

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
CONEY WESTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25th OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.00PM
AT CONEY WESTON VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Councillors Clarke (Vice Chair), Flood, Francis & Lock
County Councillor J Spicer, District Councillor A Smith

6 members of the public
A. Morris (Clerk).

Councillor Clarke, Vice Chairman, opened the meeting at 7pm.

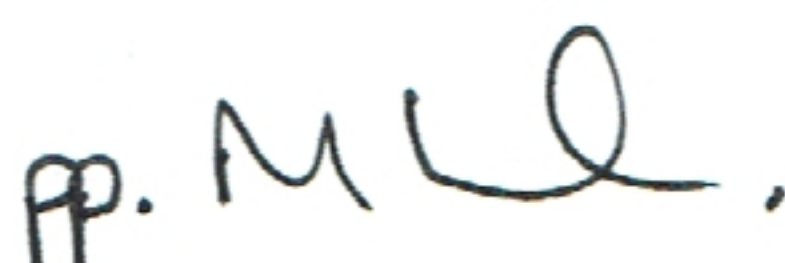
AGENDA ITEM

ACTION

1. **To note and accept the resignation of Cllr Mihr** – Council was advised that the Clerk had received written confirmation of Cllr Mihr’s resignation effective 13th October 2023 and it had been acknowledged. A West Suffolk Council notice has been issued for the new vacancy.
Cllr Clarke extended thanks to Mr Mihr for all his hard work, commitment and support that he has given to the Parish Council during his tenure on the Council. He will be sadly missed.
2. **Appointments:**
 - 2.1. **Nominations for the position of Chair** – Cllr Lock nominated Cllr Clarke for the position of Chair, seconded by Cllr Flood and voted unanimously.
 - 2.2. **Nominations for the position of Vice Chair** – Cllr Clarke nominated Cllr Lock for the position of Vice Chair, seconded by Cllr Francis and voted unanimously.
3. **To receive apologies for absence and approve the reasons given** – the Clerk has received apologies for absence from Cllr Craig who is in hospital. The Council wishes her a speedy recovery.
4. **Declarations of interest** – Cllr Clarke for items on the Bowls Club and Playing Field, Cllr Lock for items on the flooding and Playing Field and Cllr Francis for items on the village hall and Playing Field.
5. **To approve the draft minutes of the last Parish Council meeting (27th September 2023)** – items outstanding are 7.4 (noticeboards to be discussed at this meeting); 7.7 (20’s Plenty initiative) which is pending, pot holes at the cattery (pending); 9 (Emergency Plan) completed and 11 (Chapman’s lorries) which will be discussed at this meeting.
The remainder of the minutes are deemed to be correct and a true record of that meeting – proposed by Cllr Clarke, seconded by Cllr Francis and voted unanimously.

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Peter Clarke, Chair

pp. 


Andrea Morris, Clerk

6. **Scheme of public speaking** (public participation about a specific agenda item).
2 members of the public asked to speak about the recent flooding (item 7) and 1 member on the Chapman lorries (item 12).
7. **County Councillor's report** – Cllr Spicer paid tribute to Cllr Mihr who had worked tirelessly on the highways and speeding issues in the village. Cllr Spicer outlined the current position of Suffolk County Council (SCC) in relation to the drainage works which are necessary to avoid further flooding issues – these plans have been designed, costed, funded and approved by SCC Highways. The work will involve access to land which is owned by a non-resident of the village and who is only contactable through a third party intermediary. The reason for the considerable delay in the commencement of these works is a legal one between the owner/Agent and SCC. The owner and Agent are not engaging with the SCC in order to resolve the issue of 'easement' for works being carried out on that land – 'easement' which SCC are willing to pay. Cllr Spicer advised that she would back any houseowner and the Parish Council if they wished to approach the owner/Agent directly to try to put pressure on them to respond to SCC in order to resolve the issue.

