

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

Present: Dr Geake (Chair), Mr Guyler, Mrs Jenkins, Mr Gallagher, Mrs Osborne-Lomax, Mr Hardiman and Mr Foster.

In attendance: District Cllrs Overett and Mansel, Mrs Fuller, Clerk, Mrs Ewans, Deputy Clerk and 5 members of the public.

Dr Geake welcomed Mrs Osborne-Lomax to her first meeting. It is with regret that Mrs Robinson has resigned from the Parish Council but we thank her for her contribution and hard work.

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

Public comment: resident thanked District Cllr Overett for her help in getting the containers moved on the Tilia site. The silos should be moved in January. District Cllr Mansel advised that the Tilia planning application will be going to MSDC Planning Committee hopefully in January. Mr Howard passed to Cllrs a welcome pack which is given out to new residents of Drinkstone for consideration for Woolpit. Mr Howard will be leading a meeting on Friday to arrange VE Day 80th anniversary celebrations in May. Mr Foster and Mr Hardiman will attend on behalf of the Parish Council. The Parish Council will agree an amount for a financial contribution at the budget meeting next month. Mr Baker advised that he has purchased Drinkstone Mill and hopes to have the sails made and on by the VE celebrations as he remembers watching aircraft going over it during the war. Mrs Ewans commented that the Christmas trees look wonderful this year.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

County Councillor's report: At Cabinet on Tuesday 5 November, a decision was made by the council that it would allocate £1.5m from its reserves to deal with the recommendations which have come out of the flood investigation (Section 19) reports following Storm Babet last October. The money will mostly be used for highways flood mitigation and drainage work, but some will be put aside to develop longer-term schemes and accessing funding for further flood protection for the county. The money will not fix all problems with flooding in the county and the £1.5m relates only to the recommendations from the reports published so far (10 reports out of the 48 commissioned). The works funded via this decision will be carried out between now and March 2026, and additional funding is required because the council would ordinarily only carry out three or four investigations a year – Storm Babet means that 48 will be needed. Flood investigations are prioritised in locations where five or more properties have been flooded, or flooding to major infrastructure for 10 hours or more. For the second year running, Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders are providing funding to help Suffolk residents make their homes warmer and save money on their energy bills by providing discounted loft insulation - an uninsulated home can lose up to a quarter of its heat through its roof. The Suffolk Loft Insulation Offer enables homeowners in Suffolk to receive a 50% discount (up to £200) and free delivery on orders of 200mm or 370mm wide eco-friendly thermal insulation rolls. The council's new £3m fund for interest-free loans to residents wishing to undertake home energy efficiency upgrades that was mentioned in last month's parish report is now active. Energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps are possible with loans from £2,000 to £15,000 to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest. A Suffolk Retrofit Assessment Voucher Scheme is also launching, funded by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders, whereby homeowners in Suffolk will be able to apply for a voucher that covers the cost of a professional retrofit assessment on their home property. These assessments are the first step towards making their home more energy-efficient, lowering their bills and reducing their carbon footprint. Residents who own a home

with an EPC band of below C can take up the offer of a voucher to claim an assessment from a PAS 2035 Retrofit Assessor who will identify the best measures for their home. Suffolk County Council has launched a public consultation prior to decisions on the budget for the next financial year, 2025-26, which are due to be made in the next few months. This is an opportunity for residents and businesses to share their views on proposed Council Tax changes and spending priorities, as well as giving information on how the council manages its finances, the cost-saving measures already in place, and how the council might generate more money to support essential services.

