

Minutes of Coney Weston Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7th November 2024 at 7:00pm in Coney Weston Village Hall.

Present Cllrs M Lock, B Francis, P Clarke, P Sullivan, P Hines & SCC Cllr J Spicer

1. Co-option of new Parish Councillors

The Parish Council welcomed Patrick Sullivan and Paul Hines, who were both co-opted on as Parish Councillors. They both completed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Members Register of Interest forms. The Clerk will ensure that these documents are sent to West Suffolk Council.

Action Clerk

2. Apologies for absence

WSDC A Smith sent his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting as he was attending a West Suffolk Overview & Scrutiny meeting in Mildenhall.

3. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

3.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None.

3.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None.

3.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. N/A.

4. Minutes - The minutes of the Thursday 12th September 2024 Parish Council meeting were agreed and approved as a correct record.

5. Meeting open to the public

It is requested that this item does not exceed 15 minutes and that any member of the public does not speak for any longer than 3 minutes.

Residents raised concerns about the condition of the playing field. The waste bin has fallen over, and the old tube slide has been left on the site. Concerns were also raised about dogs on the field. As those present are aware, the playing field does not come under the jurisdiction of the Parish Council. However, the Clerk is happy to contact the trustees to provide information about how they might attach a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to the playing field, if they were minded to do so.

Action Clerk

6. Report from County Councillor: J Spicer. To include any update on:

6.1 Village drainage.

The drains under the road, at Three Ways have been jetted and cleared, this alleviate flooding at the bend, by the village sign. Although this does not solve the flooding problem, it will help, especially when it is combined with the works to clear the Village Ditch. Exploratory works, with nine test holes being dug along The Street from the Coles Path to the Village Hall, is currently being undertaken. Some exploratory works are also being undertaken on the School Field. The results of these works may occasion new plans being drawn up to address the drainage issues. It is unlikely that any major works would take place before next spring. The Parish Council will continue to work with all parties involved to resolve the drainage issues.

6.2 Reduction in bus services.

As previously reported the bus that served Coney Weston, was run by Simonds. Simonds were bought out by a company based in the Midlands, and in August this year we were advised that they would be withdrawing the current service. This would have resulted in a massive reduction in the service for Coney Weston and some villages would be left with no service at all. A task force, led by Joanna Spicer, was swiftly formed and a temporary rescue package, from Suffolk County Council (SCC), was put in place. This package is only funded until the end of December 2024. The Task Force began the work to put together an urgent bid for funding from the SCC Bus service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to fund the new routes. The Clerk attended the latest Save Our Buses Task Force Meeting, at Bardwell. At this meeting the group discovered that they were expected to

produce two separate bids for funding. One for the 'shoppers' bus and one for the 'education/training' bus. The Clerk along with the Chairman from Barningham Parish Council, and Cllr Spicer were tasked with completing the bid for the 'education/training' bus. This came as a bit of a surprise and there is a considerable amount of work that will need to be undertaken in order to meet the November 15th deadline. We have been told that we should get a quick answer regarding the grant. It was felt important that we spread the word that to retain the service, if the bid is successful, then people need to be using the bus going forward. The Task Force has concerns over what will happen, when the temporary service finishes at the end of December, if the bid is unsuccessful. The Chairman and Clerk will continue to provide feedback on this issue.

Action Chairman/Clerk

The Parish Council thanked Cllr Spicer for the £2,000 grant that she made towards the costs of a new Vehicle Activated sign (VAS) for the village.

7. Report from B. Councillor: A Smith.

Cllr A Smith was unable to attend the meeting and sent his apologies. The Parish Council would like to formally record their gratitude for the £600 grant that Cllr Smith made towards the costs of a new Vehicle Activated sign (VAS) for the village.

To include any update on;

7.1 Audio system for the Village Hall.

Although no further information has been received from Cllr Smith, Cllr Francis was able to provide feedback from the meeting that they both attended with an audio company in July. The price for a system with a gooseneck microphone and speaker ranged from £1303-£2170. The amp would be an additional cost. A less expensive option, coming in at around £500 was also considered.

