

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

Present: Mr Guyler, Mr Gallagher, Mrs Robinson, Mr Foster and Mr Hardiman.

In attendance: District Cllrs Mansel and Overett, Mrs Fuller Clerk and 4 members of the public.

In the absence of the Chair, Mr Guyler was unanimously voted to chair this meeting.

1. Apologies for absence.

These were received and accepted from Mrs Jenkins and Dr Geake.

2. Public comment: resident concerned that Tilia Homes may not be complying with approved plans with regard to the car park and landscaping. District Cllr Mansel asked for photos to be sent to her and then she would take up with the MSDC Planning. Resident concerned regarding the condition of local roads and who was going to pay for repairs since this was caused by work on the A14. County Cllr Mellen has raised this several times with SCC Highways but has not had a response. Mr Hardiman advised that Dan's Coaches have won the contract for the school buses from October and hope to run 4 buses per day and will look at providing a weekend service in due course. There would appear to be a drug issue in Elmswell which is likely to spread to Woolpit. The Outside Film Night on 1 September was very successful and attended by all age groups. The Clerk will send thanks to the Cricket Club for allowing it to take place and for providing the barbeque and bar. The company used is giving up the cinema side of their business and are willing to sell all the equipment except the speakers for £700.00 which may be worth considering as it cost £350.00 to hire each time. Mr Hardiman will look into the price of speakers and cost of replacement projector bulbs before the matter is discussed further. Resident concerned regarding the condition of the Millennium Garden as it is very overgrown. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting. Mr Foster advised that the bottle bank area also needs looking at.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' report: Mid Suffolk Council are carrying out an informal survey to find out how our residents want us to invest to improve facilities in our communities. The Annual canvass of electors is currently underway. All properties in the district are being contacted to confirm who is registered to vote. Mid Suffolk Cabinet will be discussing the new waste collection service next week. The proposals include weekly food waste collections from 2026 as well as accepting more recyclable waste with the addition of a second recycling bin for every household. This will mean that the general waste black bin will not fill up as quickly, and any changes to the collection cycle will be explained to residents as part of a Suffolk-wide communication ahead of the 2026 roll-out. Businesses across the district are set to be recognised for fresh thinking and new ideas in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Innovation awards this autumn. Work has now begun on the development of the sports facilities at Chilton Fields in Stowmarket. The new trim-trail is currently being installed. The rest of phase 1 of development will continue over the coming weeks as part of a larger project aimed at addressing the Health Inequalities in Stowmarket. The old HQ building in Needham Market is to be sold for development, in order to deliver the regeneration plans and funds for re-investment back into social housing. MSDC has already developed housing on the old Middle School site and part of the old office site behind the older building facing the high street. A trial of electric community vehicles is set to launch next summer in Suffolk. Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs will be placing sixteen electric vehicles across eight locations in Suffolk, which local residents can book by the minute, hour or day. Two of these locations are in Mid Suffolk – Needham Market and Stowmarket. The planning application for a care home and sheltered housing units on School Road was determined by planning

committee on 28th August. The scheme was recommended for refusal on grounds relating to heritage harm, landscape harm and it was against policy in both the new Joint Local Plan and Elmswell Neighbourhood Plan. The committee agreed with the officer recommendation and the application has been refused. Monthly drop-in sessions are 10-12 Thursday 19 September at Teacups Café and Tuesday 22 October at the Wesley Café.

Mr Hardiman asked on progress of installing EV chargers to the car park off Old Stowmarket Road. Cllrs Overett and Mansel continue to raise this at MSDC and have been assured that this matter is being discussed. Mrs Fuller asked if there was any update on the cycle/footpath to Elmswell. It was agreed at the last meeting that a further meeting for an update would be held on 9 September. Mrs Robinson can attend on Woolpit's behalf if necessary.

County Councillor's Report: On 20 August the inspection report for Suffolk County Council's social care services for children was published, following a visit from Ofsted at the end of May. The report found that social care services for children, which include fostering and adoption, safeguarding, child protection, youth justice and corporate parenting (children in care), 'require improvement to be good.' My group are concerned by this as children's services were rated as 'Outstanding' the last time they were inspected in 2019, and the remarks on leadership – that leaders do not have 'sufficient grip' on all the services provided – are especially worrying. A new director for children's services started in July 2024, and more information will be available on the plans for improvement in September when the inspection report is tabled at Cabinet. This inspection is separate from the recent inspection into services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Moving up and changing school is a big change for children and a new stage of growing independence. To help parents and carers support children with this transitions, Suffolk County Council have a selection of Solihull Approach online courses which are free for anyone with a Suffolk postcode. Over 60 new community venues across Suffolk will have new electric vehicle (EV) charge points, as Suffolk County Council's 'Plug-In Suffolk' project continues to grow. Fast charging facilities will be installed at 63 new sites, including community centres, village halls, scout huts and other community hubs, and 25 existing charge points from an early iteration of Plug-In Suffolk will be adopted under a new contract. The county council has successfully bid for £7.3 million from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, which supports local authorities to plan and deliver EV charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking. £1.4 million of the LEVI funding will go towards the community charging infrastructure, with a further £5.9 million allocated for on-street charging, which will be developed later this year. Residents of Suffolk can come together to invest in renewable energy sources through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. Solar Together Suffolk helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from qualified installers.

