

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 AUGUST 2024 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

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

In attendance: District Cllrs Mansel and Overett, County Cllr Mellen (in part), Mrs Fuller - Clerk, Mrs Ewans – Deputy Clerk and 4 members of the public.

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

The Clerk advised that since the last meeting both Mr Watkins and Mrs Walker have resigned from the council.

1. Apologies for absence.

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

2. Public comment: Mrs Ewans complimented Mrs Jenkins on how lovely the flower pots look in the centre of the village.

Mr Hardiman advised that the little bin in the circular garden at Steeles Road for dog waste and it was agreed to swap the litter bin for the spare dog bin. The Clerk will advise MSDC and also ask if we can install a litter bin in the area as well.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' report: At July's Council meeting, a process was agreed to enable thousands of Grade II listed building owners to make sensitive energy efficiency upgrades more quickly and easily. The first such initiative in the country, it will involve both Mid Suffolk and Babergh working closely with Historic England, and potential upgrades will include improving or replacing windows, and permitting solar PV and other renewable technologies to be installed on unlisted outbuildings. The aim is to enable residents to more easily reduce the energy needed to power and heat their listed homes. Suffolk's second State of the District Report (2024) was discussed at last month's Council meeting, the first was produced in 2023. Drawing on a range of open-source data and the Council's Resident Survey, the report provides an overview highlighting many of our district's strengths, alongside some key challenges that the Council is seeking to address. In doing so, it forms part of the evidence base underpinning the strategic plan (The Mid Suffolk Plan) and helps to inform and support the district's actions. MSDC have launched 3 new grant funds which utilise the Government's REPF funding. There are three schemes available for activities which will have a positive impact on rural business and communities. Some of the income generated from Gateway 14 is being used to provide grants to enhance Stowmarket Town Centre. The household support fund is available to help tenants who are finding it difficult to pay their housing costs, and in some cases can also be used to reduce rent arrears. Please encourage any residents in need to apply. MSDC are holding a 'call for land' summit on 5th September, 10am-2pm, at the Mix in Stowmarket. Any landowner who would like to use their land to help wildlife – for example by tree or hedge planting or creating a meadow – is welcome to attend. This is a free event, and advice, support, and resources from local environmental organisations will be available. Monthly drop-in sessions are 10-12 Tuesday 13 August at the Wesley café and Thursday 19 September at Teacups Café. The issues at the development off Rags Lane have been reported to MSDC Enforcement who are checking that conditions of the Sect 106 agreement are being adhered to. An application has been submitted for CIL funding for the EV points in the car park off Old Stowmarket Road. Mr Guyler asked Cllrs Mansel and Overett if they have been advised what MSDC housing numbers requirement is now. This information is not available at the moment but MSDC currently has 11 years land allocation which could go down to approx. 7 years with increased numbers of houses required by the new government. The application for the retirement complex in Elmswell is due to go to MSDC Planning Committee 28 August.

County Councillor's Report: At Cabinet on Tuesday 25 July, the proposal to invest a further £9.1 million in Suffolk's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) service was agreed. This is to fund extra staff and capacity to make sure the council can achieve its targets for assessing children and production of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The investment will be funded through the council's reserves, and will be £2.6 million extra for the rest of this financial year, £3 million in 2025/26, and £3.5 million in 2026/27, although the extra money in the coming two years will be subject to ongoing review. This comes at a time when the outcome of the 2023-24 budget was also presented, showing a nearly £15 million drop in the council's useable reserves – it's 'savings' for a rainy day. Concern was expressed that the council's target for EHCPs was to complete 50% within the legal 20 week timeframe, rather than the required 100%. At Council on Thursday 11 July, Cllrs reviewed the new Youth Justice Plan for 2024-2025 which outlined the ways the council plans to support young people who become involved in the criminal justice system. The plan outlines the ambitions of the council to reduce the number of girls, children in care and minority ethnic children currently over-represented in the Suffolk system, and support children involved in the criminal justice system or at risk of re-offending to engage with education, training or employment. There is concern that the Ministry of Justice funding for the Turnaround programme is due to end in March 2025, as this early intervention programme was doing good work to prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system in the first place, it was suggested that the council should ask the county's new MPs to lobby for the continuance of this program in Westminster. A motion was brought to the council meeting on Thursday 11 July to propose that the council review and streamline processes to use housing developer funding for local improvement work. It was acknowledged that often, infrastructure works needed following additional housing were delayed for years, whether this was due to designing, programming or undertaking the works to a decent standard. Often these works are scheduled and provided by SCC, but sometimes the developer will be responsible for them which can also lead to delays and make local communities frustrated and ultimately resentful of new development. The motion was passed by councillors and the hope is that this will speed up the process for new junctions, footpaths, cycle paths and road improvements near new housing developments. On Tuesday 23 July, the council's scrutiny committee met to discuss the state of the roads in the county, how much was spent annually and how works were prioritised. Officers from Highways explained how roads are categorised from Green to Red (poor condition), that the optimal resurfacing programme would require around £50m per year in funding, whereas the current amount available for resurfacing works was more like £17m per year. My group are pressing for a review of the county's Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) which sets out the parameters on what defects Highways respond to and the timeframe for response. We also believe the reporting systems for defects is not working correctly. All of the committee agreed that better communication with residents and timely fixes for road defects would be beneficial to the public perception of Suffolk's roads – as overall the condition of roads rated Red (in poor condition) has dropped since 2012, and the number of roads rated Green (in good condition) has risen. On 3 July, 250 local schoolchildren pledged to write to their local Member of Parliament about climate change after an inspiring address by Chris Packham, renowned UK naturalist, at this year's Suffolk Youth Climate Conference. The event was held at Suffolk One Sixth Form College and organised by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. The partnership is engaging with schools, charities, and community groups to bring about positive change for the environment and also the health and wellbeing of Suffolk residents. A range of workshops were held on topics such as electric vehicles, nature-based solutions, the global food system, coastal adaptation, plastic pollution, flood and water management, sustainable fashion and climate anxiety. Students also had the opportunity to engage with 30 charities and organisations working to improve the natural environment in Suffolk. On 11 July,

