

WESTERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday, March 19th 2024 in Westerfield Church Room at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors: Jason Kirk, Peter Hudson, Michael Noble, Sue Peace, John Barber; District Councillor Colin Hedgley; David Gooch (Clerk); and three members of the public, including Peter Miller (PM).

1. Governance

1.1 Apologies and approvals of absence

Apologies were received from CC Bryce, and DC Dan Clery.

1.2 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

None.

1.3 To approve the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 16th January 2024.

These were approved (Clerk noting he'd corrected a planning reference error).

1.4 Comments from members of the public on matters on the agenda

None.

1.5 Councillor Vacancies

Following the May 2023 election the PC had 5 councillors compared to the 7 seats available, and although quorate the PC had previously agreed co-option to fill the vacant seats, hence had advertised the vacancies to residents. Brian Keyland was present having contacted the PC seeking to become a councillor, being eligible under s.79 of the Local Government Act 1972 and not disqualified under s.80 of the Local Government Act 1972. Brian Keyland was duly co-opted, completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took his place as councillor on the PC. Clerk to update Register of Interests thereby informing ESC.

A further person had expressed their interest but was unable to attend this meeting.

2. Village Improvement

2.1 To review progress on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

Councillor Peace provided an update on behalf of Mary Pluquet (MP) from the working group. The NP had received 64 pages of comments, plus comments on these from Ian Poole, Places4People, after completion of the Pre-Submission Consultation (regulation 14) stage on 19th January. The areas that needed to be addressed (at a working group meeting provisionally arranged for 27 March) were mostly i) Aims and Objectives, and ii) Community Action 9 Westerfield Railway Station.

Next steps and dates would be agreed after this meeting.

PM said the work should be completed ASAP as there was a question mark over grant availability for 24/25.

Clerk noted that the final invoice was expected by end March, and hopefully no further funding would be required. Chair Kirk praised the great progress towards completion of the NP.

2.2 To receive an update on traffic and safety measures for the village

2.2.1 Henley Road, Akenham – CR 433933/438478

Further to the Michelle Doick reporting a dangerous situation ("8-10 feet abyss") at the Henley Road end of Lower Road, and Paul West (SCC Councillor) response discussed at the 16 January meeting, a further update had been received from Paul West who said that ditches are a necessary feature on the edge of the highway, to drain fields and the carriageway, therefore road users need to drive to the conditions of the road. However, there may be scope to increase the presence of signs in the area to highlight this well used junction. At present, Suffolk County Council (SCC) have no funds for improvement works, although we may wish to contact our County Councillor re these concerns as they typically have a small pot of funds to spend on highway improvements via the County Council. This was noted by the PC, who also observed that this location was technically just outside the parish.

2.2.2 Others

As previously noted, it is hoped to leverage the completed Neighbourhood Plan to progress road safety initiatives in the village.

2.3 Flooding update (re Country Park/Henley Gate)

Cllr Hudson said that he and the Clerk had visited Country Park to assess the 'Surface Water Drainage Strategy' provided by Hannah Purkis (HP), Lead Local Flood Authority, SCC. Photos of the flooding at various locations (partially blocked drainage ditches, flooded footpaths etc) had been compiled into a brief report sent to Hannah. However, Hannah had responded that "The footpaths within the country park would not normally be provided with dedicated drainage networks and usually shed water to either side to naturally dissipate into vegetated/grassed areas beyond. Any issues with the pathways within the country park would be best directed to either Ipswich Planning Authority" (Rosalynn Claxton, IBC), and "The Flood & Water team do not routinely

inspect drainage networks on development sites and are instead consultees in the planning process. The onus is on the developer to build in accordance with the approved plans. If that has not been done then they would be vulnerable to enforcement action being taken by Ipswich Planning Authority. If Suffolk County Council was adopting the network, for example if it served an adopted highway, then it would be inspected as part of this process, but as the Country Park is not being adopted by SCC it wouldn't be inspected for this reason".

Clerk to pursue the Country Park flooding issues with Rosalynn Claxton, IBC.