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

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 6 August 2024.

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

24/03790 and 24/03791 LB Installation of 4ft high gates, Sunnyridge Cottage, Rags Lane – no comment.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

24/03399 Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area – reduce 2 Acer crimson king trees by 50% to give more light to garden and pool area and fell 1 silver birch which is dead. The Limes, Drinkstone Road – no objection.

7. Clerk's Report

Steeles Road garden – MSDC has confirmed that we can have a dog and litter bin in the area which they will empty.

Keith Harknett – Keith sends his thanks for the card and gifts to mark his retirement as Litter Picker.

MSDC NPPF consultation – Cllrs were advised that this can be completed as an individual but if they wanted WPC to respond we would need to arrange an additional meeting. Cllrs were asked to consider this and advise the Clerk.

Parish Liaison meeting – a reminder that Woolpit is hosting the next meeting with neighbouring villages on 10 September.

Reporting matters to the Police – the Clerk advised that she had tried to contact the SNT team to request additional patrols to combat anti-social behaviour and vandalism. That email address is no longer valid and on completing the online form it advises to talk to the local council. She therefore emailed Tim Passmore, PCC and has had a response from the correspondence and complaints officer that the Community Policing Team will contact us.

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

Resident concerned regarding a dispute with one of the advertisers in Woolpit Diary. The Clerk was instructed to advise that WPC cannot arbitrate in these matters and they should contact Trading Standards. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** MSDC BMSDC Town & Parish Council survey (planning), Suffolk Police and Crime Panel 2023/4 annual report, Town and Parish update September. **SALC** AGM 1 July draft minutes, news bulletin 13, 20, 27 August, 2 September, training bulletin 13, 20, 27 August, 3 September, NSIPs Bulletin August. **Rural Services Network** Rural Funding Digest August, Rural Bulletin 13, 22, 28 August, 3 September. **CAS** community led housing Zoom events. **National Highways** A14 Haughley to Tot Hill reconstruction scheme feedback survey and drop in event 28 August. The Clerk responded and asked what they will do to contribute to the repairs to damaged local roads used as rat runs during the work. **Suffolk Police** public meetings September & October. **Health Watch Suffolk** age well ion Suffolk survey. **Mindful later life** fully funded mindfulness courses in October.

9. To consider Insurance renewal through Business Services at CAS and take any necessary action.

The renewal premium from Ansvar via Community Action Suffolk is due on 1 October and the premium quote is £1,276.28 which includes £10m Public Liability Cover and £237k for Assets Register items. The Deputy Clerk is checking replacement values for all the Asset Register items. It was agreed to advise CAS that we will be renewing once these figures are checked and the payment can be approved at the next meeting.

Action: then Clerk

10. To approve accounts for payment.

Mr M Gardiner £528.00 Highways Ranger August, Mrs P Fuller £1091.35 Clerk salary August, Suffolk County Council £405.13 pension payment August, Mr P Raven £30.00 renovation of the war memorial and noticeboard, Elmswell Parish Council £451.20 Vertas taxi-bus contribution June 2023-March 2024, Mr M Hardiman £79.38 reimbursement for plastic poles and batteries for Highways Ranger equipment, Classic Ice Cream Bike CO £340.00 outside cinema 1 September. All accounts were approved and payments authorised. Payment by Direct Debit e-on next £37.97 pump light quarterly bill.

11. To receive a monthly financial report.

The current account balance at the end of August was £543,983.78 of which CIL is £427,835.51, Recreation Ground £925.47, earmarked reserves £51,123.22 general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £27,099.58.

12. To consider a grant request from Communities Together East Anglia and take any necessary action.

The Clerk was asked to get a breakdown of the £4,930.56 annual cost by heading and a set of last audited accounts. These have not been received and therefore no further action can be taken at this time.

13. To consider filling two casual vacancies and take any necessary action.

MSDC has confirm that no request for an election has been received and both vacancies can be filled by co-option. The Clerk will arrange an advert in the next Woolpit Diary and on the noticeboard. Meanwhile Cllrs were asked to consider people who can be approached to join the council. *Action: the Clerk/all Cllrs*

14. To adopt internet banking and CCTV polices and take any necessary action.

It was unanimously agreed to adopt the internet banking policy. Mr Gallagher and the Deputy Clerk will be asked to formulate the CCTV policy for both WPC as Trustee WRGC and the Village Hall Committee. *Action: Mr Gallagher/Deputy Clerk*

15. To consider a response to BMSDC Joint Local Plan Part 2 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation and take any necessary Action. (30 September). Cllrs agreed not to comment.

16. to consider a response to BMSDC Proposed Approach to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Consultation and take any necessary Action. (30 September). Cllrs agreed not to comment.

17. To receive an update on the Elmswell to Woolpit cycle/footpath and take any necessary action. Already covered under District Cllr report.

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

Mr Hardiman advised that the benches are made and one installed at Baker's Peace. The benches in Heath Road and Warren Lane will be installed shortly. The landowner of Bishop Karney Green has not given permission for a bench on the path near Wheeley Hall Cottage.