District Councillors' report: A full council meeting took place on the 21 November, which included discussion of the council's treasury management. The Green administration also introduced a motion urging the government to rethink the decision to cut the Winter Fuel Allowance for most pensioners. After debate, this was agreed and a letter will be written to the chancellor. Updates to Fees and Charges across the district were approved in this month's cabinet meeting and will take effect on 1 April 2025. A full list of alterations is available on the council's website – most charges are being raised by only 1.7% and some fees are coming down. Mid Suffolk's website now has a new community funding page, which aims to make it much easier for local community groups to understand and apply for grants and funding. If you are in need of some funding for a project, it's worth going to the Mid Suffolk website home page and clicking the 'Access community funding' button. There are a few alterations to the recycling schedule over Christmas, including a scheme to recycle Christmas Trees. There has been national press speculation over a change in local government structure across Suffolk. The White Paper has yet to be published, being scheduled to be published in December, although there has been speculation over the district and county councils being abolished and replaced with a unitary authority (with combined powers of a district and county council) covering all of Suffolk. More information will be available in the future. Mid Suffolk council, along with their partners in Babergh council, signed up to a new campaign to stop social housing stigma. This was done in the form of a council workshop, which looked at the best methods to tackle social housing inequality and negative stereotypes associated with it across the district. MSDC have confirmed responsibility for the maintenance of the new car park behind the surgery. Soft landscaping will be planted this season and work is ongoing to provide EV charging points in the allocated spaces. Road signage has been ordered and SCC will erect the signs in due course. MSDC enforcement officers have been working with Tilia Homes regarding the unlawful site compound adjacent to Bury Road. Tilia Homes have agreed to move the unsightly buildings and silos to the correct location over the coming weeks. Enforcement officers have also been dealing with the site between Drinkstone Road and Rags Lane. It has been agreed that the container will remain as a store for machinery needed to maintain the meadow and planting will occur this winter, in compliance with the S106 and planning conditions. Reminder that we are still welcoming Locality Budget applications from local community groups. Monthly drop-in sessions are 10-12 noon 7 January at the Wesley Café and 13 February at Tea Cups.

4. To receive declarations of interest and requests for dispensation.

There were none.

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

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

24/04953 advert consent & **24/04954** Listed Building consent. Construction of 1 externally lit hanging sign on retained bracket, 1 externally lit wall sign and remove existing and replace window vinyls. East of England Co-op Foodstore, The Street – decision to object to lit signage in the Conservation Area but if MSDC minded to

approve then they must be turned off when the store is closed.

24/05092 Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area – re-pollard 1 lime tree back to previous points. Beechen Green, Drinkstone Road - leave the decision to MSDC Tree Officer.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

24/04445 Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Proposal to fell T1 Laburnum Tree due to poisonous seeds, reduce height of T2 Sycamore Tree by approximately 4m and remove branches to create 2m clearance over existing carport, reduce height of T3 Sycamore Tree by approximately 6m and reduce height of T4 Eucalyptus Tree by approximately 6m. Street House, The Street – no objection.

24/04518 Application for works to a tree in a Conservation Area - Fell 1 No Norway Maple Tree (T11) to ground level, tree has been linked to potential subsidence damage. New Rectory, Rectory Lane – no objection.

24/04636 Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce 1 No. Apple Tree (T1) by 3m and prune side branches by up to 2m to re-shape. The Bull Inn, The Street – no objection.

24/04656 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/22/04067 - Condition 9 (Landscape Management Plan), Condition 10 (Hard Landscaping Scheme and Boundary Treatments) and Condition 15 (Construction Surface Water Management Plan) Land Adj To O C Jewers & Sons Ltd, Elmswell Road. Condition 15 not acceptable, further details required. Conditions 9 & 10 acceptable.

7. Clerk's Report

Rural Services Network bulletins - the Clerk asked if Cllrs wish to continue receiving these, it was agreed to carry on as they have funding information.

E-on Next – the Clerk has fixed the business plan for the next three years for the pump light.

Streetlight upgrades – SCC has now competed these.

SALC subscription – will increase by 0.2 % and NALC proportion by 40p per elector for 2025.

Meeting regarding the car park behind the Health Centre – This will be owned and operated by MSDC, the Health Centre has been informed.

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

Letters of thanks from **Woolpit Friendly Bridge Club, SARS and Mid Suffolk CAB** for grants. **The Poor's Land Trust** advising that Mrs Moss has resigned as a Parish Council nominated Trustee after 25 years and asks the Parish Council to nominate another Trustee. This will be an agenda item next month. In the meantime the Clerk will send a letter of thanks to Mrs Moss. *Action: the Clerk.* **Resident** concerns regarding bright lights recently fitted at Costcutter. They are blinding drivers in Old Stowmarket Road. The Clerk will write to the owners asking them to look at the issue and take action and advise that WPC is seeking advice from MSDC Environmental Health. *Action: the Clerk.* District Cllrs advised that there was no request for lighting on the 2017 planning application and they would take this up with the Planning Department. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: Rural Services Network** Funding Digest November, Rural Bulletin 12, 19, 26 November, 3 December. **SALC** Employer National Insurance Survey, news bulletin 11, 18, 25 November, 2 December, training bulletin 12, 19, 26 November, 3 December, NSIPS bulletin October, introducing new members of the team, Jim Friend retirement 31 December, Mid Suffolk Area Forum 5 December, DEFRA property flood resilience grant fund. **SCC** LGPS employer newsletter Autumn, LGPS Suffolk Annual Employers meeting 10 December, Help your communities stay warm this winter, loft insulation for everyone in Suffolk, Greenest County Community newsletter. **Suffolk Highways** update 3 A1088 Bridge Farm Bridge, Stowlangtoft. **MSDC** CIL briefing sessions November/December, free trees, hedging and wildflower scheme,

Christmas and New Year refuse collection schedules 2024/5, HAF Christmas activity programme, adoption of BMSDC Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and intensive livestock and poultry farming SPD. **MARPA** response to draft Suffolk Local Transport Plan, newsletter November. **National Highways** A14 westbound J43 bridge joint repairs and resurfacing 26-28 November overnight. **FSP Sports** sports sessions available for all ages.

9. Finance

a) To receive a monthly financial report from the Clerk

The current account balance at the end of October was £38,545.69 and savings account is £650,000.00. The total of both accounts is £688,545.69. Of this CIL is £548,155.27, Recreation Ground £776.67, earmarked reserves £49,276.64, general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £53,337.01.

b) To approve accounts for payment.

Payments of grants to SARS £875.00 and Mid Suffolk CAB £1,400.00 were unanimously ratified. Mr M Gardiner £504.00 Highways Ranger November, Mrs P Fuller £1,453.86 Clerk's salary November (includes back pay for agreed salary scale 2024/5), Suffolk County Council £514.17 pension payment, Gipping Press £380.00 print December/January Woolpit Diary, Mr R Raisey £124.40 edit December/January Woolpit Diary, Suffolk.cloud £120.00 annual website hosting/support 2024/5, SLCC £190.00 2025 subscription, Woolpit Institute £390.00 meeting room hire 2024, Mr M Hardiman £43.53 reimbursement for wood and postfix for benches, Suffolk County Council £22,654.80 various streetlight column and lantern replacements, Proludic £219.60 two tiles for the trampoline. Under CIL Woolpit Institute £2,362.00 grant for gravelling outside space. All payments were approved and payments authorised. Payment by direct debit £37.55 E-on Next pump light quarterly bill.

c) To begin discussion on 2025/6 precept which must be agreed at the January meeting

Mr Foster suggested a new public footpath from Drinkstone Road to Deadman's Lane however this is not something the Parish Council can facilitate. VE Day celebrations need to be included in the budget.

10. To consider the purchase of outdoor cinema equipment and take any necessary action.

WPC has been offered the screen, pump and projector for £700.00, speakers would need to be purchased separately at approx. £1000.00. Issues would be storage and erecting the screen when required. It was agreed to carry forward this item to the next meeting so that we can find out how old the equipment is, what it would cost new and find out costs of hiring a company to put on shows.

Action: Mr Hardiman/the Clerk.

11. To consider framing an old map of Woolpit for public display and take any necessary action.

WPC has been given an old map of the village. It is an unusual size so will need to have a bespoke frame. The Deputy Clerk has one quote for £139.00. Councillors agreed that it would be good to have this on public display and further quotes will be obtained for the next meeting.

Action: Deputy Clerk

12. To consider filling the casual vacancy by co-option and take any necessary action.

The resignation of Mrs Robinson means we have two vacancies, the notice has been posted on the board and MSDC will advise mid December if an election has been requested. The second space can be filled by co-option. An advert was placed in the December/January Diary.

