

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 7th May 2024.

Councillors present: John Gale (Chairman), Sylvia Pettitt, Guy Holland Bosworth, Edward Page Turner and Geoff Ingham.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk).

1. Election of chairman

John Gale was nominated and following a vote, it was resolved that he would be chairman.

2. Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and agreement to abide by the Council's Code of Conduct by the chairman.

The chairman signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Election of a vice chairman

Sylvia Pettitt was nominated and following a vote, it was resolved that Sylvia Pettitt would be vice-chairman.

4. Register of Members' Interests form.

Councillors reviewed their Register of Members' Interest forms. No amendments were necessary.

5. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from parish councillor Helyn Dudley and the reason for absence accepted.

6. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests.

No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda and no dispensation requests were received.

7. Approval of minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 12th March 2024.

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman signed them.

8. Public session.

No issues were raised.

9. To discuss finding an additional parish councillor.

Sylvia Pettitt and John Gale agreed to speak to a couple of residents who might be interested.

10. To receive an update on the list of actions agreed at the last meeting.

There was one outstanding councillor action. The circular bench still needs to be removed.

11. Finance.

a) Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- J P Kirk - expenses - LGA 1972 111 - **£18.72**
- SALC – annual subscription – LGA 1972 111 - **£181.17**
- C Whitaker – internal audit of PC accounts - LGA 1972, s111 – **£75.00**
- McGregor Services – grass cutting - Open Spaces Act 1906, ss 9 & 10 – **£156.00**

Payments agreed in the budget:

- Ousden Village Hall - annual donation as agreed in the budget - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19 - **£2,800** plus **£300.00** for the insurance for the playpark. It was resolved that an additional £200 would be paid to Ousden Village Hall to cover the cost of use of the village hall for meetings.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings:

No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since 1st April 2024.

Receipts

Date	Bank	Description	Total
08/04/2024	Lloyds Bank Current Account	VAT refund 2023-24	£559.86

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook.				

- d) **Bank balances as of 30th April 2024.**
It was resolved that some of the funds in the current account would be transferred to the reserve account once the payments agreed at this meeting have been made. Sylvia Pettitt and Geoff Ingham verified and signed the bank statements.
- e) **Update on the inspection of parish council property carried out by John Gale.**
John Gale has inspected the Parish Council's property. Everything is in good condition apart from the village sign which needs cleaning and some general maintenance. The circular oak bench also needs to be removed
- f) **Internal auditor's report.**
No issues were raised.
- g) **To approve the Receipts and Payments summary for the financial year 2023 – 2024 and the explanation of significant variances (over 15%).**
It was resolved that the receipts and payments summary for the financial year 2023 – 2024 and the explanation of significant variances would be approved.
- h) **To approve Ousden Parish Council's Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 and sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24.**
It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council's Annual Governance Statement and sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 would be approved. The Chairman and RFO signed section 1.
- i) **To decide whether Ousden PC should submit a Certificate of Exemption from an external audit.**
It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would submit a Certificate of Exemption from an external audit as its income in 2023/24 was £10,836 and its expenditure was £12,154 which is below the £25,000 threshold for an external audit. The Chairman and RFO signed the Certificate of Exemption.
- j) **Confirmation of the dates for the notice of the period for the exercise of public rights.**
It was resolved the dates for the exercise of public rights would be Monday 3rd June – Friday 12th July 2024.
- k) **To approve the Financial Report which the Council needs to publish as part of the Transparency Code 2015.**
It was resolved that the financial report would be approved.
- l) **Precept information for 2023/24.**
A precept payment of £10,115 was received from West Suffolk Council on 25th April 2024.
- m) **Renewal of the Council's grass cutting contract.**
It was resolved that the contract with McGregor Services would be renewed and an increase of £5 to £65 per cut agreed.
12. **Planning**
- a) **Update on planning application DC/23/1951/FUL – Murben Barn, Agricultural Building.**
Ousden Parish Council has been notified that this application has been withdrawn by officers. Environmental Health has sent a holding objection. The clerk agreed to contact the Case Officer, Clare Oliver, to find out what this means and why the application has been withdrawn as it is still showing as pending a decision on the West Suffolk Council website.
13. **Highways/rights of way matters/tree or transport issues.**
- a) **Trees blocking footpath 3**
Sylvia Pettitt confirmed that the trees are still blocking the footpath. The clerk agreed to let Rights of Way Officer James Pickerin know.
14. **Suffolk Devolution consultation which ends on 26th May 2024.**
It was resolved that John Gale would submit a response on behalf of the Council.
15. **To discuss any village issues:**
A resident has agreed to start producing the Ousden newsletter again. It will be two pages of A4 and will be circulated six times a year.
16. **Correspondence.**

- a) **Email from East Cambridgeshire about their draft Hedgehog Recovery Design Guidance SPD – for information only.**

- 17. **Any other business for noting or including on the agenda.**
No issues were raised.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.53pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated