

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 JUNE 2025 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

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

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

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

2. Public comment: Resident asked if there is to be a pedestrian crossing near the double roundabout and was referred to County Cllr Mellen as this is a Highways issue. Resident is Woolpit PC looking at having a foodbank for Woolpit residents. This was investigated a year or so ago and the difficulty was finding somewhere to store the stock, someone to run the foodbank and setting up a charity was complex. Cllrs will look at the issue again. Meanwhile District Cllr Overett offered the resident some information on setting up a scheme as she had provided information previously.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

County Councillor's report. On Tuesday 13 May, Cabinet approved the council's new five-year Care Market Strategy, which replaces the previous strategy from 2021-2024. The strategy sets out how the council will work with care providers in the county and other voluntary and community organizations to ensure there is enough care accommodation and workforce to meet adult social care need. The council has a legal duty to do this and care purchasing is one of the largest costs faced by the council – over £380m in the 2024-25 financial year, with demand forecast to keep growing. The strategy was developed in partnership with care providers, NHS Integrated Care Boards and Healthwatch Suffolk, with a focus on supporting people with higher additional needs such as dementia, neurological illness and autism, promoting independence where possible and providing better support for unpaid carers. The Cabinet meeting on 13 May also agreed that the council should object to the proposals for the Sea Link Grid Reinforcement, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) creating an undersea link between Kent and Suffolk, making landfall near Thorpeness and including a converter station being built at Saxmundham. The council acknowledged that the infrastructure was important for connecting low carbon energy developments, but that they had concerns about a number of issues, including the proposed bridge across the River Fromus which was felt would have significant adverse effects on the local landscape and character, and the inclusion of 7am to 5pm on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays in the working hours, as this would not give local residents any respite from the construction works. The council also reiterated the lack of coordination with other energy projects in the county, particularly National Grid Ventures' Lion Link project which is due to make landfall further up the coast at Walberswick. The council has also objected to the plans for Eco Power's new large solar farm in north Suffolk, based on several factors including the loss of good quality agricultural land, the impact on communities and the local landscape and damage from cable corridors. A statutory consultation on the plans is expected later in the year. Suffolk County Council has launched a consultation so Suffolk residents can give their views on the contributions which can be sought from developers proposing major planning applications. In 2011, the council published the "Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions to make developers aware of what they should consider, and the financial contributions they should take into account to mitigate for the impact of new developments such as housing estates. The guide has been updated periodically since it was launched, and has now been reviewed and is out for consultation focusing on early years childcare settings, education costs, libraries, and waste infrastructure contributions.

Developers need to provide funding to the county council to absorb the impact of extra housing to enable it to provide council services, and the consultation asks for public feedback on how this should be calculated. The consultation is open until 9 June. On Thursday 22 May, all three motions tabled were passed by the council, these included a motion against the government's proposed changes to public consultation for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) like Sizewell C, Sea Link and Lion Link and solar farm applications. The council also agreed motions proposing a ban on live animals being used as prizes on council land, and to support the campaign for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to be eligible for the 20 year long service medal which is currently for warranted police officers only. The meeting was the council's AGM (Annual General Meeting), and a new Chair, Cllr Jessica Fleming, and new Vice Chair, David Roach, were sworn in during the meeting. Suffolk County Council is currently arranging meetings with town and parish councils to engage with them about the coming changes in local government which will see Suffolk's two-tier system (districts/boroughs and county council) move to unitary councils/mayoral model which will undertake all services. As the administration's position is that one council would be best for Suffolk, it is likely that they will be promoting this at the meetings. County councillors have not been invited to the meetings but as your representatives, we would very much like to be there – if you are attending one of these meetings, please make contact with your local county councillor to find out if they are coming. The meetings are being organized by the council's communications team and will be around the county in the next couple of months. Nominations are now open for the Suffolk Community Awards 2025, which is organized by Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Association of Local Councils. The awards ceremony will showcase the excellent work and achievements of individuals, groups and local councils across Suffolk with 18 awards, including a new one for a local council's efforts respond to climate change. Other award categories cover youth participation and young person of the year, community building, contribution to volunteering, most active community and council, councillor, young councillor and clerk of the year. Nominations are now open and must be made by Sunday 13 July.

