

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7 MAY 2024 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSITITUTE

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

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

1.Election of Chair.

Dr Geake was proposed, seconded and unanimously elected.

2. Election of Vice-Chair.

No Cllr was put forward and it was agreed to continue without a Vice-Chair.

3. To receive the recommendation of the Interview Panel for the co-option of councillors and take any necessary action.

Matthew Watkins and John Guyler were recommended and Cllrs unanimously agreed their co-option.

4.Apologies for absence. There were none.

5. Public comment: Mr Foster commented on the grass cutting of the playing field and the residual grass left. He feels it needs another cut and that we are not getting good value from the contractor. Mr Hardiman advised that the new censor lights have been fitted at the roundabout near Costcutter so now stay on all the time.

6. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' report: A litter bin and a dog bin at the car park behind the Health Centre are now in place and emptied weekly, alongside monthly mechanical sweeping. Plans for soft landscaping are also in hand – we are asking for clarification as to when this work will be completed. The Health Centre's delays in engaging with MSDC to take over the lease have gone on long enough and need resolution. We remain in discussion with Mid Suffolk senior officers to ensure that the car park will be properly managed, flooding issues resolved, and EV charging points up and running without further delay and will keep the parish council updated. The much-needed path between Goldstar and Rectory Lane is nearly complete but its entry point onto Rectory Lane is a safety concern as the lane is narrow at that point with poor visibility. We have asked officers to request that this path be extended to where the Rectory Lane is wider and where there are alternative entry points onto the layby. We have also asked for Goldstar to re-seed the damaged sections of verge along the Heath Road section of the path. International Compost Awareness week runs from 5-11 May. To help promote home composting and reducing waste the Council have events around the district to give away free compost. The results from a recent tenant satisfaction survey are not very promising with many tenants rating the service from the Council as poor. A programme of activities is being prepared, including a better system for booking appointments with the service team. The Council was successful in gaining an £800k grant for decarbonising council housing stock. The Housing Solutions team has been shortlisted as Team of the Year in Housing Heros awards. The next round of locality grants has had a soft launch. The application process is now open, so applications from any community group are welcome. Monthly drop-in sessions are Tuesday 21 May 10-12 Wesley Café and Thursday 20 June 10-12 Teacups Café.

County Councillor's report: At Health Scrutiny Committee on 17 April, we heard from colleagues in the NHS about their digital integration work, trying to join up the different IT systems they use and to make information sharing easier between health and care providers. This is especially helpful given the UK's aging population. There was also a report from NSFT on mortality reporting between November 2023 and

January 2024 – this relates to the deaths of current patients and those within six months of discharge, with their system of recording having recently been overhauled. On 23 April, Cabinet reviewed the Leaving Care Strategy which detailed the ways in which the council wants to improve the service it provides to young people leaving our care. The council acts as a ‘corporate parent’ to all children taken into care, and must always ask itself with every decision: ‘would this be good enough for my child?’. Plans in the new strategy for young people leaving care include help with housing, employment, mentoring and extension of the current council tax exemption scheme for care leavers who are living outside of Suffolk. The Leaving Care service offers support to all young people leaving care up to the age of 25, and care leavers regularly attend meetings at the council to provide feedback and ideas for improvement. As well as the council’s new £4.4m investment in additional staff to improve SEND services, two new appointments have been made to leadership. Sarah-Jane Smedmor will be the new permanent Director for Children’s Services, with a start date of 8 July. An Independent Chair for the new SEND Improvement Board has also been appointed, Kathryn Boulton, who will start in June and lead the SEND improvement the council needs to deliver, following the poor Ofsted/CQC inspection in November 2023. The council submitted an action plan after the report was published which has been approved by Ofsted, CQC and the Department for Education. The council will be receiving an additional £10.9million from the Department for Education to create new specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The Department for Education also announced it was funding a new SEND school in Suffolk sponsored by the Unity Schools Partnership, which will provide 126 new places in Suffolk for pupils aged between three and 16 with severe learning difficulties. Earlier this month, the Chancellor also announced a new Alternative Provision (AP) free school, the SENDAT New AP Suffolk Free School, in West Suffolk. The sites for both schools are yet to be confirmed. More families will be able to secure free assistance to make their houses warmer and more energy efficient using the Warm Homes Suffolk scheme. Residents and landlords of eligible properties can apply for energy efficient measures such as insulation, solar panels or heat pumps, with average funding of £18,000 is available for homeowners, and £12,000 for landlords and their tenants. Warm Homes Suffolk has been funding home energy efficiency improvements for two years, with funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. To be eligible, homes must have an EPC rating of D, or below and not heated by mains gas, households have a combined pre-tax income of under £36,000. Residents across Suffolk are set to benefit from 421 newly surfaced roads this year which is almost double the number of roads completed last year. This is a result of the extra £10 million investment by the council into resurfacing roads. 102 roads will be surface dressed, whilst a further 319 sites will benefit from a full machine resurfacing during the year. Surface dressing and machine resurfacing treatments prolong the life of a road surface, remove potholes and level it out. During the last six months, Suffolk Highways has repaired over 9,000 potholes and resurfaced 41 roads, with a further 278 roads planned for resurfacing in this financial year. Having said this, winter weather always sees an increase in potholes and there is still a lot to do. In July the council will vote on the county devolution deal and at present it is not clear if there is enough support in council for the deal.

