

TOSTOCK ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9 April 2024 at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors: Cllr Jane Storey (Chair), Cllr Michael Baulby, Cllr David Blundell, Cllr Paul Callow, Cllr Roger Cross and Cllr Julian Kearsley;
County Councillor: Cllr Andy Mellen;
18 residents; and
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed (who took the minutes)

24.01 Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Jane Storey, Chair of the Parish Council, welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted that both she and Cllr Andy Mellen would offer reports following which questions could be addressed to either. Representatives from village bodies and organisations would then be invited to deliver reports on their activities

24.02 Apologies for Absence

Received from Parish Councillor Cllr Sarah Cobbold, District Councillor Cllr Austin Davies and John Parnum.

24.03 Minutes of the Last Annual Parish Meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, held on 10 April 2019, be approved as a true record and duly signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

24.04 County and District Councillors' Annual Reports

04.1 County Councillor: Cllr Mellen referred to his formal report (held with the minutes and published on the village website). In speaking, he noted the financial constraints applying to the County Council and the focus required to be placed on social care and services directed at children and young people. As a consequence of that focus, he reported that the ability of Suffolk Highways to deal with matters such as potholes and safety issues was somewhat limited. On being asked if the new contractor employed by the County Council had a strategy to tackle highways problems, he stressed that they did but that there was insufficient evidence to date that it was working. As such, he maintained that he would continue to press for action in Tostock and the other villages he represented.

04.2 District Councillors: Neither Cllr Bradbury nor Cllr Davies was in attendance and no written annual report had been received.

24.05 Parish Council Annual Report

Cllr Storey presented a comprehensive report on the activities of the Parish Council (held with the minutes and published on the village website), the composition of which was entirely new following the election in May of 2023. She paid particular attention to the poor financial position inherited by councillors which evidenced deficits and under provision in various areas with serious action needed to bring effective control back to the budget. The situation had also led to difficulties with audits and the implementation of a Budget Working

TOSTOCK ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Party to review and take action on all aspects of expenditure, not least regarding "The Tostock Chronicle".

She went on to highlight issues with speeding and highways matters which, inevitably, had had major impacts upon residents. The significant increase in traffic volume, as a product of extended work to the A14, had had a detrimental effect on village and associated roads but the Parish Council continued to work with the local contacts from Suffolk Highways, itself under significant pressure, to secure remedial action.

Cllr Storey offered her thanks to fellow councillors for their work and constructive and positive participation in Council meetings, to the relatively new Parish Clerk and paid a warm and heartfelt tribute to Cllr Vanessa Malcom who had very sadly passed away in January of this year.

24.06 Current Issues

Cllr Storey added to her report in relation to five key areas:

- ◆ action being taken to reduce the cost of "The Tostock Chronicle" whilst providing for its long-term future;
- ◆ issues concerning the availability of water to allotment-holders which were to be addressed by the Poors Estate Committee;
- ◆ the need for a new (volunteer) Village Recorder to replace Mr Jim Langlois;
- ◆ work being undertaken to repair and replace the village sign which had been damaged in high winds; and
- ◆ the possibility of establishing a 'speedwatch group' for which volunteers were needed.

24.07 Village Organisations

The meeting was able to hear brief reports from a broad spectrum of bodies and organisations which, as the Chair reflected, evidenced the wealth and variety of opportunities and activities which existed in the village. The following were covered although, in one or two cases, the person who spoke was, if not an official representative, sufficiently knowledgeable to offer some details:

- ◆ Book Club
- ◆ Carpet Bowls
- ◆ Cribbage Club
- ◆ Crochet Club
- ◆ Poors Estate
- ◆ St Andrew's Church
- ◆ Tennis Club
- ◆ Tostock Dangerous Men's Group
- ◆ Tostock Past & Present Society
- ◆ Tree Officers
- ◆ Village Hall
- ◆ Village Recorder
- ◆ Village website

It was noted that it would be really helpful if more information about the above could be included on the village website, as well as appearing in "The Tostock

TOSTOCK ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Chronicle", and all present were encouraged to contact Tom Whitman (who was now managing the site) with contact details and news of events.

24.08 Any Other Matters

It was noted that the 'Village Get Together', as reported in April/May issue of "The Tostock Chronicle", had been a great success, with thanks expressed to the organisers and all who had helped. Thanks were also recorded to those who made time to provide and look after the flowers at the entrance gates to the village.

24.09 Thanks

Cllr Storey wrapped up the meeting by thanking everyone who had attended and contributed, making it such an informative and positive event.

24.10 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Annual Parish Meeting, assuming it was held on the equivalent day next year, would be held on Tuesday 8 April 2025. However, confirmation would be provided and advertised nearer the time.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35pm.