

STURMER PARISH COUNCIL

Ian Brown
Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
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Minutes of the **COUNCIL MEETING OF STURMER PARISH COUNCIL** held at **STURMER VILLAGE HALL** on **24 JANUARY 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 – post co-option	YES
VACANCY	
Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier	NO

CLERK – Ian Brown

4 Members of the public

22/93	NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE None received
22/94	INVITE ANY DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING Cllr Diana Garrod declared a Non personal pecuniary interest in Item 22/104 & 22/106(a) – Fallen tree at FP3 and Footpaths in general for FP3 Cllr David Porth declared a Non personal pecuniary interest in Item 22/106(a) – Footpaths in general for BP19
22/95	APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2022 RESOLUTION – Minutes 29 NOVEMBER 2022 adopted as true record: Proposed Cllr Alan Carter, Seconded Cllr David Porth - Unanimous agreement
22/96	INVITE CANDIDATE(S) STANDING FOR CO-OPTION TO PRESENT THEIR CASE After introducing himself and explaining interest in the work of the council members duly co-opted and invited Mr Paul Smith to join them at the council table and complete the formalities of Acceptance of Office
22/97	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">➤ Riverside bungalows – parking of two large vans➤ Potholes reported but frustration at lack of response with repairs➤ Speedwatch – interest remains in reforming the group if numbers can be found➤ Thanks to PC for organising Solar Farm presentation from LanPro➤ SFAG written objection response to the Solar Farm proposals➤ Anaerobic digest plant – pressure groups Slurry Worry and Muck off Acorn expressing concerns over smell, environmental impact and effect on highway(s)
22/98	RECEIVE COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier provided various updates to the council throughout the month Dist Cllr Diana Garrod – full report APPENDIX A
22/99	RECEIVE CLERKS REPORT & NOTE CORRESPONDENCE Full report APPENDIX B

22/100	<p>FINANCE – RECEIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT - AGREE PAYMENTS, APPOINT AUTHORISER RESOLUTION – Approve Finance statement(s) as attached: Proposed Cllr David Porth: Seconded Cllr Terrie Jones – Unanimous approval Appointed authoriser – Cllr Alan Carter Finance statement(s) – APPENDIX C</p> <p>Note - Cllr Carter presented two invoices from MKM BS Haverhill for council to approve payment. CLERK to ACTION – Cllr Diana Garrod to authorise payment</p> <p>22/100 (i) – CONFIRM 2023-24 BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUEST RESOLUTION – Approve 2023-24 Budget at £13,130.61: Proposed Cllr Terrie Jones: Seconded Cllr David Porth – Unanimous approval</p> <p>RESOLUTION – Approve 2023-24 Precept request at £13,130.61: Proposed Cllr Paul Smith: Seconded Cllr Alan Carter – Unanimous approval</p> <p>CLERK to ACTION</p>
22/101	<p>REVIEW & COMMENT ON CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS/APPEALS</p> <p>Note – Wheelchase Appeal upheld with costs allowed</p> <p>NOTE ANY FURTHER COMMENTS - Lanpro Solar Farm, Hill Lane, Sturmer; Planning Scoping Opinion Consultation 22/03173/SCR Area of Natural Beauty (AoNB) entity commented due to site being within the AoNB area as are the Wixoe solar farm proposals if they proceed.</p> <p>CLERK to request West Suffolk planning inform the council of any developments for the Wixoe site and invite the council to consult on the proposals.</p> <p>Council requested CLERK to contact BDC to enquire whether there are S106 funding associated with the solar farm proposals.</p> <p>PC to invite Solar Farm agent to attend and present at the Annual Parish Assembly on 04 April.</p> <p>TO BE NOTED – WOODLANDS SITE CARE HOME OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLANS TO BE SENT TO THE PC Artist impression circulated to members, planning application still to be submitted</p>
22/102	<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 Highways confirmed works proposals are still in the “validation” process and will require funding allocation</p>
22/103	<p>PROVIDE INPUT TO ANY UPDATES TO THE PC EMERGENCY PLAN FOR SUBMISSION TO BDC BY 31 JANUARY Contact cascade to be updated – CLERK to ACTION</p>
22/104	<p>RECEIVE UPDATE REGARDING FALLEN WILLOW TREE 03/11/22 FROM WOODLAND NEXT TO RAILWAY AMENITY WALK OVER RIVER AND PROW 3 Owner of Woodland is seeking vehicular access along Amenity walk to carry out works to Woodland.</p>