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

8. To appoint Parish Council Representatives to other bodies.

- a) Institute Committee – Mrs Jenkins.
- b) Woolpit Village Hall Committee – Mr Gallagher.
- c) Woolpit Charity Lands – Ms Hicks who will be asked to provide an annual report
- d) St Mary’s Church Building Trust – Mr Guyler
- e) Good Neighbour Scheme – Mrs Jenkins

Councillors with responsibility for:

- f)SALC – vacant
- g)Public Transport Liaison Officer – Mrs Robinson and Mr Hardiman
- h)School Liaison – Mr Gallagher
- i)Allotment Wardens – Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Walker
- j)Responsible Financial Officer – Mrs Fuller, Parish Clerk
- k)Pump Garden – Mrs Jenkins
- l)Millennium Garden – Mr Hardiman
- m)Tree/footpath Warden – Mrs Robinson with support from Mr Wainwright

9. To review the effectiveness of council's internal audit and systems of financial control including insurance and risk assessment.

Cllrs reviewed the current internal audit and control procedures and are satisfied that they comply with regulations and are suitable for the PC's financial levels.

10. To approve the minutes of the meeting 2 April 2024

The minutes were approved and signed.

11. Planning**a) to consider current applications**

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 comment.

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 40No affordable dwellings, associated works & infrastructure. Land South of Melvin Way and Old Stowmarket Road. A meeting is to be held with the developer shortly and it was agreed that unless something substantive emerges from the meeting our previous comments would be resubmitted. It is noted that the transport plan implies buses run all year round and not only term time which is misleading.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

24/01477 Application for work to trees subject to TPO MS196/W1 No.1 group of oak (G1) reduce the height of the trees by approx. 4-5 m to suitable replacement growth and reduce side lateral branches by approx. 3-4m.15 Lower Broom Road – granted.

24/00746 Construction of a single storey rear white UPVC conservatory, 6 Wrights Way – granted.

24/00869 Erection of a single storey side extension (following part removal of existing side extension), Ship House, Borley Green.

24/01665 Discharge of Conditions application appl 21/01132 Condition 5 (Hardstanding Areas), Land off Bury Road – satisfied.

24/00327 Discharge of Conditions application appl 18/04247 Condition 27 (Areas for loading, unloading, manoeuvring and [parking including Electric Vehicle Charging and cycle storage) Land of Bury Road – satisfied.

24/01490 Discharge of Conditions application appl 20/00779 Condition 9 (sustainable drainage system) Condition 11 (additional details) Condition 16 (Lighting) Goldstar Transport, Elmswell Road - satisfied

24/00372 Discharge of Conditions application appl 18/04247 Condition 24 (details of roundabouts, Estate Roads and Footpaths) – not acceptable the cycle routes do accord with the current design standard LTN1/20 and there also some amendments required to the footways.

