

## **BLYTHBURGH with BULCAMP & HINTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs; Roderick Orr-Ewing, Jude Blois, Claire Lyth.

**In attendance:** Nick Rees (Locum Clerk), Paul Ashton (ESC), Richard Smith (SCC), Philip Stone and one member of the public representing HSNGR.

**203. Apologies:** Paul Lacey, Matthew Saunders

**204. Declarations of Interest for any items on the agenda:** None

**205. Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2024 were accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

**206. Public Speaking:** A representative of the (HSNGR) Halesworth Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway attended the meeting and wish to make the Council aware of matters not necessarily related to the application. He explained that his duties at the site involved a considerable amount of gardening work, clearing vegetation, removing brambles from trees etc. The membership of the group had now reached three hundred and included a young Blythburgh resident.

**207. County and District Reports:** District Cllr Paul Ashton reported on the Government's latest plans to create a unitary authority for Suffolk which would effectively remove all the mid-tier District and Borough councils. These proposals were another attempt to reduce costs, but Cllr Ashton said this was obviously an unsettling time for staff. A detailed paper on the proposals would be published shortly. Following a recent site visit, Cllr Ashton gave an update on some of the major works in progress in and around the Sizewell C site. There were some concerns locally that although the site offered employment and potentially reduced unemployment, the higher rates offered would also attract existing employees from other industries and businesses and some self-employed tradesmen, thereby creating shortages elsewhere.

County Cllr Richard Smith (arrived later at 7.55pm from a meeting at Westleton) reported on some of the same subjects but also gave a different perspective on the proposals for a unitary authority for Suffolk. Cllr Smith felt that there was some merit in the idea as some duplication already existed and for residents it has always been confusing as to which Council was responsible for various services in the County. Cllr Smith also reported on the Sizewell C site visit, he had been amazed at the scale of the project and advised the Council that currently there was still 60% of the heavy plant equipment and vehicles still to arrive. Cllr Richard Smith reported that SCC had delayed the decision regarding the application DC/24/1337/CCC Hinton Incinerator application until the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.

**208. Chair's Report:** The Chair reported that he, Cllr Paul Lacey and Cllr Matthew Saunders had made up a committee of three councillors that interviewed Mr Philip Stone for the Clerk's position on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November. The Chair had invited since Mr Stone to observe the November monthly meeting, and the matter of employment would be discussed *in camera* under the last item. The Chair thanked Nick Rees for standing in since May and for his calm approach and support during this period.

**209. DC/24/2962/FUL Retrospective application (revised):** Reinstatement of the former Southwold Railway Station facilities and trackwork at Blythburgh to create a Heritage Centre for study of the original line and its purpose. The Council reconsidered the revised application but still had several concerns that had not been resolved. The representative for HSNGR answered questions when

These minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings of the meeting held on the 13/05/24

Signed (Chair) \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

appropriate and whilst this was helpful it did not resolve the issues completely. After further debate it was **resolved** that Blythburgh Parish Council still objects to the revised application and will continue to object until there is sufficient reassurance on the following points:

1. Evidence provided that no rail track will, or has been, laid directly over the public sewer, this is to ensure access for maintenance and/or repairs when required and adequate vehicular access is maintained for sewer maintenance vehicles.
2. That the public access for the footpath (which had been established for over 80 years) will be maintained at all times.
3. Confirmation that the planning permissions required for the container has been properly obtained.

Cllr Paul Ashton suggested the Council could lodge a holding objection until these matters were resolved and, in the meantime, he would investigate the permissions for the storage container.

- 210. Registering Footpaths:** To consider the process involved with registering the track (relating to the above application) as a public footpath. The Clerk had provided details of how to register a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO). The Council agreed that the process should be undertaken as soon as possible.
- 211. B1125 Transport Working Group report:** It was noted that the road had been closed and some minor works had been undertaken on the B1387 recently, but it was not clear exactly what and when further improvement works would be completed.
- 212. Budget 2025/26/ Current Financial position/Precept analysis.** To receive the suggested budget for discussion and to consider the changes to the tax base. The Clerk had provided an explanation of the additional revenue generated by the decision by East Suffolk Council to double the Council Tax for second homeowners in the village. The Council considered this year's unique option of receiving the net gain but not raising the precept for all the single homeowners in the village for the year 2024-2025. The additional funds raised (£2,301 for 2024-2025) could then be used appropriately for improvements to the village, village hall and for building reserves. The Council agreed to the budget at £10,558. The individual budget lines were also agreed in principle but would be reviewed again in January. The Clerk advised that the Reserves should be reviewed again at the end of the year and suggested that the Council should consider increasing the Village Hall and Defibrillator reserves.
- 213. CIL report 2023 – 2024.** The CIL report was noted and would be sent to East Suffolk Council.
- 214. Government email addresses:** To consider the costs of adopting the .gov email for the clerk and potentially also for councillors. The Council agreed that the costs were disproportionately high for a small Council without any perceived gain for tax paying residents and agreed to defer the decision.
- 215. Update on the Village Hall.** The Chair reported that the Committee was awaiting the results of an electrical test and would be considering a list of works, including additional lighting and signage.
- 216. Payments:** The following payments were approved: - 1. CAS Website hosting - £60, 2. N Rees Locum services (August – November) - £1,500, 3. Reimbursement to the Chair, R Orwell-Ewing for payment of Michael Wallace for verge cutting services (April – August) - £250.00, 4. Leiston Press for the Blythburgh Booklet - £259.00.
- 217. Correspondence:** None

The last item was held *in camera* as personal information may be disclosed. All members of the public left the building.

These minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings of the meeting held on the 13/05/24

Signed (Chair) \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

**218. Employment:** To appoint a new Clerk and agree the contract terms on a six monthly trial basis and to review the handover arrangements. The recommendations of the three councillors who had interviewed Mr Stone was duly considered. Mr Stone was asked to return to the meeting to clarify a point and then it was **resolved** to offer a 6 month contract at £19.20 per hour based on 15 hours per month, an additional £3.00 per week home working allowance was offered and the payroll would be undertaken by SALC. Mr Stone accepted the offer. The Clerk would arrange a handover meeting with Mr Stone next week.

The meeting was closed at 9.30pm