

## MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

**Present:** Mrs Ewans (Chair). Mr Hardiman, Mr Griffin, Dr Geake, Mr Auchincloss, Mr Howard and Mr Guylar.

**In attendance:** County Cllr Mellen (in part), District Cllr Mansel, Mrs Fuller Clerk and 5 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Wortley.

2. **Public comment:** residents of Haybarn Meadow described the issues that they are having with the Bury Road development. 2 substations are being built with one encroaching into the designated green space. 1 was on the original planning application but another is being built without planning permission. Hopkins site manager has advised that there is a non-material amendment in for consideration by MSDC but there has been no consultation with residents or the Parish Council. A resident of White Elm Road has corresponded with Hopkins Homes complaining regarding the water in the attenuation ponds and is awaiting a response. It was agreed to bring forward agenda item 21 to after item 6.

### 3. **County & District Councillors reports.**

**County Councillor's report:** Residents may have seen the sad news that Cllr Graham Newman, until recently chairman of Suffolk County Council, passed away recently after a short illness. Cllr Newman was a Conservative Councillor for Felixstowe and served his division since 2005. SCC is currently going through the process to approve the budget for 2023/24. At the beginning of January, the Scrutiny Committee examined the proposals in preparation for them to go to Cabinet and then Full Council. The administration's budget proposes a 3.99% increase in tax, broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1.99% increase in the general tax. The Council aim to make most of its savings through transformation schemes, as well as taking savings from ongoing unfilled vacancies amongst the Council's workforce. At the beginning of January, the Scrutiny Committee met to examine the Carbon Budget. This document attempts to calculate the amount of carbon SCC emits through its services. More importantly, it shows the Council's progress towards achieving Net Zero by 2030. This year's carbon budget shows that SCC is not on track to reach Net Zero by 2030. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2030 – that's still half of what we are emitting now. SCC is planning to invest £110,000 in managing and inspecting trees and hedgerows. The money will be used to ensure that trees and hedgerows are given the best chance to thrive. Currently, the Council has planted around 50,000 trees and hedging plants this planting season. This comes as the latest science indicates trees can capture nearly twice the amount of carbon as previously thought. Work by Highways England to replace the concrete road surface on the A14 between Woolpit and Stowmarket was due to start this month, initially with overnight closures to start setting up the contraflow. Last week it was announced that the work programme is postponed and there appears to be some confusion about what is happening. The latest information is that the work is only being pushed back by a few weeks. The whole project is expected to take around 18 months to complete. As part of ongoing work aiming to restore some of the lost bus services, it has been identified that Vertas (the council's wholly-owned facilities subsidiary) has some vehicles available during the school day, and some work is being done to see if there a service could be provided to villages in the west of the county using this resource. Mr Howard advised that potholes are not being dealt with even when large and deep and many people are claiming off SCC for the damage to their vehicles.

**District Councillors' report.** Current proposals for next year's budget include a council tax freeze for residents. There will also be a reduction of up to 100% for