Cllr Mellen has been contacted by several residents regarding speeding on the Abbotts Green development. As the roads have not yet been adopted, the developer or management company can put in a 20mph speed limit (and many do during the construction phase) but it wouldn't be enforceable, so it would pretty much be an advisory limit. Once the roads are adopted by SCC, the default limit would be 30mph as per policy – unless a 20mph limit had been specified and put in as a condition of the planning consent which is unlikely. Once the roads are adopted by SCC, in order to get a 20mph limit, the community would have to go through the whole process as is currently happening for the heart of Woolpit – speed surveys, accident data, consultation, a TRO – just to get what should probably have been designed in at the start.

There is a lot of concern regarding the traffic flow at the exit of the eg service station. Cllr Mellen will look into having "Give Way" signage/road markings at the egress of the site to make it safer as many residents have witnessed near misses.

District Councillors' report. The 15 May annual council meeting for Mid Suffolk confirmed new appointments for the council. This included the appointment of Cllr Keith Scarff as Chair of the council, and Cllr Lorraine Baker as Vice Chair. While Suffolk County Council has advised Government of its preference for a single 'mega-council' Unitary for the whole of the county, MSDC – together with the other Suffolk districts and borough – believe that 2 or 3 smaller and more localised "Unitaries" will be less remote, more responsive to local communities, and offer better democratic representation. Although this will be a Government-level decision, the views of our residents are important to Mid Suffolk and will inform our final submission. An MSDC survey is now available, and includes some specific questions together with space for

residents, businesses, and communities to share thoughts, concerns, and ideas in greater detail. The Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden by-election, following the sad death of Cllr Rachel Eburne, will take place on Thursday 12 June. There are three candidates - Conservative, Green and Liberal Democrat. The two current planning applications at the eurogarage service area for advertisement consent, one for the lighting and one for the totems, were refused by committee on 7 May. Reasons for refusal included visual and landscape issues as well as the setting and significance of designated heritage assets. A second bin, near to the gate to the Health Centre car park, will be in place within the next two weeks. We have been assured by MSDC officers that shrub and wildflower planting will be undertaken in the very near future. EV charging is due to be in working order by September, and the Old Stowmarket Road signage in place within approximately the same timescale. We continue to seek positive ways to work with the Health Centre to ensure the gate is opened on future vaccination days and safe parking thereby facilitated. We welcome current progress towards securing this long-awaited community path between the villages, and strongly support the CIL bid from SCC for over £3M to fund phase 1 (phase 2 is due to be completed alongside via a different funding source). The CIL bid will be discussed by MSDC Cabinet this month. We have received some early enquiries and applications for locality grants and continue to welcome enquiries from local community groups. Our monthly drop-in sessions are ongoing, when we are available for residents to meet us and discuss local issues. Are next sessions are Wednesday 11 June 10-12 at Wesley Café, Elmswell and Tuesday 22 July 10-12 at Green Wolf Café, Woolpit.

Cllr Overett was advised that the lighting at the eurograge is still being used and she confirmed that enforcement action will be taken by MSDC.

The dumped caravan is still in Bury Road and a fridge has now been dumped there too. Cllr Overett will contact officers again as this is an urgent issue to get this removed.

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

There were none.

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 6 May 2025

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. To appoint Parish Council Representatives to other bodies.

a) Institute Committee – Mrs Jenkins

b) Good Neighbour Scheme - Mrs Jenkins

Councillors with responsibility for:

c) SALC – Miss Tomlinson with the help of Mrs Ewans, Deputy Clerk.

d) Public Transport Liaison Officer – Mr Hardiman

e) Allotment Wardens – Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Hammond

f) Pump Garden – Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Hammond

g) Tree/footpath Warden – Mr Hardiman and Mr Ewans

7. Planning

a) to consider current applications

There were none.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

25/01189 Remedial work to South West external façade, comprising of part reconstruction of defective brick outer skin. East of England Co-operative, The Street – Listed Building consent granted

25/01374 Replacement of four underground petrol tanks and installation of a new underground petrol tank and upgrade existing pumps with Stage II vapour recovery. Woolpit Service Station, Church Street – granted.