1 member of the public outlined the situation at the village sign corner on Friday 20th October during Storm Babet – water flooded from the field opposite the village sign into the ditch on the bend. This then overflowed onto the road, then flowed down The Street and into the village pond. When the pond was full the water flowed down The Street towards the Old Post-Office. He urged Cllr Spicer to contact SCC to ask for interim works to be carried out to dig out ditches and pump out excess water from the village pond and further down The Street (which is separate to the scheme mentioned above). He also questioned whether SCC have a legal right to carry out these works and also if there was a planned alternative if the scheme above cannot go ahead because of the legal issues mentioned. Cllr Clarke advised that he has emailed Amanada Mayes at SCC who manages drainage issues asking for an urgent 'wash through'.

Cllr Spicer suggested that the PC open up a rapport with the new Drainage Maintenance Engineer who has replaced Julian King in order to hold a public meeting in the village in order to answer residents' questions on the flooding issues and planned scheme. Cllr Clarke asked if Cllr Spicer could forward the report on the flooding that was done by Bob Clench which was used by SCC to design the proposed design scheme, and also the design plans themselves which the PC has never seen.

It was noted that the planned scheme is in 2 phases – these need to be done in tandem in order for there to be sufficient drainage capacity for the run-off.

Cllr Lock undertook to contact John Wallace to dig out the ditches on the bend opposite the village sign on Thetford Road (along with requesting him to cut back the hedge on The Street side).

Cllr Clarke raised the possibility of making a formal complaint to SCC on the delay in commencement of the drainage works and the lack of communication to the Parish Council – to be discussed among Councillors before any action taken.

2 members of the public raised flooding at Coles Path – will liaise with Cllr Clarke to show him where this is. Paddock Farm (blocked road gullies) also has an issue which has been reported on the District Council portal.

PC

Cllr Clarke suggested repeating the leaflet drop to householders who have ditches on their properties asking them to do a clean through (a similar initiative was undertaken in January 2021) along with information in the Parish magazine and website advising all residents on the status of the works. Cllr Francis raised the idea of a campaign – to be discussed among Councillors further.

Speeding – Cllr Spicer advised a separate meeting on the current speeding issues in the village. She is not in favour of the “20s Plenty” initiative and reiterated that she is willing to give £2,500 from her locality budget to a gateway scheme but it depends what the PC want. Police will only become involved if there is evidence from a VAS machine. Cllr Spicer will send details of the gateways to Cllr Lock. Cllr Lock asked DCllr Smith whether the district council might also be able to contribute a donation to the potential gateway scheme. DCllr Smith will consider whether this is permitted within their remit.

JS

AS

Cllr Clarke extended thanks to Cllr Spicer for the grant of £750 towards the cost of the toilet block at the Bowls Club.

8. **District Councillor’s report** – DCllr Smith advised that he has contacted the Principal Enforcement Officer for WSC who has forwarded the original application for Chapman’s (2010) but could not find any commitment to reducing traffic loads through the village. If there is evidence (specific details) that the lorries are not sticking to the approved traffic route then this needs to be reported on the West Suffolk online enforcement portal – he will send the link to Cllr Francis. He will undertake further work and investigation on this and report back at the next meeting.

AS/BF

1 member of the public queried why this is being investigated now. Cllr Francis to send DCllr Smith a link to a document she has with data of lorry movements from 2007/8 up to 2010/11.

BF

DCllr Smith advised that there are no sites designated for home building in Coney Weston in the WSC Local Plan. – this status will last until 2040.

Solar Farm at Firsfield – deadline for comments on the revised traffic route was 19th October. Update at next meeting.

9. Councillor’s Reports

- 9.1. **Defibrillator, village group liaison and volunteers** – Cllr Clarke reported that the defibrillator cabinet is misting up (possible water ingress?) and will undertake to investigate. Possible replacement of heating element. Thanks were extended to local residents who helped with the movement of sandbags from the Bowls Club during the recent flooding on Friday 20th October. Cllr Lock stated that more sandbags are needed – quotes received and given to Clerk. Proposed by Cllr Clarke to accept quote from Whitton & Frost for the purchase of 1 ton sack of sharp sand (£68.40 inc VAT) and 20 bags (Amazon) at a cost of £16.99 (inc VAT), seconded by Cllr Francis – voted unanimously.