Clerk had also been invited to a Zoom call attended by Hannah Purkis and Bradley Carvell, SCC, to discuss the flooding to Lower Road, Westerfield. SCC had conducted a site visit on 04 March 2024 where several obstructions to the watercourse that spans from Sandy View to the Barleycroft property were noted. Subsequently Clerk had been sent details of key responsibilities of riparian owners maintaining the drainage ditch bounded by Lower Road at the front of these properties.

Clerk agreed to prepare and distribute a note to the relevant residents on Lower Road, reminding them of the key responsibilities of riparian owners.

The PC noted that the stream of water in this watercourse has only been present since Country Park, and that SCC would also need to clear the section of the watercourse they're responsible for, heading west beyond Barleycroft. It is understood that SCC were also chasing Anglian Water to maintain the watercourse/ditches they're responsible for. A resident said that they had been chasing Anglian Water for several years, but they'd failed to take any action.

2.4 Footpath Clearing

The footpath on the west side of Westerfield Road between the railway line and Lower Road still needed clearing due to overgrowth. Cllr Keyland said he'd previously reported this but an SCC inspector had said the overgrowth and uneven path didn't merit them taking any action (these requirements are set in the Defect Response Matrices of SCC's Highway Maintenance Operational Plan).

The PC asked the Clerk to coordinate a date for a small team of volunteers to clear the footpath.

2.5 Litter Bin Westerfield Road/Country Park

ESC had presented two options for a litter bin: Glasdon Topsy2000 bin is £438.56 + VAT in Black, Green or Blue, and a Glasdon Topsy Royal bin is £451.54 + VAT in Black only. Charges include Site Scanning, new bin, installation, and line search. If the bins are requested for SCC highways land, there is an additional £174.00 for an SCC street Licence but this does not apply since the existing dog bin will be replaced by the new litter bin.

The PC chose the Topsy Royal bin, and Clerk instructed to proceed with the litter bin order.

2.6. St Marys Way Pond

A Land Registry search has been submitted (16th February, Receipt No.1123-7366) for the Official Title Register to determine ownership of the pond, before the PC decides what action to take regarding the dead trees that could potentially fall across St Marys Way, and/or the pond/adjacent properties. Clerk had emailed a reminder to Land Registry re progress of the search request.

The PC discussed the pond outfalls shown on area maps, as one is shown to drain onto the carriageway but is potentially blocked, and similarly the drains on the corner of Church Lane are blocked when previously they've been free-flowing.

3. To receive reports:

3.1. County Councillor

[CC Elaine Bryce's February 2024 report](#) had been distributed to councillors prior to the meeting.

3.2. District Councillor

[DC Clery's February 2024 Parish Report](#) from East Suffolk Council GLI Group had been circulated prior to the meeting.

[DC Hedgley's March 2024 report](#) had also been circulated to the PC prior to the meeting. DC Hedgley encouraged the PC and residents to use the Suffolk Highways reporting tool for potholes, noting that a 'Dragon Patcher' to repair holes quicker, was being trialled in Suffolk. DC Hedgley also highlighted the Budget and spending plan; residents 'grow your own' campaign; new funding of up to £200 for loft insulation; and that due to rising costs the Lowestoft flood barrier wasn't being built – this would have an impact further down the coastline. Finally, DC Hedgley reminded the PC that both he and DC Clery have some funds available (£7k5 each), that the PC could potentially apply for.

Cllr Hudson stated a key issue for Westerfield and many parishes was traffic and road safety yet the DC and CC reports show very little progress with roads which are probably the worst condition they've ever been. DC Hedgley said that the DCs have no responsibility for roads, or influence on Suffolk Highways. However, this does sit with the County Councillors hence **Clerk was actioned to ask CC Bryce to include a highways**

update in her report.

3.3. Parish Councillors on meetings/forums attended.

- i) 20s Plenty, 18th March (Zoom call) – Cllr Noble said that the discussions were mostly re supporting various campaigns, whereas Westerfield will be leveraging the Neighbourhood Plan to pursue road safety in the village. Cllr Noble noted that the 20mph limit had achieved speed reductions in Wales, and that posters, banners, and litter bin stickers were available. The PC discussed the need for a Suffolk Highways Street Furniture license for any banners although this isn't required if they're not on council land.

