



## **Elsenham Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting  
held in The Memorial Hall at 7.45pm on 8 January 2024**

### **Members of Elsenham Parish Council (EPC) present:**

Cllr. G Mott (Chairman GM), Cllr. B Donald (Vice-Chair), Cllr. G Bentley (GB),  
Cllr. B Burlton (BB), Cllr. P Davis (PD), Cllr. R Franklin (RF), Cllr. F Lambert (FL),  
Cllr. J Minor (JM), Cllr. A Mowbray (AM), Cllr. S Waite (SW).  
and Mrs. L Johnson (Parish Clerk – LJ).

### **Members of the public present:**

1, plus District Cllr. P Lees (PL)

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr. P Jarvis (PJ).

**Declarations of Interest:** GM, FL, RF, SW and BD declared an interest in number 8.3 on the agenda, they all write articles for the magazine, GM also proofreads the magazine. PD declared an interest in number 8.3 on the agenda, PD is on the Editorial Board. RF declared an interest in agenda item number 14, RF is a Touchpoint volunteer worker.

### **Open to the public**

There were no questions.

### **Closed to the public.**

**23248. Actions from previous minutes, none.**

### **23249. Minutes.**

The Council considered the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023. GM signed the minutes as a true record.

### **23250. District Councillors' report.**

UDC has received a 'telling off' in the press regarding the Local Plan. PL said that the accusations stated were not correct. UDC had called an Extraordinary Cabinet Meeting for Tuesday, 9th January, to discuss this article.

GM asked why you could not view other people's comments on the new Local Plan. PL said that all the comments would be tabulated together and published with an answer.

PL said the Local Plan was on track.

Some District Councils will be asking Town/Parish Councils to take over some of the district's responsibilities due to lack of money. PL said UDC would not be undertaking this, but Town/Parish Councils should include in their precepts, funds

for carrying out projects as UDC will be reducing their grants in the 2024/25 financial year.

The average house in Saffron Walden costs £458,000, the average house in Hatfield Heath is £951,000.

There is a Boundary review of the number of councillors for Essex and because of the population growth there will be an increase in the number of elected members from 75 to 78, in Uttlesford that means an increase from 4 county members to five. The proposal now is that Cllr. Gooding would lose Elsenham and Henham.

BD said she was attending a Scrutiny Committee meeting this week; the Scrutiny Committee is no longer split into two sections.

#### **23251. Budgets for 2024/2025.**

5 Documents Circulated.

- Appendix A EPC Budget and Precept.
- Appendix B EPC Earmarked Reserves.
- Appendix C Budget 2024 -25 Options.
- Appendix D Parish Councils Comparisons.
- EPC Budget and Precept 2024-25 report

BB gave an in depth talk on how the Finance Committee had reached their recommendations for the budgets and the precept. The choices EPC had on setting the final precept figure for 2024/2025 and the outcome it would have on residents in Elsenham.

EPC is in a group of six similar councils by size within Uttlesford, compared to the other 5 parish councils EPC is the poorest parish with low reserves.

EPC precept is only a very small part of the total Council Tax bill that residents receive.

Factors as to why the precept will have to be increased are

- Inflation is currently high.
- There were 6 new budgets items being proposed.
- The budgets for 2024/25 are higher than the predicted income for 2024/25.

#### **The contribution from the Elsenham Youth Football Club (EYFC).**

EYFC have always paid 50% towards the maintenance of the playing field, with EPC paying the other 50%. EYFC is the biggest user of EPC's services. After looking at the EYFC's finances, which exceeded EPCs' plus the fact that only 37.1% of the members are from Elsenham, the other 62.9% coming from Stansted and surrounding villages, the Finance Committee decided to put a proposal to Full Council that EYFC contribute two third towards the maintenance of the playing field with EPC contributing one third.

**a) Proposal:** the contribution from EYFC for the maintenance and using EPC land, is increased to £9,000 per year, subject to reconsideration if the Football Foundation grant is forthcoming.

BB proposed, FL seconded the vote was carried by 9 votes in favour 1 vote against.

**b) Proposal:** EPC includes a budget of £4,500 in the 2024/25 precept, to part-fund a PCSO for Elsenham.

FL proposed, JM seconded the vote was carried by 5 in favour 4 against 1 abstention.

- c) **Proposal:** EPC includes a budget of £3,500 in the 2024/25 precept, to donate to the Elsenham News, so the magazine may continue to be published for another year.  
GB proposed, SW seconded, the vote was carried by 8 votes in favour 2 abstentions.
- d) **Proposal:** EPC includes a budget of £2,000 in the 2024/25 precept for Climate Change & Environment.  
BB proposed, FL seconded, the vote was carried by 7 in favour 1 against and 2 abstentions.
- e) **Proposal:** EPC sets up a new EMR of £2,000 in the 2024/25 precept, for hard surfaces in the playing field.  
JM proposed, SW seconded, the vote was carried unanimously.
- f) **Proposal:** EPC sets up a new EMR of £2,000 in the 2024/25 precept for Tye Green.  
GM proposed, JM seconded, the vote was carried unanimously.
- g) **Proposal** budget 2431 Playground Maintenance is increased from £2,000 to £6,000. To install extra paths in the children's play area.  
GM proposed, SW seconded, the vote was carried by 7 votes in favour 1 vote against and 2 abstentions.

BD raised questions regarding budgets 4011 Hardware and Maintenance, 4015 Computer Software and 4027 Councillors training, all the budgets had been reduced by 50%.

GM said that with small budgets like these, they could go over budget. Councillors would not be stopped from attending training courses and if new software was required, taking budget 4015 over its budget the software would still be purchased.

BD said that £5,000 was a large budget 4060 New Housing Advice. BD would rather these funds were available for other things, including housing advice if needed.

- h) **Proposal:** budget 4060 and 4065 are reduced by £2,000 and a contingency budget is agreed for £4,000.  
GM proposed, BB seconded, the vote was carried unanimously.

- i) **Proposal:** EPC agree all the budgets for 2024/2025.  
BB proposed, RF seconded, the vote was carried unanimously.

BB explained how the precept could be reduced by using £10,000 from the general reserves, this would reduce the monthly payment on a band D household. The Government guidelines advise that at least three months of the precept are held as general reserves.

- j) **Proposal:** EPC reduce the general reserve from £45,000 to £35,000, therefore increasing the income by £10,000 and thus reducing the precept.

FL proposed, SW seconded, the vote was equal 5 in favour, 5 against, GM used his casting vote. The vote was not carried by 5 in favour, 6 against.

**23252. Precept.**

Proposal EPC agree to set a precept of £125,000 for 2024/2025  
BB proposed, GM seconded, the vote was carried unanimously.  
The Chair and Parish Clerk to sign the precept form.

**The time being 10.10pm the Chair changed the order of the agenda.  
Some of the agenda items would have to be postponed until the next Parish Council meeting.**

**23253. Rights of Way and Open Spaces Committee.**

**Proposal:** EPC gives authority to the Parish Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, to spend up to £600 on pumping the Tye Green Pond, if it is considered necessary.  
GM proposed, BB seconded, the vote was carried unanimously.

**23254. Finance proposals.**

**Proposal:** EPC donate £190 to Touchpoint.  
BD proposed, RF seconded the vote was carried 9 in favour 1 against.

**23255. Correspondence.**

**23256.** Rural Engagement Team November Newsletter.

**23257.** PFCC Weekly Newsletter 1st December 2023.

**23258.** Essex - DR – Stakeholders.

**23259.** Stansted Airport Watch Member Letter 1 December 2023.

**23260.** EALC News e-Bulletin Week Commencing 4th November 2023.

**23261.** EALC Police, Fire and Crime e-Bulletin- Week Commencing 4th December 2023.

**23262.** Uttlesford Police Newsletter.

**23263.** Your Essex: your need-to-know this December 2023.

**23264.** CSC update.

**23265.** PFCC Weekly Newsletter 8th December 2023.

**23266.** Local Plan News: One week left to have your say.

**23267.** District News: Have your say on Local Plan, Christmas & New Year bin collection.

**23268.** Community Ownership Fund Round 3.

**23269.** EALC News e-Bulletin- Week Commencing 11th December 2023

**23270.** NALC Events.

**23271.** Member Update 12 December 2023.

**23272.** Violence and Vulnerability Unit Newsletter.

**23273.** EALC Police, Fire and Crime e-Bulletin- Week Commencing 11th December 2023.

**23274.** EALC Announcement- Government grants no tax referendum principles in 2024/25 for Local Councils.

**23275.** Latest Planning Committee Decisions + Local Plan consultation.

**23276.** PFCC Weekly Newsletter 15th December 2023.

**23277.** Our impact in your parish.

**23278.** EALC News e-Bulletin Week Commencing 18th December 2023.

**23279.** Introducing UCAN and its mobile service.

**23280.** EALC Announcement- ECC Minerals Local Plan Review.

**23281.** Rural Engagement Team December Newsletter.

**23282.** PFCC Weekly Newsletter 22nd December 2023.

**23283.** Uttlesford Citizens Advice AGM - Change of Venue.

**Public asked to leave the meeting.**

**In accordance with section 1 of the Public Bodies (admissions to meeting) Act 1960, the public and press will be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

**23284. The annual hedge cutting. - Quotes Circulated.**

**Proposal:** EPC accept the quote from Amenity Services to carry out the annual hedge cutting.

GM proposed, JM seconded, the vote was carried unanimously.

Meeting closed at 10.25pm

The date of the next Parish Council meeting is on 5 February 2024.