

# GAZELEY PARISH COUNCIL

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## **Minutes of the Meeting of Gazeley Parish Council held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7.30pm in Gazeley Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr Paul Kinnon, Chair, (PK) Cllr Laurence Chapman (LC), Cllr Robert Connelly (RC), Cllr Kevin Grimwood (KG), Cllr Stuart Jolly (SJ), Cllr Judy Moatt (JM) and Cllr Sam Raithatha (SR)

**In attendance** Lynne Francis, Parish Clerk, District Councillor Roger Dicker and 20 members of the public.

### **23.06.01 Chairman's Welcome**

The meeting was opened by the Chairman, Cllr Paul Kinnon, who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **23.06.02 To receive apologies for absence**

All Councillors were present at the meeting.

### **23.06.03 To receive Declarations of Interest, pecuniary and non-pecuniary, on matters on the agenda.**

None declared.

### **23.06.04 To receive reports from external bodies as appropriate and to take questions from Councillors or members of the public on those reports and on any other matter on the agenda.**

District Councillor Roger Dicker reported on the results of the recent local council elections and the new composition of the Council. He apologised for missing the Annual Parish Meeting as he was out of the country.

One priority of the new Council is to address the appalling state of grass cutting in the district. Cllr Dicker has been elected Chairman of the Council for the year and he intends to be out and about in the district and can be contacted by email or telephone, details of which are on the Council's website.

Another issue is that of the imbalance of the costs of street lighting between the former Forest Heath villages and those that came under St Edmundsbury DC. Talks are on-going to see if this can be resolved but the cost of changing the situation is an obstacle at present.

Public Forum – no matters were raised.

### **23.06.05 To approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Gazeley Parish Council, held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May.**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of both meetings be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**23.06.06 To receive the Clerk's report on outstanding issues and any other matters that may have arisen since the publication of the agenda.**

**Repair of the Cricket Hut** – The Clerk has arranged a meeting between SR and Amber Whelan-Jones from Savills to discuss the repair of the hut and the responsibilities of the parish council with regard to the trees surrounding the site.

**Streetlighting** – The Clerk has not yet received any further information with regard to the costs of upgrading the street lighting in our ownership.

**Bank Mandate** – The forms were sent to Lloyds Bank but the Clerk has not yet received confirmation that the mandate has been updated.

**SARS** – The parish council has received a letter of thanks from the Suffolk Accident Rescue Service for their recent donation towards their important work.

**Phoenix Cycle Works** – A lengthy email was received from Environmental Health to explain what action was being taken in the wake of an event at the site which attracted complaints of excessive noise disturbance.

**Speed Indication Device** - The latest data from the SID has been published on the village Facebook page.

**Next Agenda** – The Clerk has received an email with regard to Community Emergency Plans (CEP). It will be placed on the agenda of the July meeting for consideration.

### **23.06.07 Finance Matters**

#### **a) Authorisation of outstanding payments and signing of the Schedule of Payments.**

**Resolved.** That the proposed payments be authorised and signed by the Chairman.  
The schedule is attached to the minutes of the meeting. Cheques were signed by KG and JM.

#### **b) Monthly Finance Report**

The current balance of the accounts is detailed in the Schedule of Payments

c) To confirm acceptance of a quotation from Zurich Municipal for insurance cover for 2023-2024.

**Noted.** That the quotation of £536 was considerably lower than that of our previous insurer but the Clerk pointed out that this is an on-line policy only. RC had reviewed the insurance policies and had advised that this should be adequate for our needs.

**Resolved.** That the quote should be accepted.

#### **d) To receive a report from the Internal Auditor.**

Internal auditor, Bobby Bennett gave her report to the Council.

In summary she noted that the audit delivered a good level of financial assurance.

There are recommendations relating to governance and operational risk management where it is considered that improvements could be made. It is noted that there are new councillors following the election in May 2023. The councillors need to familiarise themselves quickly with their responsibilities as a corporate body and their responsibilities as an employer.