Cllr Noble agreed to liaise with 20s Plenty re availability of posters, banners, & bin stickers.

Upcoming meetings:

- i) SALC East Suffolk Forum, 20 March. Cllr Noble would attend this.
- ii) "Bringing Ideas to Life" the East Suffolk Community Partnership Annual Forum, 22nd March 2024 at the Trinity Park Conference Centre (for Town & Parish Chairs). This forum offers an opportunity to explore some of the important issues affecting our lives, communities, and businesses; and work together to address them. Chair Kirk wasn't available to attend this.
- iii) Bringing back nature - Biodiversity net gain for councils, Weds 24th April 12.30- 1.30pm. Free online event by Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (BFER) and project partner Suffolk Wildlife Trust, will share their knowledge and experience surrounding planning and biodiversity, noting that the Environment Act places a duty on councils to 'conserve and enhance' the natural world. Cllr Peace expressed her interest in attending this.
- iv) Road Safety Forum – the next forum was scheduled for 6th May but likely to be re-arranged as this is a bank holiday.

4. To note and discuss current planning applications

4.1 Status updates:

The following were noted by the PC:

i) IP/23/00406/REM

Regarding the traffic concerns raised by the PC the following response was received from the Planning Officer: "The traffic concerns on the existing road network, I understand were discussed and assessed at the outline stage. In terms of accessing details for the pedestrian/cycle connections across the site. The phasing strategy will provide a high-level plan of what is planned. Therefore, the applications you may wish to look at are: 16/00608/OUT and 22/00904/REM".

4.2 New applications

i) DC/24/0405/FUL

Installation in garden of own property of an outside cabin that is to be used as a hair salon. Total measurements are 3 X 4.5 and will have working electricity and water. NOT installing a toilet. – Oakleigh, Lower Road, Westerfield, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 9AR, Due date 22 Mar 2024.

The PC agreed to respond that it has no objection in principle to this planning application, however the PC request assurance that the applicant be considerate to neighbours re any noise pollution e.g. from hair dryers etc. if doors or windows are open. In addition, the PC were concerned that any potentially harmful chemicals were disposed of correctly e.g. if rinsing hair dye or perm solutions require any special treatment.

Clerk to submit the PC's response to DC/24/0405/FUL

4.3 Items received after the agenda was published, and other planning matters

- i) Planning application objections from Save Our Country Spaces (SOCS) re Fonnereau / Red House farm development (23/00977/CON- Phase 1 Housing of IP/14/00638/OUTFL)

This was distributed to councillors on 15th February.

- ii) ESC 'Planning Committee Member Call-In' process

A further route for Planning Applications to be determined by the Planning Committees: "In simplest terms, this will further enhance the influence of your contributions to planning decision making, but it doesn't change anything which Town and Parishes are expected to do in the planning application process. You will receive a copy of the 'Call-in' email at a later stage in the application process, if an application is to proceed to Planning Committee. We still strongly encourage Town and Parish Council attendance at Planning Committee if it has reached that route of determination." This was noted by the PC.

- iii) ESC Planning Policy Team Local Development Scheme and Waveney Local Plan 5 year Review Assessment updates: [Local Development Scheme](#) and [Waveney Local Plan 5 year review](#)

These were noted by the PC.

5. Consultations

5.1 Review of [Street Trading Policy](#)

ESC stated that: "Generally there aren't street trading issues in a village location but there's no blanket ban hence ESC are welcoming suggestions for individual streets to be prohibited. The consultation is open until 17 March 2024, now extended to 17 May. Parish councils requested to consider streets they would like to be prohibited and give full reasons for any suggestions. We envisage, that there will not be a blanket ban in towns and villages (in the current policy, there are just a handful of streets in particular towns that are prohibited)".

5.2 [Suffolk County Council's Local Transport Plan Consultation](#)

The [consultation page and survey](#) on the latest update of the Local Transport Plan has been launched 12th February 2024 and open until 8th April. This had been distributed to councillors on 19th February.

