

Felsham Parish Council

Minutes of the MEETING of FELSHAM PARISH COUNCIL held on 10th December 2024 in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr Simon Garrod (Chairman); Cllr Ken Sparkes; Cllr Mark Tavernor; Cllr Jason Stringer; Cllr Beverley Williams; Cllr Karen Hubbard

In attendance: SCC Cllr Penny Otton; MSDC Cllr Nicky Willshire; Clerk & RFO Miss Isabelle Reece

Apologies: Cllr Paul Kearney

2024/092 Chairman's Welcome; to receive apologies for absence - Chairman Cllr Garrod welcomed everyone to the meeting and received apologies from Cllr Kearney.

2024/093 Declarations of interest & requests for dispensation – Cllr Sparkes for the Felsham Charity

2024/094 Minutes of the Previous Parish Council – the Minutes of the meeting of 12th November were considered, **APPROVED**, and signed by Cllr Garrod as a true record

2024/095 To receive reports from SCC & MSDC Cllrs

a. SCC Cllr Penny Otton

Cllr Otton's report, previously circulated, was noted and is available on this website. Cllr Otton highlighted the uncertainty and potential upheavals associated with Central Government's recent Devolution White Paper. It was confirmed that one set of railings on Gedding Bridge had been replaced, but responsibility for their painting was queried. Cllr Otton agreed to investigate the matter. A recent van collision on the other side of the road had destroyed destruction of railings which would also now need to be replaced. Cllr Otton agreed to contribute £400.00 funding from her Locality Budget towards the replacement kissing gate. SCC Highways would need undertake a site inspection: Cllr Otton agreed to pursue this with relevant officers.

b. MSDC Cllr Nicky Willshire

Cllr Willshire had sent her report prior to the meeting and is available on this website. Cllr Willshire highlighted the grant funding still available, including from her Locality Budget. She agreed to allocate a portion of this for Felsham's new permanent beacon, which would cost around £1200.00. Cllr Willshire was pleased to note that regular liaison with her Community Officer was proving effective: Cllr Sparkes noted the promptitude of the work to cut back hedge overgrowth on the path to the Community Room on The Orchard, following reporting of the issue. She also mentioned loans available from the Public Works Board, which can include purchase of land.

2024/096 Public Forum – There were no members of the public in attendance

2024/097 To receive Clerk's Report – investigation of retrospective Planning Permission for the Six Bells Listed Wall yet to be completed and the Survey Form for the Government Consultation on changes to attendance requirements for council meetings was more lengthy than a simple single response and time was problematic.

2024/098 Finance & Governance

a. To receive a financial update (RFO's Report) – The Clerk had circulated a Financial Report, but because of a printer malfunction, signing of a bank reconciliation was postponed until the January Meeting

b. Payment orders totalling £252.60 were APPROVED – Clerk's Salary (November)

c. To receive the Internal Auditor's Report – The Internal Auditor's Report was received and is available elsewhere on the website

d. To Consider 1st draft Budget 2025-26 – This was considered and a few minor adjustments made, for 2nd draft in January. The Clerk requested clarification on mechanism for triggering S137 payments to charitable organisations. Following this, a donation of £75.00 to CAB was proposed by Cllr Garrod, seconded by Cllr Sparkes and unanimously **AGREED** with subsequent payments to be triggered by the CAB Annual Report. Cllr Garrod reported that the Felsham & Gedding Village News was once more active and so a donation would be in order. **ACTION** – Cllr Hubbard to instigate a 'donation request' from the F & G Village News.

e. Any other Finance & Governance matters – the matter of websites which give inaccurate information was flagged: some of these are problematic and often under the control of third parties, so difficult or impossible to amend. The Clerk also sought clarification of what personal information Councillors were happy to include on the Parish Website and Notice Board. (Name and email addresses only)

2024/099 Planning

a. There had been no Planning Applications since issue of this Agenda

b. The following decisions were noted – Land Behind Six Bells, Felsham DC/24/04315 REFUSED, DC/23/05045 & APP /W3520/3338527 APPEAL DISMISSED; DC/24/04637 – 23 Meadow Close, Felsham, Tree Works – GRANTED

c. There were no other Planning Matters

2024/100 Village Maintenance – Trees & Greens

a. To receive a report from the Tree Officer – nothing reported

b. To consider matters reported & updates – nothing reported

c. Mowing Regime – Cllr Tavernor had been in contact with several prospective contractors, but delays had ensued and the matter was postponed until the new year

d. Village Sign Update – Cllr Sparkes had spoken with the contractor: the final quote for supply only of the Village Sign was £3212.00. Work would start February or March and a deposit of 30% would be required. A completion date would be required before any payment can be made. Mr Simpson had confirmed his preparedness to complete the Planning Application for installation, which will be undertaken on a voluntary basis by Cllr Stringer

e. To consider purchase/commission of permanent beacon in time for WWII 80th Anniversaries – Cllr Hubbard had found a local volunteer who is happy to fabricate one for the village for just the cost of materials. Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Hubbard, by unanimous vote it was **AGREED** to proceed with the project; with an alternative supplier sourced if the time scale was not possible for the generous volunteer resident. The question of a post remains to be investigated.

2024/101 Conservation Area

a. To receive a report from the Conservation Office – no report available

b. To consider any matters reported – nothing reported

2024/102 Highways & Footpaths

a. Parking at The Orchard – remaining surveys yet to be collected: a working party will probably be necessary to collate & summarise responses

b. To receive a report from the Footpath Officer – no report available

c. To consider any matters reported – nothing reported

d. Flooding & drainage – Cllr Tavernor suggested contacted Suffolk Highways to ask what format of plan they would require if local knowledge was sourced to locate existing and historical drainage provisions

e. Solar Lighting project – no update available: Clerk awaiting input from councillors

f. Community Road Safety – awaiting confirmation of team of six to proceed with Suffolk Constabulary

g. Kissing Gate Project – see item 2024/095a

2024/103 Local Housing Needs – no update available

2024/104 Correspondence

a. Parish Council Suggestions Box – this is now installed in the Community Store: a notice advertising the fact has been included in the relaunched Felsham & Gedding Village News

b. to note correspondence & consider action – no other correspondence to be considered

2024/105 Matters to be brought to the attention of the council/future agenda items – Path between Community Store and Church

2024/106 To confirm date of the next Meeting – Tuesday 14th January 2025

The Meeting was closed by Cllr Garrod at 20.45hrs

Signed_____ **Chairman** **Dated**_____