

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 1 APRIL 2025 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

Present: Dr Geake (Chair), Mrs Jenkins, Mrs Osborne-Lomax, Mr Guyler, Mr Hardiman and Mr Foster.

In attendance: Mrs Fuller, Clerk, District Cllr Mansel, County Cllr Mellen (in part) and 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

2. Public comment: It is noted that a new parasol has been stolen from a garden in Mill Lane. The owner was asked to report to the police so that they can build up a record of issues in the parish. Mr Hardiman and Mrs Osborne-Lomax have looked at the potential area for the new bus shelter. If the hedge could be cut back or removed this would allow for the bus shelter to have sides and still provide access along the path for wheelchairs/buggies. It was agreed that The Diocese would be contacted as this is their hedge.

Dr Geake expressed our sadness at the passing of District Cllr Rachel Eburne. She grew up in Woolpit, and did so much across the whole district to improve people's lives. We will really miss her energy and commitment.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

District Councillors' report: It is with great sadness to announce that the Deputy Leader of Mid Suffolk Council, cabinet member for finances and resources, and Councillor for Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden, Rachel Eburne, sadly passed away on the 14 March after a long illness. Since being elected as a councillor back in 2010, Rachel was a key champion within her local community and was deeply committed to Mid Suffolk. She will be deeply missed by us all. All District and Borough Councils in Suffolk have published their joint proposals on how local government in Suffolk should be re-organised. This proposal is for two or three unitary authorities across the county, but the exact boundaries for these authorities is yet to be determined. Letters to this effect have now been sent and acknowledged by the Secretary of State. Now more detailed business plans for the proposed new authorities will need to be finalised and agreed. Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk agreed for updated CIL charging structure proposals to go out for 6-week public consultation. The CIL charging rates had not been changed since the Councils brought in CIL back in 2018. It is proposed that these are now increased and have been viability tested before going out to consultation. Details of the proposed new charging structure can be found on the website in due course. The reserved matters application for the proposed extension for Precon at Lawn Farm Business Park was approved by planning committee in March. A number of conditions including lighting and traffic management were included as well as a proposal to set up a parish liaison group, hopefully across the whole site. Some highway safety works are complete and the businesses at the Eurogarage service area are now trading. There are now a number of live planning applications to regularise the other aspects of the development including lighting, cycle parking and the totem signage. Some of these applications will be determined by planning committee in due course. The next round of locality funding is due to be launched in the next month or so, but we can now begin to accept applications. The total amount per councillor has increased to £10,000. We apologise for cancelling last month's drop-in due to illness. Hopefully the next ones will be going ahead as planned on Tuesday 8th April 10:00 – 12:00 at Wesley Café, Elmswell and Tuesday 6th May 10:00 – 12:00 at Green Wolf Café, Woolpit.

Parishes have been provided with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' 'Planning for the future' briefing pack which lists the number of dwellings required in each village over the next 20 years. Although it looks as if Woolpit has already met

the requirement it is likely that villages along the A14 corridor will be required to take more as Stowmarket has no land to take its proportion. It would be a good time to review Woolpit NP and add housing numbers and land allocations.

County Councillor's report: At Cabinet on 18 March, the council administration voted to bring Suffolk's libraries back in-house at the end of the current contract for the library on 31 May. Suffolk Libraries, who have held the contract since the service was divested in 2012, were the only bidder for the contract, but negotiations broke down and the council felt it had no alternative but to bring the libraries back under council control. The proposal to do this was passionately opposed not just by Suffolk Libraries, but also Suffolk residents and the many volunteers and Friends groups who work for and raise money for libraries in their communities. Many of them attended the Cabinet meeting and protested outside Endeavour House, or asked questions during the meeting. Following the Cabinet meeting, two requests were submitted for the decision be 'called in' – a process by which an issue can be tabled at a meeting of the council's Scrutiny Committee to be looked at more closely. Both the requests were rejected after being reviewed by the council's monitoring officer. Local Government Reorganization Proposals from all Suffolk councils were submitted to the government by 21 March, and as noted in last month's report, Suffolk County Council has announced that it will be proposing one single unitary council for Suffolk. Subsequently, all the district and borough councils have now voted to propose multiple unitaries (2 or 3) as their preferred option. All the councils now need to prepare a business case and submit it to the government by September. The government should announce by the end of the year what local government in Suffolk will look like in future. The plan is for a mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk to be elected in May 2026, and the government's public consultation on a new Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk is open until 13 April. National Grid undertook final consultations for the Norwich to Tilbury pylons project in Suffolk in March, in anticipation of receiving a Development Consent Order application later in the year. Suffolk County Council has welcomed a series of changes to the latest set of plans, evidence that National Grid has listened to some of the council's concerns and those of local communities. However fundamental differences remain, with the council clear that offshore and undergrounding solutions should be priorities for the scheme. National Grid have confirmed that undergrounding through the Waveney valley, which the council were hoping for, is now not likely to happen. The council has pledged to continue to fight for no pylons, and if the scheme is agreed, for proper compensation for residents and communities. Suffolk Archives' recent exhibition, *The Arrivals: Celebrating Migration to Suffolk*, has been nominated for Community Engagement Programme of the Year at the prestigious 23rd annual Museums + Heritage Awards. The exhibition explored historical and contemporary migration experiences to Suffolk since the end of World War II, including oral history recordings, stories of migrant entrepreneurs, and archive materials from the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCARE). Visitors learned about Jewish refugees, Polish soldier Marion Laskowski, the Windrush generation, and saw examples of traditional clothing from around the world. Suffolk Archives' latest exhibition is *Departures*, which explores emigration from Suffolk. It will be running at The Hold, on Ipswich waterfront until 31 May, with a programme of tie-in events. National Highways will be carrying out work overnight between Woolpit and the Sugar beet Factory from 22 April to August.

