

Strumpshaw Parish Council Minutes

Strumpshaw Parish Council meeting Tuesday 16th November 2021
at 7.30 p.m. at Strumpshaw Community Hall, Mill Road, Strumpshaw,
NR13 4FS.

Present: Maureen Hammond (Chairman), Paul Dexter (Vice-Chairman), Sheila Ashford, Michael Green, Tina McAulay, Olly Page, Richard Palmer

In attendance: Hilary Hammond (Deputy Clerk and acting RFO), District Councillors Jan Davis and Eleanor Laming.

Sarah Cartwright, Bob Hunt, Lynda Hunt, (Community Hall Committee members)

Tanya Rowlandson (Prospective salaried Clerk and RFO)

1 member of the public

The Chairman said that she intended to discuss item 16 (Finance report and payments) immediately after item 10.3 as it contained proposals about the process to record financial receipts as payments.

1. Apologies for absence.

County Councillor Andrew Proctor

2. Declarations of interest in matters on the agenda.

Richard Palmer declared a pecuniary interest in item 10.2. In view of the very small amount involved in this item the Chairman gave Richard Palmer a dispensation to remain in the meeting for this item, but not to participate in it.

3. Committee appointments

3.1. Michael Green was appointed to the Buckenham Wood Project Committee. Proposed Sheila Ashford, seconded Olly Page

3.2. The Council noted that Sheila Ashford had resigned from the Finance Committee.

3.3. Olly Page was appointed to the Finance Committee. Proposed Tina McAulay, seconded Paul Dexter

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2021

The Minutes of this meeting were approved and signed.

5. Matters arising not on the agenda

5.2 The Chairman and Deputy Clerk did not meet Jerome Mayhew MP because they were unwell.

8. The Deputy Clerk reported that he had written on 25th September to Broadland District Council concerning a planning issue relating to 1 Norwich

Road, Strumpshaw. He had not received a reply.

6. Clerk vacancy update

The Deputy Clerk reported that a candidate had been interviewed on 6th October and had been offered the post. This candidate withdrew from the post on 22nd October.

Tanya Rowlandson was interviewed on 15th November and was offered the post subject to ratification by the full Council. Tanya Rowlandson said that she had come across an unexpected complication in relation to her contract with Broadland District Council. She said that she may in the end be unable to accept the appointment.

The Parish Council ratified Tanya Rowlandson's appointment subject to the contract issue with Broadland District Council being satisfactorily resolved. Proposed Sheila Ashford, seconded Olly Page.

7. Provision of a bus shelter

A report from the Deputy Clerk and acting RFO was received and is filed with these Minutes.

The Parish Council noted that an application could be made to the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme for 50% of the cost of installing a bus shelter outside St.Peter's churchyard on the south side of Norwich Road. The remaining 50% of the cost would be provided through a grant from County Councillor Andrew Proctor's Divisional Highways fund for 2022/23 and a grant of £600 from the R C Snelling Charitable Trust, already received.

The bus shelter would be 3.1m long x 1.0 m wide x 2.24 m high. It would be a solid construction without sides in a green polyester powder coated finish and would be provided with a perch seat, flag pole and timetable case.

The Council noted that the lowest quotation was received from Westcotec at £4,145 ex VAT (installed).

Shelia Ashford asked for confirmation that the bus shelter includes a perching seat. This was confirmed.

The Parish Council resolved:

- To apply to the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership fund for 50% of the cost of providing a bus shelter;
- To accept the quotation from Westcotec in the sum of £4,145 ex VAT, subject to receiving funding from the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Fund for 2022/23 and Councillor Andrew Proctor's Divisional Highway Fund.

Proposed Richard Palmer, seconded Paul Dexter

8. Purchase of a laptop and software

A report from the Deputy Clerk and acting RFO was received and is filed with these Minutes.

The Parish Council noted that the Norfolk Association of Local Councils had confirmed that it is good practice for the Council to provide a laptop and relevant software for the Clerk and RFO. This is because a dedicated laptop increases compliance with data protection regulations. Providing such a computer reduces the possibility of unauthorised access by family members to the Parish Council's data when it is held on a computer owned by the Clerk and RFO.

A specification had been drawn up, as detailed in the report. The availability of a computer to meet this specification had been checked with 4 companies. The lowest quote was from John Lewis for a HP Pavilion 15 inch laptop with wireless keyboard, mouse and HDMI cable (to enable the PC to be linked to the Community Hall video system). This quote totalled £443.32 ex VAT.