Suffolk County Council's annual Carbon Charter event was held to honour businesses from Suffolk and Norfolk for their achievements in environmental sustainability. More than 100 delegates from a range of local businesses shared their experiences of reducing their environmental impact. Since they were established in 2010, over 500 businesses have received Carbon Charter awards for taking climate action, by reducing their carbon emissions, supporting their local community and developing green spaces.

Mr Hardiman asked Cllr Mellen to find out from officers why we cannot have a SID post along Green Road as it is needed there. Cllr Mellen advised that the signage for the car park off Old Stowmarket Road has been ordered and is to be paid for by MSDC. Mr Foster advised that drains in Masons Lane remain blocked and he was told some time ago that they would be cleared during annual maintenance but nothing has been done. Cllr Mellen will follow up with officers.

It was agreed to bring forward 24a and 19.

24a) To receive an update on 20 mph in the centre of the village including the proposed area now suggested by SCC and take any necessary action.

Although the area covered in our original request has not been granted SCC has provided a drawing of a smaller area that is likely to be deemed acceptable. Cllrs would like to see the 20 mph extended on Green Road to the Stackyard development and Bury Road to the new roundabout. The Clerk was asked to respond to SCC to see if these two additions can be included if not Cllrs will accept the area earmarked by SCC.

Action: the Clerk

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

A topographical survey should be carried out this week for the footway/cycle path between Elmswell and Woolpit. Once this has been carried out a consultation will take place with parish councils. SCC hopes to submit a CIL application in September.

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

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 2 July 2024.

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

24/01307 Installation of two underground petrol tanks. Woolpit Service Station, Church Road – no comment

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 comment.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

24/03082 Discharge of Conditions appl 18/04247 - Condition 24 (Details of Roundabouts, Estate Roads and Footpaths) Land Off Bury Road – satisfied.

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 1no. self build single storey dwellinghouse (following demolition of existing buildings) and re-build garage. Spooners The Heath – approved.

24/02213 Erection of beacon. Woolpit Cricket Field – granted.

24/02228 Erection of entrance gate and store/shed. Land at Green Farm, Green Road – granted.

24/02728 Discharge of Conditions appl 24/00869 Condition 3 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy), Ship House, Borley Green – acceptable.

24/02359 Application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for DC/24/00564 - Conversion and extension of existing garage and outbuilding to form annexe for the Variation of a Condition 2 (Approved plans and documents) - amendment to approved out-building conversion. Jocrosse Meadow, Rags Lane – granted.

7. Clerk's Report

Derek Prior – It is with sadness that WPC learnt of the death of Derek Prior who served on WPC from 1968-1989 and as Chair from 1971-1986. A condolence card has been sent to his family.

Car park opposite church – MSDC operative was clearing the left side and was unsure if the right hand side was MSDC responsibility. The Clerk advised him it was as per the lease and it was cut and cleared within 2 days.

Signs for the bottle bank – these are not required as there are already two signs there.

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

Resident concerned that grass cuttings will block drainage gullies. Residents concerned regarding pot holes Rags Lane. Residents requesting improved speeding measures in Wood Road. They will be advised that these are district and county matters that the Parish Council cannot control. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** **SCC** suffolkonboard bus timetable updates. **MSDC** Town & Parish update, July, August, Suffolk Recycles summer newsletter, call for land summit 5 September. **SALC** training bulletin 9, 23, 30 July, news bulletin 15, 29 July, The Local Councillor June, speaker confirmed for Mid Suffolk Area Forum 19 September. **Rural Services Network** Rural Bulletin 9, 16, 23, 30 July, 6 August, Funding Digest July. **Woolpit ARC** photos of nearly decorated areas. **National Highways** A14 Haughley to Tothill reconstruction scheme July newsletter. **Suffolk Police** Police & Crime Commissioner's July update. **County Cllr Mellen** copies of correspondence regarding streetlights at the new Bury Road roundabout.