Mr Hardiman asked regarding the signs to the Health Centre. These have been ordered.

County Cllr Mellen will contact Carl Lockwood for a further meeting regarding the Elmswell/Woolpit cycle/footpath.

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

There were none.

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 4 March 2025

With one spelling amendment, the minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

25/01111 Application for Consent to display advertisements. Erection of one 7 metre tall totem sign and one 10 metre totem sign. Eg On The Move, Kiln Lane, Elmswell – object.

The illuminated signs will create yet more excessive light, disrupting natural nighttime conditions to the detriment of nocturnal wildlife including insects, bats and birds.

The signs will adversely affect the views of Woolpit as you approach, especially from the north, and will be detrimental to residents' sense of place.

The signs are larger than necessary and will cause harmful visual impact to the setting of, and historic relationship between, the two listed churches of Elmswell and Woolpit.

25/01189 Listed Building Consent – Remedial work to South West external façade, comprising part reconstruction of defective brick outer skin. East Of England Co-op, The Street – no comment.

25/01151 Conversion of outbuilding from garden shed/garage into a home office/hobby room. Laurel House, Bury Road – no comment

25/01374 Replacement of four underground petrol tanks and installation of a new underground petrol tank, and upgrade the existing pumps with Stage II vapour recovery. Woolpit Service Station Church Street – no comment

25/01444 Application for works to a tree in a Conservation Area - Reduce 1 No Lime tree by approximately 50%. Danesfield, Drinkstone Road – no comment

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

25/00650 Application for non-material amendment re 24/04207: addition of photovoltaic panels to southern and western elevations of affordable housing plots 33-46 only. Omission of ground floor kitchen window to north elevation of affordable housing plot 44. Land off Bury Road, approved.

7. Clerk's Report

The family of Derek Prior – has requested that we consider naming a road in Woolpit after Derek. The Clerk has advised that we have none to name at the moment but will keep it in mind for future development.

Fire at Lady's Well – this was on 30 March approx. 5.30 p.m. Loud bangs were heard which were presumably aerosol cannisters again. The incident has been reported to the police.

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

The following items have been circulated to Councillors: Rural Services

Network Funding Digest March, Rural Bulletin 11, 18, 25 March, 1 April. **SCC** update 5 – A1088 Bridge Farm Bridge Stowlangtoft, Loft Insulation 50% grants. **MSDC** bin emptying service prices 2025/26, adoption of BMSDC Joint Development Scheme March 2025, Mid Suffolk Neighbourhood Plans meeting with parishes 21 March, food waste action week 2025, Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus - update on fares, Town & Parish Liaison meeting – devolution 10 March slide pack, Town & Parish update April, BMSDC Planning for the Future briefing pack, adoption of BDC & MSDC Biodiversity and trees supplementary planning document. **NALC** Chief Executive bulletin 6, 13, 20, 27 March. **SALC** Mid Suffolk Area Forum 18 March, news bulletin 10, 17, 24, 31 March, 18 March Financial Regulations update, training bulletin 11, 18, 25 March, devolution update 10 March, Devolution – reminder of information briefing session by Government to Norfolk & Suffolk 18 March and presentation slides and summary notes, AGM & 75th Anniversary celebration 2025, Suffolk Highways events 20 March, Devolution and Local Government – where are we now 25 March, NSIPs bulletin March. **St Elizabeth Hospice** compassionate conversations sessions. **MARPA** AGM 29 March. **Keepers' Daughter** community film screening. **Resident** copy of

response to SCC regarding 20 mph zone. **Resident** copy letter to Goldstar regarding litter.

