

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Held ON TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

Present: Dr Geake, Mr Hardiman and Mr Gallagher.

In attendance: County Cllr Mellen (in part), District Cllr Mansel (in part), Mrs Fuller, Clerk and 11 members of the public.

Mrs Ewans, Chair has resigned from the Parish Council and her contribution to WPC was noted.

1. To elect a Chairman.

Since there were only three councillors in attendance, it was proposed, seconded and carried to appoint Dr Geake as Chair for this meeting.

2. Apologies for absence.

These were received and accepted from Mrs Auchincloss, Mr Foster, Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Symons.

3. Public comment: resident concerned regarding the poor quality of pavements for mobility scooters. Would like to be able to cross the playing field but the kissing gates at entrances do not allow this. Access by the Tennis and Cricket Club is impassable and the needs of the disabled and elderly are not being served. The Parish Council as Trustees of the WRGC will look into the matter.

Resident would like the Parish Council to purchase 20's plenty sticker and distribute for residents to display in Rags Lane and other areas of the village.

Mr Baker has identified three footpaths on his land that would be suitable for a bench to be installed. He was asked to forward locations to the Clerk so these can be discussed at the next meeting.

Resident concerned regarding speeding vehicles exiting the new car park at the back of the Health Centre. The height barrier has been removed because it was damaged but needs to be reinstalled to stop HGV's turning round in the car park.

A pile of garden rubbish has been dumped in a parking space in Steeles Close. A photo will be passed to District Cllr Mansel who will report to MSDC Officers.

4. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' report: The Pride in Your Place campaign was launched last month with the aim to clean-up neighbourhoods, build community pride and tackle the doorstep issues that voters say matter to them. Under the funding scheme, parishes with a population over 1,500 are eligible to apply for up to £400 in funding. Applications can also be made by voluntary, community and social enterprises with support from their local town or parish council. Businesses in both council areas are set to benefit from a new round of funding thanks to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). Mid Suffolk District Council was allocated £821,658 over the next two years. Grants are available between £5,000 - £10,000 per application and will fund a maximum of 50% of total project costs up to the maximum value of £10,000. Eligible projects include net-zero developments, agriculture and farm diversification, visitor economy business expansion as well as SME investment and diversification or investment in community facilities in our rural areas. The free trees, hedgerows and wildflowers scheme is open for applications that both help wildlife and have public access. Applications can be for individual trees, tree planting schemes, small community woods, hedgerows, community or scattered orchards and wildflower meadows. MSDC tree canopy cover across the district is currently well below the national average. MSDC wants to help get 30% of its land managed for wildlife by 2030 (30 by 30 national initiative). Support was provided for residents in Babergh and Mid Suffolk who were struggling with the cost of living during 2022/23. £100,000 was awarded to tenants through the household support fund, £150,000 to households struggling with the cost of their rent through Discretionary Housing

Payments and a reduction in council tax for low-income households. Christchurch Estates are currently undergoing some community engagement regarding a development proposal for a care home and supported living units between Parnell Lane and St John's Church, Elmswell. The appeal against MSDC planning decision for a Solar Farm at Burstall was successful as well as the appeal for costs. There are currently several other applications for solar farms in the district and this appeal decision will be a material consideration. Cllrs Mansel and Overett have arranged a series of monthly drop-in sessions alternating between Woolpit Teacups and Wesley Café in Elmswell.

Cllr Mansel advised that car park behind the Health Centre is now in MSDC ownership. She will look into whether MSDC can install a speed bump on their land at the exit. MSDC is aware the barrier is not there but cannot give a date when the barrier will be reinstalled. The gate between the car parks is now locked shut. Signs are required to direct traffic to enter via Old Stowmarket Road but SCC needs to be involved as this is highways land.