24/01795 Discharge of Conditions Application appl 18/04247 - Condition 12 (Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Design Scheme) Land Off, Bury Road – acceptable.

24/01665 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/21/01132 - Condition 5 (Hardstanding Areas) Land Off, Bury Road - satisfied

24/01144 Appl for non-material amendment to appl 2112/16 and subsequent appeal. Alterations to landscaping details, land South of Steeles Close – acceptable.

24/01535 Appl for non-material amendment to appl 21/01132 substitution of approved house types on 64 plots including planting and landscaping, land off Bury Road – refused, the proposals are considered to conflict with the requirements of the NPPF and represent a material alteration to the approved development on this site.

12. Clerk's Report

Re-siting of the beacon – MSDC has confirmed that planning permission is required.

SID for The Heath – this has been ordered now the pole has been moved.

Spooners, The Heath – MSDC has confirmed that there is no breach of planning regulations regarding the height of the new brick wall.

Footpath Warden – Mrs Wortley has resigned as tree and footpath warden.

Anglia Car Chargers – court proceedings have been issued following no response to our request of a refund of all money paid.

Joint parishes meeting 14 May – Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Robinson will attend on behalf of Woolpit.

13. To receive correspondence/communications and deal with any matters. The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: **Rural Services Network** Rural Bulletin 3, 9, 16, 23, 30 April, Funding Digest April. **SCC** Greenest County community newsletter spring. **MSDC** Police & Crime Commissioner statement of persons nominated and policy details, grass cutting and meadow management 2024, CIL Bid round 13 alert – April reminder, Hackney Carriage/Private Hire policy consultation, Town & Parish update May. **SALC** news bulletin 8, 15, 22, 29 April, Training Bulletin 9, 16, 23, 30 April, 7 May, pension requirements as an employer, SALC AGM 1 July – guest speaker Carol Engles CAB West Suffolk, planning training, pre release of new Model Financial Regulations. **Mid Suffolk CAB** Cost of Living Forum 2024 report. **CAS** Community Led Housing Zoom events 4 June. **Stowmarket Striders** details of Road Race 28 June. **County Cllr Mellen** copy emails with SCC regarding Woolpit-Elmswell pedestrian/cycle link update. **Care Choices** Suffolk Care Services Directory E-Book link. **Communities Together** Spring newsletter. **Residents** Thanks for providing SIDS, concerns regarding nature area Warren Lane, useful information on reflective backing boards for 20 mph signage, copy email to County Cllr Mellen regarding flooding The Street. **Mindful Life** free NHS online mindfulness courses for residents over 65.

14. To approve accounts for payment.

Mr K Harknett £57.60 Litter Picking April, Mr M Gardiner £540.00 Highways Ranger April, Suffolk County Council £344.36 pension payment April, Equity pc renewal of Avast software 2 years, Gipping Press £415.00 Woolpit Diary printing, SALC £767.30 subscription 2024/5, Wavelength Aerials £108.00 repairs to CCTV system. CIL payments – Mr C P Schramm £4,647.69 50% to fit windows to ARC, Suffolk County Council £570.00 to move SID pole, Mrs J Ewans £43.92 reimbursement for additional SID padlocks, Mrs J Ewans £455.00 reimbursement for court fees re Anglia Car Chargers. All accounts were approved for payment. Payments by Standing Order Mrs P Fuller £, 1056.91 April salary

15. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The balance of the Community Account at the end of April was £555,785.65 of which CIL is £431,372.30, Recreation Ground £1,945.47, earmarked reserves £48,404.84 general reserve £30,336.81 and general funds £43,726.23.

b) To consider Clerk's hours and change paying salary by online banking instead of Standing Order and take any necessary action

It was agreed to cancel the Standing Order and pay the Clerk worked hours each month now we can arrange online payments. This will allow Cllrs to monitor additional hours worked more regularly. An increase of contracted hours will be discussed at the June meeting.

c)To discuss applying for funding to change to a gov.uk domain and take any necessary action.

As the maximum funding available is £100.00 Cllrs agreed not to apply for funding and get the new domain via Suffolk.cloud.