residents with the lowest income and a simplification of the existing Council Tax reduction scheme for residents on Universal Credit. The net costs for providing services is set to rise by 41% and the Cabinet have suggested that our surplus will be reduced. Despite the difficulties of the most vulnerable, MSDC is to increase housing rents by 7% to meet the rising costs of the Housing Revenue Account. This is less than the rate of inflation. The proposed budget will need to be agreed at Full Council on 23 February. MSDC referred themselves to the Regulator of Social Housing because there were found to be some issues relating to health and safety compliance. The RSH reported their findings and will continue to monitor the Council's housing until the issues are resolved. An action plan has been agreed to ensure that MSDC housing becomes compliant in a timely manner. Construction of a state-of-the-art distribution unit for garden and leisure products retailer The Range is officially underway at Gateway 14. There was a ground-breaking ceremony last week. Gateway 14 Ltd hopes to provide a new base for manufacturing, logistics and R&D businesses with a particular focus on innovation and sustainability at Gateway 14 as well as providing innovation space for smaller and start-up businesses that will boost the local economy and attract investment into the region. Babergh and Mid Suffolk aim to reduce the number of long term empty properties. There are currently almost 600 homes across both districts. Houses for homes is a re-branding of the service in the hope that people will engage better with the Councils to bring these homes into use. MSDC Cabinet has approved the next phase of the business case for the Stowmarket wellbeing and leisure hub. Since the initial plans were drafted last year the project now intends to include a new sports pavilion, a multi-use games area, four indoor sports courts and a multi-agency wellbeing hub. The local elections are taking place on 4 May. The pre-election restriction period will begin on 23 March. This year for the first time voters will need to bring photographic ID when they attend a polling station to vote. Details of the types of ID which are acceptable can be found at on MSDC website. Residents who do not have any form of acceptable ID need to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate or they can apply for a postal vote. An appeal has been lodged as MSDC has not determined the planning application for the petrol station on land by A14 at Elmswell. Last year the committee requested an independent report. This was discussed at MSDC planning committee and MSDC will defend the appeal on highways grounds.

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

**5. To approve the minutes of the meetings 3 January 2023.** The minutes were approved and signed.

## **6. Planning**

### **a) to consider current applications**

**23/00172** Erection a single story rear extension. The White Elm, White Elm Road – no comment.

**23/00311** Outline application (access to be considered, all other matters reserved) Erection of 2 detached dwellings. Land northwest of Warren Lane – object. This application is outside the settlement boundary of Woolpit Heath and is contrary to Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore the proposal constitutes development in the countryside and is environmentally unsustainable. Warren Lane is a narrow country lane and there are concerns regarding road safety due to increased traffic. There is no footway in this area towards the village centre giving rise to road safety issues

**23/00367** Erection of garden room extension. The Drey, Borley Green – no comment.

**23/00467** Erection of single storey side extension including conversion of garage, and erection of a three bay detached cartlodge. Tamarack, 5 The Oaks – no comment.

**22/06268** Erection of a two storey rear extension. 1 Mill Lane – the decision was left to MSDC

**b) to receive MSDC decisions.**

**22/05532** Remove facing brickwork to fireplace and hearth in lounge and rebuild using reclaimed Woolpit white bricks. Tudor Rose, The Street – Listed Building permission granted.

**22/06150** erection of a new workshop/shed. The Firs, Rags Lane – permission granted.

**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 – permission granted.

**22/06119** Notification for Prior Approval for a Proposed Larger Home Extension - Erection of single storey rear extension. Willowbrook, Heath Road – prior approval refused. Not acceptable under prior approval procedure as the enlargement has a total eaves height of 2.85m. This is higher than the eaves on the original dwelling. Full planning permission required.

A planning consultant has met with Mrs Ewans and the Clerk as they are interested in Woolpit NP and what development WPC would support. They were advised that we cannot say until WPC has something in front of it to consider.

**21. To receive an update on the Bury Road development.**

Cllrs are concerned that the development is causing issues to residents immediately adjacent to the site. There have also been concerns raised regarding the potential of flooding from those involved with The Room in White Elm Road. Cllrs are not drainage experts and have to assume that the drainage strategy within the planning application is correct. The Clerk was asked to write to the resident in White Elm Road advising that WPC has discussed their concerns and refer them to MSDC planning website and for them to advise WPC of any response from Hopkins Homes.

*Action: the Clerk*

The Clerk will write to MSDC to ask why the additional substation is considered a non-material amendment since it impinges on green space and brings development closer to properties in Haybarn Meadow and why wasn't WPC consulted.

*Action: the Clerk*

**7. Clerk's Report**

**4 May 2023 elections** – nomination forms will be available from MSDC from 16 March and completed forms must be returned by hand by 4pm 4 April 2023.