6. Communications

See also the update on '[PC Communications 240319](#)' from Cllr Peace.

6.1 Newsletter

Cllr Peace said that the January/February newsletter had been distributed, and the March/April newsletter which included a Neighbourhood Plan update, was underway.

6.2 Website update

None.

6.3 Facebook Group

Facebook group: Residents have said they'd like to post items themselves rather than via the 5 admins. The PC agreed with Cllr Peace's preference to set-up a new group that residents can post to, then run both groups side by side for a trial period. Users would be excluded if they don't abide by the rules.

7. Financial matters

7.1 Receipts & Payments since last meeting, approve payments due

Receipts since 16th January 2024:

02.02.24	HMRC VAT Q1Q2		£194.98
09.02.24	Business a/c interest payment		£130.35
11.03.24	Business a/c interest payment		£130.49
		Total:	£455.82

Expenditure incurred and Payments since Council meeting on 16th January 2024:

Date	Payments	CQ/ Online	Amount (gross)	VAT
25.01.24	Donation to Westerfield PCC for upkeep of churchyard wildlife areas (Hilary Bisset). This is in 23/24 budget.	DG/MN	£600.00	£0.00
25.01.24	Christmas Tree batteries - Y Maynard reimbursement	DG/MN	£8.50	£0.00
25.01.24	PC use of Village Hall (then donated to Coffee gp to heat hall). P Maynard.	DG/MN	£80.00	£0.00
25.01.24	Additional 35 copies of the Welcome Booklet, S Peace reimbursement	DG/MN	£52.50	£0.00
25.01.24	Westerfield Newsletter printing paper £5.20 + £10.98 inc VAT) + ink (£15.49, £10.98 x 3 inc VAT), S Peace reimbursement	DG/MN	£64.61	£10.77
31.01.24	Clerk January payslip: D Gooch	DG/MN	£316.91	£0.00
			Jan total: £1,122.52	£10.77
29.02.24	Clerk February payslip: D Gooch	DG/MN	Feb total: £316.91	£0.00

Expenditure to be considered at Council meeting on 19th March 2024:

Date	Payments	Amount (gross)	VAT
	NP Phase 1: Pre-Submission Draft Plan Consultation (£2640 ex VAT), + Printing (£355 ex VAT), as itemised on the Fee Proposal.	£3,523.00	£528.00
	Station Adopters, S Burn £57, £119.45, £64.72	£241.17	£10.79
	Land Registry search - Pond, St Mary's Way IP6 9BQ	£17.94	£2.99
	Fasthosts Internet Ltd, westerfield-village.co.uk Hosting; M Noble reimbursement, 5mths x £8.46 incl Mar 24	£42.30	£7.05
	Street lighting Maintenance & Energy, 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024. Suffolk Highways. Inv: 9542641	£354.07	£59.00
	NP Phase 2: Submission of Plan to District Council (£2640 ex VAT); Phase 3: Examination Support (£440) + Referendum publicity postcard (£70 ex VAT) as itemised on the Fee Proposal. (NB £6145 ex VAT v £6265 Grant)	£3,696.00	£616.00
	Glasdon Topsy Royal bin (in Black) supplied via SCC. £451.54 + VAT.	£541.85	£90.31
	HMRC P30 Q4	£237.60	£0.00
	Clerk March payslip: D Gooch	£316.91	£0.00
	Mar total:	£4,732.99	£607.83

Payments authorised for committed expenditure but invoices not yet received

	Glasdon Topsy2000 bin £438.56 + VAT in Black. Charges include Site Scanning, new bin, installation, and line search. Price valid to end March.	£526.27	£87.71
	NP Phase 2: Submission of Plan to District Council (£2640 ex VAT); Phase 3: Examination Support (£440) + Referendum publicity postcard (£70 ex VAT) as itemised on the Fee Proposal. (NB £6145 ex VAT v £6265 Grant, as £120 for room hire)	£3,696.00	£616.00

The above was approved by the PC. **Clerk to progress outstanding payments.**

7.2 Bank Reconciliation to 12th March 2024

The bank reconciliation had been circulated prior to the meeting. Clerk explained that this would be updated to end March in preparation for auditing. Spend was within overall budget. This was approved by the PC. On behalf of the PC, Cllr Keyland volunteered to check the finances prior to audit.

