

# RICKINGHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held Thursday, 3 March 2022  
Rickinghall Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr Gillian Crossley-Holland (Vice-Chair) Cllr Andrew Gordon  
Cllr Brian Rhodes Cllr Geoff Short (Chair)  
Cllr Sally Smith

Parish Clerk – Leeann Jackson-Eve  
District/County Cllr Jessica Fleming  
11 members of the public

7.30pm The Chair welcomed those present and opened the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence:** None. The PC accepted the resignation of Cllr Stephen Pattenden and thanked him for all his hard work on behalf of the community.
2. **Casual Vacancies:** There were no applications for seats on the Council.
3. **To confirm the minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2022:** The minutes, circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed as a true record.
4. **Magazine Input:** Cllr Rhodes.
5. **Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:** None.
6. **Public Forum:**

Cllr Jessica Fleming reported that Suffolk County Council's 2022-23 Budget had been passed including a 1.99% increase in council tax. Suffolk was planning a Festival of Suffolk in connection with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This included a Suffolk-wide Jubilee Lunch on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June. It was also planned to plant 775,000 new trees (one for each resident) as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project. The 2,792-acre Sunnica Solar Farm project in West Suffolk/Cambridgeshire had been found to be unacceptable to SCC. It was noted that there were 850 children in care and SCC had initiated a campaign to recruit foster carers and adoptive parents. At the District Council level, it was reported that Mid Suffolk would not be raising Council Tax this year. There was a reported outbreak of Bird Flu at the Gressingham site in Redgrave and owners of birds were reminded to report immediately any suspicions of disease to Animal & Plant Health Agency at 0300 020 0301.

Members of the public relayed their concerns about the reconsultation on the photovoltaic solar array, battery storage and ancillary infrastructure on land to the south of Suggenhall Farm, Church Lane. A councillor spoke of the need for more non-fossil fuel energy sources and this aim was recognised by everyone present.

However, it was felt strongly that the new submission still did not adequately address the harmful effect on nearby residential and business properties, on wildlife and nature and on the landscape, including two public rights of way which overlook the site, as well as the loss of arable land. The following issues were highlighted:

- The re-siting of the buildings would be more prominently visible from neighbouring properties and the Grade I Listed church.
- The native hedge screening would not mature to 3m for up to 10 years and there was no indication of how the impact on surrounding properties, and other users of the countryside, would be mitigated during the growth period.
- The loss of arable land, particular during a time when supplies of produce were uncertain due to worldwide events, was insupportable. It was felt strongly that the UK should focus on becoming more self-sustaining.

## 7. **Planning:**

### 7.1 **Planning Applications:**

- 7.1.1 **Land To The South Of Suggenhall Farm Church Lane.** Ref. DC/21/06825. Full Planning Application - Development of a photovoltaic solar array, battery storage and ancillary infrastructure. Re-consultation. The PC agreed that the issues raised in the Public Forum needed to be addressed more adequately within the application and a compelling argument needed to be made to justify the loss of arable land and

the loss of amenity to residents and other users of the countryside. Furthermore, in its previous comments the PC had highlighted Policies B&R20 and B&R21 in the Botesdale & Rickingham Neighbourhood Plan as being relevant to the application. Neither had been referenced in the application. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan continues to be ignored by the applicant in the resubmitted documents and so the PC still considered the submission to be insufficient in this respect. The PC therefore RESOLVED, with 4 in favour and 1 against, to object to the application for insufficient evidence regarding the concerns outlined above and to the proposal as remaining more harmful than beneficial to the local community. In addition, in support of community feeling, it called on MSDC, SCC and central Government to initiate a more comprehensive approach to the provision of alternative energy sources in Suffolk and the UK. It had been suggested that a proactive approach requiring solar panels on new builds and initiating a programme of installing solar panels on industrial buildings and brownfield sites would greatly reduce the need for rural/arable sites such as this. It was felt strongly by the local community that not enough thought had been given to the impact solar farms had on the countryside, on the self-sustainability of the UK with regard to food production and on rural amenity characteristics which were a valuable resource for well-being. It had also been suggested that Suffolk had already contributed disproportionately to alternative energy sources and the PC agreed that Suffolk local authorities should lead the way in providing a masterplan for the county rather than the current piecemeal approach to considering sites.

7.1.2 **Hall House Cottage, The Street.** Ref. DC/22/756. Application for Listed Building Consent. Replacement of 5no windows and 3no doors as per Design & Access Statement. 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 **Redholme, The Street.** Ref. DC/22/00741. Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area- Fell 1no Sycamore due to damage to fence and paving slabs. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.

7.2.2 **The Willows, Hinderclay Road.** Ref. DC/22/00941. Notification of Works to a tree in a Conservation Area - Reduce back (Pollard) to 8ft 1No Chestnut Tree. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.

7.2.3 **The Old Four Horseshoes, The Street.** Ref. DC/22/01067. Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area: Pollard 1no Multi-Stem Poplar (T1) at 5-6m, pollard 3no Poplar (T2, T3 and T4) to 6m, and pollard 1no Corkscrew Willow (T5) to 3m. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.

7.3 **Notification of Planning Decisions by Mid Suffolk DC:** None.

8. **Progress Reports:**

8.1 **Chairman:** None.

8.2 **Clerk:** None.

9. **Correspondence:**

9.1 **Parochial Church Council:** It was noted that Covid had delayed the process of closing St Mary's, Rickingham Superior churchyard for new burials but that was now going ahead as planned.

9.2 **Green Ixworth:** The action group was seeking to form a strategic partnership of parish councils along the A143, given the impact that new development in the area would have on A143 traffic. The PC agreed to express an interest.

9.3 **Resident:** The PC considered the request for support for a small development on Bury Road. However, it was noted that the land in question was outside of the settlement boundary in the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan and was therefore unsuitable for development.

9.4 **Resident:** The PC considered an anonymous complaint about a caravan blocking the pavement. It was noted that the PC's policy was to not respond in any way to anonymous correspondence. An item would be put in the parish magazine highlighting the policy and reiterating the PC's commitment to keeping correspondents' details confidential.

9.5 **Reclaim the Rain:** The PC noted the update on the joint Norfolk/Suffolk County Council project which sought to gather local knowledge and first-hand experiences

with surface water flooding, as well as information on any water users who might have a personal interest in, or seek to make use of, this water as a resource.

10. **General Items:**

10.4 **Queen's Jubilee:** The proof for the commemorative coins had been approved by the Clerk and these were on order.

10.5 **Skate Park:** This was on course to be installed in March.

11. **Finance:**

11.1 **Account Balance:** £69,498.97

**Income:** £ 463.32 3<sup>rd</sup> qtr MSDC Street Cleaning Grant

11.2 **Accounts for Payment:**

Admin Payments £ 941.25 Not itemised due to GDPR

Street Sweeping etc. £ 180.68 St Clean/VAS Mar 22

Mortimer Contracts £ 180.00 Install Dog Bins

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

12. **Highways Issues:** None.

13. **Welcome Pack:** None.

14. **Councillors' Reports:** None.

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

16. **Next Meeting:** 7 April 2022 – It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting would take place at 7:15pm before the regular meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:55pm.