9. Finance

a) To receive a monthly financial report from the Clerk

Total funds at the end of March were £621,012.67. Of this CIL is £496,511.50, earmarked reserves £58,543.45, general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £28,957.72.

b) To approve accounts for payment.

Mr M Gardiner £612.00 Highways Ranger March, Mr P Fuller £2134.64 Clerk salary March, Suffolk County Council £419.37 pension payment March, HM Revenue & Customs £1490.62 Tax and N/I January-March, SALC £789.37 annual subscription 2025/6, Woolpit Institute £455.00 office rent January-March, Woolpit Institute £60.00 room hire for meetings January-March, Mr M Hardiman £46.28 reimbursement for VE80 flag, office keys and glue for trampoline, Mr R Raisey £149.28 edit April/May Diary, Ali Everett Carpentry £82.00 replace office door lock, Suffolk County Council £1637.52 street lighting energy and maintenance 2024/5, Equity pc £54.00 sort printer/scanner issues. Under CIL Stuart Canvas Ltd £9480.00 replacement cricket club practice nets. Payment by Direct Debit Information Commissioner £47.00 annual fee. All payments were approved and authorised for payment. £12,500.00 has been transferred from the savings account to the current account to cover these payments.

10. To consider a quote for replacement grass mats for the play area and take any necessary action.

This has become necessary as detailed in the latest play equipment inspection. Since all the equipment and the maintenance contract is with Proludic it is considered appropriate to use them for replacement. The quote of £1066.05 was unanimously approved.
Action: the Clerk

11. To receive a report from the working group to consider filling the casual vacancies by co-option and take any necessary action.

All 3 vacancies can now be filled by co-option. Cllrs Osborne-Lomax, Guyler and Hardiman have met and circulated a set of recommendations for discussion including a better focus on recruitment, using the Woolpit Diary and the website more effectively, and a "buddying" system for new councillors. All recommendations were approved and Mrs Osborne-Lomax will lead on this and put into action.

Action: Mrs Osborne-Lomax

12. To receive an update on a VE 80 celebrations including progress of the beacon and take any necessary action.

Posters are being put up and the beacon should be finished next week. All other matters are in hand. The school will allow children to attend events in the village before going to school. VJ80 is 15 August and it has been suggested this too should be marked. We already have a film evening arranged and this can be incorporated into any other commemoration.

13. To consider quotes for ground maintenance of the playing field and take any necessary action.

After considering the three quotes received it was agreed to continue with Top Gardens at a cost of £1980.00 + VAT.

Action: the Clerk

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

The copy that has been amended by the Village Hall Committee has only been received yesterday and therefore this item is deferred to the next meeting.

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

This was covered under County Councillor's report. We await the date of the next meeting.

16. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

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

The pole in Green Road needs to have a larger hole so it can be cemented deeper into the ground. Once this has been done the SID can be reinstated.

Action: Mr Hardiman

b) to receive an update on 20 mph zone

The period of consultation ended 24 March. SCC sent out 259 letters and received 30 replies of which 22 were in support, 1 objection and 7 that could not be ascertained whether they were supporting or objecting. If WPC has no objection SCC will progress onto the next stage which is the formal Legal consultation. The Clerk was asked to confirm that WPC has no objection.

Action: the Clerk

17. To consider a response to BMSDC Planning Statement of Community Involvement consultation and take any necessary action (ends 12 May)

WPC responded that letters should be sent to neighbours for developments over 10 dwellings, should continue for developments of 1-9 dwellings if it is not too costly and householder applications do not require letters to neighbours. Listed Building alterations can be dealt with by Heritage Officers.

18. Completed training details for March 2025.

Mrs Osborne-Lomax attended a finance for councillors' course 3 March.

19 To receive an update on the Bury Road development including transfer of land and take any necessary action.

Mr Guyler and Mrs Ewans, Deputy Clerk attended the liaison meeting on 5 March. The meetings seem to be working well and points raised have been responded to. There will be a site meeting with Tilia for councillors on 4 April. Tilia now owns the area of land for a burial ground and WPC will need to look at what is required to legally take on the burial ground.

Action: the

Deputy Clerk

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

The empty half plots have been advertised in April/May Diary. A resident has raised concerns that the field beside the allotments is becoming a fire risk due to the state and height of the dead vegetation. Councillors do not feel that the field in its current condition is any more a fire risk than any other set aside field or standing crop.

Action: the Clerk

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

The Village Hall Charity is now a CIO and are in the process of transferring assets with the Charity Commission. A Hall Manager and a Caretaker have been appointed. Several events have been arranged for the autumn - The Common Ground Theatre is visiting in October, a dance in November and a 50's/60's evening in January 2026.

22. Date and time of the next meeting – Tuesday 6 May 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed.....approved

Dated.....6 May 2025.....