County Councillor's report: Suffolk County Council is not supporting the latest proposals by the National Grid to install 114 miles of electricity pylons across the county as part of the "Norwich to Tilbury" project. A number of objections have been raised about the 33 mile stretch of the new works which would run through Suffolk, which includes installing a stretch of cabling under the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The council is pressing for an offshore solution to be fully researched and considered. Suffolk County Council was disappointed to learn that the LionLink interconnector project from National Grid Ventures has identified an alternative landfall at Walberswick, with cable routing making its way to the north of Southwold. The LionLink project aims to connect multiple offshore wind farms in the North Sea, instead of individual wind farms connecting one by one to the shore. The project is a joint venture between the UK and the Netherlands, supplying energy to both countries. The Council will study the details of the new proposals, and will prepare its response to the National Grid's second public consultation, which opens on 8 September. The world's best cyclists will be taking to the roads of Suffolk on 7 September for the fifth stage of the Tour of Britain, including Tour de France champions. The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Training Centre at Wattisham has had a £1.3m upgrade and was formally opened on 24 August. This includes a new tactical firefighting facility to simulate incidents firefighters may be faced with and help them prepare for the dangerous work they undertake in the community. Suffolk County Council's social workers and social care teams have been shortlisted for six awards at the annual Social Worker of the Year Awards. We are really proud of our social workers, who work so hard to help people in often challenging circumstances. The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony in November this year. In May, Suffolk County Council announced a one-off £2,000 support grant for Ukrainian refugees moving on from their host into their own accommodation. The Independent Living Payment is available to any Ukrainian refugees moving into private rented accommodation after 1 April 2023. Guests must have been living in Suffolk for a minimum of two months and be registered on the Suffolk Homes for Ukraine scheme to be eligible for the payment.

HGV's parking in Old Stowmarket Road is becoming an issue. Residents should note the company name and vehicle registration and report to Cllr Mellen. Blocking a drop kerb or parking on the pavement is illegal.

A resident has reported the deep ditches at the entrance to Stackyard Green and Cllr Mellen will investigate.

A resident has asked for a safe walking area from the roundabouts to Ladyswell but cutting back vegetation and laying some sort of path and again Cllr Mellen is looking into this. He has also asked SCC Community Engineers to give costs to improve the pavement in Heath Road which he is happy to pay for from his Transport Budget. The cycle/footpath from Elmswell to Woolpit is being designed by SCC and is progressing.

5. **To receive declarations of interest.** There were none.

6. **To approve the minutes of the meeting 1 August 2023.**

The minutes were approved and signed.

7. **To consider clerking arrangements and take any necessary action.**

Additional clerking is required on some of the ongoing projects. Mrs Ewans is prepared to work on a voluntary basis as assistant Clerk on issues that she has been involved in and which does not need to be dealt with by a councillor. It was proposed, seconded and carried to ask Mrs Ewans to be a voluntary Clerk's assistant.

8. Planning

a) to consider current applications

23/03775 Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area. Fell 2 sycamore (T1 & T2) reduce crowns group of 5 yew (T3) by up to 3m. Abbotswell, Rectory Lane – no objection.

23/04004 Erection of workshop for the storage and maintenance of buses. Corern, Rattlesden Road – object detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area and road traffic safety with further large unsuitable vehicles for the road.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

23/03081 Listed Building consent. Internal alterations and refit of supermarket including external refurbishment works as detailed in the Heritage statement. East of England Co-op Foodstore, The Street – granted.

23/03617 Discharge of conditions appl 19/03851 Condition 15 (Wildlife Sensitive Design Scheme) Land at Lawn Farm, Warren Lane – acceptable.

23/03475 Discharge of conditions appl 19/03500 Condition 20 (construction surface water management scheme) Land at Lawn Far, Warren Lane – satisfied.

23/02762 Change of use of part of existing residential amenity land, erection of side extension and detached carport/garage. Cider Shed, Grassy Lane – granted.

23/02916 Erection of first floor side extension over existing garage. 58 Briar Hill – granted.

23/03021 Submission of details application for approval of reserved matters appl 21/06725. Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered for 2 single storey dwellings. Land South of 1 Oak Lane – approved.

9. Clerk's Report

The Elms, Bury Road – Hopkins Homes has contacted their construction team to cut land around the site to eliminate weed seeds to neighbouring properties.

Car Park by the Health Centre – MSDC has changed the lock on the gate so it can regain control over its operation to ensure it remains closed to vehicular movements. MSDC is also in the process of getting the new car park into MSDC's parking order to finalise how the car park will be managed. Temporary signs have been put up on the gate stating access is via Old Stowmarket Road and Beaker Place. MSDC has advised the Health Centre to provide signage at the entrance to its own car park.

