

# RICKINGHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held Thursday, 4 April 2024  
Rickinghall Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr Ian Patterson Cllr Brian Rhodes  
Cllr Geoff Short (Chair) Cllr Sally Smith

Parish Clerk – Leeann Jackson-Eve  
County Cllr Jessica Fleming  
3 Members of the Public

7.50pm The Chair welcomed those present and opened the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Gillian Crossley-Holland, Cllr Andy Gordon and District Cllr Gilly Morgan.
2. **Casual Vacancies:** There were no applications for seats on the Council.
3. **To confirm the minutes of the Meeting held on 7 March 2024:** The minutes, circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed as a true record.
4. **Magazine Input:** Cllr Short.
5. **Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:** None.
6. **Public Forum:** None.
7. **Planning:**
  - 7.1 **Planning Applications:**
    - 7.1.1 **Southgate Farmhouse, The Street.** Ref. DC/24/01354. Householder Application - Change of use and erection of extension to existing garden office to form annexed accommodation for elderly relatives. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
    - 7.1.2 **Southgate Farmhouse, The Street.** Ref. DC/24/01355. Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of an extension and alterations to existing garden office to form annexed accommodation. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
  - 7.2 **Notice of Intent to prune/remove tree(s) in the Conservation Area:**
    - 7.2.1 **Whitegate, The Street.** Ref. DC/24/01467. Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 1 No. Sycamore (T1). It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
  - 7.3 **Notification of Planning Decisions by Mid Suffolk DC:**
    - 7.3.1 **1 Hillside Meadow.** Ref. DC/24/00416. Householder Application - Conversion of existing cartlodge (first floor) to living accommodation. Planning Permission GRANTED.
    - 7.3.2 **The Homestead, The Street.** Ref. DC/24/00721. Notification of Works to Tree in a Conservation Area - No.1 Golden variegated holly (T1) To be coppiced to just above ground level. No.1 English Yew (T2) Pollard to 3m. No.1 Leyland Cypress (T3) Fell. No.4 Leyland Cypresses (T4-7) Fell. NO OBJECTION.
    - 7.3.3 **Riverslea, Water Lane.** Ref. DC/24/00775. Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - No.1 Crab Apple Tree (T1) Removal of tree and its roots. NO OBJECTION.
    - 7.3.4 **Southgate Farmhouse, The Street.** Ref. DC/24/00831. Application for works to a tree in a Conservation Area - Removal of 1No Cherry tree (T1) in rear garden to create more light and space in garden. Tree has been previously pollarded but is getting too large for the space which is approximately 30-35ft high. NO OBJECTION.
    - 7.3.5 **Land adj to the Old Parsonage.** Ref. DC/24/00832. Application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a Proposed: Erection, Extension or Alteration of a building for Agricultural or Forestry Use. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2, Part 6 - Erection of extension to barn to match existing providing winter housing for pigs. Formal Approval NOT REQUIRED.
  - 7.4 **Notification of other Planning Matters:** None.