9. To approve accounts for payment.

Mr M Gardiner £576.00 Highways Ranger July, Mrs P Fuller £1217.75 Clerk salary July, Suffolk County Council £405.13 pension payment July, Mid Suffolk District Council £1917.36 dog and litter bin emptying 2024/5, Suffolk.cloud £330.00 .gov.uk domain and mailbox 2 yrs, Geosphere Ltd £120.00 Parish on line annual subscription, Gipping Press £415.00 August/September Diary printing, Mr R Raisey £124.40 edit August/September Diary, Westcotec £4914.00 SID for The Heath, Quality Equipment £360.00 repairs/maintenance of swings, Smith of Derby £750.00 church clock 3 year maintenance, SALC £118.80 Cllr training Mr Foster and working with charities course for the Clerk, Mr M Hardiman reimbursement for markers, slabs, post mix and hazard tape, Top Garden Services £1990.33 tidying car park and grass cutting April-June. All accounts were approved and payments authorised. Under CIL Mr C P Schramm £1000.00 ARC internal painting. Payment by Direct Debit BT £198,80 quarterly bill.

10. To receive a monthly financial report.

The current account balance at the end of July was £558,275.96 of which CIL is £428,835.51, Recreation Ground £875.47, earmarked reserves £51,423.22 general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £40,141.76.

11. To consider the purchase of the following and take any necessary action.

a) new batteries for the hedge trimmer and strimmer for the Highways Ranger
Approved up to £100.00

b) signage for the play area and playing field

Cllrs agreed that signage was necessary at each entrance and the Clerk will investigate both metal and heavy plastic.

Action: the Clerk

c)replacement posts for roping off areas

Mr Hardiman will purchase a pack of 10 for £25.00

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

Whilst Cllrs are keen for the Communitia Chinwag to continue in Woolpit the first Friday of the month, with the annual cost being £4,930.56 covering venue hire, staff costs, volunteer recruitment, refreshments, activities, marketing & mileage it may not prove possible. The Clerk was asked to get a break down of the £4,930.56 by heading and a set of last audited accounts. *Action: the Clerk*

13. To consider filling the casual vacancy and take any necessary action.

The Clerk will put an advert on the noticeboard. Cllrs were asked to consider people who can be asked to join the council. The statutory notice of the second vacancy caused by the resignation of Mrs Walker has been placed on the noticeboard. *Action: the Clerk*

14. To discuss vandalism and other anti-social behaviour in the parish and take any necessary action.

There have been various issues, damage to the play equipment, plants stolen from tubs, banging on the windows at the village hall during events, posters being ripped down. The Clerk will contact the Police and request additional patrols in the village. All events of vandalism should be advised to the Clerk who will log dates and incidents so these can be passed to the Police as necessary. *Action: the Clerk*

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

This was deferred to the September meeting. Mrs Ewans, who has undertaken the task of writing the policy and procedure for CCTV, has not yet heard for the Village Hall where the CCTV system is sited.

16 To consider the Proludic operational report of the play equipment 15 July 2024 and take any necessary action.

Most issues are low risk with matting needing some attention. The major issue is the trampoline damage and this will be discussed at the CIL meeting 17 September.

17. To consider requesting Drinkstone Parish Council to ask Suffolk CC Highways to restore the signpost at the junction of Drinkstone Road, Woolpit and Woolpit Road, Drinkstone and take any necessary action.

It was unanimously agreed for the Clerk to contact Drinkstone PC. *Action: the Clerk*

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

Mrs Ewans and Mrs Gardiner attended the last meeting. The service has been a great success. A grant of £6,000 has been received per year for the next 2 years and therefore the fare will be reduced from £6 to £4. We await an invoice from Elmswell PC for our proportion of costs for 2023/4.

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

The benches have been made and will be installed shortly. Having looked at a site for the bench along Heath Road, Mr Hardiman advised it would be better to try a backless seat/perch type bench here due to the slope of the verge, Cllrs agreed to this.

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

Erection of the scaffold poles had to be delayed due to the roadworks in the vicinity.

22. To receive an update on a Village Event including an Organisations Fair and take any necessary action. No update received.

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

The new committee for the existing group 'Woods for Woolpit' has been set up. Ragwort has been removed from the area. WfW would like to get the area ready for planting hedging and grass. WfW are in contact with MSDC Biodiversity and our area will be used as an example at a forthcoming event 6 September. After discussion this item was adjourned to the next meeting so that Cllrs can look at the draft plan and Mrs Ewans will produce a fact sheet of the project so far. *Action: Mrs Ewans*

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

The SID at the Heath has now been installed. We need to look at a pole outside Goldstar and look at Wood Road. *Action: the Clerk*

25. Completed training details for July 2024.

There was none.

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

The Deputy Clerk and Clerk are arranging a meeting with Tilia Homes Land and Planning Director later this month.

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

Nothing to report. The pile of rubbish still needs to be removed.

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

Trustees have had a positive meeting with the architect and from that it is likely that more funds will be required to get to the planning stage. The Village Hall committee will present a revised CIL application with a justification for the project, what other villages have done and how the raised funds.

29. Date and time of the next meetings – Tuesday 3 September 2024 at 7.30 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.41 p.m.

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

Dated.....3 September 2024.....