

# GESTINGTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk / RFO: Kevin B. Money  
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## Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>. January 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs D. Smith (Chair), C. Craig (Vice-Chair), P. Bagby, P. Collett, A. Cooper, ECC Cllr P. Schwier, BDC Cllr D. Holland, Mr. Leslie Crumpton-Taylor (Internal Auditor) and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk).  
 There were no members of the public present.

**001/2024 Chairman welcome** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished all a happy New Year

**002/2024 Apologies for Absence** were received from Cllr G. Carey

### **003/2024 Declaration of Interest**

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Pecuniary or non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda Cllr A. cooper declared an interest in item 008/2024. Cllr D. Smith declared an interest in item 007/2024

### **004/2024 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Gestingthorpe Parish Council**

To receive and agree the minutes of the GPC meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup>. November 2023. **All Agreed**

### **005/2024 Co-Option**

The Candidate having completed a short application form and confirmed her eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (Local Government Act 1972 section 79). Forms have been returned to the Parish Clerk by the prescribed deadline 30<sup>th</sup>. November 2023.

Dawn Green gave a short presentation to Councillors.

Cllr D. Smith proposed co-opting Dawn Green onto the Parish Council. Cllr C. Craig seconded. **All Agreed**

Dawn Green then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, E Consent form and Register of Interest form. Cllr D. Green then took her seat as a Parish Councillor

### **006/2024 Chairman's report and any update since last meeting**

Whilst we seem to have avoided the worst of the recent storms, storm Henk brought power cuts and we lost one of the Chestnut trees on the Playing Field. The tree has been logged and most of the wood has been cleared by villagers for their use.

Thankfully, most of the village only lost power for a few hours, although I suggest this once again highlights a shortfall in our Village Emergency Plan and the need to have emergency cooking and heating facilities available in a central location, such as the Village Hall, for events of this nature which are becoming more frequent due to Global Warming.

I would like to thank Ashley Cooper for cutting the Playing Field hedge fronting Sudbury Road and brushing the sides of the ditch

### **007/2024 Update on GT phone mast siting.** Revised drawings sent to Councillors prior to the meeting

The only Change is a dish on top of mast so that Data can be received to the mast. Painted green.

No update on fencing. Power to unit it was agreed the underground solution is preferred but no agreement has been reached. Planning application being submitted in the next few weeks. Local resident is tired of the proposal and may not object to the application. The position of the mast is better than previous proposal.

### **008/2024 Cricket Pavilion update**

A seating proposal has been submitted. Comments to date are for the proposal to be placed on hold but the pavilion to be cleaned before any further works are undertaken. The pavilion must be got into a state for all users to use.

### **009/2024 Trees & tree planting** – update from Cllr D. Smith

The site visit has been undertaken. Roadside fence around play area using suitable fencing. The gaps should be no larger than 4". A hedge was mentioned. But this would not be practicable. RoSPA iron fencing quote of £4000 for the play area.

Tree concern over the 2 chestnut trees. The landowner stated that no trees will be cut down.

1 tree collapsed in the storm and another one is not looking good.

The remainder of the trees require further works to make safe for health & safety issues.

A tree surgeon needs to be commissioned to give GPC a report on the condition of the remaining trees.

2 Oak Trees have been purchased and planted on the playing field where a tree fell down in the last storm.

**010/2024 Flooding/ drainage** – update from Cllr D. Smith

Following the recent storms, the village has not been too affected. Flooding problems at Tucklands with ditches being blocked and the bank has slipped.

Pond on the corner of Nether Hill needs addressing.

**011/2024 Emergency Plan** – update from Cllr D. Smith

Cllr D. Green to undertake updating the information and to send the final plan to the Clerk when completed.

**012/2024 Public Participation Session**

No questions from the public

**013/2024 Update on the Parish Magazine subscription and whether Councillors wish to continue with the edition**

The editor has stood down. No GPC representative is on the steering committee. All volunteers are needed to keep this Parish News up and running in the future. Ask a representative to the March meeting.

**014/2024 Essex County Councillor report – ECC Cllr Peter Schwier**

Salting procedure in ECC – 50 trucks on the road. On 70 occasions over 21000 tonnes of grit was deposited on the Essex roads. Storm Henk – ECC received an extra 800 calls with over 100 trees falling down on highways. ECC had an extra 12 tree surgeon crews deployed. Highways assets are being blocked, please ask local landowners to keep ditches cleared.

ECC budget - less 1 year settlement money had been received from Government. ECC budget has been proposed at just under 3% + 2% adult and child social care. Making a 5%+ rise in Council tax. There is a budget gap from 2023/2024. Whats3words video to be circulated. F315 bus route there is no update on the consultation. If the bus route is removed does this mean that no gritters will operate in Gestingthorpe Can a letter template be given to the Clerk for landowners clearing ditches and gullies? Cllr P. Schwier will investigate.

Cllr P. Schwier left the meeting

**015/2024 District Councillor report – BDC Cllr David Holland**

Cllr D. Holland posted on the GPC Facebook page an article on the proposed cancellation of the F315 bus service on the consultation / contact details etc. Please make sure that the bus service is used.

