

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY
6 DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

Present: Mrs Ewans (Chair), Mrs Wortley, Dr Geake, Mr Griffin, Mr Guyler and Mr Auchincloss.

In attendance: County Cllr Mellen (in part), District Cllr Mansel and Mrs Fuller, Clerk.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Mr Hardiman, Mr Howard and Mrs Jenkins

2. **Public comment.** There was none.

3. **County & District Councillors reports**

County Councillor's report: Council met on the 1 December and amongst other business considered three motions: a motion thanking Suffolk households who are hosting Ukrainian refugees, and calling for more hosts to come forward which was supported, a motion calling for an improved Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), including prioritising Demand-Responsive & Community Transport for Suffolk rural communities and a motion on providing further support to carers. Neither of the last two was voted through. Council leader Matthew Hicks also made a statement regarding the proposed devolution "county deal" for Suffolk, under which further resources would be allocated to Suffolk's local authorities. The price of this is that there will have to be a directly-elected council leader (but not a mayor) who would lead and choose the cabinet for the County Council. Apparently this would not result in an extra tier of bureaucracy but at present it is not clear how this would be achieved. The Cabinet met to discuss the second quarter forecasts for the Council's budget (June to Sept). Currently, there is a worry as they have reported a £12.2m budget gap – largely due to inflation and energy prices. The Council will use Reserves to cover this cost. However, this cannot be a long-term solution. There is concern that the Council will not be fully funded by Government to deliver the same services to residents. The Cabinet also met to agree a new road enforcement scheme, and to apply for new Government powers to penalise drivers who commit offences affecting buses. The trial for the scheme has selected four sites in Ipswich for a cost of over £200,000. There was a by election in Beccles and this was retained by the Green Party. Last year, Suffolk CC's SEND services were criticised in a review conducted by Lincolnshire Council. Cllrs recently received an update outlining the progress SEND services have made to implement the report's recommendations. 22 of the 32 recommendations have been actioned, and the remaining 10 will be completed by the end of 2022. The delivery of 1317 new specialist school places by 2026 has been agreed and 826 of these places are now open. The number of Education Health Care Plans (EHP) has increased to 6847 in September 2022, from 5849 in September 2020. The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group met to update leaders on the progress of the county's action plan to achieve net zero by 2030. A new Suffolk Climate Emergency Dashboard has been set up to display the latest data and performance measures, as well as other action such as a successful communications campaign, additional match funding, homeowner support services, and a Net-Zero knowledge hub to educate businesses. Next steps include investments in EV charging infrastructure and developing a community energy sector. The Leaders Group agreed to release £923,458 of previously allocated funding to further implement actions. The next review will be in Spring 2023.

District Councillors' report: The Green and Liberal Democrat Group have called in the decision to go ahead with the exemplar housing scheme on School Road, Elmswell because we believe the decision making process was flawed and not all information was brought before the Cabinet. This means that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will discuss this and may make recommendations for the Cabinet to consider when they discuss it again.

The engagement event was well attended by residents, but it was a shame that no Cabinet members attended to hear the comments from the residents. As part of the Bloor Homes development on School Road, Elmswell, there will be a road closure for 12 weeks minimum from 16 Jan 2023. There will be a diversion via Cross Street/Cooks Road. This will be one-way for HGVs. 2 MSDC Winter Warmth grants have been awarded to Woolpit groups. The Woolpit Room has received £400 to help cover heating and transport costs, and the provision of refreshment so that they will be able to continue their usual activities and provide Warm Hub. The Woolpit Good Neighbour scheme was awarded £2,100 to enable the group to establish Warm Spaces at the Woolpit Institute and at the Cricket Club. At the last Council meeting a motion regarding water quality and the prevalence of wastewater discharges into our rivers and waterways was discussed. The motion recommended that this issue will be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and that planning officers will request more information than the mandatory comments from the water authority. Mid Suffolk's end of term report has been published on the website. Following the tragic death of a toddler in Rochdale, Mid Suffolk and Babergh are undergoing a full diagnostic review of Building Services. This picked up the need to increase our input into resolving issues around mould and damp. We have acted on these recommendations. More officers are now able to deliver damp and mould treatment and employed a Damp Specialist Surveyor. The Chancellor announced a new county deal for Suffolk, which hopes to deliver decades of significant investment for the area. The model is based on having a directly elected Leader for Suffolk County Council (who will not be a mayor) and the current leader/cabinet model will continue. We are still unsure exactly what this will mean for us as a District. Locality funding is still available.

4. To receive declarations of interest. There were none.

5. To approve the minutes of the meetings 1 November 2022.

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

22/05521 Remove facing brickwork to fireplace and hearth in lounge and rebuild using reclaimed Woolpit white bricks. Tudor Rose, The Street – no comment

22/05906 Erection of a single storey side extension to provide annexed accommodation for elderly relative and alterations to fenestration and roof. 23 Briar Hill – no comment.

