

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 APRIL 2024 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE.

Present: Dr Geake (Chair), Mrs Robinson, Mr Gallagher, Mr Foster, Mr Hardiman and Mrs Jenkins.

In attendance: County Cllr Mellen (in part), District Cllr Overett, Mrs Fuller Clerk, Mrs Ewans Deputy Clerk and 3 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mrs Walker.

2. Public comment: the grass on the recreation ground is getting long. The contractor will get this done once the ground is dry enough. Mr Hardiman advised that the Co-op internal alterations have been delayed as a 14-century set of steps have been found inside and therefore they have had to reapply for planning permission.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

County Councillor's report: At Council on 21 March, the council debated energy developments and the impact of the various Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) planned for the county and voted that its strategic vision for the county would be to prioritise offshore rather than onshore coordination of schemes, undergrounding of cables rather than pylons, and protection of best quality agricultural land from solar development. NSIP energy projects are approved by the Secretary of State rather than local councils, which only act as statutory consultees. Councils can and do formally object or support proposed projects in the region, however, as East Suffolk have done with the recent Sea Link proposals affecting Friston and the nearby coast. On Tuesday 25 March, Cabinet reviewed the results of the recent consultation about the Suffolk library service, which is due to go out to procurement in the summer. Broadly, the members of the public who responded to the survey agreed with what libraries currently provided, including community and digital services, and the mobile library and home library services for people who were housebound. Recent pop-up libraries in village halls did not score highly in the consultation and it is unlikely these will form part of the service in future. It is also likely that mobile libraries will run from smaller vehicles in future. The successful bidder for the new libraries contract is likely to be announced in November, with the new contract starting from June 2025. At Cabinet on 25 March the future of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) was discussed. Since 2012, government funding for economic growth in the county has been awarded via the New Anglia LEP, but the government has recently directed that LEPs should be integrated into county councils. The New Anglia LEP was established by SCC and Norfolk County Council jointly, but it will be divided between the two. Suffolk County Council will be establishing a new Business Board made up of local business owners, representatives from councils and other organizations to take over LEP functions such as deciding how future government funding for growth should be used, to undertake mentoring of small businesses and building skills in the workforce. The council has been advertising for local business owners interested to be part of the new Board in the last few months, and the transition from the LEP to the new arrangements is due to complete in August 2024. At Cabinet at the end of February we heard about the council's new responsibilities for planning and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (or increase) from April 2024. This means that developers must protect natural habitats or compensate for the loss of it when they build – for example, if a woodland is destroyed by a road, they need to create another one, either onsite or elsewhere, or enhance the natural habitat onsite so that the effect of the development is to increase nature rather than decrease it. This has been introduced to try and combat the biodiversity crisis in the UK; since 1970 UK wildlife species have declined by 19% on average, with nearly

one in six species threatened with extinction. Cabinet recently reviewed the new £4.4m investment in SEND services at the council will be spent on, particularly around clearing the backlog of EHCPs and annual reviews. Since the poor SEND inspection report was published, the council has worked with health to create a priority action plan which was submitted to Ofsted/CQC on 7 March. This plan addresses two priority actions from the report (working better together to improve systems and outcomes for children and young people, and to improve quality and timeliness of EHCPs and annual reviews) and three areas for improvement (using performance data and information to plan and commission SEND services, engaging and communicating with children, young people and their families to reduce dissatisfaction, and working with providers of services for social, emotional and mental health and neurodiverse conditions to improve outcomes in these areas for children with SEND). There has also been a recent announcement that Suffolk County Council is set to receive an additional £10.9 million to create new specialist school places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in the county. At Scrutiny Committee we heard how despite the wet winter this year, East Anglia is considered a Serious Water Stressed Area by the Environment Agency. By 2050, the demand will be 2538MI/d (mega litres per day) but the amount available will be only 1700MI/d. This will affect water bill prices - and limit economic growth in the region, as although housing developments are always guaranteed a water supply, this is not the case for commercial/industrial developments. The report included plans to preserve water or generate new supplies, including reducing water company leaks, two new reservoirs in South Lincolnshire and the Cambridgeshire fens, plus a small new reservoir in North Suffolk, and an increase in water transferred around the region. The councillors were very concerned about the likelihood of water becoming scarce in the county in the near future, especially as the public seemed unaware. They talked about how the profile of this issue could be raised to prevent people using too much water. It was noted that Essex and Suffolk Water had already declared a moratorium for new industrial/commercial connections to the supply in the Hartismere area of mid Suffolk. Following an extensive informal engagement period throughout January, February and early March, Suffolk County Council's formal consultation for the proposed Suffolk Devolution Deal was launched on 18 March. The consultation and associated materials have been informed by feedback received during the engagement sessions the council held with staff, local businesses, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organizations, county, district and borough and town and parish councillors. The public consultation will run for 10 weeks (closing on 26 May) and has been designed with the help of advice from the Consultation Institute. Once the consultation has completed, the analysed results will be presented in detail to Cabinet in summer 2024. Another Suffolk County Council consultation which has recently been launched is for the next version of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan. The LTP sets out a long-term vision for transport in Suffolk and covers key themes such as decarbonisation of transport, strengthening the local economy, promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion, and creating better-connected places that encourage a range of transport choices. Many people's travel habits have changed over the past few years, and particularly since the Covid pandemic, so it is an excellent time to refresh the plan. Public feedback will help Suffolk County Council to draft something new, which will be subject to further consultation later in the year. Suffolk County Council has been awarded a £7.3m investment for Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure following successful bids to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, which supports local authorities to plan and deliver charging infrastructure for residents who do not have off-street parking. Suffolk residents without off-street parking will benefit from £5.9 million to support EV charging, and a further £1.4 million will be used to develop the county's existing EV charging network in community locations.

