

COCKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 23 January 2025 at 7.30pm held in the Village Hall, Cockfield.

Present: Cllr Ian Levett (Chairman), Cllr Dale Baber, Cllr Joe Brinkley, Cllr Sarah Fletcher, Cllr Andy Golding, Cllr Nic Knight, Cllr Robin Morley and Cllr Ralph Turner.

In Attendance: Suffolk County Cllr Robert Lindsay, District Cllr Margaret Maybury, District Cllr Clover, 2 members of the public and the Clerk S Ball.

2024/149 Apologies for Absence
Cllr Janne Cutting-Keyton.

2024/150 Declarations of Interest
Cllr Levett declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7.2 Finance, as a recipient of payments (Reimbursements for expenditure).

2024/151 Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting
It was proposed by Cllr Fletcher and seconded by Cllr Knight that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 28 November 2024, be signed as a true record. The proposal was carried.

2024/152 Outstanding Actions

2022/178: Pavilion Balustrade:
A second Contractor's quotation for a new balustrade is still awaited.

2024/040: Speed Limit Reduction Initiative: The SCC Cabinet Member and the Head of Transport Strategy rejected the Parish Council's application for a speed reduction on A134. **(Action Closed)**

2024/059.2.1: Greens Management: A replacement hardwood finial has been provided free of charge by a resident. Cllr Baber has manufactured a plinth for it and applied 2 coats of preservative to both items. Cllr Baber will refix them onto the Bandstand roof. **(Action Closed)**

2024/066.4: Financial Regulations: The Group will make a proposal to a Parish Council Meeting before the AGM in May 2025.

2024/070.2.1: Greens Management: Cllr Brinkley has investigated options for semi-permanent kid's goal posts and nets for Great Green, but it was proposed by Cllr Brinkley and seconded by Cllr Golding that goal posts should be reinstated in their original position near the Pavilion. The proposal was carried.

2024/070.2.8: Pavilion (including Storage Shed): The Clerk confirmed that the redecoration work to the Pavilion, had been signed off. **(Action Closed)**

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2024/101.2.7: Parish Paths: Cllr Baber has inspected the footpath (which was the subject of a resident's complaint) and noted that SCC had placed temporary boarding over the footbridge, with SCC cones still in place for protection. Cllr Baber will continue to pursue the issue with SCC.

2024/116.2: Allotments: Cllr Levett with the assistance of one of the Plot holders, has laid weed proof membrane and fitted the interlocking paving slabs to about 60% of the path. Work will continue.

2024/117: The Pocket: Cllr Morley confirmed that the Contractor's quote was within the budget agreed by Cllrs at the November parish council meeting so as agreed, the Contractor was instructed to proceed. The contractor has trimmed the perimeter hedges along the road and cut the grass (twice). **(Action Complete)**
The Clerk was asked to write to thank the Resident who has offered to cut the grass in the Pocket, free of charge.

2024/136.1: Playground: Cllr Knight confirmed that APL would be delivering and spreading the additional woodchip and undertaking the rectification of issues raised in the recent Annual RoSPA Safety Inspection on 24th and 27th January.

2024/137: Social Media Policy: See Agenda Item 9 **(Action Closed)**.

2024/140: Revisions to Allotment Tenancy Agreement: Cllr Levett has issued the updated Allotment Tenancy Agreements to Allotment Holders and they will take effect from March 2025. **(Action Closed)**.

2024/141.1.6 Village Hall Car Park: The clerk had written to the Village Hall Management Group raising concerns about the wording of the VH Hire Agreements. The Chair of the VH Management Group to respond.

2024/144.1 Great Green Bootcamp: The Greens Working Group met the applicant on Great Green and agreed that he could hold a Saturday morning Bootcamp at the Garage site end of Great Green, The Greens Working Group would review any impact on the Green in 4 weeks.

2024/144.2 Village Fair and Classic Car Show in 2025: The Clerk has advised the Community Council that they can host the 2025 Village Fair on the Great Green as well as the Classic Car Show (which is weather dependent). **(Action Closed)**.

2024/145: Street Naming Request: The Clerk has advised BMSDC that the Parish Council's suggested name for the access road to the two properties behind the Horseshoes Pub, should be Stowes Hill Close. **(Action Closed)**.

2024/146: Correspondence: The Clerk has applied to BT for the Parish Council to adopt the red Telephone Box in Cross Green, which is shortly to be decommissioned.(See Agenda Item 11.2) **(Action Closed)**.