25/01151 Retention and conversion of outbuilding from garden shed/garage into home office/hobby room. Laurel House, Bury Road – granted

25/01311 Erection of single storey side and rear extension. 16 Mitre Close - granted

25/01712 Work to trees in the Conservation Area T1 Walnut, remove limb overhanging from neighbouring side, T2 Cypress, remove to ground level.

Danesfield, Drinkstone Road – no objection

25/01300 Discharge of Conditions application for 19/03851 Condition 3 (Construction Plan Management), Condition 4 (Travel Plan), Condition 10 (provision of parking and turning), Condition 11 (sustainability measures) and Condition 16 (Construction Management). Plot 4, Lawn Farm Business Park – acceptable or satisfied.

25/01990 Discharge of Conditions application for 19/02656 Condition 11 (Badger Method Statement). Land North of Heath Road – acceptable.

23/05380 Application for Approval of Reserved Matters following Outline Approval **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 40 No affordable dwellings, associated works & infrastructure. Land South Of Melvin Way And Old Stowmarket Road – reserved matters approved.

8. Clerk's Report

CCTV signs – two have disappeared and replacements ordered.

No dogs signs – all these at the entrances to the playing field have been removed. All four need to be replaced. This was approved.

Litter bin outside the Co-op – Cllr Overett has advised that MSDC Officers are liaising with the East of England Co-op who are considering options following the recent introduction of recycling laws for businesses.

Road condition, The Street – from Blake House to the Co-op is very rutted and uneven which has resulted in a resident having a fall and breaking a bone in their wrist amongst other issues. County Council Mellen has reported to SCC Highways and will follow this up.

Tarmac.com – there has been no response to my email suggesting help with installing gateway treatment in various areas or repairs to car park as part of their 'giving back to the community'.

Gateway treatments – the Clerk has contacted Badwell Ash PC to see where they purchased their recently installed gateway and which contractor they used for installation. They have a new clerk who will investigate and get back to us.

BMSDC Consultation – Statement of Licensing Policy consultation. This was received after the agenda was published. Councillors do not wish this to be an agenda item next month.

Zip-wire – issues of it getting stuck has been reported to Proludic. This will be investigated at the next inspection once we have renewed our maintenance package with them. The Clerk will confirm this and it is likely the invoice will be with us to approve for payment at the next meeting.

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

The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: **SALC** monthly Highways Forum on Roadworks 13 May, The National Allotment Society – allotment training, New Bulletin 12, 19, 26 May, 2 June, Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation – engagement with Parish Councils, Training Bulletin 20, 27 May, 3 June, NSIPs Bulletin May 2025 updates and new digital map. Mid Suffolk Area Forum 26 June speaker confirmed as Arthur Charvonia MSDC CEO, Mid Suffolk Town & Parish Liaison meeting 9 June. **NALC** Chief Executive's Bulletin 8, 15, 22, 29 May, events newsletter 13 May. **SCC** Bid round 15 24-26 Elmswell to Woolpit walking and cycle path answers to questions raised, advances notification of road closure various roads in Wetherden, Haughley, Elmswell and Woolpit Overnight 2-7 June, suffolkonboard bus timetable updates, SCC (Parish of Woolpit) (various roads) 20 mph (speed zone) Order 202. **MSDC** Listed Building Consultation notification works to windows (LLBCO), Local Government Reorganisation – Town and Parish workshops and survey launch, NSIP and largescale energy developments update May & June, Proposed revised CIL charging schedules BMSDCs consultation 28 May-9 July,

District wide Community Governance Review 2025, consultation statement of Licensing Policy, Town & Parish update June. **Rural Services Network** weekly news 8, 14, 26, 29 May. **MARPA** newsletter Summer 2025. **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** Wilder Communities events programme 2025, **CAS** Rural Housing Week event 2025 10 July. **Resident** concerns regarding traffic flow leaving E G service area, **Resident** request for SID to be moved down near White Elm White.

