

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

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

In attendance: County Cllr Mellen (in part), District Cllrs Mansel and Overett, Mrs Ewans Deputy Clerk and 8 members of the public.

Mrs Symons has resigned with immediate effect due to family commitment.

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

2. Public comment: resident asked if the verge along Elmswell Road would be tidied up for the spring daffodils. The Good Neighbour Scheme AGM on 28 March in Woolpit Institute.

Potholes in Pykotts Wy are getting deeper although they have been reported to SCC.

The community bus scheme should be commended and encouraged to continue. Moving the beacon to Woolpit Cricket Club will need planning permissions.

Residents from Abbots Green listed problems with inconsiderate dog walkers, uncollected dog mess and discarded poo bags, no bins. There was discussion about the misunderstanding that residents have about future ownership and responsibility for public spaces within the development. Complaints regarding the MSDC car park behind the Health Centre including flooding due to the car park being higher than the houses. District Cllrs took note. Again, there appears to be confusion about future ownership.

Planning consultant spoke on regarding the planning application at Spooners for a self-build bungalow.

Resident asking if National Highways will pay for road repairs caused by additional traffic using rural roads to avoid the roadworks on A14.

Cllr Hardiman is concerned that if the beacon is to be moved and ready for D-Day celebrations work must commence immediately. It is understood that Woolpit CC will be discussing this at their meeting 9 February.

Cllr Foster advised that if there was to be an outdoor cinema as part of D-Day celebrations it would have to be booked soon by WPC.

Cllr Hardiman advised that Costcutter are no longer litter picking the playing field. This needs to be investigated as this was a condition of their permission to sell alcohol.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

County Councillor's report: At Scrutiny Committee on 11 January, we got our first look at the proposed budget for the financial year 2024-25. The council has projected increased spend for areas such as social care and SEND which are statutory services – this means that the council is required to spend this money by law. As a result, important areas in the budget that can be cut have been, which will lead to cuts in Housing Related Support for those at risk of homelessness, support for people with learning disabilities and autism, and to the Skills team, who support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The budget also included a proposed 100% cut to funding for museums and arts organisations from April 2025, with the funding for 2024-25 coming from government Covid monies to provide a transition period. As you may have seen, this generated a huge amount of controversy in the press and late in January the government announced an extra tranche of funding for councils, which has allowed the administration to reinstate £500,000 for arts and museums – but with a different funding structure. Our opposition group opposes the arts cuts and the other savings, which will hit the most vulnerable in our county. However, there is little room for manoeuvre as the administration is proposing to take the maximum council tax increase allowable without a referendum (2.99% + 2% social care precept). Council tax is only part of the council's funding, and essentially the county council is not adequately funded from central government. The budget proposals will be voted on during a Full

Council meeting on Thursday 15 February. On Monday 29 January a report on the council's Special Educational Needs & Disability services was published which described a failing service. This follows on from previous reports and lots of anecdotal evidence from parents who feel that the service has let their children down. This report led to the resignation of three cabinet members who were responsible for this area, on Friday 2 February. The council's chief executive has promised new leadership for the service, and re-organisation has been underway for some time. There is a long-term problem with a country-wide lack of qualified Educational Psychologists who are needed to conduct Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for each child with special needs, hence a big backlog of children waiting for these. Funding for this service is also an issue. At the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board on 18 January, the first draft of a Suffolk autism strategy was discussed, which will increase awareness and support for autistic people and make sure local services are accessible and meeting their needs. The plans include supporting autistic people to look for work and those who are considering self-employment, tackling health and care inequalities, improving access to education and transition into higher education. The strategy was commissioned by Suffolk County Council and local NHS providers and has been developed in co-production with Suffolk people with autism to reflect their views and experiences. Construction begins this month of the controversial new power station at Sizewell, a project that is forecast to take 17 years to complete. This will have a massive impact on local communities, the coastal environment and transport routes in the county. Suffolk County Council has secured £250m in mitigation monies for Suffolk communities, but this will still create a lot of upheaval in the county and the council has a role to play in making sure Sizewell C make every effort to minimise its impact and listens to the concerns of residents and local businesses. Suffolk's Safer Stronger Communities Board has announced a fund of £150,000 from the Home Office to support Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy. Organisations can bid for funding for specific projects which support the work of Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy, with allocation of funding managed through Suffolk Community Foundation. The Serious Violence Strategy focuses on young people and communities at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, and the funding for projects is available to charities, voluntary sector organizations, social enterprises, parish councils, educational settings and other public bodies from April 2024. Visitor attractions in Suffolk are invited to sign up for a new scheme promoting car-free days out in the county. Suffolk Growth Partnership and Suffolk County Council have teamed up with national organisation 'Good Journey' to create the scheme, which launches in March. Around 25 local tourism and visitor attractions are invited to join the Suffolk Good Journey scheme offering residents and visitors discounts and incentives to leave the car at home and explore more of the county on foot, by bike or using public transport. Participating attractions will be supported and will feature on goodjourney.org.uk which provides travel information and discounts to domestic and international visitors and there will a marketing campaign to promote it. As a direct result of customer feedback, the Blue Badge phone number will be changing, and there will now be a dedicated phone line for Blue Badge customers. From 31 January the Blue Badge team will be answering enquires on 03456 066 077, this number will be visible online across the SCC Website, InfoLink and any future published materials. Those whose homes or businesses were flooded by Storm Babet and have not yet applied for the initial £500 flood recovery grant payment should do so as soon as possible as this is the first step in applying for the further £5,000 for flood protection from the government's Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Grant. The application process for the latter will begin in early 2024 and after initial eligibility checks by SCC, property owners will be responsible for sourcing an independent surveyor and PFR contractor. Payment of up to £5,000 including VAT will be paid retrospectively to the property owner once the Council receives proof of the completed installation and invoicing for the approved measures.