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2024/153 Public Participation Session:

District Cllr Clover and Cllr Maybury circulated their joint report in advance of the meeting. Cllr Clover advised that BMSDC's Housing Target had been increased from 416 dwellings to 604 dwellings/year, so the Joint Local Plan Part 2 needs to be revised, however Part 1 will remain in force. The occupancy rates for short term car parks is well down since the introduction of parking charges at Lavenham, Sudbury and Hadleigh. Kingfisher Swimming Pool in Sudbury is scheduled for reopening in Mid-February.

Cllr Clover advised that Suffolk County Council had applied to go onto the fast track programme (the priority programme to move to a Unitary Council). The target date for the creation of Unitary Councils is April 2027). It was noted that Suffolk only has a population of 750,000 and Norfolk has 850,00, so they could be combined.

Suffolk County Cllr Lindsay circulated his report in advance of the meeting. Cllr Lindsay recommended that all Parishes develop Neighbourhood Plans to villages against bullish housing targets. SCC element of the Council Tax will increase by 5%.

A resident complained that SCC had only placed temporary plates over the damaged footbridge over the ford in Old Hall Lane but not repaired it and it is slippery. Cllr Baber agreed to pursue with SCC.

The resident also advised that there is a hollow in front of the dog bin in Old Hall Lane that fills up with water and hinders access for users. Cllr Morley advised that it was unlikely that SCC would take any action and suggested the resident contacts a named resident (at Cross Green) who might be able to provide some hardcore to fill the hollow.

The resident requested that a Grit Bin be located at Old Hall Lane. The Clerk was asked to investigate costs to purchase a bin, obtain permission from landowner to site the bin and how to get SCC to fill/refill the bin.

2024/154 Planning:

154.1 Applications Received: It was noted that the following applications had been referred to the Parish Council:

DC/25/00049: Full Planning Application - Erection of two storey side extension and two storey rear extension (following demolition of existing single storey side extension): Tollgate, Chapel Road, Cockfield, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0HE **(The Parish Council supports the Application, subject to a couple of conditions)**

154.2 Decisions Received:

APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/24/04856: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 1no. Leylandii: North Barn, Old Hall Lane, Cockfield, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0LQ **(Decision: BMSDC Do Not Wish To Object)**

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APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/24/05272: Application for works to a tree in a Conservation Area - Re-pollard 1No Ash back to previous cutting points. Conifers, Cross Green, Cockfield, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0LG (**Decision: BMSDC Do Not Wish To Object**)

2024/155 Finance:

155.1: Financial Report: There is no separate Financial Report as this is covered by Agenda Item 8 - 2025/26 Budget and Precept.

155.2: Payments: It was proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Morley that the 23 January 2025 schedule of payments be approved and that the Pre-authorised December 2024 Schedule of Payments be noted. The proposal was carried.

Councillors are recommended to Note the following December 2024 payments (Pre-authorised in November)

To:	Reason:	Net £	VAT £	Total £
Anglian Water	Water Bill for Pavilion for November 2024 (08/11/24 - 08/12/24), debited 10.12.24	13.33	2.67	16.00
Octopus Energy	Electricity Bill for Pavilion for 01/11/24 - 30/11/24. (Debited 10.12.24) Inv. No. KI-446AB355-0058 - (Payment based on meter reading of actual usage)			
Simpson & Clarke	Professional Services (advice & tender preparation & submission) in association with Parish Council's offer to purchase Station Site. Invoice No.31891	406.32	0.00	406.32
A Creasy	Cemetery Cut (£120), hedge cut cemetery (£30). Total £150. Invoice No. 43	120.96	0.00	120.96
Cargate Engineering Ltd	Annual Inspection & Service of Klargesters scheduled (£148.90 + £29.78 VAT), Desludge & Wash Klargesters & Pump Station (£220.00 + £44.00 VAT). New Grease Cartridge (£42.50 + £8.50 VAT)& Grease Brush (£43.98 + £8.80 VAT). Total £455.38 + £91.08 VAT	40.00	0.00	40.00
S Ball	Clerk Salary December 2024 (40 hours @ £16.93) Gross: £677.20. Net £406.32 [PAYE: £270.88]. Note: Hourly rate includes NALC 2024-25 Salary Award	270.88	0.00	270.88
S Ball	Clerk Salary Backpay (New NALC 2024-25 Salary Scale) from 01/04/24 - 31/10/24. (£0.63/Hr x 40 x 8 months = £201.60 Gross), Net £120.96 [PAYE: £80.64]	80.64	0.00	80.64
S Ball	Clerks Expenses December 2024 (up to a limit of £40.00)	800.00	160.00	960.00
HMRC	Clerks PAYE December 2024			
HMRC	Clerks PAYE on Backpay between 01/04/24 - 31/10/24	750.00	150.00	900.00
Totals		£2,574.34	£304.30	£2,878.64

