

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

Present: Mr Guyler, Mrs Jenkins, Mr Gallagher and Mr Foster.

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

In the absence of the Chair, it was proposed, seconded and carried that Mr Guyler chair the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence.

These were received and accepted from Mrs Robinson, Mr Hardiman and Dr Geake.

2. Public comment: A resident advised that large lorries are going through the village to the Tilia site. District Cllr Overett will take this up with Planning Enforcement. Representative from Woolpit ARC thanked WPC for the financial support received to renovate the facility.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' report: An innovative new transport service, 'The Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus', has now launched and is being delivered by Swift Taxi Cabs, with funding from a Mid Suffolk District Council Rural Transport Grant. The 'Stowmarket Circular service via Thurston' runs on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, three times a day, calling at two Woolpit pick-up / drop-off points, as well as several other local villages including Elmswell, Rattlesden, and Haughley. The annual Living Well in Winter grant application window closes 8 November. One grant of up to £2000 is allowed per parish (when more than one application is made, then a decision as to where the grant is allocated will be via a scoring system). Eligible projects include after school clubs, provision of warm or social spaces, lunch/supper clubs etc. Mid Suffolk's 'Empty Homes Renovation Loan' scheme remains open for application via the website. It can provide an interest free loan of up to £20,000 to bring homes back into use. Applications can be made by the owner of a property that must have been empty for more than six months and is in need of renovation work to return it to a habitable state. Repairs include, for example, damp proofing, provision of sanitary facilities, re-roofing, and repair or replacement of windows and doors. The scheme is designed to help owners of empty properties return them to use and make them available for renting – thereby helping to reduce the level of empty homes in the area and provide more, much-needed affordable homes for rent. The extension for the Solar Together scheme has been extended to the 15th November. The scheme is available for all residents for free. At October's cabinet meeting, funding was agreed for a list of new measures to help revitalise Stowmarket Town Centre, funded from profits from Gateway 14. Measures discussed included a £400k grant scheme to assist with existing retailers, £100k to increase sustainability from the Wayfinding project, and £16k for developing overnight accommodation within the town. Reminder that we are still welcoming Locality Budget applications from local community groups. Monthly drop-in session Tuesday 26 November at the Wesley Café. There will be no drop-in sessions in December.

Cllr Overett was advised that the thistles on the Hopkins Homes/Tilia site were not cut this year and she will take this up with Enforcement. The Taxi Bus service will be £6 a journey, and they are trying to keep costs as low as possible.

County Councillor's report: Suffolk County Council have announced an extra £1.5m of funding to deliver the first phase of works identified in the flood investigations following Storm Babet. The council is also writing to the government requesting £20m for flood protection to help prevent future flooding in the county, as it is likely extreme weather will become more likely due to the effects of climate change. Concerns have been raised about areas of flooding along the coast and whether the council had a strategy for dealing with the problems caused by coastal

