

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 JUNE 2024 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

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

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

1. **Apologies for absence** were received and approved from Mr Guyler and Mrs Jenkins.

It was agreed to bring forward item 15 to after 6 planning.

2. **Public comment:** Resident regarding the condition of the car park opposite the church needs better maintenance. This is leased to MSDC.

Mr Hardiman is very disappointed and ashamed that we did not do anything to mark 80th anniversary of D-Day to commemorate the sacrifice made by so many.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

County Councillor's report: A motion, to lobby the government for improved funding for local authorities, which was supported by all parties and approved unanimously 23 May. Politicians of all parties are concerned by the £4 billion funding 'gap' predicted for councils in the next few years, particularly for social care. To balance the books this year, Suffolk County Council had to withdraw £15.9 million from its reserves - the equivalent of council savings accounts – but this is not a sustainable approach. Councils that have become bankrupt have to cut services back to the minimum they have to provide by law, and seek to raise revenue by increasing council tax and other avenues they have such as charges for parking or social care. At Cabinet on Tuesday 21 May, two reports were tabled on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in the region. The first was our response to the Five Estuaries wind farm proposals, this will have landfall in Essex but will be visible from the Suffolk coast and the developers are paying for a wildlife project on Orford Ness as environmental compensation. The second report detailed the council's response to the proposed Norwich to Tilbury 400kV grid reinforcement, and the Cabinet voted that the council should object and call for a pause until alternative options have been explored. The proposals include 183 kilometres of pylons, with four sections of underground cabling running through and near to the Dedham Vale National Landscape and the Waveney valley, but the council wants to see alternative options explored for additional undergrounding in the Waveney valley, and expressed concerns about the route which see pylons placed close to several Suffolk airfields. The council also discussed how to make sure that energy projects in the county were coordinated, as it was agreed that the impact of all the proposed projects in a similar timeframe would have a massive impact on the county, its landscape, economy and transport routes. Cabinet also considered a paper on recommendations for charges for post-16 school transport. Although students now have to be in education or training up to the age of 18, the council receives no funding from the government to pay for their transport. This means the council asks parents and carers to pay for part of the cost with the rest subsidised by the council. In 2023-24, the average cost for a mainstream seat was £1,701 and the average cost for a SEND student seat is £11,819. The proposal approved by Cabinet was for the charge for a mainstream seat to rise to £1,050 a year, which is a steep £90 increase from last year. There will be no increase for SEND students so their seats will remain at £780 a year. The 50% reduction in charge for families on a low income and in receipt of free school meals will continue for another year. The council will continue to signpost families to public transport routes where these may be cheaper and in addition, many schools have bursaries for travel which students can apply for. On Tuesday 21 May, Cabinet approved the new SEND Strategy for the Local Area SEND Partnership, which is

made up of the council's inclusion service and relevant NHS services. The new strategy takes on board recommendations from the recent Ofsted/CQC inspection to set the Partnership's direction for SEND services for the next five years. The strategy was co-produced with children, parents, carers and members of staff who work in SEND services and aims to improve services in several areas: communication, outcomes for SEND children and improved timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Annual Reviews. The strategy still requires some formatting/design work but will soon be available to view on the council's website. The council has just received notification that Ofsted will be coming for a two week inspection of its children's services. This inspection is focused on social care, youth justice, corporate parenting, family services and safeguarding. It will also look at partnership working with other council teams and external partners to support children and keep them safe. Suffolk County Council had its last children's services Ofsted inspection five years ago and was rated as Outstanding. Suffolk County Council, NHS partners and adult social care organisations have launched a dementia strategy. The number of people with dementia in the UK was estimated to be close to one million in 2021, but by 2050 this figure is expected to rise to 1.6 million people. In Suffolk, a predominantly rural county with an ageing population where 23.6% of Suffolk residents are 65 years or over - higher than the England average - the number of people who develop dementia is likely to be higher, so having a robust and effective strategy to manage this is essential. The strategy has been co-produced with people with dementia and their carers, and will look to promote early diagnosis, providing better information about care and treatment options, and focus on improved signposting for people of all ages with dementia, their carers and families, to help them get the support they want and need to enable them to live well with dementia within their own community. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has unveiled a £3.5 million investment in new firefighting vehicles and equipment, including a 32m turntable ladder vehicle, a specialist rescue tender, six new fire engines, a driver trainer vehicle plus a fleet of electric pool cars. The new vehicles will be on the road by summer 2024. The new vehicles are part of a planned replacement programme whereby fire engines are replaced every 15 years, and include the latest technology to help keep Suffolk residents safe. They also support the council's net zero targets as officer and pool cars will now be electric vehicles. Fire engines are generally diesel vehicles, although there are some electric-hybrid vehicles currently being trialled in London. In order to prepare Suffolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the council has launched a public survey so residents can share their favourite nature spots and which habitats they think should be protected. Farmers, landowners and land managers are also encouraged to submit practical, achievable proposals to support nature conservation, as well as sharing how land is currently managed and any challenges faced applying for government funding schemes. The strategy will form a plan to help reverse the decline in nature across the county, and to connect and expand existing areas that are important for wildlife and the landscape.