Richard Smith, Portfolio Holder, will be visiting Woolpit next week to look around the parish in regard to our report requesting 20 mph zone before making a decision on this.

District Councillors' report: The councils of Mid Suffolk, with a Green Party administration, and Babergh, that is Independently led, have just been jointly awarded Council of the Year for their collaboration and focus on their communities. This was awarded by the iESE, a not-for-profit organisation created by local authorities as a shared resource to transform public services and retain experience within the sector. Full Council adopted the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2024 and the associated delivery plan. Together with Babergh the councils want to aspire to go beyond the minimum required provision, and hope to provide a bespoke person-centred and proactive service. Full council recommended approval of the amendments proposed to the Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Framework following the sixth review. The main changes include allowing applications for District CIL from sports clubs and community shops and cafes with provisos to ensure that any profit made by such businesses goes back to the community, and allowing more flexibility for community project costs. The County Council has now opened the consultation of the proposed Level 3 devolution deal for the county. MSDC councillors debated this issue at last week's Council meeting, but are not involved in the SCC decision. The deal would mean the county council would have more local power alongside a fund of £480M over a 30-year period. This is a small proportion of the total SCC budget. There would also be a directly elected leader of the County Council. A 2000MW solar farm proposal near Mendlesham has been proposed. This is a large nationally significant energy application which will be determined by the Planning Inspectorate. MSDC are just a consultee, but have requested more clarity about certain aspects of the application. The next drop-in sessions are 25 April Teacups and 21 May Wesley Café. The path from Goldstar is in place but there is no drop kerb which has been raised with officers. There is disagreement between David Wilson Homes and MSDC to which land has been levelled and who is responsible for areas around the car park at the rear of the Health Centre. A meeting has been arranged to sort matters and also landscaping. Cllr Overett has asked for 2 bins to be installed on the development of which one should be a dog bin. The Health Centre has been asked if they would like to put in EV charger in the car park themselves so that the Centre could have an income from them, no response has been received yet. MSDC has been asked to look into providing the signage for the Health Centre car park as it may be able to do so more cheaply than the quote received from SCC.

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

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 5 March 2024

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

24/01477 Application for work to trees subject to TPO MS196/W1 No.1 group of oak (G1) reduce the height of the trees by approx. 4-5 m to suitable replacement growth and reduce side lateral branches by approx. 3-4m.15 Lower Broom Road – no comment.

24/01506 Erection of 4No dwellings (following demolition of barns). Grassy Lane Farm, Grassy Lane – object. The Grassy Lane area of Woolpit parish is rapidly becoming a small housing development. The owner makes piecemeal applications and has several permissions which he has not yet begun work on or has not completed.

1.the nature of this development as a whole, looking back over the planning history we calculate at least 14 individual dwellings have received full or outline permission

in recent years. As a result, there have been no environmental, traffic or drainage assessments, and there is no provision for affordable housing.

2. No further housing is needed in Woolpit

3. There are too many existing and proposed dwellings for the narrow access road of Warren Lane. The narrowness of Warren Lane requires cars to mount the verge to pass each other, making it unsuitable for pedestrians to use the verge. This then causing further issues at the junction of Warren Lane with The Heath. The proposed development would result in an unacceptable highway safety outcome by way of increased potential for vehicle and pedestrian conflict in Warren Lane.

4. The proposed development, by reason of the lack of pedestrian connectivity to local services, would not represent a sustainable location for residential development.