erosion and climate change, or a list of priorities when it comes to protecting local infrastructure. At Scrutiny Committee on 24 October, a report was presented on highways flooding and the responsibilities held by the council, water companies and the Environment Agency. Suffolk County Council is the lead flood authority for Suffolk and although it has responsibility for surface water flooding, it does not have the capacity to manage it all and has to prioritise its response. Priority is given to works to address internal flooding to five or more properties, or flooding to major infrastructure for 10 hours or more. If you have a stream or watercourse on your land, you have responsibilities to mitigate against flooding. Cabinet on 8 October included the council's response to the proposed wind farm extension at North Falls. This will be off the coast of Essex with no onshore infrastructure in Suffolk, although it still has the potential to affect transport routes, Suffolk ports and the local workforce. It will be visible from Suffolk but the impact of this has been judged as less than significant. The connection for this scheme to the National Grid is planned to be at Lawford, which will only be possible if the planned Norwich to Tilbury grid reinforcement goes ahead. It was pointed out that consent should not be granted for schemes that depended on other projects which were not yet approved, but it was noted that this was not unusual for the National Grid, which often granted grid connections for projects where there was no guarantee they would proceed. At Health Scrutiny on Wednesday 9 October, members heard from the NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) about what they were doing to improve access to GPs in the county. Low numbers of GPs and a high demand for appointments has caused problems recently with many people unable to make appointments to see their doctors. The committee heard how practices were switching to cloud-based telephony to decrease the reliance on a limited number of phone lines and digital booking so that AI can prioritise the urgency of appointments based on symptoms. The ICBs are also making an effort to train GPs and other practice medical staff locally as this means they are more likely to stay in the area. Some services, like blood pressure checks and contraception, can now be accessed at pharmacies. Members of the committee expressed concern that community pharmacies are also under pressure currently, and also that GP surgery buildings were in a poor state, with some plans for new surgeries abandoned due to cost, such as the Cardinal Practice in north west Ipswich. It was agreed that the physical buildings of the NHS – their 'estate' would be looked at in Health Scrutiny at a later date. At Council on 17 October, a motion was passed that the council would write to the government and ask them to reverse the decision they have made to cut the eligibility for the winter fuel payment for pensioners. It is estimated that this will affect thousands of pensioners in the county. The council also announced a new £3m fund for interest-free loans to residents wishing to undertake energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps. The loans (up to £15,000) to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest. The scheme will be open to homeowners across Suffolk from November. At Council on 17 October a motion was brought forward that the county review its priorities for repairing pavement defects. Currently, if there is a difference in the surface level of the footway of 20mm or more, this will be repaired, but it was argued that in areas of high footfall or where a trip or fall had been recorded, this threshold was too high. Most members of the public who trip or fall are over 65, and in areas outside GP surgeries or opticians it would make sense for the repair policy to be more flexible. The administration at the council did not vote to pass the motion, but reported that a review of their highways processes was being undertaken. Councillors from all groups will be taking part in the review to try and ensure that poor quality footways are made safer for pedestrians to use. A newly-developed plan which details the long-term vision for transport in Suffolk has been launched for public consultation. Local

communities helped shape a new draft of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan by sharing their views back in February of this year and the council is now asking for feedback on the final proposed document. The plan details activity between 2025-2040 and sets out a long-term vision for transport in Suffolk, including 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. The council has also produced fifteen 'Area Transport Plans' and a 'Suffolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan' which are the funded implementation plans for the wider Suffolk Local Transport Plan. These plans outline how the Local Transport Plan's vision and objectives will be delivered in key locations across the county.

Cllr Mellen was asked on progress with schooling. There are no plans to extend the current primary school, any extra need will be at a new school on the Bury Road site. There is no update on a further upper school. There is no sixth form at Stowmarket High and the sixth form at Stowupland has been closed due RAAC issue on site. Stowmarket is looking to extend the school with an application for CIL funding. Cllr Mellen advised that he is getting correspondence from residents of speeding traffic in Wood Road/Warren Lane. A survey was carried out in 2023 and didn't show enough speeding to warrant any changes. This survey was carried out near to the industrialised area and Cllr Mellen will commission a survey nearer the Borley Green end of Wood Road.

There have been many issues regarding SEND provision in the county. SCC is working on employing more staff and psychologists but acknowledge they are behind in this area.

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

There were none.

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 1 October 2024

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

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 – leave decision to the tree officer although Cllrs do not see why the laburnum should be felled just for having poisonous seeds.

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 comment.

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 comment.

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 re-consultations - no additional comments to our letters of objection 24 February and 5 June 2024 reiterating that we support the

submissions and objections from Elmswell, Wetherden and Haughley.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

24/04147 Erection of lean-to shed to rear of garage. Oxer House, Green Road – granted.

24/01506 Erection of 4 dwellings (following demolition of barns) Grassy Lane Farm, Grassy Lane – granted

24/04022 Construction of new vehicular access including entrance gate and picket fence. Mossbury, Heath Road – granted.

24/04670 Discharge of Conditions appl 24/01056 Condition 4 (signage details). East of England Co-op, The Street – acceptable.

24/03907 Discharge of Conditions app 23/02762 Condition 3 (foul drainage details), Condition 6 (dust control) Condition 7 (construction management plan) and Condition 8 (landscape boundary treatment plan). Cider Shed, Grassy Lane – acceptable.

24/01307 Installation of two underground petrol tanks. Woolpit Service Station, Church Street – refused, insufficient information regarding land contamination to demonstrate that the development would sufficiently protect groundwater supplies.

Enforcement – Tilia construction compound is not in the authorised location and Planning Enforcement are working to sort an appropriate timescale for relocation in accordance with the approved construction management plan. This was scheduled with a deadline 4 November but to date has not been moved. District Cllr Overett to talk to enforcement officers.