	CLERK to advise owner such access is not available but that the contracted parish tree surgeon can be contacted to complete the works on their behalf.
22/105	<p>RECEIVE UPDATE ON ALTERNATIVE MEMORIAL BENCH PURCHASE FROM CYAN Original bench remains available at £660 including delivery and VAT – CLERK to ACTION</p> <p>Base to be prepared to mount and secure the new bench – Cllr Carter and Cllr Porth</p>
22/106	<p>RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:</p> <p>a) Footpaths – ALL – FP4, ploughing and cropping – ECC to assess condition and any subsequent action.</p> <p>FP3, ECC advised repair to riverbank should be completed within six months. FP3 within vicinity of Water Lane badly overgrown, to be reported to ECC.</p> <p>BP17, access gate is locked on behalf of the EA and Anglian Water, a compromise has been implemented allowing walkers to bypass the locked gate.</p> <p>b) Flood Action Group – Cllr Alan Carter – SFAG reports on Solar Farm proposals and Bio energy plant have been submitted. Bridge repair update from Highways remains pending</p> <p>APPENDIX D & E</p> <p>c) Play Area – Cllrs Alan Carter & David Porth – Bench foundations to be installed</p> <p>d) Parish Maintenance – Cllrs Alan Carter and David Porth – Suggest commence works later in the season and confirm rates with contractor</p> <p>e) War Memorial – Cllr David Porth – Grantor requesting updated photos and another copy of the original invoice prior to releasing the grant funds, plus current photos to be placed on the WM grant site along with a description of its condition</p> <p>f) Village Hall – Cllr Terrie Jones – Warm spaces exercise, awaiting a decision on a repeat. East Egg hunt for the children under consideration.</p> <p>[f](i) – Defibrillator function – Cllr Terrie Jones – Working OK</p> <p>g) Highways – ALL – 2023 Cycle route passes through village, potholes present a hazard to cyclists and all road users, council to maintain pressure on Highways to remedy prior to the cycle event.</p> <p>Cllr Carter observed a person working (potentially a surveyor) at the entrance to the newly sold woodland; council to request Cnty Cllr Schwier update the PC should an application for a new entrance be submitted.</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> <p>RESOLUTION – Approve exclusion of the public: Proposed Cllr Alan Carter: Seconded Cllr David Porth – Unanimous approval</p>
22/107	RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE VG52 LAND SALE PROPOSALS
	<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> <p>RESOLUTION – Approve readmission of the public: Proposed Cllr David Porth: Seconded Cllr Diana Garrod – Unanimous approval</p>
22/108	<p>ITEMS OF REPORT TO BE NOTED OR ADDED TO NEXT COUNCIL AGENDA None at present</p>

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

N.B. These minutes were signed by the Chairman at the 07 March 2023 PC meeting subject to an amendment to Item 22/101 - NOTE ANY FURTHER COMMENTS - Lanpro Solar Farm, Hill Lane, Sturmer; Planning Scoping Opinion Consultation 22/03173/SCR

Area of Natural Beauty (AoNB) entity commented due to site being within the AoNB area as are the Wixoe solar farm proposals if they proceed.

Wherein the reference to the AoNB area was changed to read the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project Area

APPENDIX A

District Councillor's Report January 2023 to Parish Councils

(Cllr. Diana Garrod - Bumpstead Ward)

Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders. Intended closures:-

The Endway, Steeple Bumpstead to commence on 11th January 2023 for 3 days whilst Essex County Council undertakes carriageway patching.

Broad Green, Steeple Bumpstead. Due to commence on 13th January 2023 for 5 days whilst Essex County Council undertakes carriageway patching.

The Street, Sturmer on 23rd January 2023 for 9 hours whilst Openreach undertakes cabling.

Lanpro Solar Farm Exhibition

Sturmer Parish Council has arranged for Lanpro to exhibit their plans for a Solar Farm across Sturmer and into Steeple Bumpstead. This will be held on Thursday 12th January 2023; 3pm to 6.30pm at Sturmer Village Hall. Residents should receive a paper invitation through the post. However, I would be grateful if this is advertised through your social media channels.