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Councillors are recommended to authorise the following payments covering January 2025.

To:	Reason:	Net £	VAT £	Total £
Octopus Energy	Electricity Bill for Pavilion for 01/12/24 - 31/12/24. (Debited 10.01.25) Inv. No. KI-446AB355-0059 - (Payment based on meter reading of actual usage)	188.16	9.41	197.57
Anglian Water	Water Bill for Pavilion for November 2024 (08/12/24 - 08/01/25), debited 10.01.25	13.33	2.67	16.00
S Ball	Clerk Salary January 2025 (40 hours @ £16.93) Gross: £677.20. Net £406.32 [PAYE: £270.88].	406.32	0.00	406.32
S Ball	Expenses January 2025	38.83	0.00	38.83
HMRC	Clerk's PAYE January 2025	270.88	0.00	270.88
SPL Ltd	Purchase of 2 No. Notice boards and posts. Supply of items £832.60, Delivery £125.46, VAT £191.61, Total £1,149.67	958.06	191.61	1,149.67
The National Allotment Society	Annual Membership Fee for 2025. Invoice dated 13/12/24. Payment due 10/01/24	55.00	11.00	66.00
Cockfield Village Hall Management Committee	Hire of Village Hall for PC Meetings 2024/25. 13 meetings @ £30 = £390	390.00	0.00	390.00
I Levett	Purchase of 12 No. 2nd Class Stamps for PC Xmas cards	10.20	0.00	10.20
BL Colson	Topping Meadow at the Pocket (twice). Trimming Hedges for safety reasons	120.00	24.00	144.00
Action Play & Leisure Ltd	Supply & spread 15m3 play grade woodchip and undertake repairs identified in RoSPA safety inspector's report	1,856.10	371.22	2,227.32
Vertas Group Ltd	Grounds Maintenance Jan - March 2025, Inv. No.VG00-CIN-000019354	696.68	139.34	836.02
Totals		£5,003.56	£749.25	£5,752.81

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*Clerk's Expenses for January 2025 Represented by:		Unit Cost	Total Cost
HP Instant Ink	Instant Ink Printer Cartridge Subscription 5/12/24 - 5/01/25	11.99	11.99
Mailchimp Ltd	Mailchimp Essential Monthly Subscription (Community Broadcasts) Direct Debit is taken 28/01/25	12.54	12.54
Post Office	Book 8 x 2nd Class Stamps	6.80	6.80
Village Shop	Ream A4 Printing Paper	7.50	7.50
Total			£38.83

Cllrs to note income received in January 2025

Nil	Nil	0.00
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2024/156 Vegetation Management:

It was proposed by Cllr Morley and seconded by Cllr Brinkly that the quotation of £300.00 + VAT from S Bradnam to trim back vegetation around the pond on Great Green and to raise the canopies of 2 No. Oak trees and 1 No. Poplar tree in the Pocket be accepted. The proposal was carried.

2024/157 Jeffreys Green:

It was proposed by Cllr Morley and seconded by Cllr Knight that the quotation of £3,575.00 + VAT from ADM Contracting Ltd to coppice and cut back trees along the riverbank in Jeffreys Green be accepted. The proposal was carried. It was further proposed by Cllr Morley and seconded by Cllr Knight that the cost be funded from Neighbourhood CIL. The proposal was carried.

2024/158 2025/26 Budget & Precept:

158.1: Budget: The Clerk explained the basis of and calculations behind the proposed 2025/26 Budget (circulated to Cllrs in advance of the meeting) and answered Cllr questions. It was proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Baber that the budget be approved. The proposal was carried.