Cllr Hardiman asked about signage for access to the Health Centre car park. County Cllr Mellen advised that he is paying for them from his transport budget. It was agreed that WPC would write to the Health Centre to ask them to put up signage

inside the centre and on its website to encourage the able bodied to use the new car park.

Action: The Clerk

District Councillors' report: At the January Council meeting, the priorities for Mid Suffolk District Council were agreed. There was extensive consultation to ensure a wide range of views were considered. The core of the plan is putting environmental and social responsibilities at the heart of everything we do, "helping to create thriving and resilient communities in Mid Suffolk". This encompasses housing and infrastructure, resilience, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability. A key principle is to work collaboratively with communities. At Mid Suffolk's Cabinet meeting this week, the draft budget for 2024/25 will be discussed. This includes a 2% council tax increase to ensure financial stability for day-to-day services in the wake of shrinking government grants. A financial reserve has been built up over the last eight years and this will be spent on areas to benefit Mid Suffolk residents including bringing disused land back into use for amenity or other uses, land for biodiversity and to meet Biodiversity Net Gain, Stowmarket town centre regeneration and new foot/cycle paths to improve connectivity. In the housing budget, to be able to fund improvements to the Council's housing stock, it is proposed that rents increase by 7.7% (in line with the Government formula – CPI+1%). Many tenants receive housing benefit or universal credit and due to recent increases in the rent portion of this, the major of tenants will not see an increase in rent. The proposed Green Skills and Innovation Centre business plan for Gateway 14 was approved by Council subject to funding from Freeport East. The Council agreed a motion to support communities on flooding and to help with emergency plans. In Debenham a community meeting was held, organised by an MSDC Councillor, attended by the Environment Agency, Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council amongst others. From this, various initiatives are now underway. A reminder that this year's locality awards are still open for applications. Any group or organisation can apply for amounts of £250 or more. The next drop-in sessions are 8 February Teacups and 21 March Wesley Café.

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

Mr Gallagher advised that he was not yet a trustee of the Village Hall although he was working with the committee in an advisory capacity.

The Chair reported that she had discussed declarations of interest with Mrs Ewans because this was a complicated matter. For the time being when councillors do not declare an interest but interests are known, such as being on a committee of another village organisation which is mentioned on the agenda, it will be noted and the WPC will decide how much involvement that WP Cllr can have in that agenda item

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

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

24/00116 Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered, all other matters reserved) - Erection of 1no. self-build single storey dwellinghouse (following demolition of existing buildings). Spooners, The Heath – object. Councillors could see little difference between this application and that refused in 2023 therefore our comment of overdevelopment of the site.

24/00117 Application under S73 for the Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of DC/22/04479 dated 21/11/2022 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Erection of 1No Class E(g) commercial building (revised application following planning permission granted under reference DC/22/00638) Revised position and size (Permission DC/22/00638 will not be constructed) To vary Condition 1 (Approved Plans and Documents) to introduce revised design. Land At

Stag Cafe Old A45 – object. Councillors are very concerned regarding the piecemeal development on this site resulting in no cohesive plan for the area. Much of the parking area is being lost to the increasing number of buildings and could cause parking on the old A45. Traffic leaving the site cannot access the A14 directly and will therefore travel through the villages of Woolpit, Elmswell and Haughley New Street. HGVs use the totally unsuitable rural lanes which causes a danger to other road users and residents along Warren Lane, Wood Road, Borley Green and Heath Road in Woolpit. If you are minded to approve this application then solar panels must be installed on the roof or other sustainable heating and lighting methods used

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. 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 CC/0084/20MS/VOC. Lawn Farm Quarry, Old Bury Road, Wetherden. The two applications for Lawn Farm Quarry considered together. Whilst not in the parish it is close to the border. Woolpit residents are not directly affected by noise and dirt but the damage and dirt on the roads, rat running etc is a direct concern. The parish councillors who had attended the recent joint parishes meeting had heard the concerns of those living closer and had heard that the business does not comply with current conditions of use. The excellent and detailed response submitted by Haughley Parish Council was noted and wholeheartedly endorsed. Clerk to write and support Haughley PC response as well as commenting on Woolpit traffic concerns.