**Gritting Mill Lane and Rags Lane** – our request for these roads to be included in SCC gritting schedule has been declined.

**Pavement Heath Road to Costcutters** – SCC will carry out work to correct the drain cover as it is a trip hazard.

**May 2023 meetings** – the last meeting of the current council will be 2 May before councillors stand down on 9 May. The Annual Parish Council and first meeting of the new council will be 16 May.

**Warm Spaces** – these have now been cancelled due to a lack of attendance.

**Drain issues Masons Lane and Rectory Lane** – residents have experienced problems during the heavy rains. SCC has advised them to contact MSDC who have then advised drains are not their responsibility. Any drains within the highway are the responsibility of SCC. The situation will be monitored and if necessary reported to SCC again.

**Signs on Bury Road/A14 slip road** – County Cllr Mellen has got the signs back into position and cleaned them.

**Meeting with CAB** – A member of CAB team has visited various groups in the village to ascertain the impact of the cost of living crisis and what issues residents face.

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

**Rural Services Network** Rural Bulletin 4, 10, 17, 24, 31 January, 7 February, Funding Digest January, February, cost of living survey. **SALC** new bulletin 4, 9, 12, 16, 23, 30 January, 6 February, training bulletin 10, 17, 24, 31 January, Area Forum 14 February, Buckingham Palace Garden Party 3 May. **SCC** Greenest County awards applications by 1 February, HR & Personnel matters December, LGPS active members newsletter January, community network update. **MSDC** Street Naming & Numbering policy 2023, February half-term holiday activities, Town & Parish update February. **Suffolk Police** Coronation weekend events, precept survey. **Mid Suffolk CAB** thanks for donation, how is the cost of living crisis affecting your community event 24 February. **LHP Telecoms Ltd** proposed base station installation upgrade Ticehurst Farm Tostock. **National Highways** roadworks information A14 J43 slip safety barrier replacement 17/18 January, A14 J47a Haughley to J49 Tothill reconstruction scheme – public information events, important roadworks information A14 J35-J37. **Guildhall Feoffment Trust** accommodation vacancy College Square Bury St Edmunds. **The Chamber UK** invite to levelling up the conversation; skills for the future of Suffolk 15 February. **Richard Livall** Parish Biodiversity Action Plans and Ecological Assessments. **Woolpit Room** concerns regarding flooding-ditched White Elm Road.

## 9. To approve accounts for payment.

Payments to HM revenue & Customs £515.46 Tax & N/I Oct-Dec and First Step Flooring (CIL) £1764.00 balance of flooring & matting for ARC were unanimously ratified. Mr K Harknett £59.45 litter picking January, Mr M Gardiner £445.50 Highway Ranger salary January, Suffolk County Council £328.99 pension payment, Mr M Hardiman £25.90 reimbursement for new office door keys, Gipping Press £305.00 printing Feb/March Diary, Mr R Raisey £105.00 editing Feb/March Diary, Ali Everett Carpentry £1375.00 new office door, MMR Installations £40.00 smoke alarm for office, Suffolk County Council £7857.43 street light lantern replacement, J W Warren Electrical & Fire Ltd £85.80 PAT testing office equipment. All accounts were approved and cheques issued. Payments by Standing Order Mrs P Fuller £1056.91 January salary.

## 10. Finances

### a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The Community Account balance at the end of October was £423,361.23 of which CIL is £330,118.17, Recreation Ground £225.80, earmarked reserves £75,243.32 and general funds £17,773.94

### b) To consider increasing the Clerk's pay scale and take any necessary action

Although Mrs Ewans has conducted an appraisal Cllrs have asked for a written appraisal to be available before a decision is made. *Action: Mrs Ewans.*

## 11. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

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

We are still awaiting a meeting with SCC to discuss the 20 mph zone in the centre of the village.

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

The objector in Green Road has not responded to the second letter: the revised position along The Heath has received objections and it has now been left to the residents to suggest a location acceptable to them all. It was unanimously agreed to submit the other sites in Bury Road, The Street, Heath Road, Church Road, Green Road in the countryside and Borley Green to SCC for consideration.

*Action: Mrs Ewans/the Clerk*

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

The Festival Society has been asked to suggest a great form of entertainment in the village hall. Mr Howard stated that if he was to take on the responsibility to arrange events he would need a lot of help and commitment from other Cllrs. A working group will talk to village residents to see what they would like. The village hall has been booked for the full weekend 6-8 May.

**13. To consider additional dog and litter bins at Stackyard Green and the Health Centre car park and take any necessary action.**

We are awaiting details of the Stackyard Green Management company to contact to see if they are installing bins. The Clerk has contacted David Wilsons Homes and the Health Centre regarding bins at the car park. The Health Centre has advised that it is not responsible for the car park and to contact MSDC.

**14. To consider quotes for new noticeboards and take any necessary action.**

A quote has been received for bespoke board at Borley Green and The Heath for £260.00. This was unanimously accepted.

*Action: the Clerk*

**15. To consider a Facebook page for Woolpit Parish Council and take any necessary action.**

This item was deferred until the April meeting.

**16. To consider wet leaves clearance around the parish to avoid slip hazard and water pooling and take any necessary action.**

Mrs Wortley has only been able to get one quote for a commercial company to clear the leaves. Cllrs feel that the Highways Ranger does a good job to keep the leaves cleared and can be asked to concentrate on specific areas if and when required. It was agreed not to pursue a commercial company further.

**17. To consider grit bins around the parish and take any necessary action following information from our insurance broker.**

MSDC will provide a bin and grit for the car park in Church Street if WPC can arrange for spreading when required which is accepted by Cllrs. It was agreed to purchase a bin for the village hall car park. The Clerk was asked to investigate sizes and costs. It was agreed not to provide bins for any roads in the village at this time.

*Action: the Clerk*

**18. To discuss ongoing maintenance of CCTV at the village Hall and payment thereof.**

It was unanimously agreed that WPC would pay for maintenance because the CCTV mainly covers the Recreation Ground and the car park both of which fall under the responsibility of WPC through its trusteeship and management of the Woolpit Recreation Ground charity.

**19. To discuss destruction of old Parish Council paperwork and take any necessary action.**

It was agreed to get quotes for commercial shredding service.

*Action: the Clerk.*

**20. To receive an update on the Vertas bus trial.**

Mrs Ewans has attended a meeting with SCC. They want to run a trial later in the year in Woolpit and Shimpling. Journeys will need to be booked and paid for in advance. A village co-ordinator will be needed. Mrs Ewans has recruited a volunteer. There is to be a further meeting on March.

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

All plots are now rented. Cllrs need to consider what to do with the field area.

**23. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee.**

A meeting was held on 18 January. A fire assessment has been carried out. CIL requests have been submitted to WPC for consideration. Lettings are going well. The Secretary will be stepping down at the AGM in April. Mr Howard will set up a meeting with the committee to discuss the CIL applications.

**Woolpit PC as Trustees of Woolpit Recreation Ground Charity****24. To receive a report from the Clerk.**

**Hire of field** – The Hall is being used for a craft fair in July from which some funds are giving to Woolpit ARC. A request has been received from the organiser to hire the field for a BBQ and bouncy castle. BBQs are not allowed on the field but it could be possible to have the BBQ on the car park and serve over the fence to the field. Councillors request that the Clerk asks the organiser for more details of what is being offered, who will benefit, what charges are being made. *Action: the Clerk*

**Holes near MUGA** – These have been filled but need to be monitored as could be caused by an animal.

**Disabled access of the playing field**– has been achieved by removing the post near the entrance on Church Street.

**25. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 7 March 2023. Noted.**

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

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

Dated.....7 March 2023 .....