7.3 VAT Claim

The VAT reclaim of £194.98 covering 01/4/2023-30/9/2023, had been paid by HMRC on 02/02/2024.

7.4 SALC subscription 24/25

SALC and NALC membership subscription fee will increase by 3% from 1st April for the period 2024/25 (£252.70 in 23/24 to £260.28, covered in budget).

7.5 St Mary Magdalene PCC

Hilary Bisset had contacted Clerk to say: "Further to our PCC meeting last week, the members would like to pass on their thanks to the Parish Council for the generous donation towards the upkeep of the churchyard".

7.6 SALC Internal Audit

Clerk said this has been booked for 7 – 10 May 2024. Fee is £274 (included within the budget).

8. Governance documentation review, updates, and adoption/approval

8.1 Charitable Donation Policy

Clerk said that a further update to this policy had been necessary as the Department for Levelling Up,

Housing and Communities (DLUHC) advised that the appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England for 2023-24 is £9.93 per elector, and for 2024-25 is £10.81 (as listed in the electoral role on 1st January before the commencement of the financial year).
Clerk confirmed that the PC were well within these limits.

9. Correspondence and urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

The following were noted by the PC:

- 9.1 **East Anglia THREE public information days**
- these included Westerfield Village Hall, 3pm-7pm, on Thursday 8th February.
- 9.2 **Suffolk County Council's Devolution Deal**
What Suffolk's in principle deal with Government could mean for the county. Have your say here:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>
- 9.3 **Bringing back nature - Biodiversity net gain for councils**
Wednesday 24th April 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm. This free online event presented by Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (BFER) and project partner Suffolk Wildlife Trust.
(See also 3.3 Upcoming meetings (iii)).
- 9.4 **Sizewell C update**
The February project update including construction, fora, and HGV movements and notifications, had been circulated to councillors.
Sizewell C's first Community Forum, Tuesday 9 April 2024 Time: 7 to 9pm, at Trinity Park Conference & Events Centre, Felixstowe Rd, Ipswich IP3 8UH. [RSVP here](#).
Deadline for pre-submitted questions (max 2) to info@sizewellc.com is noon Tuesday 26 March 2024.
- 9.5 **Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping for the LionLink Multipurpose Interconnector Project.**
This is not a consultation about the principle of the development, or a consultation regarding alternatives to it. Therefore, it should not be used to make representations on those matters.
Parish and Town Councils can play a significant role, by identifying local environmental and socio-economic sensitivities and risks which the applicant needs to consider. It is also an opportunity to suggest approaches to the avoidance of harm, and mitigation measures, that respond effectively to local sensitivities and issues.
The Scoping Report and appendices can be found at:
<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020033/documents>
Responses, from the relevant Parish Councils, to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Scoping Report should be clearly identified as such, and sent by email to lionlinkinterconnector@planninginspectorate.gov.uk by 4th April.
- 9.6 **Great British Spring Clean – 15-31 March**
This is to encourage community action, e.g. Litter Picks. (The PC would be clearing footpaths.)
- 9.7 **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects**
[Projects in Suffolk/East Suffolk Council](#)
Stakeholder links for: Nuclear Power Station - Sizewell C; Offshore wind farms; Offshore electricity interconnectors; Electricity transmission; Solar energy; National Infrastructure Planning.

10. Any Other Business

Cllr Keyland said that he'd received a query re what CIL money had been spent on from CIL payments for a development ~10 years ago. Clerk said that directing the query to East Suffolk Council was the correct route, but Clerk could also check PC records.

11. To note the date of forthcoming Parish Council meetings:

21st May 2024, 16th July 2024, 17th September 2024, 19th November 2024, 21st January 2025.

To be signed when approved



14th April 2024