5. Existing sewage services are inadequate and already require regular tanker attendances by Anglian Water to the sewage pumping station in Warren Lane. This situation will be exacerbated by additional dwellings

6. Although in Flood Zone 1, there is a history of flooding in this particular area and therefore a detailed flood risk assessment should be carried out.

7. There does not appear to be any cycle storage.

8. This is overdevelopment of the site in a rural area.

We feel that this should be considered as a single development of 17 dwellings. If a single application had been made for the 17 dwellings it would be a major application and, as such, would have needed a design and access statement, a sustainable urban drainage system, an ecological survey, affordable housing statement, landscape plan, S106 heads of terms and evidence of title, management plans for open space, impact assessments etc.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

24/00564 Conversion and extension of existing garage and outbuilding to form Annexe. Jocsosse Meadow, Rags Lane – granted

24/01013 Notification of work to trees in a Conservation Area. Proposal to re-coppice remaining standing stems, remove lodged stem and clear fallen stem of Ash tree (T7). Lady's Well, Elmswell Road – no objection.

24/01016 Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Re-Pollard 2No. Ash Trees (T1 and (T2) and Fell 1No. Rowan (T3). Woolpit Playing Field, The Street – no objection.

24/00116 Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered, all other matters reserved) - Erection of 1no. self-build single storey dwellinghouse (following demolition of existing buildings). Spooners, The Heath – granted.

24/00402 Discharge of conditions appl 21/01132 – condition 7 (provision of nesting boxes). Land off Bury Road – acceptable.

23/04662 Discharge of conditions appl 18/04247 Condition 16 (Energy & renewable integration). Land off Bury Road – acceptable.

23/04661 Discharge of conditions appl 18/04247 Condition 33 (Burial ground contamination strategy). Land off Bury Road – satisfied

24/00236 Discharge of conditions appl 18/04247 Condition 21 (archaeology) and Condition 22 (Archaeology Post Excavation Assessment). Land off Bury Road – satisfied.

24/00833 Discharge of Conditions appl 23/04639 Condition 4 (Biodiversity Enhancement Layout). Hesther Cottage, Mill Lane – satisfied.

7. Clerk's Report

Training – Mrs Ewans is to attend a Biodiversity net gains for councils course and Mrs Fuller will attend a procurement process course.

Trees on MSDC land, Briar Hill – MSDC has arranged to crown lift to 6m over the road the trees at the junction of Briar Hill with Meadowlands and remove any deadwood.

Closure of A14 overnight – this is for resurfacing and will commence 15 April 8.00 pm to 6.00 am.

SID The Heath – the pole has now been moved to the correct position and the SID will be ordered as agreed at the CIL meeting 19 March.

Anglia Car Chargers – the Letter Before Action has been sent by post and emailed to the Managing Director.

Councillor vacancies – MSDC has confirmed there was no request for an election and both vacancies can be filled by co-option. An advert has been included in the April/May Diary.

Litter Picker – Mr Harknett has tendered his resignation and will retire at the end of June after almost 20 years.

Welcome to Woolpit map standing between Lady's Well and double roundabouts – has fallen off the due to the wooden backboard rotting. As the map is out of date it will not be replaced. Mr Hardiman will remove the backboard.

Lorries parking overnight in Old Stowmarket Road – photos have been passed to District Cllr Mansel. There are no regulations that prevent lorries parking in the road but if they are obstructing the drop kerb or parking on the paving this is an obstruction and should be reported to the Police.

Green area for Woolpit – a public meeting has been arranged for 22 April 2024.

Annual Parish Meeting – this will be held on 23 April 2024.

Mr Foster left the meeting at 8.36 p.m.

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

Resident concerned that motorists are going the wrong way down the one-way section of Mill Lane once it is dark. **Three residents** concerned regarding the planning application for the Co-op drop box as they think this will generate more traffic in Masons Lane. They have all been advised to send objections to the application to MSDC as the LPA. **Resident** concerned regarding traffic in The Street and has had their car damaged. **Woolpit Health Centre Patient Participation Group** would like to put regular articles in Woolpit Diary. It was agreed there would be no charge as this is public information and be limited to half or whole page each issue. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: Rural Services Network Funding Digest March, Rural Bulletin 12, 19, 26 March. SALC news bulletin 11, 18, 25 March, 2 April, training bulletin 12, 14, 19, 26 March, 2 April, NSIPs Bulletin, notes from SALC Mid Suffolk Area Forum 19 March. Suffolk Wildlife Trust Community Wildlife courses 2024. MSDC Easter Holiday activities, District CIL alert – Bid round 13, Suffolk Recycles Spring newsletter, VCFSE Community Development grant funding in Mid Suffolk, Town & Parish update April, Norwich-Tilbury statutory consultation. Suffolk SLCC procurement course for Clerks and Councillors. Arthritis Action presentation to groups. Transport East launch of Rural connections: Transport challenges and opportunities in East report, Travel Behaviour Survey for the East. MARPA newsletter Spring 2024. Suffolk Police Suffolk introduces digital desk to improve accessibility to the public. Mrs Cooper thanks for donation to Loreli & Caroline fundraising for Air Ambulance.**