Action: The Clerk

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

23/01361 Discharge of conditions application for DC/18/04247 - Condition 24 (Details of Roundabouts, Estate Roads, and Footpaths) Location: Land Off Bury Road, The Street – partly satisfied 'Whilst we are satisfied that sufficient details of both roundabouts and the spine road have been submitted and agreed, sufficient details (as set out in the condition) of all of the internal estate roads have not been submitted. Subsequently, we cannot recommend that the condition is discharged. As some of these details may relate to later phases of the development, we would support a partial discharge of the condition, if appropriate.' This condition has been satisfied subject to implementation in accordance with the wording of the above condition for the roundabouts and spine road only.

23/05369 Erection of one and a half storey rear extension. Lawnswood, Warren Lane – granted.

7. Clerk's Report

20 mph - County Councillor Mellen advised on 3 January that the speed reduction report has been submitted so until formal decision is made little more can be done.

Emptying litter and dog bins – the fee has increased by 25% for 2024/25 from £1314.30 to £1642.80.

Wood chippings for footpath – contractor has been requested to supply and Mr Hardiman confirmed the work has been done.

Blocked surface water drainage in Church Street - County Cllr Mellen has taken up issues with Highways on behalf of residents.

Tree on MSDC land Briar Hill triangle - MSDC has been asked to look at trees to see if remedial/maintenance is required. There has not been a response since acknowledging our request.

Damage to MSDC Church car park fence – this has been damaged by a vehicle and information passed to MSDC.

Street Cleaning Grant- MSDC will now pay half yearly rather than quarterly. This should have no effect on WPC cash flow.

Yellow lines near school - Highways has advised that 80% must be gone before the lines will be repainted.

National Highways Notice in EADT – this was flagged up by resident. Mrs Ewans has emailed National Highways who advise that at present the only work over and above the concrete works was the new roundabout. Mrs Eans emailed back to point out that J47 mentioned in connection with other works in the notice, to date there has been no further response.

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

A resident has asked about a community Facebook page. They said that there was one but cannot find it now. It was agreed that the WPC should find someone willing to run a Facebook page as Mrs Fuller and Mrs Ewans have no time to do this and no parish councillor volunteered. **A resident** requesting for support for teenagers' litter picking in support of Air Ambulance. Cllrs agreed this was a commendable undertaking and they would like to add a donation to be discussed on next agenda. Meanwhile Mrs Ewans will write with information on litter picking equipment. Meeting notes have been received from the joint parishes meeting attended by Mrs Robinson, Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Walker and the joint response from the parishes to BMSDCs call for sites 2024. Bury Free Press for a few words about Ian Lavender. The following wording was sent in by Mrs Ewans after discussion with Dr Geake. *"The Parish Council, indeed the whole village, is saddened to learn of the death of Ian. He has been much loved, respected and valued member of our community for many years. He will be greatly missed. We send our thoughts and best wishes to Miki"* **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** **SALC** news bulletin 2, 8, 15, 22, 29 January, 5 February, Training bulletin 9,16,23, 24, 30 January, 6 February, members survey 2024, Mid Suffolk Area Forum 19 March, D-Day 80 6 June 2024. **SCC** Suffolk Greenest County awards 2024, Suffolk Pension Fund annual employer meeting 19 January, Greenest County community newsletter 6 February, **MSDC** Babergh & Mid Suffolk call for sites 2024, Town & Parish update January, February, e-cigarette recycling, Spring litter picks 2024, Joint Local Validation List consultation, February half term activities. **Rural Services Network** Rural Bulletin 9,16, 23. 30 January, 6 February, Funding Digest January. **Community Action Suffolk** Community led housing Zoom events 13 February. **Mid Suffolk CAB** invitation to cost of living forum 16 February. **Suffolk Police** precept survey: PCC proposes increase in precept to fund constabulary 2024/5. **Communities Together** New Year/Winter newsletter. **Hopkins Homes** Woolpit infrastructure – A1088 roundabout. **District Cllr Overett** public flood forum 26 January.