Manhole cover, The Street – this has now been replaced and a resident has sent their thanks to WPC for continuing to pursue the matter despite SCC response that no action need be taken.

Meeting dates – these will go back to be held on the first Monday of the month unless it is a Bank holiday, then they will be held on the Tuesday after.

Meeting with Minster Property Group – The plans are little changed from those seen with the outline application with bungalows by the boundary with houses along Heath Road except for one but Minster are willing to look again and see if they can change this. The mix is 24 shared ownership and 16 social rental. Orbit will own and manage the site, including maintenance of green areas. A planning application will be submitted in the next few months.

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

Resident concerned regarding the refurbishment of the Co-op Store and when it will take place. The Manager of the Co-op has advised that the store will be closed for two weeks and the work is not likely to commence until 2024. **Resident** concerned regarding over large trees both in private gardens and on amenity land and asking if it is possible to access funds/grants to pay for tree surgery. The Clerk is not aware of any grants of this type for trees in private gardens. The amenity land in question belongs to MSDC and the Clerk will ask the Tree Officer to inspect the trees to see what work needs carrying out. *Action: the Clerk.* Rural Services Network invitation to join the Rural Market Town Group. Cllrs do not wish to join. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: Rural Services Network Funding Digest August, Rural Bulletin 8, 15, 22 August, 5 September. SALC information from Suffolk Police – community payback scheme, news bulletin 7, 21 August, 4 September, training bulletin 5 September, Mid Suffolk area forum 14 September – speaker confirmed. MSDC Town and Parish update August and September, consultation on change to settlement boundary Elmswell NP, free trees, hedgerow and wildflowers scheme, taxi fares consultation, annual play inspections invite 2023, online measuring tool installation to planning search webpage, planning public access website unavailable 4 September, publication of examination report on the Elmswell NP, Mid Suffolk grant funding for voluntary groups, District CIL Bid 12 1-31 October 2023. SCC urban unwanted land wanted for community gardening resources, Community Networking events for environmental change 18 November and register your place, household energy advice service funding & training opportunity, Thrive renewables community benefit programme, bus timetable updates, replenishing git bins for 2023. National Highways A14 Haughley to Tothill reconstruction scheme update 18 August, August newsletter, midway public information events for Town and Parish Councils 25 September. Jo Churchill MP no cold calling zones. Homestart Suffolk record number of families accessing Homestart in Suffolk support. Suffolk Police Constable's County July.**

11. To approve accounts for payment.

Woolpit Parish Council

To ratify payments under CIL to Hannahs Decorating £938.00 Woolpit Primary School library and BookSpace Ltd £16,177.50 Woolpit Primary School library. To ratify payments to Suffolk County Council £317.45 pension payment July, Mr K Harknett £74.05 litter picking July, Mr Gardiner £512.30 Highways Ranger July. All payments were unanimously ratified.

Mr K Harknett £65.55 litter picking August, Mr M Gardiner £489.55 Highways Ranger pay August, Gipping Press £424.00 August/September Diary, Suffolk County Council £317.45 pension payment August, Geosphere Ltd £120.00 parish online annual subscription, Mid Suffolk District Council £191.58 parish election charges 4 May Mr Hardiman £14.00 reimbursement for new blind for the office. Payment by standing order Mrs P Fuller £1,056.91 August salary, BT £184.35 quarterly bill.

Woolpit Recreation Ground

Mr F Harris £300.00 refund of security deposit Children's summer fair August, Retro Party Experience £50.00 refund of security deposit Party Night 19 August. All accounts were approved and cheques issued.

12. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The balance of the Community Account at the end of August was £409,576.65 of which CIL is £306,542.04, Recreation Ground £2,111.37, earmarked reserves £46,483.74, general reserve £30,336.81, allotments £1,363.39 and general funds £22,739.30.

b) To consider a report from the Clerk regarding banking arrangements and take any necessary action. Deferred to the next meeting.

13. To consider renewal of insurance policy due 1 October 2023 and take any necessary action.

The insurance renewal premium is £1,106.98 which is an increase of £10.37 from the previous year. It was unanimously approved to renew the premium with Ansvar via Business Services at CAS.