22/04067 Erection of commercial building B1(c), B8 and B2 with associated car parking of 55 spaces, 25 cycle spaces, yard and bike storage. Land Adj To O C Jewers & Sons Ltd Elmswell Road – object with the same comments as submitted 7 September 2022.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

22/04533 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/22/02394 - Condition 3 (Fenestration) and Condition 4 (External Extract Vents and External Piping). Swan House, The Street – acceptable.

22/04951 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/21/01132 - Condition 6 (Fire Hydrants). Land off Bury Road – acceptable.

22/04130 Application for prior approval for a proposed: Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwelling houses (Use Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q - Conversion of 4No barns into 4No dwellings. Barns 3 4 5 And 6, Grassy Lane Farm, Grassy Lane – prior approval given

22/04479 Planning Application. Erection of 1No Class E(g) commercial building (revised application following planning permission granted under reference

DC/22/00638) Revised position and size (Permission DC/22/00638 will not be constructed). Land at Stag Café, Old A45 - granted

22/04979 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/19/03851 - Condition 8 (SUDS Component/Piped Networks). Land at Lawn Farm, Warren Lane – satisfied

22/05514: Works to Trees Subject to Tree Preservation Order - Reduce 1No. Sycamore Maple (T1) by 1.5m – granted.

22/04560 Listed Building application - Construction of pitched ceiling to kitchen extension, replacing existing flat ceiling, and insertion of 2no. Velux windows. 5 The Street – withdrawn.

7. Clerk's Report

Request for gate to rear access of Woolpit Room – SCC has advised that any request must come from Woolpit PC or County Councillor. County Cllr Mellen has emailed SCC Highways that he supports the gate to stop fly tipping and it is also endorsed by WPC.

New lights for Christmas tree – has been authorised.

Annual play equipment inspection – the Clerk has contacted MSDC for an update. MSDC has not received reports yet.

Dog and litter bin emptying – MSDC has advised that charges will increase to £39.73 from £37.13 and dog bins to £46.53 from £43.49 for 2023/24. A full review of the service and its costs will be carried out during 2023.

Bury Road path – further complaints have been received and Hopkins Homes contractor will remove soil to full width of the path.

Poppy appeal – raised £2600.00.

Pay award for Clerks – this has now been agreed and will be back dated to April 2022. Cllrs approved the increase.

Barclays Bank – there are continued problems with Barclays declining cheques advising that they are not signed in accordance with our mandate. The Clerk has enquired about online banking but this cannot take place until an update of business details has been verified. This form was returned to them 10 November but their officer has advised it has not yet been received. There is a pressing issue of payment of £5088.00 to First Steps Flooring for the floor at the ARC to be replaced during the Christmas break and First Steps Flooring cannot order the materials until funds have been received. Two cheques have been sent and both have been declined by Barclays as they say the signatures do not match those on the mandate. We have used four different signatories so find this difficult to accept. Mrs Ewans proposed that she pays by BACS and then is reimbursed by cheque from Woolpit PC so that the work can be carried out to the agreed timescale; this was seconded. After discussion this was approved by four votes for to two against. It is acknowledged that this is an unusual way to resolve matters but Cllrs feel there is no other option. Cllrs request that we set up a meeting with Barclays to try to resolve these matters or move to another bank.

8. To receive correspondence/communications and deal with any matters.

Resident regarding road safety at the double roundabout they have been requested to contact SCC Highways. **St Mary's PCC** request for a new street light near the church. This will be discussed at a subsequent meeting. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: Rural Services Network** Funding Digest November, Rural Bulletin 8, 15, 22, 29 November, 6 December. **MSDC** competition to name bin lorries, public consultation regarding Stowmarket creative Way Finding and Placemaking project 17 November, Rural England Prosperity Fund engagement, Stowmarket Wayfinding consultation 5 December, Community Infrastructure Levy parish briefings, Town and Parish update December 2022. **SALC** Local Government pay deal 2022/23 accepted, news bulletin 7, 14, 21, 28 November, training bulletin 8, 15, 22, 29 November 6 December. **SCC** meeting with SCC passenger transport, notes from PC transport meeting with Vertas. **Smaller Authorities Audit Appointment** PKF Littlejohn LLP has been appointed for 2022-2027 for Suffolk.

Letters of thanks for donation from **SARS** and **RBL** Poppy Appeal.

9. To approve accounts for payment.

Mr Harknett £67.15 litter picking November, Mr Gardiner £430.65 Highways Ranger salary November, Suffolk County Council £307.99 pension payment, Woolpit Nurseries £612.69 plants for pump garden plants, for planters pump area, 6 new planters, Christmas tree and new lights, Viking £111.32 stationery and stamps, G E Baker (UK) Ltd £1272.00 platinum Jubilee bench, Gipping Press £305.00 printing December/January Diary, Mr Raisey £105.00 editing December/January Diary, MMR Installations £160.00 new LED light in office, Mrs Ewans £30.00 reimbursement for chicken wire for leaf compost area, Mrs Ewans £5088.00 reimbursement for BACS payment to First Step Flooring new flooring for ARC from CIL. All accounts were authorised and cheques issued. Stuart Langston Arboricultural Services £1960.00 for tree work at the Recreation Field was deferred for further information. Payments by Standing Order/Direct Debit Mrs Fuller £979.93 November salary, BT £176.97 quarterly bill for telephone and broadband.

10. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The Community Account balance at the end of November was £438,311.42 of which CIL is £335,828.17, Recreation Ground £1,442.40, earmarked reserves £76,594.46 and general funds £24,466.39.

b) To begin discussion on 2023/4 precept which must be agreed at the January meeting

The Clerk advised that Cllrs will need to make provision for a new computer

11. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

a) To receive an update on 20 mph in the centre of the village.

The traffic speed reports have been received and now need to be discussed with SCC for a joined up thinking for a 20mph zone not isolated parts of the village.

b) to receive an update on solar powered Speed Indicator signs and locations and take any necessary action

Mrs Ewans has plotted the responses received to date. There have been a few objections mainly where the SID will be outside their property, Discussions will take place with objectors for acceptable sites.

c) To discuss parking issues in the centre of the village and take any necessary action

A resident has allegedly been told to park further on the pavement by the Co-op to avoid blocking of the road when lorries are delivering to the store. Cllrs find this unacceptable. Issues of parking in the village crop up every few years. Nobody wants yellow lines, parking permits would be very difficult to get and are no solution without proper enforcement.

d) to receive a report on the joint parishes meeting to discuss buses/public transport.

This was well supported by other parishes. MSDC is to see if it can get information for parishioners to see if they would actually use buses. Vertas is looking at ways of using their buses after the school service has finished and before pick up starts (between 0900-1500). A possibility is to provide a service on market day to Bury St Edmunds and may be trialled in Woolpit. This would have to be a paid service and bus passes would not be able to be used.

12. To consider additional road name signs in The Street and take any necessary action.

It was unanimously agreed to have two signs, one on the grass area in front of 1 Briar Hill and one in the verge opposite the Plough.

Action: the Clerk

13. To reconsider a request for a litter picking trolley and take any necessary action.

Having looked at the guidelines issued by MSDC they state that volunteers carry out litter picking at their own risk and are not covered by MSDC insurance. Is this something that WPC could adopt and get them to sign to allow them to litter pick. Cllrs are still very concerned regarding the risks along country lanes and asked the Clerk to contact SALC for advice on this matter. *Action: the Clerk.*

14. To consider a street party for the coronation of King Charles III and take any necessary action.

The Village Hall has been provisionally booked for Saturday 6, Sunday 7 and Monday 8 May 2023. Funds to cover costs need to be included in the precept.

15. To consider 25 road names for the Bury Road development and take any necessary action.

It was approved to have the main road though the site as Elizabeth Way, Eburne Road, Cordon Road, Cockayne Road and Jones Road after notable residents who are no longer with us, Shilvers after an old field name and the rest after rivers in Suffolk. *Action: the Clerk*

Mr Guyler left the meeting at 9.35 p.m.

16. To consider grant request from Mid Suffolk CAB and take any necessary action.

It was proposed and seconded to make a grant of £750.00. A further proposal was made to make a grant of £1000.00. The first proposal was then withdrawn and £1000.00 grant was unanimously approved. Mrs Wortley attended Mid Suffolk CAB AGM and they will provide an outreach service if they can perceive a need for this.

17. To consider replacement of Woolpit PC's non-LED streetlights with LED units and take any necessary action.

It was agreed to get a quote from SCC for consideration at a CIL meeting. *Action: the Clerk*

18. To receive an update on the Bury Road development.

The bank by Bury Road path has been scraped back to ensure pedestrians do not have to walk on the road.

19. To receive a report on the allotments including a proposal to take back in hand the field adjoining the allotments and take any necessary action.

Rents continue to be received. There is one half plot to re-let. Suffolk Wildlife Trust has visited the site of the old allotments and is writing a report with suggestions of how the land can be used.

20. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee (if available) and consider setting up Parish Council sub-committee to discuss future financing of the village hall.

No report this month, the next meeting is in January. Mr Howard has agreed to lead a sub-committee to talk to the village hall committee regarding CIL grants once the form has been completed and returned.

Woolpit PC as Trustees of Woolpit Recreation Ground Charity

21. To discuss disabled access to the Recreation Field and Sports Field and take any necessary action.

This item was deferred for further investigation before discussion at the next meeting.

22. To receive report on proposed Tennis Club lease.

The Tennis Club has produced a draft lease for consideration. This will be discussed at a future meeting. WPC as Trustees of the Recreation Ground Charity will need to employ a solicitor and have asked for an undertaking from the Tennis Club for them to pay the Charity's costs.

23. To consider a request to run a boot camp on the Recreation Ground and an appropriate fee.

Cllrs are content that the boot camp can be run on the grass area for a fee of £10.00 per session and proof of public liability insurance. The MUGA must not be used for the boot camp. *Action: the Clerk*

24. To receive a report from the Clerk.

The resident of Larksgate is not happy with the work carried out on the tree adjacent to the property. Mrs Ewans has offered to meet with them but has not received a response

25. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 3 January 2023. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.43 p.m.

Signed.....approved.....

Dated.....3 January 2023.....