PC

- 9.2. **New residents, village initiatives** – Cllr Craig absent – no report
- 9.3. **Website, Facebook page and publicity** – Cllr Flood – left the meeting at 8pm – no report
- 9.4. **Community Development** – Cllr Francis reported that the bus shelter has been cleared with industrial matting placed for the sandbags. Gutters have also been cleaned out. A water butt will be located there in due course. 3 quotes for 2 village noticeboards have been received and given to the Clerk. Cllr Clarke proposed to accept the quote from a local resident at a cost of £315 each (no VAT) plus £50 to replace posts at the Coles Path site, seconded by Cllr Lock and voted unanimously. Cllrs Clarke & Francis to oversee this project. PC/BF
- 9.5. **Playing Field 'Task & Finish' group** – Cllr Lock reported that the search for new Trustees for the Playing Field charity continues – no final details as yet. The sale of the lawnmower has yet to take place. Thetford Town football club have agreed to hire the playing field on a Thursday evening from 6.30pm-8.30pm for practice at a cost of £25 each session – they will bring their own lighting. Status quo re dogs on the playing field will remain (i.e. no dogs).
- 9.6. **Planning** – Cllr Lock reported no new planning applications have been received for the PC to consider. News re the Jaynic site at Stanton – Copart have terminated their contract with Jaynic – Jaynic will be looking for new partners for their site.
Rushford bridge will be closed for tree removal on 5th December 2023 – alternative route will be through Euston estate and onto the A1088.
- 9.7. **Highways, hedges and footpaths, speed device** – previously discussed. In addition, Cllr Clarke raised the issue of the hedge at Coney Weston Hall – if it has not been cut back by the end of November then the PC should write to the owner. Cllr Lock to liaise with John Wallace on the cutting of the hedge. ML

10. Financial Report

- 10.1. To review income and expenditure from **1st April 2023 to 19th October 2023** against budget and to confirm that the bank reconciliation agrees with the bank statements and sign off;
- 10.2. Sign off payment schedule and authorise payments as presented on the payment schedule dated September 2023 viz:
- 10.2.1. SALC – payroll services for 6 months ending 30.9.23 £22.50, VAT £4.50 total £27.00
- 10.2.2. Bren Francis – reimbursement for purchase of industrial matting for bus stop £25.00, VAT £5.00 total £30.00
Proposed by Cllr Clarke, seconded by Cllr Lock and voted unanimously

11. **To approve replacement bank signatory** – Cllr Francis proposed to nominate Cllr Clarke as a replacement bank signatory for Cllr Mihr, seconded by Cllr Flood and voted unanimously. Cllrs Flood and Clarke to liaise to set this up. CF/PC
12. **Update on Chapmans' lorries through the village** – previously discussed at item 8.
13. **Outstanding Items from the Annual Village Meeting held in April 2023** – to be discussed at the next PC meeting.

14. Items for next meeting

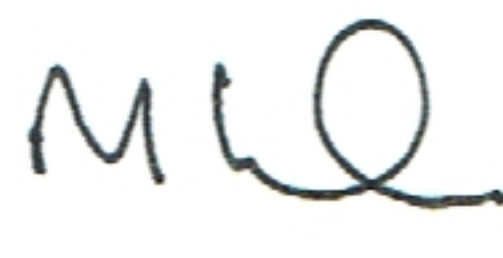
- 14.1. Outcomes of the Annual Village Meeting
- 14.2. Grant awarding policy
- 14.3. 2024-25 budget
- 14.4. Neighbourhood Watch initiative

15. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 29th November 2023 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Cllr Clarke, as Chair, closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

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Peter Clarke, Chair

pp. 


Andrea Morris, Clerk