Action: the Clerk

14. To discuss co-option of councillors and take any necessary action.

There are three applicants for two posts. It was agreed that Mrs Jenkins, Mr Hardiman and the Clerk will meet with candidates for informal interviews and make a recommendation to full council at the October meeting.

Action: Cllrs Hardiman & Jenkins and the Clerk

15. To receive an update on the community larder and take any necessary action. In the absence of Mrs Symons, this item was deferred to the net meeting.

16. To receive a report on the joint taxi bus service and take any necessary action including agreeing funding.

This is to be continued until the end of the year. £200.00 has been earmarked for June/July shortfall and it is proposed that an additional £300.00 is earmarked for August-December. This was agreed. Other parishes have asked County Cllrs for a Locality Grant. Cllr Mansel will ask officers if it is feasible to apply for a MSDC Locality Grant for this too. Mrs Gardiner is happy to continue as our co-ordinator but is likely to be out of action for a while following surgery.

17. To discuss HGV parking in Old Stowmarket Road and take any necessary action.

As advised by Cllr Mellen residents are asked to report to SCC via the HGV Incident report and also advise Cllr Mellen as there are restrictions for parking in a residential area. Reports of obstruction of the path and drop kerb should be reported to the police as it is an offence.

Action: the Clerk

18. To discuss a policy for requests for flyers to be inserted in Woolpit Diary and take any necessary action.

It was agreed the general rule is no flyers with Woolpit Diary. However it was agreed that if the distributors were agreeable, the Poor Lands questionnaire could be delivered with the Woolpit Diary but not inside the Dairy.

Action: the Clerk

19. To discuss items to be included for the Highways Ranger to carry out and take any necessary action.

There have been a few incidents where The Highways Ranger has been asked by individuals to do work. It was agreed all requests need to come via the Parish Council office.

20. To discuss a revised contract for the playing field maintenance and take any necessary action.

Strimming of the play area is now being carried out by the Highways Ranger as the contractor has not got enough manpower to do it anymore. They have been asked to contact the Clerk regarding changes to the contract and price but this has not been received to date.

Action: the Clerk

21. To review Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure and Disciplinary Rules and take any necessary action.

These were reviewed and no amendments required.

22. To discuss traffic issues in the parish**a)A14 roadworks**

The reconstruction of the A14 Haughley to Tothill is halfway with the eastward section complete. There is a public information session for Town and Parish Council on 25 September via Teams.

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

We are awaiting the 20 mph speed report from SCC. 20's Plenty stickers will be discussed at the net meeting.

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

The poles have been installed but one resident is not happy with the positioning opposite their property, it is not in the position he had agreed. Mr Hardiman will discuss the matter with them and then we will see how we can rectify the problem.

Action: Mr Hardiman

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

Nothing to report, we are awaiting a response from Hopkins Homes regarding our questions regarding taken on amenity land and the burial ground.

24. To receive a report on the allotments and take any necessary action.

All plots are tenanted. There are a few untidy plots but we have been advised by plot holders of their current circumstances.

25. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee.

No report available.

Woolpit PC as Trustees of Woolpit Recreation Ground Charity**26. To consider a request for an additional bench in the Recreation Field and take any necessary action.**

This was deferred to the next meeting.

27. To consider whether a cancellation fee should be charged if the recreational ground is booked for an event which is subsequently cancelled and take any necessary action.

An event in September was cancelled. Normally the security deposit is returned after the event provided there is no damage to the field. Currently there is no clause regarding a cancellation fee being deducted. It was agreed to refund the security deposit for the September event and add a clause to our agreement that there will be a £20.00 cancellation charge if the event does not take place. *Action: the Clerk*

28. To consider an increase in rental charges for commercial events and take any necessary action.

This was deferred to the October meeting.

29. To receive a report from the Clerk.

Cricket Club and Tennis Club leases – Ellisons Solicitors have agreed to act on our behalf.

Legacy from the late Mr Lobb – the funds have now been transferred to our bank account.

30. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 3 October

2023. As meetings are going to resume being on a Monday evening, this will now be held on Monday 2 October 2023. There will be a meeting to discuss CIL on Tuesday 19 September 2023.

The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

Signed.....Approved..... Dated.....3 October 2023.....