However, there are reliability concerns regarding this system. Cllr Clarke will arrange for a local resident, with a background in sound engineering to come to the hall to see if he can offer any other alternative solution.

Action Cllr Clarke

7.2 Disused land, Rushford Road.

We are pleased to report that this land has now been cleared. We thank Cllr Smith for his involvement with this.

8. Councillor's Reports

8.1 Cllr Clarke: - To include any update on;

8.1.1 Defibrillator.

The pads have been replaced and the batteries changed. The device was removed from its cabinet last month, taken to the scene of an incident but was not actually used. Cllr Clarke was contacted to return and reset the device.

8.1.2 Village group liaison- volunteers.

8.1.3 Village Drainage.

See under item 6.1

8.2 Cllr Francis:- To include any update on;

8.2.1 Community Development.

Two volunteers carried out some work on the planters by the village sign, refreshing the flowers. Cllr Francis has noted that the Facebook page has shown that 184 people viewed the 'Save our Pub' post, with 54 people engaging. The Road closure post was viewed 236 times, with 122 engaging. It was agreed that we would look at separating the Parish Council Facebook page from the Community page. Cllr Francis will discuss this with Chris Flood who currently helps to manage the page.

Action Cllr Francis

8.2.2 New residents.

Cllr Francis is keeping her eye on the sold property in Crown Lane, and will drop a new resident's letter in as soon as someone moves in. Cllr Francis and the Clerk will do some work to update the resident's letter.

Action Cllr Francis/Clerk

8.3 Cllr Lock: - To include any update on;

8.3.1 Playing Field "Task and Finish" group.

Following a conversation at the last meeting about the Playing Field Deeds, the Parish Council made the decision to try to vest the deeds with the Charity Commission and link them to the Charity. We have copies of the deeds, and it is understood that Cllr Francis currently has the originals. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to start archiving some items with the Records Office. This is now at The Hold in Ipswich. Cllr Francis and the Clerk will start work on this in the New Year.

Action Cllr Francis/Clerk.

9. Clerk's Report

9.1 To note attendance and receive feedback from West Suffolk forum, Streetlight briefing and flooding and drainage forum.

The Clerk attended the West Suffolk forum at Haverhill. There was a session on the Suffolk County Council Transport Strategy, led by Lewis Boudville – Principal Strategic Transport Planner. They are launching the public consultation on the Local Transport Plans and Area Plans for West Suffolk in October. The timing of this was not felt to be great, bearing in mind the issues we are having with our local bus service. The plan was focused on the towns, and a few rural areas. Our area was not even on their map. There was mention of multimodal transport, which was something that we will include in our bid to SCC, as mentioned under item 6.2.

There was also a discussion about Community Land Trusts. Sue Downs, Rural Housing Officer - Community Action Suffolk and representatives of Lavenham Community Land Trust provided an insight into what can be achieved and the opportunities that these schemes can bring to their communities. This was very interesting.

The SCC Streetlight briefing was interesting and informative. It was reported that the change to part night lighting offered savings of over £750K (over £4m at current energy prices) SCC is recognised internationally for their streetlighting programmes.

The SCC Flooding and Drainage forum included an interesting 'map' that shows the route of funding for drainage works. The Clerk will share this with the Councillors for information.

Action Clerk

9.2 To discuss training opportunities for Parish Council members.

Cllr Francis and Lock have both completed the Councillor Training, hosted by SALC. It was suggested that Cllrs Sullivan and Hines undertake the training once they had settled into their new roles. Cllrs Lock and Francis would both like to undertake the SCC Highways Self Help Training. This would enable them to work on the Highway, mainly works on the pavements, for instance cleaning road signs, and be covered by SCC insurance. The Clerk will make the arrangements for this training.

Action Cllrs Lock/Francis/Clerk

9.3 First Aid/Defibrillator Awareness –to note postponement of the second session.

Unfortunately, the course had to be cancelled, due to illness. A new course will be organised in the New Year. Cllr Clarke will liaise with the organisers regarding the new date.

Action Cllr Clarke

9.4 To discuss works required, for accessibility compliance, to website.

The Clerk has noted that there are some compliance issues with the Parish Council website. She will do some work to address this.

Action Clerk

10. Finance

10.1 To receive update on current status of accounting/banking and PAYE arrangements.

Due to issues with the Parish Council address being registered with HMRC, it was agreed that SALC would continue to administer payroll. HMRC recommended that any changes should be made in the new financial year to avoid any issues with duplication. The Clerk has drafted a letter to HMRC, which was signed by the Chairman and two Councillors, to address the issue with registering the Parish Council address.

Action Clerk

10.2 To review income and expenditure from 1st April – to date 2024.

Below is a complete list of income and expenditure from 1st April 2024 to date:

				Net	VAT	Gross
10/05/2024	Office expenses	Payment	Andrea Morris	-£8.69	£0.00	-£8.69
10/05/2024	Administration	Payment	Various	-£420.83	£0.00	-£420.83
10/05/2024	Hall hire 14/03/2024	Payment	Coney Weston VH	-£7.50	£0.00	-£7.50
10/05/2024	Hall hire 18/04/2024	Payment	Coney Weston VH	-£17.50	£0.00	-£17.50
10/05/2024	TAX collected by HMRC AM	Payment	HMRC	-£92.00	£0.00	-£92.00
10/05/2024	Internal audit	Payment	Victoria Waples	-£140.00	£0.00	-£140.00
10/05/2024	Payroll service	Payment	SALC	-£22.50	-£4.50	-£27.00
10/05/2024	SALC membership 2024	Payment	SALC	-£213.42	£0.00	-£213.42
10/05/2024	Website hosting	Payment	Suffolk Cloud	-£120.00	£0.00	-£120.00
15/05/2024	Administration	Payment	Various	-£369.64	£0.00	-£369.64
15/05/2024	TAX collected by HMRC AM	Payment	HMRC	-£87.80	£0.00	-£87.80
13/06/2024	.Gov domain	Payment	Suffolk Cloud	-£350.00	£0.00	-£350.00
17/07/2024	Office expenses	Payment	Bren Francis	-£3.05	£0.00	-£3.05
17/07/2024	Advert for Clerk	Payment	SCC Finance	-£75.00	£0.00	-£75.00
17/07/2024	Noticeboards	Payment	Ron Martin	-£137.24	£27.45	-£164.69
17/07/2024	Hall hire 9/5/2024	Payment	Coney Weston VH	-£10.00	£0.00	-£10.00
17/07/2024	17 & 19 /06/2024	Payment	Coney Weston VH	-£25.00	£0.00	-£25.00
16/09/2024	Compost for beds	Payment	Reg Hockney	-£24.00	£0.00	-£24.00
17/07/2024	Village Hall Car park	Payment	Mrs Amy Mann	-£150.00	£0.00	-£150.00
25/09/2024	insurance to 30/09/2025	Payment	Zurich	-£300.00	£0.00	-£300.00
25/09/2024	TAX collected by HMRC	Payment	HMRC	-£395.20	£0.00	-£395.20
16/09/2024	Replacement batteries/pads	Payment	Wel Medical	-£349.85	£69.97	-£419.82
17/09/2024	Compensation	Receipt	Lloyds Bank	£70.00	£0.00	£70.00
13/06/2024	Car park repayment	Receipt	Coney Weston VH	£150.00	£0.00	£150.00
25/04/2024	Precept	Receipt	West Suffolk Council	£10,676.00	£0.00	£10,676.00
11/09/2024	VAS contribution	Receipt	SCC	£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00
16/10/2024	Training repayment	Receipt	Tina Bedford	£20.40	£0.00	£20.40
07/10/2024	VAS contribution	Receipt	West Suffolk Council	£600.00	£0.00	£600.00

10.3 To authorise and sign off payments to be agreed at the meeting.

The Following accounts were approved/noted

				Net	VAT	Gross
Village Hall Car park lease	Payment	Mrs Amy Mann		-£150.00	£0.00	-£150.00
Admin	Payment	various		-£905.84	£0.00	-£905.84
Training T Bedford	Payment	SALC		-£17.00	-£3.40	-£20.40
Training V Gay & B Francis	Payment	SALC		-£70.00	-£14.00	-£84.00
VAS Purchase	Payment	Morelock		-£2,740.00	-£548.00	-£3,288.00
Admin	Payment	various		-£545.51	£0.00	-£545.51
Hall hire July	Payment	CW VH		-£17.50	£0.00	-£17.50
Expenses	Payment	Vicki Gay		-£11.24	£0.00	-£11.24
Hall hire, The Swan meeting	Payment	CW VH		-£7.50	£0.00	-£7.50

10.4 To discuss and agree budget for 2025/26 to inform precept request, to include consultation on the West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Circulated.