19. To receive an update regarding an additional entrance to Lady's Well and take any necessary action. No update received.

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

The committee of Mr Howard, Mrs Robinson and Mr Foster are still to meet. It is felt there must be a fun event such as a fair to draw people in with organisations also there to advise what they do etc.

21. To receive an update on Greener Woolpit project in Warren Lane and agree that Woods for Woolpit will manage the project.

Cllrs have received a fact sheet and draft plan for the area. It was agreed that New Woods for Woolpit will manage the project as a working party of WPC. Cllrs request that a quarterly report is sent to WPC and the group liaise with WPC as appropriate.

22. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

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

The Clerk has sent the revised area to SCC for consideration but has not yet received a response.

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

The SID along Bury Road by Briar Hill has been rotated. Mr Baker is willing to look for a suitable site on his land so that a SID can be installed in Green Road. The tree by the SID at The Heath needs to be lopped as you cannot see the full numbers on the SID. A meeting needs to be arranged with Goldstar to finalise the positioning

there for a pole before going to SCC for agreement as it is on the verge. A request has been received for a SID in Wood Road but there is no suitable site within the speed limit area.

23. Completed training details for August 2024.

Mr Gallagher has completed his councillors basic training.

24. To receive an update on the Bury Road development including a report on the meeting with Tilia Homes.

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk have met with the Land and Planning Director of Tilia Homes. He explained that Hopkins and Tilia are 'sister' companies owned in the same group. Woolpit is slightly outside its usual area of operations. The nearest site they are co-developing with Hopkins is at Thetford. He outlined the area which Tilia will develop and has promised to email a drawing so you can all see it. Essentially the area they will take over is south of the school site and along to the roundabout. This is 108 housing units. The remaining 192 will be completed by Hopkins as far as he knows.

Tilia's area includes the greater part of the affordable and social rented housing required in the overall planning permission. This is 31 homes in all. He emphasised that Tilia are not seeking to change the footprint of the houses as agreed in the existing planning permission. In fact, most of the 108 houses will be built to Hopkin's drawings. The site will look as envisaged. If the plan shows a three bed house that is what will be built. However, Tilia build slightly different houses. This will affect approx 40 plots.

The 'for rent social houses' which are immediately south of the school site is where building will commence because Tilia is not seeking to change them. He hopes they can be occupied by next spring. Also, the bungalows, with elderly and disabled in mind, will be built to existing plans.

The next application for the 40 houses they wish to change is likely to be submitted in September.

The area for which Tilia is responsible includes the burial ground and car park off Bury Road. He was aware of the WPC's proposals for the burial ground. The car park is more problematic and he will consider all options.

District Cllr Overton advised that MSDC Planning Officer is pursuing grass cutting issues on and around the site. All landscaping will need to be agreed with the LPA.

25. To receive a report on the allotments including the approval of a revised tenancy agreement and to consider a rent increase for 2024/5 and take any necessary action.

Mrs Jenkins has been to assess the area and there are quite a few plots not in good order.

A draft of a revised tenancy agreement has been circulated which gives tenants clearer information of how WPC expects the plots to be kept and left on termination of tenancy. This was unanimously approved by councillors and will be sent out with the renewal letter. The current rents are just covering the costs of water and due to the condition of the land opposite which is part of the rewilding project, it was agreed that there would be no increase in rent for 2024/5 but tenants will be given notice that it may be necessary to increase rents for 2025/6.

An email has been received from a tenant about the condition of some plots and the uncultivated field and old allotment area and they feel that the delay to decisions of the Warren Lane Greening Project is causing a lot of the issues of weeds on the allotment plots. It was agreed to forward his email to New Woods for Woolpit so that this can be taken into consideration with their plans for the area. *Action: the Clerk*

26. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee

Mr Foster, Chair of the Village Hall Committee, advised that it was agreed at the Parish Council June CIL meeting to fund architect costs for the Village Hall refurbishment project. The architect has now advised an increase in fees as they now have to carry out a biodiversity, ecological and tree surveys which are new requirements imposed by MSDC Planning. A further CIL request has been submitted for the Parish Council September CIL meeting. Mr Foster has spoken with other groups who have carried out previous projects in Elmswell, Norton and Drinkstone and he feels that the Village Hall Committee has complied with all the requests made by WPC. It is hoped that by December the Village Hall Committee will have details of 3 schemes for consideration and for WPC to consider how much it will grant from CIL funding and how much MSDC will grant. That will allow the committee to find other funding.

Mr Hardiman asked what fundraising the committee is undertaking to help fund the project. There has been none since Covid. The committee has been small and there have been issues with personnel and sorting various other issues regarding running of the village hall. The committee has been promoting the use of the village hall and have been gaining bookings for children's parties. In the future they hope to attract more bookings for wedding receptions when they have better facilities.

27. Date and time of the next meetings – CIL meeting Tuesday 17 September and Parish Council meeting Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 7.30 p.m. Both noted.

The meeting closed at 9.17 p.m.

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

Dated.....1 October 2024.....