Action: The Clerk

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

A quote for £115.00 has been received from Vertas for a bus to Stowmarket on a Thursday against the current service to Bury of £45.00. £6,000.00 grant from BSIP was granted and it was thought that this would mean the taxi bus would need to take bus passes. This is not the case as it is not a scheduled service. This funding could therefore be used to lower the cost of trips to Bury, introduce a service to Stowmarket which would increase our weekly subsidy from £8 to £22. Cllrs are not in favour of a Thursday bus to Stowmarket as Dan's Coaches already run one and it is being used.

17. To discuss planning permission required to relocating the beacon to Woolpit Cricket Club ground, and take any necessary action.

It was agreed to apply for planning permission up to a maximum cost of £200.00.

Action: Deputy Clerk

18. Completed training details for March 2024.

a)To receive a report from the Clerk on Demystifying the Procurement Procedure course

The course was interesting but the procurement procedures daunting. A small parish council has to follow the same procedures as multi-national companies. Contracts over £25,000 (not including VAT) have to be registered on Contracts Finder and award notices published on Contracts Finder too. The advice of other councils was to employ profession help for the process.

b)To receive a report from the Deputy Clerk on Biodiversity course

Most of the information had already been received from communications with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and The Woodland Trust. What WPC is proposing for the area in Warren Lane is on the right lines.

c)Mrs Walker has completed her councillor basics training.

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

The sites have been agreed and the wood will need cutting and benches putting together plus holes digging and benches cemented in. Mr Hardiman will need a group to help him with this task or we may have to look for pre-made benches and a contractor to install them.

Action: The Clerk

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

Mr M Baker has advised that after consideration he is not keen to have a dog park or a permissive path on his land. He does allow people to walk around the area now and is happy to have this on an informal basis. Cllrs were asked to keep footpath connectivity in mind for the future.

21. To consider an additional entrance gate to Lady's Well and take any necessary action.

Now that the footways on Elmswell Road have been built it is hoped to have an entrance to Lady's Well in the North West corner. The deeds will have to checked for ownership of the ditch as it may be necessary to contact Gold Star for permission to cross the ditch if it belongs to the company.

Action: The Clerk

22. To consider staging a Village Organisations Fair and take any necessary action.

There are about 40 village organisations and with the additional residents moving into the village, it would be good to organise an event where the organisations could have a stall. It would require a committee to organise and it was proposed to ask Mr Howard to be involved in arranging something for 2025.

23. To consider cleaning of road signs and take any necessary action.

It is some years since this was done and Mr Gardiner is willing to do this as part of his Highways Ranger duties during the year. He will report back any that he is unable to do.

24. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

a) A14 roadworks

About 83% of the work has been completed. There is a lot of resurfacing, studding, lighting and white lines to be painted to the roundabout by the Hopkins Homes development on Elmswell Road and this section of road will be closed 10-13 May.

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

We are still awaiting the decision of the portfolio holder.

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

The SID at Churchgate House is working well and Mr Hardiman suggested we order another SID to go back on the pole in Bury Road. However, some Cllrs feel that having too many SIDs negates people taking notice of them. Advice will be sought from 20's plenty on this point.

Action: The Clerk

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

It is believed that some homes have been sold but cannot be occupied until the spine road is completed.

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

Although not directly affected by the pylons, Cllrs asked for this to be on the next agenda as it seems there is not benefit to the area for the power to be taken down to London. Mrs Walker will investigate and bring information to the June meeting.

Action: Mrs Walker

27. To consider a response to MSDC Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Policy consultation. (ends 4 June)

This is a routine 5-year review and it was agreed not to comment.

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

Mrs Jenkins has not carried out an inspection this month. All plots are rented out. A decision needs to be made of how to dispose of the large pile of rubbish taken off a plot.

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

A new Treasurer has taken over and is sorting out the finances. The committee are advertising for a Booking Clerk and once they are in situ an online booking system will be implemented. The committee are looking for a further 2 trustees to bring the total to 7.

30. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 4 June 2024.

Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.42 p.m.

Signed..... Dated.....