9. To approve accounts for payment.

Payments from CIL to Dales Sports Surfaces Ltd £612.48 new club bowls Woolpit Carpet Bowls Club (this replaces the grant of £600.00 agreed at the December CIL meeting) and Rod Squirrell Builders £3,072.00 Woolpit Institute roof repairs were unanimously ratified. Mr K Harknett £56.68 litter picker January, Mr M Gardiner £245.25 Highways Ranger January, Suffolk County Council £357.36 pension payment January, Suffolk Association of Local Councils £ 42.00 Chairing meetings training Helen Geake 29 January, Gipping Press £415.00 Printing Feb/March Diary, Ron Raisey £114.20 Editing Feb/March Diary, Realise Future £555.59 Bench with Arms. Under CIL Parkers Pitches £19,081.39 WCC Cricket Nets. All accounts were approved and cheques issued. Payments by Standing Order/Direct Debit Mrs P Fuller £1,056.91 January salary, BT £213.38 quarterly bill.

10. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The balance of the Community Account at the end of January was £537,004.32 of which CIL is £424,261.91, Recreation Ground £1,961.37, earmarked reserves

£48,255.18, general reserve £30,336.81 and general funds £32,189.05. This has not been reconciled as the bank statement has not been received.

b) To receive an update from the Clerk regarding banking arrangements and take any necessary action.

Arrangements to transfer the current account to Unity Trust Bank are in hand and should complete on 21 February. Cllrs have received letters with security code. Cheque and paying in books should be received shortly.

11. To consider and adopt the Woolpit PC Draft Business Plan.

This had been drawn up by Mrs Fuller to meet a requirement of the new bank. It is based on other parish business plans. Cllrs unanimously agreed to adopt the plan.

12. To consider quotes for tree work and take any necessary action.

Langstone Arboricultural Services, as our approved contractor has provided a quote for all the work advised to be undertaken from the recent tree surveys totalling £1900.00 for Lady's Well, allotments and pump area and £2300,00 for the recreation ground. Tree work must be undertaken both for the health of the trees and public safety, therefore quotes were approved. *Action: Mrs Ewans.*

13. To consider a response to BMSDC Joint Local Validation List and take any necessary action.

No response considered necessary.

14. To receive an update on the community larder and take any necessary action.

It was agreed to remove this item from future agendas unless clerk has further information to report. District Cllr Overett is in discussion with Mrs Symons and supplying information and contacts.

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

The Clerk has written to Long Farms for permission to site a bench on Footpath 6 and is awaiting a response. Mrs Ewans has contacted our insurer who has confirmed that public liability will cover benches and all such items are covered.

16. To receive an update on possible land for a dog park and take any necessary action.

Mrs Ewans has asked insurers about public liability who confirm that we have cover for people but not dogs. The insurers say dog owners should have their own cover. Mr Hardiman confirmed that the landowner had agreed to a five-year lease. There will have to be further discussions with him about terms and conditions.

17. To receive a report on footpaths and take any necessary action.

Mr Hardiman advised that Mr M Baker is no longer willing to allow a permissive path to provide a circular route due to worries about inconsiderate dog owners. Concern that footpath warden had misunderstood the brief which is to report on public rights of way not village pavements.

18. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

a) A14 roadworks

Nothing to discuss

b) Roundabout

County Cllr Mellen advised that several local haulage companies have contacted him to say the new roundabout is not suitable for their larger vehicles. He will take this up with officers.

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

County Cllr Mellen advised that the 20 mph report will be decided by Richard Smith who holds the portfolio for highways.

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

4 units have been ordered. Our insurers have advised that the additional premium will be approximately £11.00.

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

Work has commenced on the roundabouts.

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

All allotments are now let. Mr Howlett has agreed to pay £75 pa for paddock off Oak Lane. The Chair reported on a Warren Lane site meeting with Richard Parmee Biodiversity Project Manager for BMSDC, Dr Geake, Mr Wainwright and Mrs Ewans. Mr Parmee very enthusiastic and many varied ideas discussed. It is proposed to get the village involved by holding a public meeting around Easter time with speakers from Suffolk Wildlife. It was suggested that allotment holders be specifically invited. Several councillors have never visited the site and this will be arranged by Mrs Jenkins.
Action: Mrs Ewans/Mrs Jenkins

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

a)Report.

Mr Foster advised that a great deal of work had been undertaken in last month. There had been a full committee meeting in January. The management is now two tier with a Trustee body and a Village Hall Committee which includes representatives from user groups, meeting four times a year.

b)to consider the application for CIL funding and take any necessary action.

Mr Foster wants to move to formal instruction of architects because matter cannot proceed without plans and drawing of what is possible. Therefore, he has asked that the CIL bid to cover fees be granted. Dr Geake reminded everyone of what the minutes of the January WPC meeting said on this subject and that the requested meetings have not taken place and the information requested is not available. The meeting with MSDC has yet to be arranged. The user group survey result is awaited and a business plan needs to be completed. It was resolved that the CIL application decision must wait until the required information has been received.

22. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 5 March 2024.

Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.

Signed.....approved

Dated.....5 March 2024.....