Annual Review of Policies

It was resolved to update as read the following policies
Community Engagement Policy, Complaints Procedure, Data Protection Policy,
Disciplinary Procedure, Disciplinary Rules, Document Retention Policy, Donations
Policy, Equality Policy, Freedom of Information Request, Grievance Procedure
Health & Safety Policy, Internet Banking Policy, Protocol for Reporting of
Meetings, Risk Management Policy, Training & Development Policy
Code of Conduct. In addition the Asset Register and 2025 Standing Orders were
adopted.

The Clerk was advised that the Financial Regs have been updated again but as
this was notified too late to action in this meeting it will be deferred. A
recommendation to adopt a new Bullying and Harassment Policy was deemed
unnecessary.

25311

Questions to the Chair

- Cllr Wallace offered her resignation after 10 years of service she notified that all her
actions are up to date and thanked all her colleagues. The resignation was reluctantly
accepted by the Chair and the Councillors all thanked her for her commitment to the
parish and wished her well for her retirement.
- In the near future Police speed patrols will be in the village twice a week to deter
speeding motorists.

Time date and place of next meeting Monday 2nd June, to be held in Assington Village Hall at 7.30pm.

The meeting was closed at 9.29pm

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Date

Appendix

Status of Planning applications, Thain bungalow has been granted.

Actions

Minute	Action	Who	Complete
	Planning comments to BDC	Clerk/AH	✓
	Pay suppliers	Clerk/Cllrs	✓
	Review planning applications prior to meetings	AH	✓
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	Consider projects requiring the use of Locality Budget	All	
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	✓
25306	Clerk received a report of water from a treatment plant in the village behind the conservation area potentially being discharged into the brook it is being investigated, AW is investigating job no 27301259 straight. Post meeting note. AW Issue closed fault is with BDC. Environmental Health is investigating.	Clerk	
25306	Notify Women's Aid, unfortunately funding not available	Clerk	✓
25308	Complete end of year procedure and to transfer spending where possible from the CIL budget	Clerk	
25309	Contact Richard Hartley regarding hedges in the Street, the Allotments and conservation area to ensure that they are cut. And instruct him to liaise with Cllr Stacey regarding the two triangles at Rose Green and Threeways	Clerk	✓
25309	Contact Chris Mortimer contracts regarding surfacing the footpath between the village hall and shop to ensure that it is usable in all weathers	Clerk	✓
25309	Enquire about a wheelchair accessible gate to be placed at the entrance to The Thicks. Gain permission from the land owner. And then gain quotations.	Chair	
25309	Collect footpaths file from current footpath wardens	Chair	
25309	Report footpath sign being removed from the Meadow Way	Clerk	
25310	Update all policies and then publish on website.	Clerk	
25311	Vacancy Procedure with BDC	Clerk	✓

8 Finance Report

Payments to be made

£5.92 WAVE – Anglian Water, allotment water
£718.86 Clerk salary
£134.70 Clerk expenses, travel and WFHA
£689.16 SCC Street Lighting
£120.00 David Bracey Playground Inspection

Payments paid since the last meeting

As per the minutes
£12.00 bank charges

Income Received since previous meeting

None

Note contractual review of Clerk salary, uplift of one Salary Scale Point which equates to 24p an hour.
Rose Green trying to retain aspect of village greenery, Brownen to speak Clerk to provide info

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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	3,612.90
Admin	300.00	476.36	300.00	300.19
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				65.40
VAT Paid	500.00	496.88		1,076.43
Total Expenditure	£9,595.00	£33,151.83	30,610.00	£13,537.36
Totals BF+ Income - Expenditure			£61,220.00	£90,692.51
Unity Trust Current Account	31 March 2024	£4,922.97	24 March 2025	£304.67
Unity Trust Deposit Account	31 March 2024	£85,732.05	24 March 2025	£90,387.84
			Total held in bank	£90,692.51

Assington Parish Council		£ 90,692.51
20485977 - Current T1		£ 304.67
		Available: £ 304.67
20485980 - Instant Access		£ 90,387.84
		Available: £ 90,387.84

CIL Budget	2021/22	2022 / 23	2023 / 24	2024 / 25
	Full year	Full year	Start of year	YTD
	£27,719.33	£20,694.71	8,901.31	£1,599.50
Total received in year				
Total retained CIL (previous year retained plus new receipts)	£75,311.27	£85,141.28	71,255.86	£63,718.91

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Date

Total CIL expenditure	£10,864.70	22,786.73	9,136.45	£4,664.17
Net retained CIL	£64,446.57	£62,354.55	£62,119.41	£59,054.74

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