

**STURMER PARISH COUNCIL**

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Minutes of the **COUNCIL MEETING OF STURMER PARISH COUNCIL** held at **STURMER VILLAGE HALL** on **09 JANUARY 2024 AT 7:30 PM**

COUNCILLOR	IN ATTENDANCE
Cllr Diana Garrod (Chairman)	YES
Cllr Alan Carter	YES
Cllr Terrie Jones	YES
Cllr David Porth	YES
VACANCY	
VACANCY	
Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier	YES

CLERK – Ian Brown – unavailable due to Covid

0 Member(s) of the public

<b>23/100</b>	<b>NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Clerk, Ian Brown - Covid NB: Attendance book not signed
<b>23/101</b>	<b>WITH REFERENCE TO THIS AGENDA MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO DECLARE ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE INTERESTS</b> Cllr. Garrod – PROW 3
<b>23/102</b>	<b>APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER – 2023</b> <b>RESOLUTION</b> - Minutes approved by Cllr. Carter, seconded Cllr. Porth (unanimous approval), but not signed as a copy was not available.
<b>23/103</b>	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION</b> <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>
<b>23/104</b>	<b>RECEIVE COUNTY &amp; DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS</b> District Councillor Garrod's January report circulated by email and discussed during the meeting. Full report – <b>APPENDIX A</b>  County Councillor Schwier arrived 20:05. Providing a short video about how to use What3Words for reporting purposes to Essex County Council. However, this bounced back from the Clerks email address as there was not capacity. Will forward ECC budget details when available. 12 crews deployed in anticipation of stork Henk for tree problems. Salt gritters out this evening in anticipation of very cold weather. Last year 50 salting trucks, including 2 small electric trucks, went out 70 times last year and spread 21,000 tonnes of grit on ECC roads. Clerk to list highway issues in the village, with the 'report it' in one email and send to Cllr. Schwier.
<b>23/105</b>	<b>RECEIVE CLERK'S REPORT &amp; NOTE CORRESPONDENCE</b> Not available.
<b>23/106</b>	<b>FINANCE – RECEIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT - AGREE PAYMENTS</b> Finance statement to be attached at <b>APPENDIX B</b> <b>RESOLUTION</b> - Finance statement agreed; Proposed Cllr. Carter, Seconded Cllr. Garrod

	<p><b>23/106(i) - APPOINT AUTHORISER</b> Cllr. Carter to be authoriser. Proposed Cllr. Garrod, Seconded Cllr. Porth</p> <p><b>23/106(ii) – CONFIRM CLLRS NOTED RECONCILED BANK STATEMENT</b></p> <p><b>23/106(iii) – CONTRIBUTE TO THE FINALISED 2024-2025 BUDGET PREPARATION TO INFORM THE FINAL PRECEPT APPLICATION FOR 2024/2025</b> <b>RESOLUTION</b> - 5% increase agreed; Proposed by Cllr. Porth and Seconded by Cllr. Carter. Unanimously agreed. CLERK to ACTION Precept request at £13,788 (an increase on 23-24 of £657</p> <p><b>23/106(iv) – RECEIVE UPDATE ON ACCOUNT OPENING WITH UNITY TRUST BANK</b> Update conveyed by Cllr. Garrod after discussion with Clerk earlier in the day.</p> <p><b>23/106(v) – APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF STREET CLEANSING AGREEMENT 2024-25</b> <b>RESOLUTION</b> - Acceptance approved. Proposed Cllr. Porth, Seconded Cllr. Jones. CLERK to ACTION</p>
<b>23/107</b>	<p><b>REVIEW &amp; COMMENT ON CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS/APPEALS</b></p> <p><b>Ref. 23/02948/FUL</b> <b>Change of use on the ground floor from Offices to Electrical workshop. - Phoenix House , Phoenix Road, Sturmer</b> <b>Comment date 10 January 2024</b> No objection. Unanimous decision.</p> <p><b>Consider reporting of a possible planning breach, details of resident’s complaint circulated to members – <u>Reporting a planning breach – Braintree District Council</u></b> Clerk to report the planning breach using the BDC website form and include the photographs supplied by the resident.</p> <p><b>Receive any update on the alleged footpath issue at the woodlands hotel development site</b> No update.</p> <p><b>Note Farmers for Farming comments ref Solar Farm development in Sturmer</b> Noted.</p>
<b>23/108</b>	<p><b>CONFIRM ENGAGEMENT OF QUALIFIED ARBORIST TO COMPLETE TREE SURVEY ALONG AMENITY WALK AND PRODUCE DETAILED REPORT ENABLING COUNCIL TO INVITE CONTRACTORS TO TENDER FOR THE IDENTIFIED WORK SCHEDULE.</b> <b>CURRENT OFFERS TO COMPLETE SURVEY PRICED AT Q1 £495, Q2 £600, Q3 up to £1,500, Q4 £960</b> <b>RESOLUTION</b> - Confirm award contract to Q4 - £960. Proposed Cllr. Porth, Seconded Cllr. Carter. CLERK to ACTION (BDC has advised that the S106 fund could not be used for this purpose, nor the maintenance works to the trees along the Amenity Walk)</p> <p><b>23/108(i) – CONSIDER DEVELOPMENT OF TREE MAINTENANCE POLICY, example circulated to members</b> Maintenance policy to be considered after arborist report is received.</p>
<b>23/109</b>	<p><b>RECEIVE ANY AVAILABLE UPDATE TO PROPPED BRIDGE INSPECTION WORKS – IF NO UPDATE CONSIDER REMOVING ITEM FROM AGENDA</b> No further update. Remove from agenda.</p>
<b>23/110</b>	<p><b>RECEIVE RESPONSES TO OUTCOME OF SITE VISIT WITH ANDREW BILBY, ESSEX HIGHWAYS, REF. DROPPED KERB AND ROAD CROSSING ON A1017 ADJACENT TO BUS SHELTER</b> No proposals from Mr Bilby were considered acceptable to resolve the problems at this site.</p>

