

# Homersfield Parish Council

## PARISH COUNCIL MEETING *Homersfield Black Swan* Tuesday 4th July 2023 at 6.00pm

### Present

Chair Lucy Hammond and Councillors Debbie Bird, Ian Duffy and Angela Stokes

**Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO):** Sally Chapman

**Also Present:** County Councillor Judy Cloke, District Councillors Toby Hammond and Anthony Speca

### A. To Receive Reports from the County & District Councillors

County Councillor Judy Cloke and District Councillors Toby Hammond and Anthony Speca spoke of their recent work and answered questions. Their full reports are on HPCs website:

<http://homersfield.onesuffolk.net>

Councillors asked the District Councillors why some of the Barnfield Cottages were empty and would they be re-let. District Councillor Hammond said he would investigate. **Action: TH**

### B. Public Forum – for Members of the Public

None

## MINUTES

### 1. To Approve Apologies for Absence

Councillor Westgate's Apologies were Approved and Councillors noted the Chair had collected and witnessed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

### 2. To Record Declarations of Interests and to Consider Requests for Dispensation

5.e) Cllr Hammond declared a non-pecuniary interest – husband repairing the bus shelter  
5.e) Cllr Duffy declared a non-pecuniary interest – repairing the bus shelter

### 3. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023

The Minutes from the Meeting held on the 16th May 2023 were confirmed unanimously as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

### 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes above and not on the Agenda

The Chair thanked Councillor Stokes for Chairing Homersfield Parish Council and all her support and commitment to the village.

### 5. Finance

#### a) To Consider the Internal Auditor's 2022/23 Recommendations

The RFO presented an action list (*attached*) listing the Internal Auditor's recommendations from the 2022/23 Internal Audit.

Councillors approved the RFOs actions which will be put in place before the next internal audit. **Action: Clerk**

#### b) Internal Auditor for 2023/24 – update

The RFO advised SALC will take bookings for the 2023/24 Internal Audit from January 2024 and will book HPCs as agreed at the May 2023 meeting. **Action: Clerk**

#### c) To Receive the Financial & Budget Reports and Approve the Income & Expenditure

The Chair signed the latest bank statement and the RFO read out the reports.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Councillors resolved unanimously to Approve the following Receipts and Expenditure:

DATE	REFERENCE	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	EXPENDITURE
16/05/2023	100925	SALC - Internal Audit		202.80
31/05/2023	S/O	ICO - Data Protection		35.00
30/05/2023	S/O	Clerk's Salary - May		200.00
30/06/2023	S/O	Clerk's Salary - June		200.00
04/07/2023	100926	SALC - Training LH		36.00
04/07/2023	100927	McCarthy Tree Services		600.00
04/07/2023	100928	Clerk's Expenses June-July		35.30
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ 1,309.10</b>
		<b>Reserves</b>		
		General Reserves		£ 6,145.06
		Restricted Reserves		£ 2,852.80
		<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 8,997.86</b>

**d) To Consider a Poppy Wreath for Remembrance Day**

Councillors resolved unanimously to purchase a Medium Poppy Wreath (Type B).

Action: Clerk

**e) Bus Shelter Repairs – update**

CLlr Duffy reported the repairs are going well and the roof should be complete in the next month.

**6. Homersfield's Playing Field - update**

CLlr Bird (*Chair of Homersfield's Playing Field Charity*) gave an update and informed:

- The long grass had been cut and the rest will be cut soon.
- The play equipment will have an inspection by David Bracey Play Safety Inspections.
- The playing field will remain closed until it can be transferred to the Parish Council.

CLlr Duffy advised he is working with different parties to get the Playing Field issues resolved.

**7. Planning Applications and Decisions**

CLlrs noted the following:

**Applications**

**a) Reference: DC/22/3007/LBC**

Listed Building Consent - The erection of two ground floor extensions to a listed building Wortwell Mill Low Road Homersfield Harleston Suffolk IP20 OHJ  
Validated: Thu 28 Jul 2022 | Status: Awaiting decision

*At HPCs 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022 meeting Councillors resolved NO COMMENT.*

**b) Reference: DC/22/2522/FUL**

Proposal: Construction of two ground floor extensions  
Wortwell Mill, Low Road, Homersfield, Harleston, Suffolk, IP20 OHJ  
Validated: Thu 28 Jul 2022 | Status: Awaiting decision

*At HPCs 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022 meeting Councillors agreed NEUTRAL and added comments to the planning application.*

**Decisions**

**c) Reference: DC/23/0912/FUL**

Proposal Removal of an existing outbuilding on site and the erection of 1 replacement

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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building to be used as a holiday let.

Wortwell Mill House Low Road Homersfield Harleston Suffolk IP20 0HJ

Status: Refused

## 8. Homersfield Phonebox

Parishioners are encouraged to host their own display of anything of interest in the phonebox and this will be advertised in the Parish Magazine. Cllr Hammond is kindly going to give the phonebox a clean.

## 9. Homersfield Wood

### a) Wood

- **Tree Surgery** - May 2023 – *update*

The tree surgery has been completed and the Chair has inspected the work and found it satisfactory.

- **Memorial Bench** – *update*

As previously agreed, a memorial bench will be donated and placed in the woods. Cllrs have received and approved instructions on how it will be anchored to the ground.

Once in place it will be risk assessed before use and added to HPCs asset list.

### b) Wood Working Parties – *update*

On 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023 six parishioners formed a wood working party and cleared weeds from the new trees. A few new trees had died and replacements will be planted in the autumn.

The tree warden is going to notify the Parish Council of the number and variety of trees that are dead and should be cut down or branches removed as they are near the pathways.

Action: Chair

### c) Permissive Path Signs

Councillors resolved unanimously to order:

a) Three 10 x 5cm public right of way signs

b) Three circular walks discs

Action: Clerk

### d) New Signs

Councillors agreed unanimously to remove the HPC black dog waste signs and purchase new signs for the entrances.

Action: Chair & Clerk

## 10. Village Maintenance

### a) Ride on Lawnmower – *update*

No buyer has been found and the Clerk will offer it to another Parish Council who has had theirs stolen.

### b) Nature Reserve White Posts – *update*

SCC has agreed to replace the missing post on the verge on St. Cross Road.

## 11. Correspondence

### a) Annual Report For Homersfield Parish Land Trust, William Adair (Homersfield) & Homersfield Poor Land Charities

Cllrs received and noted the above reports (*attached*).

## 12. AOB (For discussion only – the Council cannot make decisions on these items unless stated on the agenda)

### a) East Suffolk Council Daffodil Offer Autumn 2023 – *update*

The Clerk informed they were not successful in their bid for ESCs Daffodil Offer.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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CC Cloke kindly offered to pay for a sack of 500 Daffodils for the village and Cllrs thanked her and the Clerk will advise cost. **Action: Clerk**

**b) Bus Links**

Cllr Bird informed of the buses not linking to each other and agreed to note the difficulties, bus numbers and times and inform HPC, so a letter can be drafted.

**Action: DB**

**c) Homersfield Village Name Sign**

Cllr Stokes reported the sign had not been replaced and CC Cloke said she would chase. Clerk to send details.

**Action: Clerk**

**d) Village Plaques**

Cllr Stokes also reported problems with a couple of plaques in the village. She will photograph in order that the issues can be discussed at the next meeting. **Action: AS**

**13. To Receive items for the next Agenda**

**a) Litterpick Date**

**b) Local Metal Detector's Report**

**14. To Confirm the Future Meeting Dates:**

- Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 6.00pm
- Monday 6th November 2023 at 6.00pm

*The meeting ended at 7.40pm*

**5.a) SALC's Internal Audit Report for Homersfield Parish Council 2023**

A review of the Internal Auditor's comments and recommendations made from the 2022-23 report.

**Section 2 – Financial Regulation and Standing Orders**

**Have Standing Orders been adopted, up to date and reviewed annually?**

Yes. At the meeting of 7 March 2023 the Council carried out an annual review of its Standing Orders. Use of the Model Standing Orders (produced by NALC in 2018)

**Comment:** At the next review Council may wish to increase the procurement values (item 18 Financial Controls & Procurement) updated on 1 January 2022

**Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) Comment:**

The procurement values will be updated before the next policy review in March 2024 to the latest increase.

**Are Financial Regulations up to date and reviewed annually?**

Yes. At the meeting of 7 March 2023 the Council carried out an annual review of its Financial Regulations. Use of the Model Financial Regulations (produced by NALC in 2019)

**Comment:** At the next review Council may wish to review the Procurement amendments (SI 2022/1390) of the Public Contracts (Amendment) Regulations 2022 which came into force on 21 December 2022 and make the changes to the contract value limits from £25,000 to £30,000.

**RFO Comment:**

The procurement values will be updated before the next policy review in March 2024 to the latest increase.

**Has the Council properly tailored the Financial Regulations?**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Yes. Financial Regulations have been tailored to the Council.

**Comment:** Council may wish to remove the [square] brackets from the Financial Regulations for clarity.

**RFO Comment:**

These can easily be removed.

## Section 4 – Risk Management

### **Does the Council have appropriate and adequate insurance cover in place for employment, public liability and fidelity guarantee and has been reviewed on an annual basis?**

The Council's insurance cover was renewed at their meeting on 6 September 2022 however no minute reference that this was reviewed and considered appropriate. SALC Internal Audit Report template (v.3)

Last reviewed: 30th January 2023 7`

**Comment:** Whilst risks have been identified and steps taken to manage those risks, there should be a record that the RFO has undertaken a review as this will help manage the potential consequence of a risk occurring.

**RFO Comment:**

The RFO does review the insurance on renewal and this information can easily be added to the minutes.

## Section 5 – Budgetary Controls

### **Reserves held – general and earmarked**

Yes. The Council's final accounts show general reserves in the sum of £2,350.58 and earmarked reserves in the sum of £2,852.80 with overall reserves standing at £5,203.38 The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained between 3 and 12 months net revenue expenditure. It is noted Council's general reserves are considered to be within this level.

**Comment:** Council should note guidance as issued under the Practitioners Guide which states that an authority needs to have regards to the need to put in place a General Reserves Policy and reviewed the level and purpose of Earmarked Reserves

**RFO Comment:**

The RFO shall forward a General Reserves Policy to Cllrs to consider for adoption.

## Section 10 – Bank Reconciliation

### **Is bank reconciliation regularly completed and reconciled with the cash book and cover every account?**

Yes. There is evidence of good financial practice with a financial & budget report presented to Councillors at each meeting the internal auditor has presumed the monthly cash book which includes bank reconciliation is included within the financial report. In accordance with proper practices, the bank reconciliation is a key tool for management as it assists with the regular monitoring of cash flows and therefore aids decision-making.

**Comment:** Council may wish to include the quarterly bank reconciliation within the body of the minutes or append to the minutes for transparency.

**RFO Comment:**

The bank reconciliations (cash book and budget reports) are completed bi-monthly to coincide with the meetings. It would be extra work (and confusing) to complete these quarterly as well. The bimonthly reports can be attached to the minutes if Cllrs agree.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Is there regular reporting of bank balances at Council meetings?

Yes. Financial reports are submitted to the Council at each meeting and the internal auditor has presumed the monthly cash book which includes bank balances of each account is included.

**Comment:** Council may wish to include bank balances within the body of the minutes or append to the minutes for transparency.

### RFO Comment:

This bank balances were included in the body of the May 2023 minutes and will continue.

## Section 14 – Additional Information

### Is the Council compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation requirements?

Partly Met The Council has taken steps to ensure compliancy however such documentation is limited – evidenced as follows: Data Protection Regulations Policy Freedom of Information Policy

**Recommend:** Council puts in place the following:

- Procedures for dealing with Subject Access requests
- Procedures for dealing with data breaches
- Data retention policy including disposal

### RFO Comment:

The RFO shall forward the above Policies to Cllrs to consider for adoption.

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## 11.a) Annual Report For Homersfield Parish Land Trust, William Adair (Homersfield) & Homersfield Poor Land Charities

Report for the 3 village charities.

A decision was made by all trustees involved to combine all three together. Therefore the assets of The Parish Land Trust and William Adair charities will be transferred to The Homersfield Pools Land and the first two closed. The thinking behind this decision is that as all three operate in the same way with the same aims and objectives it makes sense to join them together thereby giving the one access to greater assets and make administration simpler.

So far CCLA have completed the process and transferred the assets although Barclays are still to acknowledge our request to do so which was sent in February.

There was just one item of expenditure from the Pools' Land charity of £89. This was to help cover the cost of the village tea party to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen.

Financial reports below.

**Tom Holdridge**  
Trustee

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR HOMERSFIELD PARISH LAND TRUST, WILLIAM ADAIR (HOMERSFIELD) AND HOMERSFIELD POOLS LAND CHARITIES**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## PARISH LAND TRUST

Report period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

### INCOME

CCLA investment holding @ 31 December 2022 £4,403.41

CCLA dividends 31 May 2022 £32.76

31 August 2022 £32.76

30 November 2022 £33.22

28 February 2023 £33.27

Total £132.01

Barclays' balance @ 28 February 2023 £2,206.27

### EXPENDITURE

None

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## WILLIAM ADAIR (HOMERSFIELD)

Report period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

### INCOME

CCLA investment holding @ 31 December 2022 £2,331.48

CCLA dividends 31 May 2022 £17.34

31 August 2022 £17.34

30 November 2022 £17.59

28 February 2023 £17.61

Total £69.88

Barclays' balance @ 28 February 2023 £1,112.10

### EXPENDITURE

None

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## HOMERSFIELD POORS' LAND

Report period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

### INCOME

CCLA investment holding @ 31 December 2022 £3,173.16

CCLA dividends 31 May 2022 £23.60

31 August 2022 £23.60

30 November 2022 £23.94

28 February 2023 £23.97

Total £95.11

Barclays' balance @ 28 February 2023 £1,654.65

### EXPENDITURE

5 July 2022 £89.00

**Tom Holdridge**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Homersfield Parish Council

Trustee

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_