Cllr Mellen advised he has had discussions with Highways about getting matters dealt with as currently some take months to resolve and basically it comes down to money hence the motion reported above for adequate funding from government. The blocked gullies in The Street seems to have been resolved but there remain issues in Masons Lane which the Clerk has been told is not a priority road. Cllr Mellen advised that there are 1300 flooding issues across the county and they are dealing with those where properties have been flooded first.

Residents have reported problems with the lighting installed at the new roundabout in Bury Road shining into houses and Cllr Mellen will look into this.

The school has advised Cllr Gallagher that they would like a school crossing patrol reinstated. Cllr Mellen investigated this some time ago and Woolpit didn't meet the criteria. He was asked to find out what the criteria is.

30 mph repeaters are needed along Elmswell Road which may have been removed due to the recent road construction.

District Councillors' Report: The next parliamentary general election will take place on Thursday 4 July. The next scheduled MSDC Council meeting on 27 June has been cancelled due to the purdah period. Other meetings may also be cancelled for political reasons. The Annual Council meeting was held on 22 May. The new Chair is Cllr Dan Pratt and his chosen charity for the forthcoming year will be The Food Museum in Stowmarket. Cllr Keith Scarff was appointed as Vice Chair. There were very few other changes to committees. The Neighbourhood CIL payout of over £500k was distributed last month. The Neighbourhood CIL funds are for parishes to spend on infrastructure within their parishes, but they are still able to apply for further funds from the developer contribution. The next bid round for applications to the district for CIL funds opened on 31 May. The decisions will be taken to the Cabinet meeting in the autumn. Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been awarded funding to improve the carbon footprint of the swimming pools. Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre received £180k to fund pool covers, and micro filtration units. Funding to begin food waste collections in Babergh and Mid Suffolk has been agreed. The service will launch in 2026 as part of a national requirement from central government. There is approximately £250k shortfall in the funding allocated from central government. The plan will be for every household to receive a new 23-litre food waste bin, as well as a smaller 5-litre caddy for use in the kitchen. The food waste will be collected on a weekly basis. Funding of £18.8m has been agreed to create a Skills & Innovation Centre at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket – the latest development there to support business, create jobs, and boost the local economy. Monthly drop-in sessions are Thursday 20 June and Thursday 18 July 10-12 both at Teacups Café.

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

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 7 May 2024

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

23/05380 Reconsultation - Application for Approval of Reserved Matters following Outline Approval DC/19/02656 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) Submission of details for Appearance, Scale, Layout and Landscaping for the Erection of 40 No affordable dwellings, associated works & infrastructure. Land South of Melvin Way and Old Stowmarket Road – no further comment to make from 23 May response.

24/02174 Application for Approval of Reserved Matters following grant of Outline Permission granted under DC/24/00116 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Submission of details for Access, Appearance, Layout, Scale and Landscaping for erection of 1 no. self build single storey dwellinghouse (following demolition of existing buildings) and re-build garage. Spooners, The Heath – no comment.

24/02309 Application for Works to a tree protected by Tree Preservation Order WS64/A1 - (works to 13 No Oak Trees) (T1) - raise crown to 4m (T2) - raise crown to 4m and reduce length of lowest west-facing limb by 2.5m (T3) - raise crown to 4m (T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9 and T10) - raise crown to 4.5m and remove dead wood (T11) - cut back entire crown to leave single habitat pole. T12 - reduce length of east-facing limbs by 3.5m T13 - reduce length of east-facing limbs by 3.5m Reason: as part of ongoing management of the veteran trees and to lessen chances of limb failure. The Outfield, Green Road – no comment.

24/02359 Application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for DC/24/00564 for the Variation of a Condition 2 (Approved plans and documents) - amendment to approved out-building conversion. Jocrosse Meadow, Rags Lane – no comment.

24/02213 Erection of beacon. The Woolpit Cricket Playing Field, Rectory Lane – no comment.

24/02228 Construction of entrance gate and store/shed. Land at Green Farm, Green Road – object due to the oppressive height and construction materials the gates are out of keeping with the streetscape and surrounding area. They will also spoil the amenity of the area.

SCC/0127/23MS Northern extension to Lawn Farm Quarry for the extraction, processing, sale and distribution of sand and gravel and subsequent restoration using inert materials. Land to the north of Lawn Farm Quarry Old Bury Road, Wetherden

SCC/0084/20MS/VOC2 Variation of conditions 1, 11, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 36, 53, 54, 56 and 57 attached to planning permission reference SCC C/0084/20MS/VOC. Land to the north of Lawn Farm Quarry Old Bury Road, Wetherden. These are both reconsultations - no additional comments to our letter 24 February 2024.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

24/01734 Application for work to a tree in the Conservation Area. Pollard back to previous pruning site. 1 Lime tree. The Limes, Drinkstone Road – no objection.

24/01377 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/18/04247 - Condition 11 (Landscape Ecological Management Plan and Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy). Land Off Bury Road – acceptable.

24/01801 Application for a Non Material Amendment relating to DC/21/01132 - Updated plans for Plots 54-64. Window depth changes to take account of kitchen area worktop working areas. Addition of Velux AOV. Ridged height of gabled section of roof increased due to need to raise stair core window, hipped roof height unchanged. Land of Bury Road – acceptable.

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

Mr Howard is happy to assist in organising an event. It was agreed to have a working group to take this forward of Mr Howard, Mrs Robinson, Mrs Walker, Dr Geake and Mr Foster. Mr Howard will advise a suitable date for meeting.

7. Clerk's Report

New noticeboards – it is now over a year since we approved M & E Services to make bespoke noticeboards. Despite much chasing these have not been received. Cllrs agreed to investigate other suppliers.

Anglia Car Chargers – the court has received a response from Anglia Car Chargers who admit our claim and ask for time to pay by 7 June. WPC has agreed to this.

Play equipment – continual damage is being caused to the trampoline tiles. We have replaced again at a cost of £101.50. It was agreed to put a sign up to advise how much it costs each time to replace in the hope that this damage will stop.

There has also been further vandalism to all equipment by foam, glue and food colouring. Fortunately, Proludic attended the next day for a maintenance check and cleaned it off. CCTV has been viewed and three girls are responsible.

Good Councillor Guide 2024 – has been circulated to Cllrs to read.

Streetlight issues, new roundabout Bury Road – residents have reported that light is shining into properties and Hopkins Homes has advised that they will fit a shield. However, residents believe that there is a problem with angle of the lamp fitment and have advised Hopkins Homes.

Manhole cover, The Street - this is rattling again whenever a car drives over it. It has been reported and SCC will replace with something stronger but there is a 14 week lead in for the work as it is not classed as a priority.

Old beacon at Lady's Well – unsuitable for it to be turned into an owl nesting box as it is too close to the road and noise disturbance.