It is recommended that the Council carry out a review into operational risks and formally document the process.

**Resolved.** That the Internal Audit report be adopted.

## **e) Budget Review**

The Chairman noted that the new councillors had a few questions with regard to the current budget and asked that it be reviewed again at the next meeting.

Churchwarden Simon Gash asked if a cheque for churchyard maintenance was included on the Schedule of Payments. The Clerk confirmed that £600 had been included in the budget and it was assumed that it would be used for grass cutting as usual but this year the church had decided to re-wild the churchyard and it had been reported that the reduced area of grass was being managed by volunteers. However the Clerk confirmed that the funds could be released at any time.

The Clerk had asked Rev. Childs if he could give some idea of what the grant might be spent on so that corresponding documentation could be available for audit purposes.

### **23.06.08 Proposal: That the Council might apply for a donation from Cllr Dicker's Locality Budget to fund the purchase and installation of extra seating at the playground – Cllr Raithatha.**

Cllr Raithatha explained that he had carried out a review of the facilities at the play area and recreation ground and had also received requests for extra seating in the area. He was aware that the Coffee Morning Team had donated funds to cut back vegetation at the edge of the field in the past and he will be seeking estimates for repeating the exercise. It was noted that there are a lot more children coming to the area and it was important to eliminate any risks at the site.

It was noted that the Council had been awarded a sum of £250 to commemorate the King's Coronation and it was suggested that it could go towards the installation of a dedicated bench.

It had also been noted in the recent inspection that the rubber flooring was coming away at the edges in places and that was creating a trip hazard.

Cllr Jolly remarked that he was aware that another local village had sourced funding for various community improvements and he suggested that this could be followed up with the village in question for advice.

Cllr Dicker asked that any request for a donation should be designated for a particular purpose rather than for a general grant so that the correct documentation is in place.

### **23.06.09 To authorise the attendance of Councillors at a SALC New Councillors' Training Course at a cost of £72 per delegate, including VAT.**

**Resolved:** That Councillors will check the SALC members' site to agree suitable dates for the training.

### **23.06.10 Sub-Committees and Councillor Responsibilities**

a) To appoint a Clerk's Sub-Committee for all matters relating to the Clerk's employment

The Clerk explained that there is usually a committee of three members on the committee, the Chairman plus two other councillors. There was a discussion about the choice of Councillors to serve on the committee but it was finally resolved that all councillors could attend meetings of the Clerk's Committee.

b) To delegate Councillor responsibility for the village defibrillator.

**Resolved:** That Cllr Jolly would take responsibility for the defibrillator and will liaise with the East of England Ambulance Service.

### **23.06.11 Blacksmith's Forge**

To review the current situation with respect to the Public Access Licence Agreement and to discuss the Council's legal representation going forward on the matter.

The Chairman explained that the Council would be looking for ways in which to help Mr Wiseman move forwards with the project. Mr Wiseman had informed the Chairman that he hopes to get the building watertight by Christmas. He would like to involve people from the community. It was confirmed that he would be moving into the building on completion.

The Chairman reiterated that anyone who would like to help can get involved because it was all about the community trying to help him deliver the project and not be a hindrance to him.

A question was asked about the Council charging 'rent' for the installation of the scaffolding. Cllr Connolly explained that as parish councillors they have a unique problem in that they are the custodians of the village green and that it would be very difficult to access the building without going over the green. To control that, there would have to be some kind of legal agreement in place but the Council had had no feedback at all from Mr Wiseman during the past year and as a result it had been advised to seek legal advice. He explained that everything in the agreement is negotiable but in properly regulated circumstances the Council would want to have an agreement in place in the case of an accident on the green, which is the Council's responsibility, so they could be considered liable. He felt that it was therefore important for the Council to protect itself.

The Chairman agreed that they would have to accept that such an agreement had to be made with Mr Wiseman.