Housing Strategy Consultation

Braintree District Council is developing its new strategy to guide its approach to housing need and demand up to 2028, which is now out for public consultation until 5pm Tuesday 7th February 2023. Residents can read and comment on the document on the council's website at www.baintree.gov.uk/housing strategy The three main commitments from the Council in the draft strategy are:

- Facilitating a consistent programme of high quality, affordable homes which best meet the needs of the current and future residents.
- Supporting communities and enabling housing across the district to meet the needs of all our residents, especially those who are vulnerable.
- Improving access to and the quality of the Private Rented Sector and make best use of assets and existing properties.

Christmas Tree Collection

BDC will be providing a drop-off service from 10 locations across the district on Saturday 14 January 2023. Steeple Bumpstead Village Hall, Finchingfield Road, CB9 7EA, 08:00 -

08:30am. The Old Council Yard, Hedingham Road, Great Yeldham, CO9 4HS, 09:00 - 09:30am.

- BDC will collect real trees and wreaths
- You must remove all decorations before recycling the tree
- BDC cannot take artificial trees or wreaths containing wire
- Trees must not be taller than 6'7"

Members Allowances

At the meeting of Full Council on 3rd January 2-23, it was agreed to amend Rule 20.8 of the Members Allowance Scheme as set out in the Constitution and to not increase Members Allowances in line with the Local Government Staff Pay Award for 2022/23.

PFCC Public Meeting

Put your questions to Roger Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex: County Wide Public Meeting – 15th February 2023 – Facebook Live.

Second Quarter Performance Management Report (1/7/22-30/9/22). Sample extracts:-

The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the performance of the Council at the end of the second quarter of 2022/23 in relation to the publication of 'Bouncing Back Together', the Council's plan for the district up to March 2023.

The Council continues to support and monitor Superfast Essex in the delivery of Superfast Broadband across the district:- The Braintree district is currently at 95% of premises able to access superfast broadband and is forecast to reach 99% coverage within 3 years. The district wide take up of superfast broadband is currently at 30%. Superfast Essex and Gigaclear have been running campaigns to increase uptake and to raise awareness of 5G.

The Council continues to work with partners including Essex Highways on the delivery of our Cycling Strategy and implementation plan which includes developing integrated, high quality cycle routes that are safe to use and connected across our district:- The cycle video launched in conjunction with National Bike week in June was used again for Bike to Work week in August. The council has also supported three local cycling organisations who have now received cycling grants up the value of £12k. The recommendations from scrutiny reviews of the Cycling Strategy and into cycling and walking in the Braintree district have been undertaken and presented to Cabinet in October 2022.

Carry out air quality reviews in known air pollution hot spots across the district to improve the knowledge of local air quality and the proposed actions to take:- The results of the air quality monitoring in Halstead have shown that no measures need to be put in place. The review of air quality in the district has been completed by the Consultants. A report will be taken to Management Board in the third quarter.

Facilitate the delivery of a purpose-built medical centre in Sible Hedingham:- Planning permission has been granted. The land transfer continues to be delayed and the end date was pushed back to December 2022. This is to allow adequate time for the necessary process requirements to complete within the NHS to exchange contracts.

Revitalise Community Transport scheme and increase the number of volunteers:- The service currently has 20 volunteer drivers shared between the social car scheme and minibus hire

scheme. In the second quarter of the year, the Community Transport team provided 6,530 journeys. Demand for the service post pandemic is starting to increase. The Community Transport service have been working with Community 360 to promote volunteer driving opportunities at various events across the district.

Continue to deliver our LiveWell programme, focussing on:

- Supporting children and their families to have the best start in life
- Supporting older people to age well
- Supporting children and adults to have good mental health
- Tackling obesity in adults and children
- Reducing hip fractures in over 65's

The health and wellbeing panel are reviewing the priorities of the health and wellbeing board. A number of activities continue to be delivered under the Livewell programme including numerous organised walks (which average 200 walkers each month), fitness classes for people with health conditions and the over 60's, seated exercise classes, dance lessons and weight management sessions.