9. To approve accounts for payment.

Payments of £41.86 to E-on next for pump light quarterly bill and £15.54 Anglian Water Business allotment water 6/12/23-4/3/24 were unanimously ratified. The Clerk has set up a new direct debit for E-on next now we are with Unity Trust Bank as Barclays cancelled the last one. Mr K Harnett £93.78 Litter Picking March, Mr M Gardiner £773.90 Highways Ranger March, Mrs P Fuller £2,224.27 expenses January – March, pay adjustment for increased rate and overtime 2023/4, Suffolk County Council £357.36 pension payment March, HM Revenue & Customs £2,327.70 Tax & N/I January-March, Viking Ltd £73.91 stationery, Business Services at CAS £8.72 additional premium for SIDs, Ron Raisey £137.04 edit April/May Woolpit Diary, Suffolk County Council £2,865.50 streetlighting power and maintenance 2023/4, Stuart Langston Arboricultural Services £1,180.00 tree work at Lady's Well, allotments and pump area. Under CIL Mr C P Schramm £4,647.69 50%

payment to order windows for ARC, Mr M Hardiman £54.79 Reimbursement for paving slabs and post mix for benches. All accounts were approved and payments authorised by Mrs Robinson, Mr Gallagher and the ARC item by Mr Hardiman. Payment by Standing Order Mrs Fuller £1,056.91 March salary.

10. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The balance of the Community Account at the end of March was £491,958.43 of which CIL is £389,474.58, Recreation Ground £1,945.47, earmarked reserves £48,341.18, general reserve £30,336.81 and general funds £21,860.39. This has not been reconciled as the bank statement has not been received.

11. To receive an update on the Vertas Taxi-bus service and take any necessary action.

This is being well used by Woolpit residents. There is a meeting between Mr Dow Elmswell Clerk and MSDC to discuss funding for 2024/5 and if Locality funding can be applied for following the funding from BSIP.

12. To discuss relocating the beacon to Woolpit Cricket Club ground, and take any necessary action.

Mr Hardiman and Mrs Robinson have met with members of the Cricket Club and a suitable site has been identified in the North East corner. This will be plotted on a map to ensure it is on WCC ground. The Clerk will then consult MSDC regarding planning permission.

Action: The Clerk

13. Completed training details for March 2024. None.

14. To receive an update on benches on some footpaths and take any necessary action.

The timber has been ordered and is being pressure treated. Clarkes of Walsham will deliver when ready.

15. To receive an update on possible land for a dog park and take any necessary action.

The Clerk will arrange a meeting with Martin Baker which will be attended by Mrs Ewans, and Dr Geake.

Action: The Clerk

16. To receive a report on footpaths and take any necessary action.

No report. SCC has advised that they will not be replacing fingerposts as they have no funding available for this and has suggested the parish may want to replace these themselves.

17. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

a) A14 roadworks

overnight closure of the A14 between Woolpit and Bury St Edmunds commences on 15 April for resurfacing

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

Richard Smith is visiting Woolpit to assess before making a decision on the submitted report

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

The pole in the grounds of Churchgate House has been installed. As Bury Road is currently closed due to roadworks, the SID from Briar Hill will be moved to Churchgate House to see if it functions correctly from there along Church Street and Old Stowmarket Road before ordering an additional SID. The pole has been moved at The Heath to the correct position and the Clerk will order the SID. Spares are now at the Institute.

Action: The Clerk

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

A complaint has been received that work is commencing before agreed working hours. It is noted that the developer has removed the wording ‘to be developed by others’ and replaced with ‘for future residential development’ on their marketing material.

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

A tenant who has taken over a vacant plot has cleared a lot of rubbish from the plot and is asking advice how to get rid of it. Mrs Jenkins will look to see how much there is.

Action: Mrs Jenkins

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

There are 2 new trustees who still have to sign forms. The committee are hoping to get a new treasurer in place. There has been a change of caretaker and the committee is looking at splitting the job into a caretaker position and a booking clerk. The AGM is scheduled for 15 April but is likely to be postponed. The Trustees are looking to stabilise the structure and rework the constitution, they are also trialling Hallmaster online booking system.

21. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 7 May 2024.

Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.06 p.m.

Signed...approved.....

Dated.....7 May 2024.....