The Clerk pointed out that the Council had instructed solicitors to deal with the Access Licence and she asked what their instructions were in that regard. She was asked to contact the solicitor and inform her that talks were on-going with Mr Wiseman and we would update her shortly if it was agreed that no further action on her part was required.

**23.06.12 To consider any other matters raised by Councillors or the Clerk to be noted, or for inclusion in a future agenda.**

Cllr Raithatha noted that there is a damaged post on Church Green and he asked if a local handyman could repair it. It was agreed that minor works could be carried out on an ad hoc basis. If there is a cost involved then the PC would consider the quotation.

Cllr Judy Moatt noted that the door is not secure on the telephone kiosk on the green. It was felt that some use should be made of it and suggestions would be welcome.

She also reported that some residents had been stranded in Newmarket after the Mulleys bus had been cancelled. It was agreed that it might be a good idea to log the occasions when the bus had failed to arrive but that could be difficult because some people were often unwilling to make a formal complaint.

It was suggested that the County Councillor should be informed of the situation.

It was noted that there are other alternatives to the usual bus service, such as the Voluntary Network, a locally based charity, but this could prove to be more expensive.

The Chairman asked Cllr Jolly if he had agreed to liaise with the Gazeley Gazette about articles from the PC.

Cllr Jolly replied that he had spoken to Rev. Childs, and agreed that it would be a good idea, but nothing had yet been decided.

The Clerk felt that there wouldn't be enough room to write about ordinary Council business, which is already covered in the minutes of the meeting, but other issues raised, such as the situation with Mulleys buses, the telephone kiosk or the play area would be good subjects to include.

SJ agreed to take the ideas forward.

Cllr Grimwood asked if Anglian Water could be contacted with a view to installing a standpipe at the allotments.

The Chairman noted that there had been several adverse comments about the rewilding project at the church and he asked if there was any information that could be passed on to residents.

Margaret Gash suggested that concerned residents should contact Rev.Childs directly with any queries but she said that there was some literature in the church porch about the scheme.

Cllr Raithatha noted that parking on Highwood Road was extremely limited and at times it would be impossible for emergency vehicles to get through. It was noted that all parking on the highway is legal but it was suggested that this could be highlighted in the Gazeley Gazette, to draw residents attention to the situation.

Cllr Jolly also commented on the condition of the churchyard, saying that it could deter anyone from arranging a wedding in the church. The area around the newer part of the graveyard was very untidy and some families had struggled to reach their graves.

A question was raised from the floor about the possibility of resurrecting the War Memorial Project that had been abandoned a few years ago.

The Chairman agreed to add the item to the next agenda for discussion.

**23.06.13 To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023, beginning at 7.30 in the Village Hall.**

Refreshments will be provided from 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

**PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS****June****2023**

<b>Payments</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Cheque No.</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Balance</b>
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S.P. Landscapes, grass & pond				
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	£			
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maintenance, May	435.60	1253		
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Gazeley Village hall hire				
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	£			
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Coffee Caravan 2023	252.00	1254		
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Gazeley Village Hall Hire				
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PC 9th & 30th May	£ 42.00	1255		
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SALC, Balance of Subs. Fee	£ 0.80	1256		
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The Dalham Estate Lease fees	£ 8.00	1257		
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L Francis, Certificate Frame	£ 17.50	1258		
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L. Francis, Registered Mail	£ 7.65	1259		
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L. Francis, Printing Ink	£ 32.95	1260		
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Zurich Municipal	536.00	1261		
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**Receipts**

Interest			£	15.39
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<b>Total</b>				
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	£			
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<b>1,332.50</b>				
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			£	
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				<b>15.39</b>
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**Balance of Accounts****At 22.5.23**

Treasurer's Account				£
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				11,944.50
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Instant Access Account				£
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				27,960.18
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<b>Total Balance of Accounts</b>				
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				<b>39,904.68</b>
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