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

Rattlesden litter picking group would like to work with Woolpit to keep Green Road to Rattlesden clear of litter. Mrs Parker is happy for the group to contact her. They can also put a notice up in Woolpit asking for people who are interested but it will not be endorsed by WPC. **Resident** copy of correspondence to SCC complaining that gully cleaning was carried out at night. **Resident** thanks to Woolpit Nurseries for the planting of the tubs and also they really like the new roundabout. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** **SALC** news bulletin 7, 13, 20 May, 3 June, training bulletin 14, 21 May, planning training available to book, Mid Suffolk Area Forum 4 June and speaker confirmed. **SCC** visit to Toggam Solar Farm 4 June. **MSDC** 2024/5 Capital Grants, May holiday activity programme, BMSDC JLP draft supplementary planning documents, Norwich to Tilbury NSIP statutory consultation deadline extended to 24 July, Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople call for sites 2024, UK Parliamentary Notice of Election, Town and Parish update June. **Rural Services Network** Rural bulletin 8, 14, 21 May, Funding Digest May. **SISK** A14 overnight closure information 31 May – 29 June. **Old Newton PC** parishes meeting notes 14 May. **Mid Suffolk CAB** helping people in your community with cost of living problems. **Spot Wellbeing** Health and wellbeing group free 6 week course commencing 25 June. **Resident** copy email to MSDC regarding FOI request Highways issues, flooding, The Street. **Resident** copy of email objecting to planning reconsultation 23/05380 land south Melvin Way.

9. To approve accounts for payment.

Mr Harknett £57.60 litter picking May, Mr Gardiner £600.00 Highways Ranger May, Mrs Fuller salary May, Suffolk County Council £344.36 May pension payment, Gipping Press £455.00 Jun/July Diary printing, Mr Raisey £124.40 June/July Diary editing, SALC £76.80 Cllr training Mr Gallagher, Mrs Brown £100.00 internal audit of 2023/4 accounts, Mrs Ewans £146.50 reimbursement for planning permission fee for the beacon. All accounts were approved and payments authorised.

10. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The current account balance at the end of May was £562,085.95 of which CIL is £425,663.01, Recreation Ground £1,215.47, earmarked reserves £52,404.84 general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £45,802.63.

b) To consider increasing the Clerk's contracted hours and take any necessary action

The Clerk is currently contracted for 17 hours per week but is regularly working 20 hours. It was therefore agreed to increase the contracted hours to 20 per week from 1 June 2024.

c) To approve costs for .gov.uk domain names and email accounts through Suffolk.cloud and take any necessary action.

It was agreed that 20 Gb mailbox storage would be necessary at a cost of £160.00 for one year and £300.00 for two years. The cost of a domain name is £85.00 for one year or £150.00 for two years. It was unanimously agreed to arrange two years at a cost of £450.00. The Clerk advised that it is possible to apply for £100.00 grant towards the set up costs via Suffolk.cloud and she has therefore completed the form.

Action: the Clerk.

d) To consider a cinema evening in conjunction with Woolpit Cricket Club and take any necessary action.

This came from discussions after the success of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations to hold an annual event. Sunday 1 September is the suggested date and the company we used before can supply the equipment at a cost of £340.00. The film will be The Greatest Showman and we may have to purchase this. It was agreed to fund the cinema and Woolpit Cricket Club will provide the facilities and drinks/food to purchase.

Action: Mr Hardiman/the Clerk

e) To consider the purchase of a larger capacity dog bin for Old Stowmarket Road and take any necessary action.

Since this is being well used a larger bin is necessary. It was agreed to purchase a 50 litre bin from Glasdon at a maximum cost of £300.00. *Action: The Clerk*

11. To complete and sign the Statement of Assurance and Annual Return for year ended 31 March 2024.

The forms were duly completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

12. To receive an update on the Vertas Taxi-bus service and take any necessary action. Nothing to report.

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

Mr Hardiman has now found someone who will put the benches together and Mr R Baker will get the holes dug.

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

Now that the tarmac footways have been completed. Residents are now able to get onto the footway from Rectory Lane and then cross to the other side of Elmswell Road in relative safety. Mrs Ewans has met with Goldstar and they do not own the ditch and are happy for some form access to Lady's Well adjacent to their site. A clearance will be made in the corner and a very informal bridge will be built. A scaffolder has agreed to build at a low cost for the publicity which could be a small plaque on the bridge and thanks in the Diary.

Whilst at the meeting with Goldstar it became apparent that some speed reduction was required, Goldstar say they own the verge and would agree in principle for a SID to be installed subject to agreeing the position. It was agreed to pursue this and an official email will be sent thanking Goldstar for the meeting and what was agreed. This would be followed by a further meeting to agree the SID location.

Action the Clerk/Deputy Clerk.

16. To consider a response to National Grid Norwich to Tilbury Statutory consultation (ends 18 June).

The deadline for the consultation has been extended to 24 July. It was felt that we should support the objections of SCC, MSDC and other parishes who are affected and object. Mrs Robinson advised that Old Newton PC has a standard response letter which she will ask for a copy. Mrs Walker has produced a report of issues which has been circulated to Cllrs. This will be compressed for consideration at the next meeting.

Action: Mrs Robinson/Mrs Walker.

17. To consider a response to B&MSDC JKLP supplementary documents consultation (ends 19 June). Councillors do not wish to comment.

18. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

a) A14 roadworks

This is in the final stages but will be quite disruptive with the overnight closures.

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

The Head of Transport Policy and Cabinet Member conducted a site visit. The decision is: A village wide 20mph scheme is not supported at Woolpit, noting the higher speeds observed away from the village core. The need for traffic calming in a non-street lit location is problematic and there are no obvious interventions that would be practicable. It is also noted that the NP consultation noted support for the village centre only. However, it is recognised that the village core has low traffic speeds, and multiple observed activities, suggesting a 20mph limit would be appropriate here. A scheme on a much tighter boundary should be considered as the next step, as well as wider consultation on a specific scheme, before proceeding to a

Speed Limit Order. Cllr Mellen will contact the Highways Officer to engage with us to agree a suitable central zone.

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

We are still awaiting delivery of the SID for The Heath. The purchase of an additional SID at Goldstar will be discussed at the CIL meeting.

d) To consider a request for a one-way system in The Street and take any necessary action.

This was discussed at some length, but Councillors do not feel that this is practical as it would split the village in two making more rat runs down the smaller surrounding lanes.

19. Completed training details for May 2024. None to add this month.

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

A sign has been erected For Tilia Homes, Kiln Grove and the Hopkins Homes sign removed. An enforcement order has been issued for Hopkins Homes to cut the weed areas on the site.

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

An email has been received from an allotment holder advising they believe WPC should be informing residents regarding the future of the old allotments and the adjacent field. He raises three points that the field is a sorry waste after being usefully used for the production of crops, why is it taking so long to redevelop the old allotment area which is currently uncontrolled growth and looks a disgrace and the allotment holders question why the grass strip to the field is not being cut.

WPC aim not to use the field as arable land but to rewild the area for biodiversity along with the old allotment area. This takes time to achieve and needs to be done properly in consultation with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and MSDC Biodiversity team.

Originally the grass strip was cut by Mr Howlett but for the past year by Mr R Baker has been doing it for which we thank him. Mr Foster will contact Mr R Baker to see if he is willing to continuing cutting it.

Action: The Clerk/Mr Foster

It was agreed to continue the meeting for an additional 10 minutes.

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

A new bookings clerk has been appointed. The accounts are moving forward and a user group member has agreed to become a trustee.

23. Date and time of the next meetings – CiL Tuesday 18 June and Parish Council – Tuesday 2 July 2024; both at 7.30 p.m.

There are only an additional SID and a request to make a change to the grant given to the Friendly Bridge Club for the CIL meeting. It was unanimously agreed to cancel the meeting 18 June and consider these two items under a CIL heading at the meeting 2 July.

The meeting closed at 10.01 p.m.

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

Dated.....2 July 2024