23/111	<p><b>RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:</b></p> <p><b>a) Footpaths</b> - 2 fallen trees at Sturmer 17. Potentially both the responsibility of a landowner. Clerk to contact the landowner by letter.</p> <p><b>b) Flood Action Group</b> – Report circulated to members and discussed in the meeting.</p> <p><b>c) Play Area</b> – Awaiting new signs.</p> <p><b>d) Parish Maintenance</b> – Nothing to report. No tree problems during recent storm Henk.</p> <p><b>e) War Memorial</b> – Cllr. Porth to remove poppy. Hay and debris collects in this site, otherwise okay.</p> <p><b>f) Village Hall</b> – Cllr. Jones; winter warmth lunches held today, approximately 12 attended. 2 further events to be held 6<sup>th</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> March between 12-2pm. Easter bunny hunt scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> March. All churches in the ward, including Sturmer, will be open on 15th June for D-Day. It was suggested at a recent VH meeting that the location of the Village Emergency Plan is placed on the Village Hub Facebook site.</p> <p><b>[f](i) – Defibrillator function</b> – In good order. VH meeting suggested further training and Cllr. Jones will contact the trainer in Steeple Bumpstead.</p> <p><b>g) Highways – Including Popes Court, Light No1 Unit ID 187691</b> Discussed with Cllr. Schwier – he would like the light ID number to be included in the aforementioned suggested email. Problems at Water Lane conveyed to Cllr. Schwier. Discussion regarding S106 monies with Cllr. Carter and Cllr. Schwier.</p>
	<p><b>MOTION TO BE AGREED - <i>Approve exclusion of the public</i></b> <b><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></b></p>
23/112	<p><b>RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE VG52 LAND SALE PROPOSALS</b> Regarding proposed landscaping. Cllr Porth suggested that an agreement should be compiled by Mark Catley; Cheffins (PC's representative). Subject to MC's approval, the parish council has no objection to the proposals put forward, which would benefit the common and Sturmer's residents. The PC must not incur any costs. Clerk to initiate this proposal and convey to Mr Catley and Mr Bishop accordingly. Unanimous agreement.</p>
	<p><b>MOTION TO BE AGREED – <i>Approve readmission of the public</i></b> <b><i>Members of the public to be readmitted to the meeting</i></b></p>
23/113	<p><b>AGREE FINAL ITEMS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW OF THE POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS PLAN</b> Those items listed in Cllr. Porth's recent email are approved by the PC as an addition to the existing items. Clerk to convey to BDC accordingly.</p>
23/114	<p><b>ITEMS OF REPORT TO BE NOTED OR ADDED TO NEXT COUNCIL AGENDA</b> None at present</p>
23/115	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TBA – CLOSE</b>  Close 20:39  Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm (subject to VH as no calendar was available). Cllr. Porth to check availability.</p>