158.2: Precept: The Clerk explained that because of an overestimation in the 2024/25 Cockfield Tax Base, BMSDC have reduced the 2025/26 figure, the effect of which is that the Parish Council portion of the Council Tax needs to increase by 5.5% just to generate the same Precept in 2025/26. The Parish Council would also need to increase the Council Tax by a further 3.5% - 4.5% to cover increased costs (Inflation etc) of providing services, however after some debate, it was proposed by Cllr Levett and seconded by Cllr Baber that the increase in the 2025/26 Precept be limited to 7.83% (+£9.06 increase in Council Tax for a Band D property). The proposal was carried.

2024/159 Social Media Policy: It was proposed by Cllr Baber and seconded by Cllr Fletcher that the Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy, circulated to Cllrs in advance of the meeting, be adopted. The proposal was carried and the Clerk asked to upload the Policy onto the Parish Council page of the website.

2024/160 Local Needs Housing: None.

2024/161 Resident Requests:

161.1: Fencing: A request from a resident to erect a fence around the playground equipment on Great Green was considered. It was proposed by Cllr Brinkley and seconded by Cllr Morley that the request be refused and the Clerk was asked to write to the resident, explaining the Parish Council's decision.

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161.2: Defibrillator at Cross Green: A request from a resident was received for the Parish Council to provide defibrillator coverage in the Cross Green area. It was proposed by Cllr Levett and seconded by Cllr Fletcher that the Clerk investigate the acquisition of a defibrillator and potential locations, including the soon to be decommissioned BT phone box (subject to its successful adoption by the Parish Council and the provision of a suitable power supply). The proposal was carried and the Clerk was asked to submit a report to the February Parish Council Meeting.

2024/162 Plough & Fleece: Following legal advice from SALC, the Clerk issued a briefing note to Cllrs in advance of the meeting, explaining the limit of Parish Council's Statutory Powers and the options available to support of the Cockfield Village Group's proposed acquisition of the Plough & Fleece and relocation of the village shop and Post Office. Whilst it does not appear possible for the Parish Council to donate towards the purchase of the Pub, or purchase shares under the Share Offer, or to benefit a Post Office, there may be other options available to the Parish Council to be able to financially assist the Group, once the Pub has been acquired. The Clerk was asked to seek further legal advice from SALC.

2024/163 Maintenance Schedule and Asset Management:

163.1 Maintenance Matters by exception:

163.1.1 Greens Management: Cllr Morley advised that UKPN were inspecting a tree in the Pocket that is growing over HV power cables and would advise what action was needed.

163.1.2 Glebe Land: Cllr Levett advised that there were 3 No. vacant allotment plot, which would be advertised in Green Links, a Community Broadcast and on the website.

It was proposed by Cllr Levett and seconded by Cllr Fletcher that additional weed suppressant sheeting be purchased at a cost of £24.97 + VAT to complete the allotment footpath. The proposal was carried.

163.1.3 Earls Meadow/Bruffs Line/Jeffreys Green: None

163.1.4 Cemetery: None.

163.1.5 Playground: None.

163.1.6 Village Hall Car Park: None.

163.1.7 Parish Paths: None.

163.1.8 Pavilion (including Storage Shed): None.

163.1.9 Bus Shelter: None.

163.1.10 Notice Boards & Benches: None.

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163.1.11 Village Sign: None.

163.1.12 Speed Indicator Devices: None.

163.1.13 Other Assets: None.

2024/163.2 Maintenance Calendar: (Full review, February, June, October only)
None.

2024/164 Third Party Liaison:

164.1 Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC): None

164.2 Highways and Emergencies: None.

164.3 Police/Fire: The Clerk advised of reported speeding within the 30mph limits of Cross Green. Cllr Cutting-Keyton was asked to request a visit from the Speed Camera team.

164.4 BMSDC: None

2024/165 Correspondence: Cllrs considered the list of correspondence received and listed in the Correspondence highlighted by the Clerk and agreed to any appropriate actions.

- Email from Cllr Cutting-Keyton requesting a budget of £300-£500 be agreed for VE80 Day event on 8th May, and for the football club to provide a paid bar and Cockfield Community to provide the music. It was proposed by Cllr Levett and seconded by Cllr Baber that these requests be approved and be funded from S137. The proposal was carried.

2024/166 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council either for information or for inclusion on the agenda of a future Ordinary Meeting:

Footbridge over Ford at Cross Green
Cloud Storage for Parish Council

2024/167 Next Meeting:

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 27 February 2025 at 7.30pm, in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 10.20 pm.