West Suffolk Council is currently reviewing its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and has written to us to formally consult us on the proposed changes. As part of their collective work to support communities that are the hardest hit by the current pressures on the cost of living, West Suffolk Council is seeking views on extending, for a further year, the decreased contribution rate (maximum discount of 100 per cent) for working-age residents, which proposed support for low-

income households and those facing financial hardship, in light of the current pressures on the cost of living. The Parish Council supported this initiative.

An informal request for financial assistance, with the grounds maintenance, has been received from St Mary's Church, Coney Weston – a formal grant application would be required if this is supported. It was agreed to hold a further zoom working party meeting to discuss, the above request and the budget in more detail with the new Councillors. This will be held on Monday 18th November, 7pm. A report of this meeting will be given and a decision regarding the Precept will be made at the January 2024, ahead of the deadline for applications.

Action All

10.5 Notification of exempt status, 2024 received from PKF Littlejohn.

The Clerk has received the notification of exempt status, for Coney Weston Parish Council, from the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn.

11. Speed Indicator Device (SID)

11.1 To receive latest speed data.

This data has been shared on Facebook. Although a majority of drivers are respectful of the speed limit, unfortunately there are still a small number of drivers who are not. The Clerk is arranging for the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) device to visit the village in the New Year. This device captures vehicle details and letters are generated for those caught speeding.

11.2 To receive update on purchase of new device.

The new speed device has been ordered and will be delivered to Cllr Lock's address.

11.3 To note return visit of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition device (ANPR)

See under item 11.1

12. Planning. (to include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted).

No applications received.

13. The Swan Pub (currently closed)

13.1 To confirm listing of the pub as an Asset of Community Value. (ACV)

The Swan has been successfully listed as an Asset of Community Value.

13.2 To receive feedback from public meeting held on Tuesday 5th November.

A public meeting was held in the village and was well attended, with 47 interested people attending. The option to take The Swan on as a Community Pub was discussed and this received an overwhelmingly positive response. Among those present, 19 people expressed a willingness to contribute financially, 24 offered to volunteer, and 15 indicated an interest in both. Notably, one attendee indicated a readiness to contribute up to over half of the asking price.

In light of this interest, a Community Interest Group (CIG) is being formed. The Clerk has written to West Suffolk Council to formally notify them of the CIG's intent to be considered a bidder for the property. On this basis we requested an extension of the moratorium period until March 30th 2025. Cllr Lock has shared some information about the Plunket Foundation, who offer advice and funding assistance to CIG's. This information will be shared with the CIG and Cllr Lock will facilitate the next meeting of the group. Once the steering group has been formed the Parish Council will take a step back. The Parish Council would be happy to cover the costs of any hall hire the group needs and consider any further applications for financial assistance moving forward.

Action Cllr Lock

14. Correspondence for consideration/Information

14.1 Keep the Heat Event, Ixworth Village Hall, 16th November 10am 1pm. Circulated.

14.2 To receive information for Funding Opportunity: Communities Capital Grant Fund. Circulated.

14.3 Local Transport Plan for Suffolk to 2040. Circulated.

15. Items for Future Agenda

As discussed under item 10.4 the Budget/Precept will be an agenda item for the January 2025 meeting.

16. Date of next meeting: - Thursday 9th January 2025 7pm at Coney Weston Village Hall.

17. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items:

17.1 Personnel Issues. 17.2 Legal Issues.

The meeting was closed to the public and continued under item 17.2. to note action taken by West Suffolk Council regarding complaint received from a member of the public.