7. Clerk's Report

Woolpitparishcouncil.gov.uk – Cllrs were all asked to only use these email addresses now for council business.

Car Park behind Health Centre – Mr Guyler will represent WPC at the meeting 18 November.

Broken grill The Street and drain cover near The Institute – SCC has repaired both of these issues.

Communita Chinwag – is back monthly from 1 November as three month's funding has been secured from MSDC but are looking at ways for the group to be self sustainable.

Survey requests in SALC bulletins – it was agreed that these would only be an agenda item if requested by a councillor.

Institute Hire – The office rent will increase to £35.00 a week, the upstairs room to £30.00 and downstairs rooms to £15.00 from January 2025. The Institute Treasurer has asked for payments quarterly.

Youths on bridge over A14 – a resident from Elmswell has advised that 2 youths were seen on the bridge gesticulating at vehicles and wondered why they were not at school. They did not report to the police.

Suffolk Police – has responded regarding vandalism and anti-social behaviour and are making more patrols through the village during the evenings.

Woolpit Community Speedwatch – has disbanded and the police have collected the equipment.

Woolpit Post Office – The Post Office has no plans for a temporary Post Office whilst the Co-op is being refurbished.

Woolpit website – has now changed to www.woolpitparishcouncil.gov.uk and there is notice and link of this on woolpit.org.

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

Resident concerned regarding the untidy state of Elmswell Road and overhanging trees, pedestrians walking there and no joined up path to Elmswell. They have suggested that the Parish Council employs a tree surgeon to do the work. Cllrs will contact SCC again as this is their responsibility and the cost to WPC which would need a road closure would be prohibitive. *Action: The Clerk.* **E-on next** our business plan for the Pump light expires 3 December. The Clerk was given permission to fix for 1-3 years depending on costs. *Action: the Clerk.* **The following items have been**

circulated to Cllrs: MSDC changes to bin collections 2026, community grants, Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus launch 29 October, October Half Term activities programme, Town & Parish Liaison meeting 17 October, Sudbury Community Energy meeting 30 October, Rural Housing event 6 November, Eat your Pumpkin campaign, Town & Parish update October. **SALC** news bulletin 7, 14, 21, 28 October, 5 November, training bulletin 15, 22, 29 October, 5 November, Suffolk Highways update October, Suffolk Highways free upcoming forums, Local Councillor Magazine October, Mid Suffolk area forum 5 December. **SCC** Greenest County Community newsletter October. **Rural Services Network** Rural Bulletin 8, 15, 22, 29 October, 5 November. **Suffolk Highways** updates 1 & 2 A1088 Bridge Farm bridge, Stowlangtoft. **CAS** Rural Community Led Housing event 6 November. **Communities Together** new transport service - rural connect Stowmarket from 4 November, autumn newsletter. **Post Office** closed for refurbishment 17 October-14 December, no plans for temporary post office during the refurb. **Marpa** Mid Anglia Community Rail Partnership - Ipswich to Cambridge route. **Suffolkonboard** bus timetable updates. **Resident** copy emails to MSDC regarding Tilia Homes development. **Resident** copy of objections to app 24/04207 Bury Road.

9. Finance

a) To receive a monthly financial report from the Clerk

The current account balance at the end of October was £47,239.57. £650,000.00 has been transferred into the savings account including receipt of the October CIL payment of £127,794.06. The total of both accounts is £697,239.57. Of this CIL is £551,422.04, Recreation Ground £826.67, earmarked reserves £49,122.91 general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £58,867.95.

Councillors were asked if they have all set up as signatories on the Unity Trust Bank current account. Only Mr Foster still has to do this and he is in contact with the bank regarding initial passcodes.

Councillors were also reminded that they should be regularly looking at the reports on the Scribe accounts package to see payments against budget figures. This was part of the reason for having the accounts package so that councillors could view them at any time rather than the Clerk producing a comprehensive list each month for distribution.

b) To approve accounts for payment.