The Council noted that subscriptions to MS 365 business standard software and Norton antiviral software would be required at a first year cost of £125.00 ex VAT followed by an annual cost of £141.00 ex VAT.

The Parish Council resolved:

- To authorise the purchase of a HP Pavilion 15 inch laptop from John Lewis, complete with a wireless keyboard and mouse and a HDMI cable at a cost of £443.32 ex VAT;
- To take out subscriptions to Microsoft MS 365 business standard software and Norton antivirus software at a first year cost of £125.00 ex VAT followed by an annual cost of £141.00 ex VAT.
- To give the Chairman and Vice Chairman delegated authority to consider any increase in price and to approve any reasonable increase;
- To authorise the Deputy Clerk and RFO to use his personal credit card for the purchases if necessary and to reclaim the amount spent from the Parish Council.

Proposed Michael Green, seconded Sheila Ashford

9. Community Hall

9.1. Codification of discretionary charging measures

Michael Green said that he had become aware that two charitable fund raising events at the Community Hall had initially received differing responses relating to the hire charge, although in due course the hire

charge for both events was waived. Michael Green stated that he was conscious that the Community Hall Committee were using discretion, but that this was not currently codified. He asked that a clear policy should be developed concerning which organisations can use the Community hall free of charge, and also said that he realised that this codification could be quite challenging.

The Chairman stated that the Community Hall Committee should have time to consider and codify this policy. She also recognised that this could be difficult.

The Parish Council referred this item to the Community Hall Committee to recommend a policy to a future Parish Council meeting after their next formal meeting.

9.2. Purchase of an intruder alarm

Lynda Hunt introduced a written report, a copy of which is filed with the Minutes.

The Community Hall Committee had taken advice from the Norfolk Constabulary's Safer Neighbourhood Team from Acle. The Community Hall Committee investigated three potential intruder alarm systems and recommended the Grade 2 Intruder Alarm system provided by the Alarm Company based at Rackheath at a revised initial cost of £1,220 plus VAT and a revised annual cost thereafter of £65.00 plus VAT. The funding for the alarm system would come from Community Hall funds in 2021/22. The future cost had been included in the Community Hall budget for 2022/23.

The Parish Council resolved to authorise the purchase of a Grade 2 intruder alarm from the Alarm Company. Proposed Paul Dexter, seconded Olly Page

9.3. Community Hall Hire pricing review

Sarah Cartwright introduced a written report, a copy of which is filed with the Minutes.

The Community Hall Committee had adopted the recommended good practice of carrying out an annual review of hire charges. They had researched the hire charges at eleven neighbouring community or village halls.

The Community Hall Committee recommended that the hire charges should be increased from 1st April 2022 to:

£14.50 an hour for one off events with a £50 returnable deposit

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£12.50 an hour for regular bookings (bookings of six sessions in a year and advanced payment of four sessions)

The Parish Council resolved to adopt this hire charge increase. Proposed Richard Palmer, seconded Paul Dexter.

9.4.Operational report and community update

Sarah Cartwright introduced a written report, a copy of which is filed with the Minutes.

Sarah Cartwright drew attention to the fact that the Community Hall has attracted 21.5 hours a week of regular hires and two monthly hires, with a gradual increase in ad hoc hires.

Sarah Cartwright updated the Council about progress with the supply of the storage shed. The supply of the shed had been delayed because of the manufacturer having difficulties obtaining supplies. The materials were now in stock but no date for delivery had yet been provided.

The Council noted that the outside work including sowing grass seed had been completed.

The Council also approved the change in the buffer time between hires to 15 minutes in view of the change in the government advice relating to individuals making informed choices about protecting themselves from COVID 19. The Special Conditions of Hire are no longer applicable.

Sarah Cartwright stated that the Community Hall Committee would benefit from the Silver membership level of Community Action Norfolk at an overall cost of £50.00 a year. The Parish Council budgets for the Bronze level of membership at a cost of £20.00 a year. The Community Hall Committee offered to pay the £30.00 a year difference from Community Hall income.

The Parish Council resolved to increase the membership of Community Action Norfolk to Silver from the next renewal date, 21st January 2022. Proposed Olly Page, seconded Paul Dexter.

10.Budgetary matters

10.1.Report of the Finance Committee 2nd November 2021

The report of the Finance Committee held on 2nd November 2021 was received. A copy is filed with the Minutes.

10.2.Allotment rents for 2022/23

Richard Palmer took no part in this item.

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A report from the Deputy Clerk was received. A copy is filed with the Minutes.

The Parish Council noted that the rent for the Council's 6 allotments was last set to come into effect from April 2020.

The Council resolved to set the rent from April 2022 at £13.00 a plot a year.

Proposed Sheila Ashford, seconded Tina McAulay.

10.3. Budget proposals for 2022/23

A written report and detailed financial appendix from the Deputy Clerk and acting RFO, based on the outcome of the 2nd November Finance Committee, was received. A copy is filed with the Minutes.

The Parish Council noted that it remains a low precepting authority in comparison with its neighbours, and that it had the lowest precept for 2021/22 amongst six neighbouring parish councils.

The recommended budget, as detailed in the spreadsheet in the appendix, includes provision for the increase to 7 hours a week for the Clerk and RFO; the annual Scribe subscriptions; the software subscriptions for the laptop; cleaning supplies for the bus shelter; twice weekly summer time emptying of the litter bin at the Wood Lane entrance to Buckenham Wood; and the maintenance of the Wood Lane hedge and notice boards at Buckenham Wood. The budget also includes the use of some of the Community Hall development reserve to delineate the northern boundary of the Community Hall and allotments land.

The Council noted that the precept required in 2022/23 to meet the budget pressures amounts to £10,520. This equates to £37.04 per Band D house, based on the number of Band D houses in January 2021, an increase of £4.65 for each Band D house. The precept represents a 14.3% increase above the 2021/22 level.

The Parish Council resolved:

- To adopt the recommended budget as detailed in the appendix;
- To set the precept at £10,520 for 2022/23.

Proposed Tina McAulay; seconded Olly Page. A vote was taken: all Councillors were in favour.

16. Finance report and payments. (See note at the start of the Minutes)

A written report from the Deputy Clerk and acting RFO was received. A copy is filed with the Minutes.

16.1. Process for paying invoices, noting receipts and recording them in the Parish Council's accounts

The Parish Council noted that professional advice, including advice from the Council's internal auditor, had been received that the Council's Responsible Financial Officer is the only person who may make and record payments in the Council's accounts system. Income, other than Community Hall hire income, also has to be recorded in the Council's accounts system by the RFO.

The Parish Council confirmed the following process to authorise and pay invoices and to record income.

- Invoice received and passed to RFO;
- RFO asks the relevant person to confirm that the work or service has been satisfactorily provided;
- RFO ensures that an electronic copy of the invoice is filed, and if necessary prints a paper copy;
- RFO asks the Chairman to authorise the payment;
- RFO makes the payment from the relevant bank account;
- RFO records the payment in the Scribe accounts systems and files the paper copy;
- RFO produces a list of payments that have been made between Council meetings for approval at the next Parish Council meeting;
- Payments will be independently confirmed by two councillors other than the Chairman.
- Income other than hire income for the Community Hall is recorded in the Scribe accounts system by the RFO.
- Hire income for the Community Hall is recorded in the Scribe accounts system automatically when an invoice is marked as paid on the Scribe bookings system.
- All income will be reported to the next Parish Council meeting.

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- The receipt of income will be independently checked by one councillor other than the Chairman.

16.2. Payments made and income received

The Parish Council approved the following payments made between 21st September and 10th November 2021, authorised the listed payments to be made and noted the income received between 21st September and 10th November 2021. Proposed Richard Palmer, seconded by Sheila Ashford.

| Date | Payee and purpose | Budget heading | Amount £ |
|-------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 24.9.21 | Hilary Hammond: refund of sign for notice | CH grounds & maintenance | 24.00 |
| 24.9.21 | Marie Head 4 | CH operational | 25.00 |
| 24.9.21 | Jack Angel | CH grounds & maintenance | 4310.00 |
| 24.9.21 | Starboard Systems Ltd. (Scribe) | Admin & CH operational | 691.20 |
| 27.9.21 | Strumpshaw PCC | S&HPCC | 750.00 |
| 28.9.21 | Envirosafe invoice 1200 | CH operational | 108.00 |
| 28.9.21 | JG Electrical 01843 | CH operational | 27.00 |
| 1.10.21 | Marie Head 5 | CH operational | 25.00 |
| 6.10.21 | Royal British Legion | Remembrance Day wreath | 25.00 |
| 8.10.21 | Marie Head 6 | CH operational | 25.00 |
| 13.10.21 | Marie Head 7 | Community Hall operational | 25.00 |
| 14.10.21 | Wave | Community Hall operational | 55.65 |
| 20.10.21 | BADCOG | Badcog grant | 350.00 |
| 28.10.21 | Envirosafe 1251 | Community Hall operational | 108.00 |
| 20.10.21 | Marie Head 8 | Community Hall operational | 25.00 |
| 28.10.21 | Jack Angel | Community Hall development | 1,500.00 |
| 31.10.21 | Graham Pallant | Community Hall operational | 150.00 |
| 01.11.21 | Lynda Hunt - domain name renewal refund | Community Hall operational | 14.39 |
| 04.11.21 | Marie Head 10 | Community Hall operational | 25.00 |

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| Date | Payee and purpose | Budget heading | Amount £ |
|-------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 05.11.21 | Bob Hunt - wifi dongle for projector refund | Community Hall operational | 25.99 |
| 05.11.21 | EDF E55906509002 | Community Hall operational | 51.15 |

These payments were due to be made after 16th November 2021. Authorisation was approved.

| Item | Budget heading | Amount £ |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Hilary Hammond - refund of purchase of lever arch | Admin | 20.92 |
| Sarah Cartwright - refund of items for bunting | Community Hall operational | 102.81 |

These receipts were received between the meeting of 21st September and 10th November 2021.

| Date | Source | Budget | Amount £ |
|-------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 15.9.21 | Invoice 21/46 | CH income | 48.00 |
| 22.9.21 | Invoice 21/45 | CH income | 420.00 |
| 27.9.21 | Invoice 21/59 | CH income | 14.00 |
| 28.9.21 | Invoice 21/52 | CH income | 36.00 |
| 28.9.21 | Invoice 21/57 | CH income | 108.00 |
| 28.9.21 | Invoice 21/53 | CH income | 300.00 |
| 5.10.21 | Broadland DC | Precept | 4600.00 |
| 7.10.21 | Invoice 21/54 | CH income | 48.00 |
| 5.10.21 | RC Snelling charitable trust for bus shelter | Other income | 600.00 |
| 7.10.21 | Invoice 21/56R | CH income | 48.00 |
| 11.10.21 | Invoice 21/60 | CH income | 28.00 |
| 13.10.21 | Invoice 21/63 | CH income | 6.00 |
| 16.10.21 | Broadland DC | Green infrastructure grant | 200.00 |
| 20.10.21 | Invoice 21/62 | CH income | 24.00 |

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|----------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| 26.10.21 | Invoice 21/55 | CH income | 360.00 |
| 26.10.21 | Invoice 21/68 | CH income | 360.00 |
| 26.10.21 | Invoice 21/70 | CH income | 72.00 |
| 28.10.21 | Invoice 21/66 | CH income | 288.00 |
| 1.11.21 | Invoice 21/73 | CH income | 50.00 |
| 1.11.21 | Invoice 21/72 | CH income | 78.00 |
| 1.11.21 | Invoice 21/71 | CH income | 72.00 |
| 3.11.21 | Invoice 21/50 | CH income | 180.00 |
| 9.11.21 | Invoice 21/67 | CH income | 48.00 |

16.3. Bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliations were approved by the Chairman.

11. Suspension of standing orders for public participation including reports from County and District Councillors

The Chairman welcomed District Councillors Jan Davis and Eleanor Laming to their first Parish Council meeting,

Councillors Davis and Laming had provided a written report, a copy of which is filed with these Minutes. Highlights specific to Strumpshaw were:

Councillor Davis had attended the National Highways hearing about the proposed dualling of the North Burlingham section of the A47. He reiterated the concerns of local parish councils about access for cycling, walking and horse riding across, under or over the proposed dual carriageway.

The 1st Strumpshaw Brownies had been given £350.91 for equipment from the Member Grant process.

A discussion took place about social prescribing, which is not yet available in Strumpshaw. Councillor Davis suggested that residents who have needs should contact the Broadland DC help hub.

A member of the public asked about the uneven nature of footpath 6 from Barn Hill to Stone Road. The Council undertook to raise this issue with the agent for the landowner.

12. Communications

12.1. Lord Lieutenant's plaque

The Deputy Clerk outlined the background to the Lord Lieutenant's plaque, which is intended to commemorate the resilience of each community during the time of the pandemic. The plaque for Strumpshaw will recognise the 'meals on wheels' service provided from the Shoulder of Mutton by Bob and Dani Cameron. It will also recognise the early leaflet produced and distributed by members of the Strumpshaw Tuesday Coffee Break. Arrangements have been made for the plaque to be presented by a Deputy Lieutenant on Tuesday 7th December 2021.

12.2. Repair to footpath map on Pack Lane

The Deputy Clerk drew attention to the footpath map located at the Norwich Road end of Pack Lane which had been virtually illegible for a number of years. Paul Ashford, a local resident, had undertaken to refurbish and repair this map at his own expense, and it is now back in place. The Parish Council resolved to ask the Chairman to write to Mr. Ashford to thank him, and to arrange for a photo and article about the map to be sent to the next edition of Parish News.