BDC budget Cllr Locality Fund is being kept in place. BDC budget has a shortfall of £2m

New NPPF policy has been brought into place. No need for a 5-year land supply where a local Council has a Local Plan. National Grid is moving along. Bramford to Twinstead project is with the planning inspectorate.

Cllr D. Holland left the meeting

**016/2024 Planning Applications**

**23/02792/HH** - Dove Cottage Church Street Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AZ

Two storey side extension

Due to the time constraint set by BDC the following response was sent to BDC by the 25<sup>th</sup>. December 2023 deadline. ***Gestingthorpe Parish Council has no objection to this application.***

**017/2024 Decision/s made by BDC on planning applications**

No planning decisions have been made by BDC affecting Gestingthorpe

**018/2024 Representative reports**

- Highways – Cllr P. Collett

**Potholes etc.** - I have reported a damaged road sign and a missing finger sign on the ECC Highways website with no action on the part of ECC.

**Speeding** - Speeding persists within the village at dangerous levels.

I am continuing to liaise with the Rural Policing Unit and the PCSOs to see if the number of speed checks can be increased.

**F315 Bus Service** - The Parish Council have responded to the Consultation regarding the future of the service with a strong recommendation that the service is retained. The results of the Consultation are awaited

- SID – Cllr P. Collett

**SID Sudbury Road** - The speed survey was carried out by ECC but not in the position requested by the Parish Council. I understand that ECC are considering if a second survey would be funded by the Local Highways Panel.

- Playing Field – Cllr A. Cooper

Chris Moulton has kindly carried out some minor repairs the larger slide unit that were detailed in the ROSPA report.

I visited the Playing Field on Sunday morning. As mentioned in the Chair's Report, most of the wood from the fallen tree has now been removed. Thank you to David for erecting the hazard tape after the storm—and also for contacting Graham Nicholls.

If any larger bits remain unwanted, they could be cleared with farm machinery—once it is dry enough to travel on the outfield.

As mentioned in a previous email, there is now room to fit in another 4 to 6 trees, between Lauren's tree and the bottom corner. Ideally, they would be planted some distance from the ditch, so that hedge-cutting and ditch-clearing are not hindered.

The soak away holes by the pavilion, which were dug by a number of very helpful volunteers, now need to be filled with rubble. Rubber matting has been laid on the steps and entrance of the pavilion. I thank Chris Moulton for his help with both tasks.

Overhanging branches around the field will need to be trimmed at some point

- Footpath – Cllr P. Bagby – Nothing to report
- Village Hall – Cllr P. Bagby

The Village Hall has had a very active and successful Christmas period.

The Craft Fayre held on November 18 was very well attended. Crafts were locally made with all sellers reporting good business. The Village Hall recipe book was launched. The Guess the Cake weight competition was won by a lady from Little Yeldham and the Sausage Sizzle sold out.

The Children's Christmas party was held at the beginning of December and was attended by children from both Gestingthorpe & Bulmer. Santa paid a visit who handed out gifts to both the children and the Elf helpers. Feedback on the day and afterwards was very positive with everyone keen to see this become a regular event on the Village Hall calendar.

The Adults' party was held the following Friday. The VH ran a cash bar with attendees bringing a plate of food. Games & dancing were held till late.

Planning is now underway for a calendar of events in 2024 which will be published soon.

2 new Rointe heaters have been purchased and installed in the main hall replacing the old fan heaters. The new heaters are Wi-Fi enabled and can be controlled remotely at home. We are currently running all heaters at a constant at a low temperature to see if it will improve the dampness in the hall sufficiently to justify the additional electricity cost.

As at the last committee meeting on 23 November, Dawn Green was co-opted on to the management committee as Secretary replacing Steph Prior. The Treasurer reported cash holdings of £6,115.70.

The next committee meeting is on 25 January 2024.

#### **019/2024 Finance**

- To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31<sup>st</sup>. December 2023

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31<sup>st</sup>. December 2023

- To receive the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2023/24

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2023/24

- To approve the payment of Accounts for December 2023 and January 2024 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Councils financial requirements. **All Agreed**

#### **020/2024 Budget 2024/2025 - Councillors to finalise the expenditure for 2024/**

Cllr D. Smith proposed the 2024/2025 expenditure of £12207.00p. This produced a Precept demand from BDC of £10882.00p. Resulting, using the BDC Tax base figure of 175.47, a band D property of £62.02p.

Cllr C. Craig seconded. **All Agreed**. The RFO to submit the appropriate Precept form to BDC by 31<sup>st</sup>. January 2024 deadline.

#### **021/2024 Items for Next Agenda**

**Cllr A. Cooper gave his apologies for the March meeting**

#### **022/2024 Date of next meeting is on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>. March 2024 at 7pm**

**09.05.24 (Annual Village meeting & GPC AGM): 11.07.24: 12.09.24: 14.11.24**

#### **023/2024 Closure of the Meeting**

To close the Meeting having considered and determined all items of business.

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 9pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

*D Smith*  
Chairman  
D. Smith

14<sup>th</sup>. March 2024