Payment of ££1418.66 Business Services at CAS annual insurance premium was ratified. Mr M Gardiner £606.00 Highways Ranger October, Mrs P Fuller £1105.39 Clerk salary October, Suffolk County Council £405.13 pension payment October, Suffolk Association of Local Councils £84.00 training for local councils acting as sole trustee of a charity for the Chair and Clerk 12 November, Woolpit Institute £1297.92 office rent April-December 2024, Glasdon UK Ltd £98.42 post for a bin in Steeles Road garden, Mr Hardiman £31.52 reimbursement glue for trampoline tiles. Payments under CIL Woolpit Friendly Bridge Club £300.00 grant towards purchase of computer, Modece Architects Ltd £3920.00 RIBA Stage 1 architects fees for Woolpit Village Hall revamp. All accounts were approved and payments authorised. Payment by direct debit BT £199.80 quarterly bill.

c) To accept the Local Government pay rates for 2024/25

The 2024/25 pay settlement has been finalised and Cllrs accepted these and to backdate the increase to April 2024 for the Clerk who is on salary scale point SCP25.

d) To consider grant requests from Suffolk Accident Rescue Service and Mid Suffolk CAB and take any necessary action.

After discussion it was proposed, seconded and approved to make a grant of £875.00 to SARS and £1400.00 to Mid Suffolk CAB. *Action: the Clerk*

e) To consider items for 2025/26 budget.

The Clerk asked for Cllrs to advise of any items they wish to be considered for inclusion in the budget for 2025/26.

10. To approve dates for meetings in 2025.

Meeting dates were set as the first Tuesday of the month for full council meetings, third Tuesday of March, June, September and December for CIL applications meetings and 22 April for the Annual Parish meeting

11. To consider filling two casual vacancies by co-option and take any necessary action.

An application has been received and it was unanimously agreed to co-opt Tracey Osborne-Lomax to the council. As Mrs Osborne-Lomax has a disability that means she is unable to use the stairlift it was agreed that meetings would be held in the downstairs room of Woolpit Institute as from the December meeting.

That leaves one vacancy to fill and the advert will be in the December/January issue of Woolpit Diary and on the noticeboard. *Action: the Clerk*

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

The joint policy with Woolpit Village Hall has been formulated and a draft will be put to Woolpit Village Hall Committee for approval before coming before the Parish Council.

13. 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.

UK Power Networks no longer allows for lights to be put on its poles. The Clerk has therefore asked SCC to turn off the two lights for the time being until a decision on what to do has been discussed. Mr Guyler will put forward a proposal at the next meeting.

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

A CIL application has been submitted to MSDC for consideration but the decision will not be known until February 2025. Planning permission will be required for the section due to run behind Elmswell Church and this will be determined by SCC. The next steering group meeting which is scheduled for the second half of November will be in Woolpit so that officers can assess what signage is needed and what vegetation is required to be cut back on the Woolpit end of the path.

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

Mrs Ewans is contacting the company which is going to do the work; it may become necessary to look at this again.

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

No update received.

17. To discuss traffic issues in the parish**a) To receive an update on 20 mph in the centre of the village including considering quote from SCC and take any necessary action**

It was agreed that the quote would be discussed at the CIL meeting 17 December, the Clerk will advise SCC. *Action: the Clerk*

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

A pole has been installed on private land along Green Road and Mr Hardiman will move the SID from Church Street in due course. The SID outside Stoneleigh, The Heath has been turned to monitor traffic leaving the village.

18. To consider a response to NALC grave re-use survey and take any necessary action. (ends 15 November 2024)

Cllrs do not wish to respond to this very complex issue.

19. To consider a response to SCC Local Transport Plan for Suffolk to 2040 and take any necessary action. (Consultation ends 25 November 2024)

Cllrs do not wish to respond as a body but Cllrs were asked to respond as individuals.

20. 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) This was carried forward to the next meeting.

21. Completed training details for October 2024.

Mr Foster has completed Councillor Basic Training and Mr Guyler attended a streetlighting forum.

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

The streetlights on the roundabout have been fitted with shields to help direct the light away from residential properties. The Tilia construction compound is to be moved.

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

Renewals along with the updated tenancy agreement has been sent out to tenants. A further email has been received from a tenant who finds it strange that WPC has added additional clauses to the tenancy agreement when the old allotments and field have been neglected. Part of the old allotment area has been scraped for a wetland corner.

24. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee

Woolpit PC has paid the first invoice from the architects which allows them to carry out measurements and come up with their ideas for the refurbishment of the Village Hall. The new website is beginning to take shape under woolpitvillagehall.org.uk. A booking system with Hallmaster is being trialled.

25. Date and time of the next meeting – Tuesday 3 December 2024 at 7.30 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.17 p.m.

Signed.....APPROVED.....

Dated.....3 December 2024.....