8. **Progress Reports:**
- 8.1 **Chair:** None.
- 8.2 **Clerk:** None.
9. **Correspondence:**
- 9.1 **SCC:** The PC noted the cost breakdown of Street Light Maintenance and Energy costs for 2023-24.
- 9.2 **MSDC:** The PC noted the information on the Norwich to Tilbury Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) statutory consultation which would run for 10 weeks until mid / late June.
10. **General Items:**
- 10.1 **Payment of Grant Funding:** It was noted that no applications had been made to the PC during 2023/24 for grant funding in addition to annual items agreed in the budget. The annual payments would be made at the May meeting.
- 10.2 **Street Sweeping and Path Cutting:** It was noted that the increase for 2024/25 from £10.52/hour to £11.22/hour agreed at the previous meeting was below the national minimum wage of £11.44/hour. It was therefore RESOLVED, with 3 in favour and 1 against, to raise this to £12.50/hour in 2024/25. It was also RESOLVED, with all agreed, to extend footpath cutting to start in April (normally May-September) due to increased spring growth.
- 10.3 **Annual Newsletter:** It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to accept the quote of £429 from Community Workshop for printing of newsletter (650 copies). There would also be a charge of £25 for delivery with the Parish Magazine.
- 10.4 **Speed Indicator Device:** The PC noted that a site application had been made to Suffolk County Council for the post opposite the church on Bury Road for an additional SID.
- 10.5 **Flooding:** The drains in Bury Road still had not been cleared and it was agreed to follow up on this with Suffolk Highways and the SCC Flooding team. It was also noted that repairs to Candle Street, as discussed at the last meeting, had begun.
- 10.6 **Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan:** There was no update.
- 10.7 **Community Transport (RBGNS):** A meeting was convened involving the Redgrave, Botesdale and Rickinghall Chairs, along with the Parish Clerk, Gordon Lawrence (RBGNS), and Communities Together East Anglia (CTEA), the entity overseeing the Mid Suffolk Connecting Communities service for Suffolk Transport. The purpose was to explore the possibility of CTEA assuming responsibility for the RBGNS Community Transport service, with Gordon continuing his volunteer role in coordinating bookings and driving. However, discussions during the meeting and subsequent consideration of CTEA's formal Transport Offer had raised some significant compliance concerns.
- It was confirmed that if CTEA were to take ownership of the vehicle, then it would be their responsibility to insure, licence and ensure that all drivers were compliant, including insurance, DBS checks and regular licence checks, as well as ensuring that daily vehicle checks were conducted and recorded in an appropriate way. Additionally CTEA would require the service to use their booking system and had confirmed that passengers travelling on a vehicle owned by CTEA would need to be registered on their system. CTEA had expressed concern that the current data recording methods for the RBGNS service, while meeting passenger and volunteer driver needs, did not comply with GDPR requirements.
- Regrettably, both parties reached a mutual agreement not to pursue the offer, citing Gordon's lack of necessary technology and reluctance to integrate closely with CTEA systems. Additionally, it was felt that booking through CTEA would not offer the same level of responsiveness as the current service.
- Councillors acknowledged the relevance of CTEA's concerns, particularly in light of recent confirmation of the PC's responsibility for the bus per the original SCC-drafted vehicle agreement. County Cllr Jessica Fleming undertook to contact the SCC officer who initiated the original agreement to arrange a meeting to discuss transferring ownership of the bus to RBGNS.
11. **Finance (as of 31/03/24):**
- 11.1 **Account Balance:** £ 32,746.88
- Bank Balance:** £ 32,746.88
- Income:** £ 3,682.51 HMRC – VAT Reclaim 2023-24

11.2 **Accounts for Payment:**

Admin Payments	£	964.98	Not itemised due to GDPR
Street Sweeping etc.	£	182.35	St Clean April 2024
SCC	£	1,129.41	Street Light Energy/Maint 23-24
Hedgehogs R Us	£	157.50	Hedgehog Highways
RBR Parish Magazine	£	50.00	Flooding Guide – 2 pages
Suffolk Assoc of Local Councils	£	510.92	Annual Fees 2024-25

RESOLVED, with all agreed, to approve payment of the accounts above.

11.3 **Budget Report:** The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report was noted, with a bank balance of £32,746.88 and £27,731.32 of that allocated to earmarked funds. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to allocate the difference of £5,015.56 to General Reserves.

11.4 **To consider and approve the Community Infrastructure Levy Report to MSDC for 2023-24:** The Council RESOLVED, with all agreed, to approve the submission of the CIL Report to MSDC. The report indicated that the PC had carried over £19,214.20 in CIL funds from the previous year and received £0.00 in 2023-24. Of this, £17,000.00 had been given to the St Botolph's Primary School Decarbonisation Project and £2,214.20 to the Rickinghall Village Hall Solar Project. This left £0.00 in CIL funds to be taken forward into the next financial year.

12. **Highways Issues:** A collapsing drain in Bury Road had been reported by a resident.

13. **Welcome Pack:** None.

14. **Councillors' Reports:**

- Local Charities – A meeting had been held in March.
- Public Rights of Way – The handrail on the steps to the A143 was broken and the Clerk would report it. It was noted that this had been reported more than once previously and SCC had not deemed it a priority for repair.
- Village Hall – The recently commissioned solar panels awaited connection to the grid, with new Wi-Fi installed to get the system online. Additionally, a new speaker system had been set up, the playing field had been fertilised and plans were underway to establish a village archive in one of the old changing rooms for the benefit of the Local History Recorder and other interested parties.

15. **Matters to be brought to attention of the Council:** None.

16. **Next Meeting:** 2 May 2024

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:50pm.