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

## APPENDIX A

### **District Councillor's Report to Parish Councils January 2024**    **Cllr. Diana Garrod - Bumpstead Ward**

#### **Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders & Roadworks**

Intended closure of Braintree Road, Halstead Road, Queen Street, Potter Street, Swan Street, Sible Hedingham, due to commence on 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024 whilst Essex CC undertakes machine resurfacing. Details at: <https://one.network/?tm=135750313>

Intended closure of Chapel Street, Haverhill Road, Finchingfield Road, Old Hall Road, Eggshell Lane, Cornish Hall End, Little London Hill, due to commence on 29th January 2024 for 12 days **has changed** to 26<sup>th</sup> March to 5<sup>th</sup> April. The closure is required while Essex County Council undertakes surface dressing. Details at: <https://one.network/?tm=136554590>

Intended closure of Water Lane, Steeple Bumpstead 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (postponed from Dec '23). The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Gas Transportation Company undertakes gas connection. Details at: <https://one.network/?tm=135767707>

#### **Household Waste and Recycling Collections**

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 a new policy for Household Waste and Recycling collections will be implemented. This includes the non-collection of additional waste put out for collection that is not contained within grey wheeled bins, referred to as side waste.

In comparison to other councils in Essex, the tonnage of waste collected in grey wheeled bins in the Braintree District is significantly higher. Last year, Braintree District households generated the fourth highest volume of residual waste in Essex, averaging to 463.58 kgs of waste per household. Therefore, the council will be ceasing the collection of all side waste from 1 April 2024 and will only collect waste which is presented in the grey bin and the lid must be shut. There are many local authorities across the country that already do not collect side waste, including those in Essex.

If a resident's bin is missed on their collection day, under the new policy, they will need to report it to the council after 3pm on the day of collection and no later than 12 noon on the next working day and should leave their bin at their normal collection point. The collection crew will return to collect it within 2 working days of receiving a missed bin report. The weekly collections for properties which have communal bins, such as flats, will remain the same.

There is still no restriction to the number of clear recycling sacks residents can put out for collection, providing they contain the correct items. One of the aims of the new policy is to support a more circular economy by keeping resources in use for as long as possible, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling to extend the life cycle of products.

#### **How Much Recycling is Rejected?**

Of the total waste collected (56,326 tonnes) from December 2022 to November 2023, 1,337 tonnes of Dry Mixed Recycling was sent to Suffolk's Energy from Waste Facility. This represents 2.38% of the total waste that could not be recycled as it was contaminated. (Comment from Cllr. Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services).

#### **Recycle your Christmas Tree**

If you are looking to recycle your real Christmas tree following the festive period, Braintree District Council will be collecting them on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2024. BDC will collect REAL trees and wreaths, however all decorations must be removed before recycling the tree. They cannot take artificial trees or wreaths containing wire and trees must not be taller than 6'7".

Drop off locations:                    Steeple Bumpstead Village Hall, Finchingfield Rd, CB9 7EA: 08:00 – 08:30am  
    The Old Council Yard, Hedingham Rd, Gt. Yeldham, CO9 4HS: 09:00 – 09:30am

[Please do not leave your tree at any other time as this will be treated as fly-tipping.](#)

More information at: [https://www.braintree.gov.uk/bins-waste-recycling/recycle-christmas-tree?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.braintree.gov.uk/bins-waste-recycling/recycle-christmas-tree?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

### **Wethersfield Grant Funding (Asylum Centre)**

At the Cabinet meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023, details of the funding Braintree District Council has received from the Home Office were put forward. The Asylum Large Sites and Vessel Grant has been received under the Asylum Pathfinder Large Sites Accommodation Programme.

The Funding Instructions confirmed that the Council would receive an initial upfront payment of £1,487,500 under the Grant, with further payments expected under the Grant on a quarterly basis thereafter. The Grant is calculated on the basis of £3,500 per bed space on site, and this payment therefore represents 425 of the overall capacity at Wethersfield, which is expected to contain a total of 1,700 bed spaces.

It is important to identify that £3,500 is not paid nor received by the Council each time an asylum seeker is allocated a bed space, it is not a per head funding. Rather the payment is triggered on the initial occupancy of the bed space. Accordingly, the Council only receives this funding once per occupied bed spaces. This is regardless of how many different individuals are allocated the bed space over the lifetime of the site. This means that the funding is essentially capped, and the Council will not receive more than the equivalent funding of 1,700 spaces under this current Scheme.

The Funding Instructions set out that the Grant must be used by the Council to address pressures on local services associated with the asylum accommodation, to support the outcomes of the large sites programme. The Council will need time to develop the Scheme, or potentially a number of Schemes, allow for applications against the Scheme(s) to be made to the Council and for funding awards to be approved.

A statement has been issued and can be seen on the Council's website at

[www.braintree.gov.uk/wethersfieldairfield](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/wethersfieldairfield)

The Home Office continue to keep their [factsheet relating to MoD](#)

[Wethersfield Asylum Accommodation](#) updated regularly to include the latest information and updates about the site. They also publish a monthly newsletter available on the [GOV website](#) to address any concerns and questions raised by the community.

### **Essex Flood Partnership Appointment**

At the Cabinet meeting 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 it was agreed that Cllr. Richard van Dulken (ward member for Yeldham) would be appointed to the Essex Flood Partnership.

Outside bodies are external organisations and partnerships which have requested that an Elected Member be appointed to them, or established to support the Council in the management of its services. Participation in outside bodies, contributed to the Council's strategic functions, priorities or community leadership roles; supported partnership and joint working; and enabled Members to gain and share knowledge and expertise. It was added that Members appointed to outside bodies must respond to all reasonable requests for information about the work of the outside body and their participation in it. In undertaking their role, the nominated Members were required to ensure that the relevant Cabinet Member was updated at regular intervals as to the work being undertaken, and where necessary this would be incorporated into reports to full Council.

### **Housing Delivery Test**

Braintree District Council has passed the government's Housing Delivery Test, delivering 2,811 new homes between 2019/20 and 2021/22 to meet local needs.

The figures were revealed last month by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities which showed the council performed 152% against its target of homes required, putting the council in a good position compared to other authorities in Essex.

The Housing Delivery Test is an annual measurement of housing delivery to assess the extent to which each local authority is building enough homes to meet their housing need, as determined by central government. If

failed, under government rules, this means a presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and that planning permission should usually be granted.

897 of these homes will be affordable meaning they will be available to either rent or purchase at more affordable levels to help people who cannot afford to purchase or rent homes on the open market. A target of an additional 250 affordable homes is expected to be complete by March 2024.

Changes were also announced to the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In the council's response to the NPPF consultation last year, it expressed significant concerns on the five-year housing land supply system due to it facilitating unplanned, speculative development as it is heavily weighted in a developer's favour. It was announced this policy will now be scrapped for councils like Braintree who have an up-to-date Local Plan for any new planning applications.

**Cllr. Diana Garrod**

Braintree District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward

## APPENDIX B

Sturmer Parish Council Finance Statement - December 2023						PRECEPT	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BALANCE		
						13,131.00	11,937.00	8,543.38	4,587.23		
Date	Supplier	Description	Invoice	BACS/DD	Minute Ref	Rec	Credit	Debit	VAT	NETT	Cost Cnt
Month Closing Balance							17904.45				
05-Dec	Sturmer Village Hall	Grant	App Form	FPO		Y		850.00		850.00	Grant S137
15-Dec	A&J Lighting	Lighting maintenance	37816	DD		Y		27.00	4.50	22.50	Lighting
20-Dec	DRAX	Electricity Lighting	97438/00312	DD		Y		25.03	1.19	23.84	Utility
22-Dec	HP Inc / IB	Printer Ink	818485	FPO		Y		4.12	0.69	3.44	Admin
22-Dec	Employee	WFH Allowance	N/A	FPO		Y		26.00		26.00	Admin
22-Dec	Employee	Salary	PAYE	FPO		Y		723.75		723.75	Clerk

## APPENDIX C

Dear Alan

Please give the following update to the PC next week:

Solar Farm, Hill Lane

We have raised objections

### Sturmer Station Bridge

It has been confirmed that an overall sum is approved for bridge works in January (Cabinet) and February (Full Council) by ECC members. This should include an amount allocated by officers for re-routing of utilities at the bridge in 2024/25 with replacement of the bridge in 2025/26

### Water Lane

Worse flooding has been noted since the surface was patched. In addition, the continued use of the field opposite Dearsley for a scaffolding business with hardstanding and buildings may have made this worse as the field acted as a flood plain for Water Lane previously. In addition, the previous owner kept the ditches there free of debris and vegetation and flowing to help clear the lane which is not now done. As Parish Councillors have expressed concern we hope they will take up this matter with Essex Highways and Braintree District Council as they were successful in having the side inlets on the A1017 at Hill Lane cleared after many years of the flood group trying to get this done without success.

The SFAG log has been updated and is available to view.

Thanks

Linda Bevan  
Sturmer Flood Action Group