Work with Community 360 and Active Essex to provide support to children and families who need it during school holiday periods through the provision of activity sessions:- We continue to work with Active Essex and Community 360 to provide activities and a nutritious meal through the school holiday periods. The summer holiday sites saw 82% of children return to an activAte club. During the summer, 11 clubs were provided by ten organisations providing support to 644 children and young people.

Continue to work with Essex County Council on the Governments 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' on initiatives to prevent rough sleepers returning to the streets:- The Next Steps accommodation programme to provide stable accommodation and tailored support to prevent people returning to rough sleeping and begin to rebuild their lives is now up and running with all six units of accommodation now occupied.

Review the criteria for the discretionary business rates scheme for charitable and non-profit organisations:- The criteria for the discretionary business rates scheme has been reviewed and no changes to the criteria are being made. The relief scheme has been published and all current recipients of this relief have been contacted and asked to reapply so that entitlement can be reassessed against policy.

Monitor changes to various legislation to understand the impact on services including but not limited to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Environmental Bill 2020 and Planning reforms:- The Specialist Domestic Abuse Officer is now in post and is providing support to colleagues within the Housing Service. They are also establishing links with others in similar roles in other Authorities and looking into DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation to enable the council to respond to domestic abuse situations more effectively.

Review and adopt a new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex and enhance the value of joint working through the waste management partnership:- As part of the project to review the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy, we have agreed the baseline data for our waste management service and six collection methodology options. External consultants are currently modelling the options to assess the impact on our waste collection service.

The full PM Report can be found in Cabinet agenda 6th December 2022:
<https://braintree.cmis.uk.com>

Free Workshops from Business Growth Experts

A series of free workshops, designed to help boost knowledge and skills, will begin towards the end of next week. Each workshop is open to two employees per business. Register early to reserve a spot as spaces are limited. Follow the links (below) for more on the sessions and to reserve a spot:

✓ **13 January: How to trade out of the cost-of-living crisis**

Reserve a spot: <https://bit.ly/3VnROJO>

✓ **17 January: How to motivate staff**

Reserve a spot: <https://bit.ly/3HQ36TV>

✓ **20 January: How to increase productivity**

Reserve a spot: <https://bit.ly/3G6wmV8>

✓ **25 January: How to recruit staff and upskill employees**

Reserve a spot: <https://bit.ly/3hCPbpD>

The workshops will take place at [The Plaza in Great Notley, CM77 7AU](#)

Your business must be from the Braintree District to be eligible. The workshops are funded by the UK Government through the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#).

News from Suffolk – Public Meeting

Acorn Bioenergy wants to create an anaerobic digestion plant on land currently occupied by Spring Grove Farm, owned by the Thurlow Estate and situated next to the A1307 just outside both [Haverhill](#) and Withersfield. A public meeting is planned at the Epicentre on 12th January 2023 at 7pm.

Cllr. Diana Garrod

Braintree District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward

APPENDIX B

STURMER PARISH COUNCIL -CLERKS REPORT 24 JANUARY 2023

ECC are urging people to comment on the proposals for the Finchingfield Bridge.

A member of the community has asked the PC to maintain an interest in the fate of the Red Lion PH should it risk being closed and whether it could then become an asset of community value.

Owned by Greene King and no known plans for its closure to date.

Latest feedback received from UKPN on the lamp adjacent to the pocket park – contacting BT to confirm whether ever their responsibility.

Parish lighting contractor to assess lamp condition at PC expense.

No response from Highways on the possible weight restrictions and associated signs on Water Lane.

Clerk to enquire of Highway's personnel working on pavement refurbishment project.

CLERK attending an election briefing with the EALC and will report to members.

The .Gov domain registrar has changed, CLERK has completed the transfer with the JISC service centre, JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE.

The owner of a parcel of woodland neighbouring the river and footpath has requested access to the amenity walk to enable their completing tree works, Mrs Woodward.

CLERK to acknowledge request.

Farms for Farming have written to the council outlining their objection to the proposed Solar Farm impacting the parish.

Anonymous so council unable to acknowledge receipt.

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 - December 2022										
							BUDGET	ACTUAL	BALANCE	
							11,937.00			
							11,445.82			
Opening							Credit			
Date	Supplier	Description	Invoice	BACS/DD	Minute Ref	Rec	Debit	VAT	NETT	Cost Cnt
Month Closing Balance							£11,417.07			
08-Dec	MKM BS Haverhill - AC	BEDEC Barn paint	453	FPO		Y	33.54	5.59	27.95	Admin
09-Dec	ECC	LED lamp grant	32526	BGC		Y	700.00			Income
14-Dec	Employee	Salary	PAYE	FPO		Y	686.15		686.15	Clerk
15-Dec	A&J Lighting	Annualised maintenance	36813	DD		Y	27.00	4.50	22.50	Lighting
16-Dec	ECC Community Fund	Memoral grant	A665117	BGC		Y	360.00			Income
20-Dec	DRAX Energy	Electricity Lighting	4539/4540	DD		Y	25.03	1.19	23.84	Utility
DECEMBER							1060.00	771.72	11.28	760.44
Month Closing Balance							£11,705.35			
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						

track. If they do we can report them and they will be fined as it will be against the construction traffic guidelines. Small vehicles will access the site via Hill Lane for maintenance of the panels once completed.

Biodiversity Gain is required as part of the process. The existing farmland has poor biodiversity and a good mixture of wild flower seeds etc will be sown to improve diversity on the site.

Hannah could not give any more information on the fate of non-recyclable materials at the end of the scheme.

The scheme has to be progressed before the developer can apply for permission to connect to the National grid. I believe there is a long waiting list for these connections.

A box for further comments was provided at the exhibition so in this:

I asked for a written reply to our letter so we have Hannah's responses in writing. She may be able to do this. She is preparing a document of all the comments from public consultation and the developer's responses which will accompany the planning application.

I also asked for a contact if we find construction lorries are travelling through Sturmer and up Hill Lane from the A1017.

Personal objection:

Thanks to Lanpro for providing an exhibition on the proposals for a solar farm in Hill Lane, Sturmer in the village hall in Sturmer.

I attended and a representative, Hannah kindly answered the questions I had previously raised on behalf of Sturmer Flood Action Group. It seems that our concerns over flooding will be addressed as they will follow guidelines on drainage from the Essex County Council Suds Team.

However, I would like to raise a PERSONAL objection as a regular walker and resident of the area. I believe the solar panels will be an eyesore and a blot on the landscape. It will not be possible to screen such a large site completely with trees.

I think these panels should be on roofs (particularly of new developments) and in car parks like the one at the Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury which will provide power for the leisure centre. Car parks are ugly already but well cultivated farm fields are not. They provide a pleasant and relaxing view which helps us all with our mental and physical health.

Please refuse this application as the development will be unsightly and in a prominent position in the countryside.

Linda Bevan

SFAG

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APPENDIX E

Sturmer Flood Action Group

Rivendell The Street Sturmer Haverhill Suffolk CB9 7XF

25 January 2023

Dear Sir

Acorn Bioenergy Plant near Haverhill

I am writing on behalf of Sturmer Flood Action Group to express our concern that the large area of hardstanding needed for the bioenergy plant near Haverhill will increase flooding in Sturmer.

The Sturmer Flood Action Group was formed in 2014 to alleviate flooding in Sturmer. Twenty houses have been flooded here internally and gardens and outhouses are regularly flooded.

The Haverhill Flood park was built to protect Haverhill and Sturmer from flooding.

Any increased flood water from the plant will flow into the Stour Brook and to the flood park.

We are seeking a reassurance that the sluice gates and release of water from the flood park will be controlled so that Sturmer is not flooded as occurred in 2014, if the plant is built.

We would like to know what the sustainable drainage proposals are for the site.

We are concerned about possible pollution of the Stour Brook and what steps will be taken to prevent this.

We are also concerned about increased heavy lorries on the A1017 going to and from the site carrying noxious waste materials. The A1017 is already a problem for Sturmer residents because of speeding heavy lorries and other traffic, noise, pollution and hazard and inconvenience.

Please let us know when the planning application for this site is submitted so we can find out more and make a comment on it.

Yours faithfully,

Linda Bevan - Secretary - Sturmer Flood Action Group

To:

Acorn Bioenergy – info@acornbioenergy.com

cc Sturmer Parish Council

Haverhill Town Council

Roger Webster – Environment Agency

West Suffolk District Council – customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk