

POLSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 21st January 2016 in Polstead Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Anne MacWillson (Chairman), Amanda Flather, Peter Patrick, Matthew Peck and Sue Wigglesworth.

Attending: Gordon Jones (Suffolk County Councillor), John Ward (Babergh District Councillor), Dave Crimmin (Clerk) and 3 members of public.

16/001 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Oxford and Page (commitments) sent their apologies.

16/002 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

Cllr MacWillson declared a pecuniary interest in item 16/010a as she was claiming an expense.

16/003 Minutes of Meeting held on 17th December 2015

The minutes of the meeting were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

16/004 Reports from County and District Councillors and Suffolk Constabulary

The councillors noted the reports submitted by Gordon Jones and John Ward. Gordon Jones additionally updated councillors on the Fire and Rescue consultation, the SCC's Budget Scrutiny which also proposes a 2% Social Care Levy and a pre-consultation on special education provision. John Ward updated councillors on Babergh's review of car parking charging in Sudbury and Hadleigh, housing numbers and most active communities.

16/005 Reports and Question from Councillors and Chairman's Report

The closure of the nursery as well as the proposed Community Shop refurbishment were discussed. Cllr Peck raised the issue of the copse of trees by the allotments causing an reduced sunlight issue to one of the tenants.

16/006 Reports and Questions from Parishioners

Mr Lowe, a Nayland resident, wanted to understand if PPC would support a proposal to get a stretch of electricity cabling, running from Stoke by Nayland to Bells Hill in the AONB, placed underground. The councillors said that whilst supporting the proposal it would very much depend on the views of the landowner, funding being available and whether the proposal was supported by the Dedham Vale AONB. Cllr Patrick and Mr Lowe will contact the DV AONB to review.

16/007 Clerk's Report (Appendix A)

Following a review of the Clerk's Report by the councillors there were no further actions requested of the Clerk.

16/008 Correspondence (Appendix B)

Following a review of the Correspondence and emails there were no further actions requested of the Clerk.

16/009 Planning

- a. The councillors noted **Planning Application B/15/01679 Land opposite The Old Post Office, Water Lane** - Reduce height of 1 no. common lime tree and 1 no. beech tree by 30%, fell 1 no. oak tree.
- b. The councillors reviewed **Planning Application B/15/01751 Stackwood Cottage, Stackwood Road** - Erection of first floor side and rear extensions and resolved that they supported the application.
- c. No further planning application had been received since the agenda was posted.
- d. The status of planning applications, enforcement referrals and appeals previously reviewed by PPC were as follows:

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Application Reference	Address	Planning Details	PPC Minute	Parish Council Comments	Babergh DC Comments
B/15/00403/FUL	Sharline, White Street Green	Erection of 1 no. dwelling & 1 No. replacement dwelling (following demolition of existing property).	15/104b	Objected	
B/15/00403/FUL	Sharline, White Street Green	Erection of 1 No. dwelling & 1 No. replacement dwelling (following demolition of existing property).	15/153a	Supported	
B/15/01434	Stackwood Cottage, Stackwood Road	Erection of two storey rear and side extensions.	15/197a	Supported	REFUSED 24/11/2015
B/08/00092	45 Rockalls Road	Non-Material Amendments for replacement of arched mezzanine window with large glazed windows to south elevation.	15/197b	Supported	
B/15/01489	Christobel, White Street Green	Erection of single storey rear extension.	15/197c	Supported	Permission Granted 21/12/2015
B/15/01558	Woodlands Farm, Rockalls Road	Erection of 1 No. agricultural workers dwelling	15/212a	Supported	

16/010 Finance

- a. All cheques signed and due for signing, as itemised in Appendix C, were authorised by the councillors. The councillors also noted the income received since the last meeting and reviewed the Statement of Accounts against the budget and the Bank Statements against the reconciliation.
- b. The councillors reviewed the agreed Expenditure budget and proposed reserves (Appendix D) and resolved to set a Precept of £18,210 which will mean a 0% increase in the Band D Council Tax for 2016 / 2017.
- c. The councillors resolved to allocate the 2016 grass cutting contract to JD Palmer at the same rate as 2015.
- d. The councillors considered the options of joining the Sector Led Body for the audit procurement against the alternative of setting up the governance within PPC. The councillors felt that the option of joining the Sector Led Body was better in terms of transparency and resolved to join.

16/011 Highways and Footpaths

Gordon Jones will ask SCC Highways to review the suggestion put forward by Mr Howard to reduce the severe flooding that occurs on the road by Homey Bridge.

The councillors reviewed the proposals of the Footpath to be maintained by PPC's contractor in 2016 and agreed that FP's 1, 7, 8, 12, 13, 13X, 15 17, 18, 20, 30, 31, 34, 35 and 41 be included in the cutting contract. The Councillors resolved to contract B Patrick for 3 hours per week at £12.50 per hour, for up to 30 weeks, to maintain the footpaths and other cutting areas in the parish. Any additional work during the year will be co-ordinated through the Clerk to the contractor. The councillors resolved that FP 4 be levelled in places by the contractor.

The councillors are getting very concerned regarding the illegal use of the footpaths by horse riders and bikers.

Cllr Patrick left meeting

16/012 Assets, playground and playing field

Plans for the residents to be involved in the upgrade of play equipment at the playground and playing field will start with a meeting outlining the plans being arranged between 10am and noon on the 7th April 2016. An event to fund raise for the cost of the equipment will be held on Saturday 2nd July 2016.

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16/013 Christmas Carols

The councillors were very pleased with the linkage between the Church service and the Christmas Carols.

16/014 Risk Assessment

The councillors reviewed PPC's Risk Register (Appendix E) as at January 2016 and were satisfied that all issues were covered.

16/015 Effectiveness of PPC's Internal Audit and Internal Control process

The councillors reviewed the current system of PPC's internal controls and internal audit and resolved that they were satisfied with the measures currently undertaken by the council.

16/016 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The councillors reviewed PPC's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and do not consider that there are any requirements for change.

16/017 Future Agenda Items

- Community Shop refurbishment
- Copse below allotments
- Fund raising event.

16/018 Next meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday 18th February 2016 starting at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Appendix A Clerks Report

Minute	Action	Complete ✓
14/124	Response sent to Royal Mail on Pillar Box removal. No response to date on request for VR box.	
15/127	Order to be prepared with contractor in February.	
15/181	Met with John Baxter re footpaths.	✓
15/191	Minutes updated on website.	✓
15/193	Babergh informed re dog bin emptying.	✓
15/197	Response sent to Babergh re planning application(s)	✓
15/198 a	Cheques distributed to suppliers.	✓
15/198 c	Transparency grant received fro SALC.	✓
15/199	Heath Road signage was due to be installed in December.	✓
15/200 b	Request for new dog bin locations with Babergh	
15/200 c	Grit bins installed by James Oxford.	✓
15/201	Sam Morgan has taken tenancy on spare allotment.	✓
15/204	2016 meeting dates publicised.	✓
15/208	Minutes updated on website.	✓
15/210	Issues reported by residents to SCC.	✓
15/212	Response sent to Babergh re planning application(s)	✓
	Clerk Hours	
	As at 3rd January 2016 - 241.5 hours worked / 300 hours paid	

Appendix B Correspondence reviewed by councillors

No correspondence received.

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**Appendix C RFO Report
Receipts & Payments**

Date	Details	Ref	Power	Receipts	Payments
07/12/15	Interest 7 Sep to 6 Dec	BS 53		0.41	0.00
01/12/15	SCC P3 Grant			97.16	0.00
21/12/15	SALC Transparency Grant			71.82	0.00
21/01/16	A MacWillson - Xmas Carols	789	LA 2011 ss 1 to 8	0.00	145.44
21/01/16	P Page - Allotment opening BBQ	790	LA 2011 ss 1 to 8	0.00	65.04
21/01/16	Glasdon - Grit Bins	791	LA 2011 ss 1 to 8	0.00	403.63
21/01/16	JD Palmer - Grass Cutting 2015	792	LA 2011 ss 1 to 8	0.00	2,603.16
21/01/16	Polstead Village Hall Committee - Hire 2016	793	LA 2011 ss 1 to 8	0.00	162.00
21/01/16	B Patrick - Footpath Maintenance	794	LA 2011 ss 1 to 8	0.00	75.00
21/01/16	B Patrick - Footpath Maintenance	794	LA 2011 ss 1 to 8	0.00	50.00

Reconciliation

Account	Statement Date	Statement Balance	Actual Balance	Unpresented Cheques	Credits not shown	Difference
Community Account	31/12/15	£37,056.05	£32,512.33	£4,543.72	£0.00	£0.00
Premier Account	31/12/15	£3,316.76	£3,316.76	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Cash	12/01/16	£0.00	£0.00			£0.00
		£40,372.81	£35,829.09	£4,543.72	£0.00	

Budget v's Actual

	Budget	Actual	Reserves	Budget	Actual
Assets Brought Forward		£29,408.07			
Income			Expenditure		
Precept	£17,891.10	£17,891.10	Clerks Salary	£4,315.00	£3,001.35
Bank Interest	£2.00	£1.27	Admin	£1,860.00	£1,203.17
Recycling	£0.00	£0.00	Insurance	£475.00	£0.00
Grants	£195.00	£266.14	Audit Inspections	£190.00	£208.00
Allotment Rent	£200.00	£120.00	Donations	£1,000.00	£100.00
Wayleave	£20.30	£21.01	Chairman's Allowance	£60.00	£0.00
QDJ	£0.00	£0.00	Dog & Litter Bins	£875.00	£0.00
Donation	£0.00	£0.00	Footpaths	£1,400.00	£1,378.75
Compensation	£0.00	£0.00	Grass Cutting	£2,250.00	£2,169.30
Other	£0.00	£1,077.09	Ditch Clearance	£200.00	£0.00
VAT Repayment	£0.00	£341.67	Maintenance	£1,140.00	£135.00
			Village Hall	£935.00	£0.00
			Projects	£3,000.00	£1,500.00
			Contingency	£500.00	£0.00
			VAT Paid	£0.00	£900.94
Total	£18,308.40	£19,718.28	Total	£3,000.00	£16,700.00
			Assets Carried Forward		£35,829.09
Total		£49,126.35	Total		£49,126.35

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Appendix D Precept Proposal 2016 / 2017

At the November meeting you agreed a total expenditure budget of £16,862 for 2016 / 2017:

	2014 / 15		2015 / 16			2016 / 17
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual to Date	To year end	Budget
Income						
Bank Interest	2.00	1.64	2.00	1.27	2.00	300.00
Recycling	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grants	195.00	2,061.82	195.00	266.14	195.00	195.00
Allotment Rent	25.50	0.00	200.00	120.00	120.00	120.00
Wayleave	20.00	20.30	20.30	21.01	21.01	22.00
QDJ	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Compensation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	574.50	0.00	1,077.09	1,077.09	0.00
VAT Repayment	0.00	408.27	0.00	341.67	341.67	0.00
Total Income	242.50	3,066.53	417.30	1,827.18	1,756.77	637.00
Precept		17,810.06			17,891.10	
Expenditure						
Clerks Salary	4,306.00	3,957.40	4,315.00	3,001.35	4,315.00	4,452.00
Admin	1,850.00	1,280.99	1,860.00	1,203.17	1,850.00	1,850.00
Insurance	550.00	401.14	475.00	0.00	420.00	430.00
Audit Inspections	190.00	190.00	190.00	208.00	208.00	220.00
Donations	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	100.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Chairman's Allowance	60.00	0.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	60.00
Dog & Litter Bins	790.00	608.59	875.00	0.00	790.00	875.00
Footpaths	1,400.00	1,287.50	1,400.00	1,378.75	1,400.00	1,400.00
Grass Cutting	2,200.00	2,038.90	2,250.00	2,169.30	2,250.00	2,300.00
Ditch Clearance	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00
Maintenance	1,140.00	415.00	1,140.00	135.00	1,140.00	1,140.00
Projects	1,500.00	1,816.57	1,500.00	4,200.75	3,653.91	1,500.00
Village Hall	935.00	758.40	935.00	0.00	935.00	935.00
Contingency	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
VAT Paid	0.00	341.67	0.00	900.94	500.00	0.00
Total Expenditure	16,621.00	14,096.16	16,700.00	13,297.26	19,221.91	16,862.00

Reserves held by PPC

It is proposed to increase the provisions for the Play Ground Equipment Replacement in 2016 / 2017 whilst still maintaining an adequate reserve for other Asset Replacements and Election Costs.

	2014 / 15		2015 / 16		2016 / 17	
	Start of	End of	Start of	End of year	Start of	End of year
Asset Replacement	5,750.00	6,500.00	6,500.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	6,000.00
Allotments including water	3,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Footpath Programme	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donations	750.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ponds Maintenance	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Play Ground Replacement	3,500.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
Election Costs	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,750.00
Total Earmarked Reserves	17,500.00	16,000.00	16,000.00	21,500.00	21,500.00	22,750.00
General Reserves	5,127.64	13,408.07	13,408.07	8,334.03	8,334.03	?

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Precept for 2016 / 2017

Barry Hunter, Babergh's Corporate Manager for Financial Services, has written to PPC regarding the Tax Base for 2016 / 2017 which will increase from **373.12** in 2015 / 16 to **379.77** in 2016 / 17.

Using the projections for income, expenditure and earmarked reserves, PPC will also need to consider the level it wishes to maintain its General Reserves. Best practice would suggest that the level of General Reserves should be somewhere between 50 -100% of main income. The 3 examples I give below show:

- Example 1 Increase the Precept to £18,210 but keep the Band D Council Tax the same as 2015 / 16
- Example 2 Increase the Precept to £18,710
- Example 3 Increase the Precept to £19,210

	2014 / 15	2015 / 16	2016 / 17	2016 / 17	2016 / 17
			Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
START OF YEAR					
Earmarked Reserves	17,500.00	16,000.00	21,500.00	21,500.00	21,500.00
General Reserves	5,127.64	13,408.07	8,334.03	8,334.03	8,334.03
Total Reserves	22,627.64	29,408.07	29,834.03	29,834.03	29,834.03
Income ex Precept	3,066.53	1,756.77	637.00	637.00	637.00
Precept	17,810.06	17,891.10	18,210.00	18,710.00	19,210.00
Total Income	20,876.59	19,647.87	18,847.00	19,347.00	19,847.00
Expenditure	14,096.16	19,221.91	16,862.00	16,862.00	16,862.00
END OF YEAR					
Earmarked Reserves	16,000.00	21,500.00	22,750.00	22,750.00	22,750.00
General Reserves	13,408.07	8,334.03	9,069.03	9,569.03	10,069.03
Total Reserves	29,408.07	29,834.03	31,819.03	32,319.03	32,819.03
Tax Base	371.43	373.12	379.77	379.77	379.77
Band D Council Tax	47.95	47.95	47.95	49.27	50.58

The Council Tax that a Band D household in Polstead pays is the Precept demanded by PPC divided by the Tax Base for that year.

Finally, I would recommend that the grant being given to PPC by BDC in relation to the Precept is not taken into account when resolving the Precept and is treated as an unbudgeted grant for 2016 / 17.

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Appendix E Risk Register

POLSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL				
RISK MANAGEMENT REGISTER AS AT JANUARY 2016				
Risk Identified	Impact	Risk	Insurance Cover	Control Action
Inadequate forward planning and budgetary controls	High	Low	No	Annual Budget Review Actual vs. Budget review at meetings
Fraud by Clerk or Councillors resulting in immediate financial loss	High	Low	Yes	No Petty Cash Councillors check bank reconciliation against bank statements at each meeting Internal Auditor review
Council operates ultra vires or does not comply with current legislation	High	Low	No	Regular training for Councillors and Clerk Within Clerk's job description
Poor reporting to Council, Record Keeping and Book Keeping	Medium	Low	No	Accurate minutes Timely and accurate financial reporting Internal Auditor review External Auditor review
Council lacks relevant skills	Medium	Low	No	Regular training for Councillors and Clerk Create committee and second skills
Lack of maintenance to council owned assets	High	Medium	Yes	Maintenance programme Walk the Parish to review condition of assets
Loss or damage to council owned property	Low	Low	Yes	Asset Insurance cover Review Assets Register against insurance
Injury to persons as a consequence of asset ownership or provision of amenities	High	Medium	Yes	Public Liability insurance Weekly inspection of play equipment Annual inspection of play equipment by external organisation Walk of Parish to review
Failure to reclaim VAT	Low	Low	No	RFO Report review by councillors Internal Auditor review VAT can be claimed back 3 years
Failure to respond to electors' rights of access	Medium	Low	No	Within Clerk's job description
Unexpected loss of Clerk or Clerk's office	High	Low	Yes	Up to date job description Copy of filing system index and data backup offsite

End of Appendices

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