

RISBY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9th January 2025.

Parish councillors present: Derrick Abrey (Chairman), Ian Turner (Vice -Chairman), Ben Ramsay, Simon Gray, Steve Smith and Chris Sutton.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk), County Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger and District Councillor Susan Glossop.

1. County Councillor's report.

Councillor Hopfensperger spoke about the following:

- Suffolk County Council has voted to submit an expression of interest to the Government to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme. The key to the proposals is a reorganisation of council structures, particularly in two-tier areas like Suffolk, with a shift away from district, borough and county councils towards unitary councils. Suffolk County Council will find out if they have been successful by 20th January 2025. If Suffolk is successful, it is likely that the May County Council elections will be delayed while a business case is prepared.
- Alongside reorganisation, the government is also proposing to create new mayoral authorities – with a single directly elected mayor covering larger areas (for example Norfolk and Suffolk) and with powers over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, health improvement and blue light services.
- She has asked Highways for a map of which areas in Risby had weeds cleared.
- Lorry survey in South St. The cost will be £450 which she will cover it from her locality budget. There is a discount if Risby Parish Council wants more than one survey but Risby Parish Council would have to cover the cost.
- Havebury properties in Risby. There have been problems with some of the Havebury homes in Risby being below standard. Parish councillors raised concerns that there does not seem to be any accountability. Cllr Hopfensperger explained that Suffolk County Councillor used to have walk arounds to check Havebury homes but that hasn't happened for a long time. She is going to ask the director of Havebury to reinstate this. Cllr Hopfensperger and Cllr Glossop are going to bring the problems to West Suffolk Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and ask for evidence and make recommendations about where Havebury is failing.
- A14 diversions which should be via the A134.

Councillors asked about item 11a on the agenda, damage to Lower Green caused by HGVs especially on the top corner. Cllr Hopfensperger said that this was looked into by SCC Highways in September 2023 who confirmed at the time that they would not allow bollards or any other objects to be placed on the corner for safety reasons.

2. District councillor's report.

Cllr Susan Glossop spoke about the following:

- A complaint about speeding near Brooks Cambridge School.

3. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

Parish councillor John Fairlie sent his apologies.

4. 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.

5. Approval of minutes of meeting held on Thursday 7th November 2024.

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

6. Public session.

No issues were raised.

7. Police Issues.

No issues were raised.

8. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting

There were three outstanding councillor action.

Decision made outside meeting using clerk's delegated powers:

- Following consultation with the Chairman a request to put a Christmas tree on Upper Green was agreed and a risk assessment produced.

Sophie Flux sent her thanks on behalf of the Risby Wildlife Group for allowing the wildlife spiral to continue. Some children from the primary school were using it in November which was lovely to see.

9. 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, s111 - **£5.72**
- HMRC – PAYE – LGA 1972, s111 - **£313.00**
- Community Heartbeat Trust – replacement battery – GPC - **£357.00**

Chris Sutton and Steve Smith signed the Schedule of Payments. The Chairman countersigned it.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings

No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting

It was resolved that the statement of receipts and payments would be approved.

Receipts

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
11/11/2024	Refund pension costs	Moulton Parish Council	£28.00
11/11/2024	Refund pension costs	Stradishall Parish Council	£16.00
11/11/2024	Refund pension costs	Lackford Parish Council	£16.00
15/11/2024	Refund pension costs	Ousden Parish Council	£16.00
10/12/2024	Refund pension costs	Moulton Parish Council	£28.00
10/12/2024	Refund pension costs	Stradishall Parish Council	£16.00
10/12/2024	Refund pension costs	Lackford Parish Council	£16.00
15/12/2024	Refund pension costs	Ousden Parish Council	£16.00

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
06/11/2024	363/9f	Data protection fee	ICO	£35.00
11/11/2024	388/9a	Clerk's expenses	J Kirk	£4.32
11/11/2024	388/9a	One of rental fee for clerk's new work printer	Moulton Parish Council	£40.00
11/11/2024	390/13a	Donation	Citizen's Advice West Suffolk	£100.00
11/11/2024	388/9a	Bus shelter cleaning	Mrs C Boreham	£270.00
11/11/2024	388/9a	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£198.00
12/11/2024	383/10g	Poppy wreath and donation	Royal British Legion	£50.00
20/11/2024	363/9f	Phone costs	Vodafone	£15.20
20/12/2024	363/9f	Phone costs	Vodafone	£15.20
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook				

d) Bank balances as of 30th December 2024 and confirmation of bank reconciliation.

Nat West Current Account	£598.31
Nat West Reserve Account	£23,401.12
Total in banks	£23,999.43

Chris Sutton verified and signed the bank statements.

f) Approval of regular payments for 2025 - 26.

It was resolved that the following regular payments would be approved:

Payment	2024/25 - Amount ex VAT	2025/26 - Amount ex VAT
Admin costs		
Community Action Suffolk - Insurance	£655	£700
Village hall rental - amount may vary depending on number of meetings	£96	£150

Internal audit fee	£75	£80
Scribe accounting software	£138	£150
Phone costs (shared)	£60	£60
Stationery (print cartridges and paper - shared cost)	£25	£25
Suffolk Cloud -website hosting fee	£120	£130
ICO - data protection fee	£35	£35
Maintenance costs		
Grass cutting	£2,500	£3,000
Hedge cutting	£100	£150
Bus shelter cleaning	£270	£280
Annual tree survey	£335	£400
Other payments		
Water bills for the allotments	£106	£200
Ongoing authorisations (as and when required)		
Replacement parts and ongoing maintenance of defibrillator.	£200	£200
Replacement parts and ongoing maintenance of VAS	£200	£200
Maintenance of fixed assets	£500	£500
Urgent tree works	£500	£500
Staff costs		
Staff costs as per confidential cash book (salary costs, PAYE and pension costs)		

Transfers

12/11/2024 – Reserve to current account - £500.

11/12/2024 - Reserve to current account - £500.

g) To approve the Internal Control Statement for the year ended 31st March 2025.

It was resolved that the Internal Control Statement would be approved.

h) To appoint a councillor to carry out internal control checks and complete the Internal Control Report.

Cllr Steve Smith agreed to carry out the internal control checks and complete the Internal Control Report.

i) Appointment of an internal auditor.

It was resolved the Mrs Cathy Whitaker would act as Internal Auditor again this year and a fee of £80 paid.

j) To review the effectiveness of the internal audit.

Councillors reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit. It was resolved that the document would be approved.

10. Planning.

a) DC/24/1753/FUL - Land Off Newmarket Road, Risby - Truck washing building and separate concrete pad with inspection pit.

It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application.

b) Planning applications received between meetings:

- **DC/24/1603/HH – Lantana, South St – two storey link extension (following demolition of existing link).**

This application has now been approved by West Suffolk Council.

- **DC/24/1664/VAR – Gate House, School Road – variation of condition 2.**

This application has now been approved by West Suffolk Council.

11. Highways/rights of way matters/tree or transport issues.

a) Email from a resident about damage to Lower Green caused by HGVs.

As the corner of Lower Green is on Suffolk County Council Highways maintainable land, councillors had raised this item with Cllr Hopfensperger during her report (item 1 above). As explained by Cllr Hopfensperger, Suffolk Highways looked into the possibility of installing bollards or something else on the top corner in September 2023 but decided that they would not allow this for safety reasons.

It was resolved that Risby Parish Council would go back to the resident and explain this and that the matter is now closed as there is nothing more Risby Parish Council can do.

b) Future cleaning of the bus shelters.

The resident who cleans the bus shelters is no longer able to do so and their family has offered to continue. The clerk attended HR training which stated that anyone who takes over would be deemed as an employee of Risby Parish Council or self-employed and would need their own liability insurance.

It was resolved that the Parish Council would go back to the family and ask if they would be willing to continue on a voluntary basis with a donation made annually to a charity of their choosing.

c) Update on employment training on 3rd December 2024 and approval of a Sexual and General Harassment Policy.

The clerk attended some online training about recent changes in employment law. If an employer can show that it has taken all reasonable steps to tackle harassment it would not be liable at a tribunal, therefore having a robust policy in place is vital. This also includes making sure that all councillors and employees are aware of the policy and sign to say that they have read it or be willing to attend training.

It was resolved that the Sexual and General Harassment Policy, based on the SALC template, would be approved.

12. To discuss any village issues

No issues were raised.

13. Correspondence.

a) Email from a resident about the lack of heating in a Havebury property in Risby.

Risby Parish Council was contacted by a resident about problems with the heating in a Havebury property in Risby which Havebury had not fixed. The resident followed up with Havebury and the heating has now been fixed, but there is concern that there may be other properties in Risby where tenants are struggling to get problems dealt with by Havebury.

It was resolved that:

- Risby Parish Council would produce a leaflet for residents of Havebury properties asking if they are having any problems getting their heating repaired or other maintenance issues which need resolving.
- Risby Parish Council would write to the Director of Havebury expressing their disappointment with the way their tenant was treated and that the Parish Council will be contacting other Havebury tenants in Risby to check whether this is an isolated case.

b) Email from Suffolk Cloud about changes to their website hosting service – for information only.

Suffolk Cloud will become a subsidiary of Freethought Ltd later this year. There should not be any major changes in the service provided.

c) Letter from Headway Suffolk requesting a donation.

It was resolved that no donation would be made.

d) Any other business for noting or including on the next agenda on Thursday 6th March 2025.

The following items are for including on the next agenda:

- The current grass cutting contract which is up for renewal at the end of March.
- The Government's consultation on strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework.
- Email from Risby Village Hall about a 10% increase in hire charges due to higher energy costs and inflation effective from 1st January 2025.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated