



## Minutes of the full Parish Council Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.30pm at Mistley Village Hall

### Councillors Present:

- Councillor J Chaplin
- Councillor S Coiley (From end of Minute Number 9 f)
- Councillor P Cunningham
- Councillor R Frost (Vice Chairman of the Council)
- Councillor I Leveridge
- Councillor P Nutter
- Councillor J Robinson

### In Attendance:

- Mrs S Clements – Clerk
- Five Members of the Public

*Prior to the Meeting, the Council held a minute silence in memory of the Late Frances Fairhall who served as a Parish Councillor for around 15 years prior to 2019.*

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – The Vice Chairman of the Council – Councillor Frost welcomed everyone to the Meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burton (unwell), Cambridge (family), Howell - Chairman (work), and Kent (family). These were accepted by the Council.
2. **Code of Conduct & Polices and Procedures** – The Council reflected and noted the following:
  - [MEMBERS-CODE-OF-CONDUCT.pdf \(mistleyparishcouncil.co.uk\)](#)
  - [Civility-and-Respect-Dignity-at-Work-Policy-Mistley-PC.pdf \(mistleyparishcouncil.co.uk\)](#)
  - [Complaints-Policy-Mistley-Parish-Council-1.pdf \(mistleyparishcouncil.co.uk\)](#)
  - [MPC-Community-Engagement-Strategy.pdf \(mistleyparishcouncil.co.uk\)](#)
  - [Press-and-Media-Policy.pdf \(mistleyparishcouncil.co.uk\)](#)
  - [Email-Text-and-WhatsApp-Policy.pdf \(mistleyparishcouncil.co.uk\)](#)
3. **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations** – The following declarations of interest were made. (There were no dispensations).

Name of Councillor	Details of Interest	Minute Number
Councillors Frost and Leveridge	Personal Interests – Members of the Rugby Club.	Minute Number 17 – Parish Council Assets.
Councillors Leveridge and Nutter.	Personal Interests – Volunteers with the Community Bus.	Minute Number 9 g) – Financial – Manningtree and District Community Bus.
Councillors Frost, Leveridge, and Nutter.	Personal Interests – Trustees of The Welcome Home Trust.	Minute Numbers 9 k) and 17 – Parish Council Assets.
Councillors Chaplin, Coiley, and Cunningham.	Personal Interests – Trustees of Mistley Village Hall Management Committee.	Minute No 8 c) Mistley Village Hall Management Committee.
Councillor Robinson	Personal Interest – Spouse has emailed the request.	Minute No 10 c) Correspondence

4. **Public Voice** – One Member of the Public spoke about an email received from a Councillor relating to an agenda item and other concerns about an email exchange, press and media content, where she is making a complaint to the Council. Papers were tabled by the resident.
5. **County and District Councillors Reports** – The District Councillors written report and the County Councillor’s written report were received and noted. (Copies on website). Councillor Frost reported in relation to the County Councillor Report and advised that there will be more funding for mental health and that this will include provision for primary schools. She advised that with reference to the District Councillor report that there will be improved changes to recycling – more details to follow.
6. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023** – These Minutes were received, considered, and approved following the vote. (Proposed by Councillor Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Frost). (Copy in Minute Book and on website).
7. **Update/Matters Arising from Previous Minutes held on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023** – There were no matters to note.
8. **Councillors Reports on Working Party Meetings/Other Meetings/Site Meetings–**
  - a) **Allotment Working Group** – (Councillors Burton, Chaplin, Coiley, Leveridge, and Kent) – The Council received and noted the update/report.
    - **Railway Allotments** – Plot No. 6 - Ash Trees – The Council considered the request for tree work and applying for a TCA (Tree Conservation Area) planning application to the local planning authority. The Council noted that the trees may be suffering from Ash die-back. The tree which fell in the recent storm was noted. The said tree is part of the group of trees between the Anchor PH and plot no. 6. The suspected Ash die- back has rotten wood at the root ball. The group of trees in question have grown extremely large and tall and are overshadowing plot no. 6 at the allotment site. The Council agreed to make contact with the local planning authority’s Tree and Landscape Officer to ask for advice and guidance.
    - **Railway Allotments Vegetation Clearance Works** – The Council received and considered the quotation of £425 plus VAT for the clearance works. Following the vote, the Council agreed that the working group will arrange a site meeting with our County Councillor and to defer this until the next meeting, pending the outcome of the site visit.
  - b) **Grounds & Tree Maintenance Working Group** – (Led by Councillor Nutter with other Councillors/Residents/Other Volunteers and the Council’s Warden).
    - **Tree Management Policies** – Following the vote, it was agreed to adopt these. (Proposed by Councillor Nutter and seconded by Councillor Robinson).
    - **Orchard Project with Essex County Council** – The Council noted that quotations will be sought in due course after a site meeting with Mistley Rugby Club. Planting is proposed for January 2024. An update will be provided at the next Meeting.
    - **Shrubland Road Trees Near to Secret Bunker** – Overhanging Trees – The Council received and considered the request for tree work and making a TCA (Tree Conservation Area) planning application to the local planning authority. Councillor Nutter the Council’s Volunteer Tree Warden reported his observations on this matter following a site visit. Following the vote, it was agreed to make contact with the local planning authority’s Tree and Landscape Officer to seek further guidance. (Proposed by Councillor Nutter and seconded by Councillor Robinson).
  - c) **Mistley Village Hall Management Committee** – (Parish Councillors Reps - Chaplin and Coiley).
    - **CCTV Cameras x 3 & Pole** – Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Nutter), it was agreed to accept these assets as a transfer from Mistley Village Hall Management Committee. The Council’s Assets Register and insurance policy will be updated. A CCTV policy will follow for consideration.
    - **Future Community Car Park** – (Side of Village Hall & Rugby Clubhouse) – The Council agreed to set up a meeting with representatives from the Parish Council, Mistley Village Hall Management Committee and Mistley Rugby Club. It was agreed that Councillor Nutter will represent the Parish Council.
  - d) **Signage Working Group** – (Councillors Burton, Chaplin, and Howell) – There were no new updates.
  - e) **Other Meetings/Site Meetings** – There were no additional meetings to report on.
9. **Financial Matters** – (The Council reclaims VAT). (The Council has the General Power of Competence under the Localism Act 2011 ss 1 to 8).

- a) Schedule of Accounts for Payment – The schedule was received, considered, and agreed following the vote, for payments since the last Meeting in the sum of £28,267.34 Plus VAT (£28,348.22). (Proposed by Councillor Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Frost). (Copy in Minute Book and on website).
- b) Bank Reconciliations – November 2023 – These were received, considered, and agreed following the vote. (Proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Cunningham).
- c) Barclays Bank Account Ending 174 – Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Nutter and seconded by Councillor Cunningham), the Council agreed to close this account (£231.06 balance and no activity) and transfer the balance to the Barclays account ending in 220.
- d) Finance Committee Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Cunningham), the Council agreed to the Committee's recommendations, including the 5% increase from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 for cemetery fees, and an additional £5 per annum for allotment tenancy fees (Brunswick and Railway sites) from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, (apart from the Middlefield Road and River Reach Allotments).
- e) BUDGET 2024 2025 AND PRECEPT – The Council received, considered, and RESOLVED following the vote, the Precept and Budget for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 in the sum of £102,355. (Proposed by Councillor Nutter and seconded by Councillor Robinson).
- f) DBS (Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service) – Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Cunningham), the Council agreed to commission CAS (Community Action Suffolk/Essex) to process enhanced DBS checks and subsequent certification for new Councillors Cambridge, Leveridge, and Robinson.