12.3. Post box outside St. Peter's church

The Deputy Clerk reported that a letter had been received from a resident concerning the unsafe nature of the standing area that serves the Norwich Road post box outside St. Peter's church. The Deputy Clerk had drawn this to the attention of Norfolk County Council's area highways engineer. The highways engineer has arranged for the standing area to be levelled and had had it marked presumably for a hard surface to be installed.

12.4. Queen's Green Canopy - proposal from the Rotary Club of Norwich Centenary

The Chairman reported that she had been contacted by the Rotary Club of Norwich Centenary, who meet monthly in Strumpshaw Community Hall. They had asked if they could plant some saplings on the Parish Council's land at Buckenham Wood in response to the Queens Green Canopy initiative.

The Chairman reported that an area of sycamore saplings and bramble had been identified on the eastern side of the glade which could be cleared to provide a location for these new trees. Broadland District Council had agreed that the cost of clearing this land ready for planting could be included in the Green Infrastructure project as it would result in an increase in biodiversity in the wood.

The Chairman reported that she would be meeting potential contractors to obtain estimates.

The Parish Council agreed to this initiative.

13. Buckenham Wood

13.1. Buckenham Wood Tree Warden's report

The report from Alasdair Fraser was received and noted. A copy is filed with the Minutes.

The Parish Council resolved to thank Alasdair Fraser for the work he carries out. The Chairman said that residents had remarked on the sympathetic nature of Alasdair Fraser's work in Buckenham Wood.

13.2. Quotation for works as part of the Green Infrastructure project

The Deputy Clerk introduced a report concerning proposals to improve the western path, the eastern path and entrance to the Parish Council's part of Buckenham Wood. A copy is filed with the Minutes.

The Council noted that seven companies had been asked to quote since June 2021 but that only one quotation, from Eastern Landscapes and Fencing, had been received.

The quotation proposed a new wider western path topped with Breendon gravel and with intermediate cross timbers to form risers for new, widely spaced, steps plus a handrail at a cost of £7,704 plus VAT. Sheila Ashford and Michael Green questioned the inclusion of a hand rail on the new western path on the grounds of its visual intrusion and future maintenance.

The Parish Council considered that the advice from Alasdair Fraser concerning the posts for the new entrance gate should be accepted, and that option 2 using reclaimed sleepers should be adopted, at a cost of £1,225 plus VAT.

The proposal to provide some 110 metres of chestnut fencing along the top of the quarry face on the eastern path was accepted, at a cost of £2,452 plus VAT.

The Council resolved to accept the quotation for option 2 of the entrance gate and the chestnut fencing for the eastern path at cost of £3,677 plus VAT. However, they asked the Deputy Clerk to obtain a revised quotation for the western path excluding the handrail. The Council recognised that this could be retrofitted if experience showed it

to be necessary for safety. The Finance Committee was given delegated authority to consider and determine this revised quotation.

13.3. Wood Lane hedge maintenance

This item was withdrawn as it had not been possible to obtain quotations prior to the meeting.

14. Mill Road verge maintenance

The Chairman reported that she had received complaints about the overgrown stinging nettles next to the footway along Mill Road from Norwich Road to the Community Hall. She had telephoned a councillor to ascertain the ownership of the field adjacent to this footway. This Councillor, Olly Page, had undertaken to cut the nettles and had carried this out.

The Parish Council thanked Olly Page for enabling the footway to be used more easily.

15. Planning applications

15.1. Outcome of applications not decided at the time of the last Council meeting

20210010 and 20210052. Pig rearing buildings off Wood Lane, Buckenham. No decision had yet been taken

20211565. New windows at the Old Hall, Strumpshaw. Full approval

20211752. Glebe Farm, 10 Norwich Road Strumpshaw. Broadland DC had received a revised application and would be asking for comments within a two week envelope. The Parish Council noted this and resolved to hold an additional meeting when the timetable was known. (Note subsequent to the meeting: the additional Parish Council meeting was arranged for Friday 26th November so that comments could be returned Broadland DC by 3rd December 2021)

17. Dates of the next planned Parish Council meetings

The Council noted that it holds regular meetings at 7.30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the relevant month in the Community Hall. The dates of the regular meetings for 2022 were set as: January 18th; March 15th; May 17th (preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting); 19th July, 20th September and 15th November.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Maureen Hammond
Chairman