13. To adopt a CCTV policy and procedure and take any necessary action.

The draft policy and procedure has been approved by the Village Hall Committee with a few revisions. WPC await the revised draft for consideration at the January meeting.

14. To consider turning off, moving or removing two Parish Council streetlights due to the proximity of the lights by the new roundabout in Bury Road and take any necessary action.

SCC has turned the two lights off awaiting our instructions. Mr Guyler proposed that we request SCC to remove the lanterns and connections of Units 42 & 44 and that a new column is installed in The Street outside Grange House as there is a large area of The Street without lighting. One of these lanterns could be fitted to the column. Cllrs asked if the lanterns are the same as those fitted now and what consultation with residents will be required. This information will be requested and discussed at the next meeting.

Action: the Clerk

15. To review Reserves, Lone Worker, Data Protection, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety and Complaints policies and update as necessary.

The only revision required is changing any WPC website details to woolpitparishcouncil.gov.uk. This was approved and the policies will all be renamed to standardise the headings.

Action: the Clerk

16. To receive an update on the Elmswell to Woolpit cycle/footpath and take any necessary action.

SCC wanted to postpone the next meeting until February 2025. However, Mrs Ewans has managed to get a meeting in Woolpit between the Officer, District Cllrs and Deputy Clerk on 9 December which will allow them to walk the route and look at current safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists on the Woolpit end of the route in particular as there is a lack of signage and a section with no path which will need to be resolved.

17. To receive an update regarding an additional entrance to Lady's Well and take any necessary action.

As this is an informal entrance, this has been deferred until after the meeting with SCC.

18. To receive an update on a Village Event including an Organisations Fair and take any necessary action.

It looks as if there will need to be two events, one for VE Day 80th celebrations in May and a further event and organisation fair in the summer.

19. To receive a quarterly report from the Greener Woolpit Project Working Group and take any necessary action.

A village meeting supported the idea of creating a woodland with a wildflower meadow buffer zone against the allotments. The working group were awaiting a supply of wildflower mix from MSDC before drawing up final plans but this did not come through so final plans and planting will take place next year. Forestry England and the Woodland Trust should provide grants for fencing and trees as well as hedging plants. Hopkins Homes supplied a digger and driver to create a wet scrape in the wettest area of the field which is a valuable winter habitat. The current arable weeds are another valuable winter seed source. Ragwort has been removed to avoid seeding into adjoining horse paddocks.

20. To discuss traffic issues in the parish**a) to receive an update on solar powered Speed Indicator signs and locations and take any necessary action**

The SID from Church Street has been moved to Green Road and looks to be working well. Mr R Baker was thanked for allowing the pole to be erected on his land. The SID along The Heath has been turned to monitor vehicles leaving the village and is much more visible.

21. To consider a response to enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings consultation and take any necessary action. (ends 19 December 2024).

Councillors completed the consultation in favour of remote meetings in certain circumstances but against proxy voting.

Action: the Clerk

22. To consider a response to Gambling Act 2005 Babergh & Mid Suffolk Statement of Principals consultation and take any necessary action. (ends 24 December) Cllrs do not wish to comment.**23. Completed training details for November 2024.**

Dr Geake and Mrs Fuller attended the Councils as a sole trustee of a charity training.

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

People have moved into the completed houses. The road is open for workers therefore satisfies the conditions for occupation.

25. To receive a report on the allotments including consideration of closing the Allotment for the Labouring Poor, Woolpit Charity and take any necessary action.

Most tenants have paid rent renewals and the Clerk has chased any outstanding. Several have paid but not returned signed updated tenancy agreements and these have had a reminder. The Clerk believes that the charity is no longer applicable as the land for the allotments is not the original land given for the charity. Mrs Ewans, Deputy Clerk is to investigate the file and produce a report for the next meeting.

Action: Deputy Clerk

26. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee (if available).

The committee are meeting with the architect next week who will bring initial ideas and to hear trustees' ideas. A full measurement survey has been carried out. A new website has been built and shown to trustees and will be adopted in the new year. The Charity has paid for a booking system which will go live next year.

27. Date and time of the next meeting – Tuesday 7 January 2025 at 7.30 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.17 p.m.

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

Dated.....7 January 2025.....