*Councillor Coiley arrived at this point in the Meeting.*

- g) Manningtree & District Community Bus – The Council noted that there is a remaining £10 in the budget for this financial year. The request for a grant/donation of £500 was received and considered. It was agreed following the vote to offer a £500 grant in April 2024. (Proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Cunningham). (Councillors Leveridge and Nutter abstained given their respective personal interests).
- h) Age Well East – The Council received and considered the request for a grant/donation. Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Chaplin and seconded by Councillor Cunningham), the Council agreed to offer £100 to be paid in April 2024.
- i) Councillor Training/Team Building Session – The Council considered this matter and a discussion ensued. It was however, agreed to defer this to the next Meeting.
- j) Cemetery Hedge Clearance – The Council noted following the last Meeting, that the work is to trim back all the Yew shrubs in the Cemetery grounds and cut back all vegetation that encroaches or overhangs the footways of the burial plots. Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Coiley), this was agreed. (£465 plus VAT).
- k) New Benches – (The Paddock, Furze Hill, Welcome Home) – The Council received and considered the details from a local contractor. Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Coiley), it was agreed to purchase the 2 x picnic tables and 2 x benches at a total cost of £450.
- l) Mistley Village Sign – The Council received and considered the different specifications and quotations from one company. (Four quotations were sought). The Council agreed to defer this matter until the next Meeting.
- m) Parish Councillors Generic Emails – The Council considered the costs of assisting with Councillors electronic devices at £30 per hour. Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Nutter), the IT expenses incurred by Councillor Chaplin for support with her Parish Councillor generic email were agreed.
- n) Website – The Council received and considered quotations and comparisons for its website. (Budgeted for last year). It was agreed following the vote for Councillors to research other Parish Council websites and to defer this for a decision at the next Meeting.
- o) Urgent Finance Matters – There were no matters.

#### 10. Correspondence –

- a) Boundary Fences with the Secret Bunker – This matter will be deferred until the next Meeting.
- b) Podcast – Local Community – The Council noted the opportunity to share a podcast facility via Lawford Parish Council. Lawford was thanked for the kind offer.
- c) Christmas 2024 – The Council received and considered the request received from a local resident. They noted that it may be necessary to purchase of a large tree and lights – if local business sponsorship is not forthcoming. It may also be necessary to hire a cherry picker – near to the public

highway, have access to an electricity supply, arrange for professional electrical light testing, to arrange for decorating the tree, arrange for publicising the event, liaison with the local church and school, insurance/public liability, parking control, risk assessments etc. Following the vote, the Council agreed to the request for a Village Christmas Tree. (Proposed by Councillor Coiley and seconded by Councillor Nutter). It was also agreed to set up working party comprising Councillors Chaplin, Coiley, Nutter, and Robinson with a local resident – Mrs S Robinson. Planning for this event will commence in June 2024. An agenda item will be added to the Annual Parish Council Meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

d) Other Correspondence – The following matters were received:

- Cemetery – The correspondence was received was considered. The Council noted that the Clerk has been in touch with the correspondent, the Church, the Cemetery Manager, and the Council's grounds maintenance contractor. It was noted that Gwinnell's did advise the correspondent in 2015 that he should contact his stone mason and his own funeral director, as the grave should have been levelled when the stone was fitted around 2015. Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Cunningham), it was agreed to ask the correspondent to contact his stone mason/funeral director, and if required the Council could provide contact details of its grounds maintenance contractor should any private work be required.
- Grass Verges at Lawford Green – The correspondence and maps received from Rose Builders were received and considered. The Clerk advised that the Council has not budgeted for taking over additional grass verges and maintaining these. Following the vote, (proposed by Councillor Nutter and seconded by Councillor Frost), the Council agreed not to take up this offer.

11. Mistley Norman Primary School – The Council noted that there are no new updates. The Christmas Party was noted.
12. Tendring District Association of Local Councils – The Council noted that Councillor Cunningham has stepped down as the Council's Representative. It was agreed to defer this matter until the next Meeting.
13. Next Meetings –
  - Planning Committee Meeting - Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6.30pm at Mistley Village Hall.
  - Parish Council Meeting – Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.30pm at Mistley Village Hall.
14. Resolution to Exclude the Public and the Press – The Public Bodies S.1 (2) (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) and the Local Government Act 1972 ss 100 and 102 (amended 2014). The Council agreed following the vote, to exclude the Public since publicity would legally prejudice commercial sensitivity and confidentiality. (Proposed by Councillor Frost and seconded by Councillor Coiley).
15. Confidential Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – The Council is asked to receive, consider, and approve the Confidential Minutes.
16. Update/Matters Arising from Confidential Minutes held on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023– The Council is asked to receive and note any updates.
17. Parish Council Assets – (Leases/Licences) – The Council is asked to receive legal updates and to consider and agree the next legal stages with the Council's Solicitor.
18. Staffing – The Council is asked to receive and consider the Local Government Association and the National Joint Council for Local Government Services agreement on rates of pay applicable from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

*There being no further business, this part of the public Meeting closed to facilitate the closed part of the Meeting.*