

STURMER PARISH COUNCIL

Ian Brown
Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Email: clerk@sturmer-pc.gov.uk

72 St. Edmunds Fields
Dunmow, Essex, CM6 2AN
Tel: 07913 514 589

Minutes of the **COUNCIL MEETING OF STURMER PARISH COUNCIL** held at **STURMER VILLAGE HALL** on **07 MARCH 2023 AT 7:30 PM**

COUNCILLOR	IN ATTENDANCE
Cllr Diana Garrod (Chairman)	YES
Cllr Alan Carter	YES
Cllr Terrie Jones	YES
Cllr David Porth	YES
Cllr Paul Smith	YES
VACANCY	
Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier	NO

CLERK – Ian Brown

3 Member(s) of the public

22/110	NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apology received from Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier – planning meeting
22/111	INVITE ANY DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING Interest declared in Item 22/119, FP3 – Cllr Diana Garrod
22/112	APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2023 RESOLUTION – Approve minutes subject to the amendment listed below; Proposed Cllr Alan Carter, Seconded Cllr Paul Smith <i>“The wording in item 22/101 referencing the AoNB is incorrect and request it be changed to Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project Area”</i>
22/113	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION <i>This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions and comment on items on the agenda or of import. Time for this session is limited to 15 minutes (03 minutes per person)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A voice of grateful thanks for a wonderful job on husband’s memorial seat and the war memorial site from Mrs Sissons ➤ 5 years in attempts to achieve planning at 8A Abbots Cottage, see item 22/117 ➤ Insulated reinforced concrete block construction, massively insulated on an insulated bed, aim is to build to passive house standards ➤ Air source heat pump, potentially final dwelling will not need energy supplies ➤ Potential benefit to wider community if the dwelling achieves these standards ➤ Potentially meets highest energy efficiencies ➤ Request for entry in village news re the energy efficiency grants from BDC for households ➤ Query from a walker why being cautioned when seemingly legitimately walking an historical track having walked for over 40 years; suggestion those involved view the ECC Definitive Map online and or approach their County Cllr ➤ Blocked FPs – as much evidence as possible helps when reporting such issues, members of the public can report issues themselves using the online ECC portal
22/114	RECEIVE COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS Dist Cllr Diana Garrod – full report APPENDIX A

22/115	<p>RECEIVE CLERKS REPORT & NOTE CORRESPONDENCE Full report APPENDIX B 22/115 (i) – RECEIVE ELECTION PROCESS BRIEFING Received and duly noted, Cllrs to collaborate on completion of nomination papers</p>
22/116	<p>FINANCE – RECEIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT - AGREE PAYMENTS, APPOINT AUTHORISER RESOLUTION – Approve Finance statement(s) as attached: Proposed Cllr David Porth, Seconded Cllr Paul Smith – Unanimous approval</p> <p>Finance statement APPENDIX C Authoriser appointed – Cllr Alan Carter</p> <p>22/116 (i) – CONFIRM COMMEMORATIVE BENCH ADDED TO ASSET REGISTER AT A NET VALUE OF £550 Cllrs duly advised and noted asset register update</p> <p>22/116(ii) - CONFIRM APPOINTMENT OF VAL EVANS AS INTERNAL AUDITOR RESOLUTION – Approve appointment of Val Evans as Internal Auditor; Proposed Cllr Diana Garrod, Seconded Cllr Alan Carter - unanimous</p> <p>22/116(iii) - CONFIRM COMPLETION OF RISK REGISTER REVIEW RESOLUTION – Confirm completion of risk register review; Proposed Cllr Alan Carter, Seconded Cllr Paul Smith - unanimous</p>
22/117	<p>REVIEW & COMMENT ON CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS/APEALS</p> <p>Ref. 23/00366/FUL Demolition and replacement of 8A Abbotts Cottages with a four-bedroom dwelling. - Annexe At, 8 Abbotts Cottages, The Street Comment date 21 March '23 4 Cllrs wish it recorded as NO COMMENT, which is a majority of the council and not a unanimous decision. Cllr David Porth wish it recorded he OBJECTS to the proposal</p> <p>Property (opposite Dearsley), Kedington Road – query change of use Clerk to contact Planning re the paddock querying legitimacy of building development at the site Cllr Diana Garrod to make further enquiries</p> <p>Jacksons Barn, Kedington Road – planning position update No further comment</p> <p>NOTE ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE FOLLOWING –</p> <p>Lanpro Solar Farm, Hill Lane, Sturmer; Planning Scoping Opinion Consultation 22/03173/SCR Not responded to invitation to Annual Parish Assembly – CLERK to chase SFAG written expressing their concerns to both solar farm proposals</p> <p>Water Hall Farm, Wixoe; Solar farm – Environmental Impact Assessment - DC/23/0088/EIASCR Public exhibition / presentation at Sturmer village hall on Thursday 09 March between 2pm-7pm</p>
22/118	<p>RECEIVE ANY FURTHER FEEDBACK FROM HIGHWAYS SITE MEETING TO DISCUSS FOOTWAY IMPROVEMENTS AT j/w HILL LANE WITH A1017 – DRAINAGE, REDUCING ROAD WIDTH, FOOTWAY CONDITION (SAFE PEDESTRIAN / MOBILITY USERS), HEDGE MAINTENANCE, ROAD SIGNAGE, VISIBILITY ISSUES Footway improvements now completed Remaining items not commenced</p>

22/119	<p>RECEIVE UPDATE REGARDING FALLEN WILLOW TREE 03/11/22 FROM WOODLAND NEXT TO RAILWAY AMENITY WALK OVER RIVER AND PROW 3</p> <p>Footpath Officer emailed Cllr Diana Garrod advising they are not minded to remove tree as it serves as additional barrier to closed FP3. The EA have suggested they will write to the land owner.</p> <p>CLERK to contact FP Officer to ask landowner to remove the tree and to consider additional trees in a precarious position nearer Lion Meadow.</p>
22/120	<p>PROGRESS PLANS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 04 APRIL 2023</p> <p>Local groups to be invited to attend to share a brief overview of their activities – to include WI, History Group, SFAG, Village Hall, Tree Warden, Bowls club, Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier, local Police – APA to commence at 7:30pm</p>
22/121	<p>RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:</p> <p>a) Footpaths – ALL - Nothing to report</p> <p>b) Flood Action Group – Cllr Alan Carter - Report APPENDIX D</p> <p>c) Play Area – Cllrs Alan Carter & David Porth - Bench installed, locked to ground, Noticeboard overhauled, identified room for an additional small piece of play equipment, council to consider appropriate type/size of equipment.</p> <p>d) Parish Maintenance – Cllrs Alan Carter and David Porth – Resident request to plant a tree along Amenity Walk, near play area, in memory of loved one.</p> <p>e) War Memorial – Cllr David Porth – Five year maintenance plan associated with the grant award to be maintained including publicity and positioning of tributes, painting yet to be completed once weather improves.</p> <p>f) Village Hall – Cllr Terrie Jones – Nothing new to report</p> <p>[f](i) – Defibrillator function – Cllr Terrie Jones – Working OK</p> <p>g) Highways – ALL – Nothing new to report</p>
	<p>MOTION TO BE AGREED - <i>Approve exclusion of the public</i> <i>Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting for the next item, Exclusion of Public and Press - Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the following item on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt and commercially sensitive information</i></p>
22/122	<p>RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE VG52 LAND SALE PROPOSALS</p>
	<p>MOTION TO BE AGREED – <i>Approve readmission of the public</i> <i>Members of the public to be readmitted to the meeting</i></p>
22/123	<p>ITEMS OF REPORT TO BE NOTED OR ADDED TO NEXT COUNCIL AGENDA</p>
22/124	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 04 APRIL 2023 - ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY – CLOSE – 9:30pm</p>

Signed.....Date.....

APPENDIX A

District Councillor's Report March 2023 to Parish Councils (Cllr. Diana Garrod - Bumpstead Ward)

Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders. Intended closures:-

Camps Road, Helions Bumpstead. Due to commence on 7th March 2023 for 3 days. Required while Anglian Water undertakes meter exchange.

Sages End Road, Helions Bumpstead. Due to commence on 13th March 2023 for 3 days. Closure required while Anglian Water undertakes stoptap replacement.

Further £1m to help the most vulnerable (Decision at Full Council meeting 20/2/23)

Due to the council's strong history of sound financial management, it is able to offer support to the district's most vulnerable residents using £1million of its New Homes Bonus. The funding will provide support to communities by working with partners to provide food security, helping the most vulnerable through activities of existing community groups and organisations, improving access for rural communities and enabling physical and emotional health and wellbeing. To ensure the cost-of-living funding is targeted and delivered in the most effective way, Braintree District Council will work closely with community partners on delivering a programme of support through to March 2025.

Council Tax 2023/24 (Decision at Full Council meeting 20/2/23)

With over 60% of the council's net budget being funded from council tax, it has been agreed to increase council tax by 2.5%, an extra 9p per week based on a Band D property. This means Braintree District Council will remain one of the lowest Council tax rates in Essex and below the national district average. Additional support will be provided to those facing financial difficulties through the council's Exceptional Hardship Fund and a new government funded Council Tax Support Fund, where those in receipt of Local Council Tax Support can get an additional discount of up to £25.

It is proposed that £1.6m is used to provide a New Homes and Growth Dividend of up to £25 to council taxpayers against their 2023/24 council tax liability. The taxpayer must be known by the Council to be liable to pay Council tax on 1st March 2023 and continue to have a Council tax liability for 2023/24 on 1st April 2023. If this criterion is not met there will be no entitlement to a dividend. Braintree District Council's Council tax remains one of the lowest in Essex. The £25 refund means that, depending on their property, almost everyone will pay between 4% and 17.5% less Council tax than they are currently paying.

The Council Tax rate for 2023/24 is £194.31 or an additional £4.68 for the year or 9p per week based on a Band D property for Braintree District Council's share of the overall tax bill.

Although Braintree District Council collects the council tax, the money doesn't just pay for our services. It also pays for the services provided by the police, fire, county council, parish and town council services too. Braintree District Council collects the Council Tax on behalf of the District Council, Essex County Council, Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, Essex Fire Authority and the Parish and Town Councils in the district. Less than 10% of Council tax is allocated to BDC.

For every £1 people pay in council tax, just under 10 pence goes to Braintree District Council (9.7%). ECC receives 72.1 pence, Essex Police & Crime Commissioner receives 11.6 pence, Essex Fire Authority receives 4 pence and Parish and Town Councils receives 2.6 pence.

Parish Council Street Cleaning Agreements (Decision at Full Council meeting 20/2/23)

Unexpected extra funding from central government has meant that the previous budget proposal to reduce the funding to parish councils by 33% as part of a street cleaning agreement will be deferred by a year.

Optional Green Bins – Potential Charge to Residents – Why it is being considered

The budget proposals confirm an intention to introduce a charge for garden waste collections, which would be significant in closing the 2024/2025 budget gap and in future years. This will be considered at a Cabinet meeting on 13 March 2023, along with car parking tariffs.

Over 70% of local authorities in the UK already charge for garden waste collections as a non-essential, opt-in service. If the proposal gets approved at Cabinet on 13 March 2023, those who currently do not make use of the garden waste collection will not be charged if they choose not to sign up to the service. Residents with gardens can choose to compost their own garden waste rather than opting to pay for a service or disposing their garden waste at one of the Essex County Council recycling centres. If it is approved, BDC will communicate full details with residents.

Over the last 10 years the Council has delivered £10million in savings and extras income, which it has been able to reinvest in priorities alongside meeting inflationary and other cost pressures. A further £1million has been identified to help close the budget gap for 2023/24, and where possible, the council has tried to avoid impacting key services. A budget gap of over £2million is forecast up until 2027. Given the scale of the challenge facing the council, inevitably there has had to be some difficult choices made in the budget.

FYI: Cost of living grant programme – UK Youth Fund

This new fund is a three-year unrestricted grant programme aimed at mitigating the devastating impact the cost of living crisis is having on the youth sector.

The UK Youth Fund in partnership with Pears Foundation will provide targeted funding to youth organisations delivering high quality youth work to ensure doors stay open, bills get paid and youth workers receive the salaries they deserve. This will help to ensure young people continue to be supported at this most difficult of times by the youth organisations and youth workers on whom they've come to depend. The Fund will stay open whilst funds remain to be distributed.

Details at: <https://www.ukyouth.org/ukyouthfundpears/>

FYI: Investing in spaces and places grants – Asda Foundation

Investing in Spaces and Places is Asda Foundation's higher value grant for local groups aimed at improving spaces in the heart of local communities.

The Foundation know small grass roots organisations play a vital role in their community, making positive change and improving people's lives every day, but the challenge for many is having the appropriate space and place to bring people together to deliver this fantastic work.

Asda Foundation will be investing £500,000+ for this grant in 2023 to support bigger community projects within local communities where local people can be together and thrive.

Grants will be between £10,000 and £25,000 and the application window opened on 6 February and will close on 19 March 2023. The grant criteria will focus on investing in community spaces and places and projects must fall into at least one of the following categories:

1. Building Repairs
2. Building Development
3. Outdoor Development

Details at: <https://www.asdafoundation.org/foundation-grants>

FYI: Defibrillator grants – London Hearts

Grants are available to fund Public Access Defibrillators in communities all over the country. London Hearts is a charity aiming to help and support communities with the provision of heart defibrillators and teaching CPR/defibrillator skills. They can provide a grant of £300 towards the cost of a defibrillator and storage as well as a free online training video. When someone has a cardiac arrest, timely intervention is the key to survival. By making more defibrillators available, and by training more people to use them, the better the chance of survival for a cardiac arrest victim. Details at: <https://londonhearts.org/>

Cllr. Diana Garrod

Braintree District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward

.....

APPENDIX B

STURMER PARISH COUNCIL -CLERKS REPORT 07 MARCH 2023

Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier has asked members to engage with and help assist residents with highways related queries; to that end he has provided members with access to a "Highways Toolkit".

Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier has provided various updates throughout the moth which have been forwarded onto members.

Complaints of signage left on the highway, I believe that has now been removed?

I have attended an election briefing with the EALC, notes attached to the agenda.

Similarly FP3 is now officially closed at the same section for a minimum of six months pending a review of its repair / reinstatement or potential re-routing.

Essex Highways is calling on landowners with ditches and low hanging trees near roads to make sure these are cleared and cut back ahead of the spring.

Essex Highways bridge team have advised current position on the Water Lane bridge which will be covered under the SFAG briefing.

LanPro yet to respond to the invitation to attend the APA on 04 April.

BDC are holding briefing sessions for candidates and agents in the Council Chamber, Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB on the following dates: 6pm – Thursday 9 March

Street Cleansing agreement for 23-24 at £79.42 – Council agreed to renew for 2023-24 – CLERK to ACTION

The AoNB have invited the council to support their work, council agreed to a £50 contribution – CLERK to ACTION

The council have received various communications from the bodies that support this sector including BDC and ECC and all other matters are covered by the agenda.

APPENDIX C

Sturmer Parish Council Finance Statement - February 2023								BUDGET	ACTUAL	BALANCE		
								11,937.00				
					Opening		11,445.82					
Date	Supplier	Description	Invoice	BACS/DD	Minute Ref	Rec	Credit	Debit	VAT	NETT	Cost Cnt	
Month Closing Balance							10,308.22					
07-Feb-23	War Memorial Trust	Memorial refurbishment	N/A	BGC		Y	870.00				Income	
15-Feb-23	A&J Lighting	Annualised maintenance	37012	DD		Y		27.00	4.50	22.50	Lighting	
17-Feb-23	Macintosh Electronics	Gov.uk domain renewal	18477	FPO		Y		142.80	23.80	119.00	Admin	
20-Feb-23	DRAX Energy	Electricity Lighting	9606/9608	DD		Y		25.86	1.23	24.63	Utility	
27-Feb-23	Employee	Salary	PAYE	FPO		Y		462.15		462.15	Clerk	
FEBRUARY							870.00	657.81	29.53	628.28		
Month Closing Balance							10,520.41					
S106	Source - Exp 30-04-27	Open - Spend to date	Description	Balance								
	Wheel Chase	20,103.56		20,103.56								
	Oct-20	5,664.00	Play equipment	14,439.56								

Sturmer Parish Council Finance Statement - March 2023								BUDGET	ACTUAL	BALANCE		
								11,937.00	15,911.89	-3,974.89		
					Opening		11,445.82					
Date	Supplier	Description	Invoice	BACS/DD	Minute Ref	Rec	Credit	Debit	VAT	NETT	Cost Cnt	
Month Closing Balance							10,520.41					
	Cllr Porth	Seat fixings - B&Q	1184	FPO				19.72		19.72	PM	
	Electric Websites	IT support	260123	FPO				16.00		16.00	Admin	
	A&J Lighting	Lamp repair-Pocket Park	36977	FPO				177.00	29.50	147.50	Lighting	
	Community Heartbeat	Defib annual support	15574	FPO				198	33.00	165.00	Admin	
	Employee	Salary	PAYE	FPO				462.15		462.15	Clerk	
	Employee	Expenses	March Exp	FPO				42.20		42.20	Admin	
	A&J Lighting	Annualised maintenance	37097	DD				27.00	4.50	22.50	Lighting	
	DRAX Energy	Electricity Lighting	1660/1661	DD				23.35	1.11	22.24	Utility	
MARCH							0.00	965.42	68.11	897.31		
Month Closing Balance							9,554.99					
S106	Source - Exp 30-04-27	Open - Spend to date	Description	Balance								
	Wheel Chase	20,103.56		20,103.56								
	Oct-20	5,664.00	Play equipment	14,439.56								

APPENDIX D

Dear Alan

Please give this update to the PC next week:

Gullies in Water Lane were cleared of mud by yourself - flooding has led to an ice hazard for vehicles this year;

The work on Sturmer Station Bridge Water Lane has been delayed until 2024. The Approval in Principle is expected to be shared with the PC/SFAG this month. The help of our District and County Councillors has been requested to ensure the bridge is not delayed further in the light of flooding problems for the residents;

Comments have been sent on another proposal for a solar farm - 103 acres at Water Hall Farm close to the Mere. In particular, SFAG are concerned about drainage as the Mere is the flood plain for the village.

There will be a public consultation by the developer on Thursday, 9 March 2023 in Sturmer Village Hall from 2 pm until 7 pm.

Comments have been sent on the Bioenergy plant proposed near the Epicentre in Haverhill. Concerns have been raised about flooding as we are down-stream from the plant which will require a large hardstanding and smell and noise nuisance from lorries travelling to it through Sturmer.

Thanks

Linda Bevan
Sturmer Flood Action Group