10. Finance

a) To receive a monthly financial report from the Clerk

As at the end of May there was £36,280.49 in the current account which includes £405.00 for online ticket sales for the VE 80 dance and £8260.40 VAT refund for 2024/25. The savings account balance is £599,575.23 to bring the total to £635,855.72. Of this CIL is £480,244.83 of which £173,831.65 has been allocated, earmarked reserves £71,287.68, general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £47,323.21.

b) To approve accounts for payment.

The following payments were unanimously ratified – Swing Machine £950.00 balance for band VE 80 dance 10 May, John Farr Chocks Away £100.00 music and dancing VE 80 event 8 May, and under CIL Modece Architects Ltd £6,680.00 Village Hall project package 2. The following accounts were approved for payment – Mr M Gardiner £560.70 Highways Ranger May, Mrs P Fuller £1,245.91 Clerk salary May, Suffolk County Council £408.29 pension payment May, Mr M Hardiman £20.61 reimbursement for bread rolls for BBQ VE 80 event 8 May Woolpit Cricket Club £510.00 burgers & sausages for VE 80 BBQ, Equity pc £54.00 to resolve scanner issues, Gipping Press £380.00 June/July Diary, Viking £185.68 stationery and stamps, Tania Jones £210.00 internal audit of accounts 2024/5. Payment by Direct Debit E-on Next £108.49 pump light six months bill.

c) To consider a grant request from Brave Futures and take any necessary action.

The charity was previously known as Fresh Start, New Beginnings and WPC made a grant of £100.00 in April 2021. They are a specialist support service covering Norfolk and Suffolk for children and young people, up to the age of 18 years, who have experienced sexual abuse which affects 1 in 10 children. It was unanimously agreed to make a grant of £120.00,

Action: the Clerk

11. To complete and sign the Statement of Assurance and Annual Return for year ended 31 March 2025.

The Clerk advised that the internal audit is complete and no issues had been identified to raise with Cllrs. The forms were duly completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk. The dates for the publication of public rights were agreed as 9 June – 18 July.

Action: the Clerk

12. To consider the purchase of a wi-fi booster for meetings and take any necessary action.

Some Cllrs are having difficulty with wi-fi during meetings and it was proposed and agreed to purchase a wi-fi booster to alleviate this. Mrs Osborne-Lomax agreed to investigate a suitable unit up to a maximum of £100.00. *Action: Mrs Osborne-Lomax.*

13. To receive an update from the Councillor Recruitment and Retention working group and take any necessary action.

An induction for Mrs Hammond and Miss Tomlinson has been completed with input from the Deputy Clerk. Basic Councillor training will be booked once new Cllrs have confirmed their availability. An update on the 20 mph zone and item regarding the drop in session 24 June have been included in June/July Diary which has already elicited one enquiry. The next Diary will include a bio of Mr Hardiman and this will be an ongoing theme. Woolpit PC now has a Facebook page run by Mrs Osborne-Lomax and items are also published on Nextdoor and this seems to be working well to engage with the public in all age groups. The group is also looking at ideas for

getting people interested and ready to apply when there are vacancies. The working Group were hoping to promote being a councillor at the school fete but have not received a response from the school. There is a skills matrix on the SALC website which could be adapted for our use. Mrs Jenkins has conducted an exit interview with a councillor who has recently resigned, with one further to do to see what WPC can do to improve retention of councillors.

14. To receive a report on a VE 80 celebrations including the beacon and take any necessary action.

100 People attended the dance in the Village Hall 10 May. The Mac 'n Cheese van covered their costs and has said they would be willing to attend future events. Mr Hardiman took over as Chair of the working group and all went to plan on 8 May. The evening event at the Cricket Club was well attended. Quality Equipment have very kindly donated the new beacon to the village to celebrate their 60th year and it was agreed that a plaque would be attached to the beacon advising this. The Clerk advised that once ticket sales and bar takings have been taken into account the celebrations cost a total £879.00. Both events were very successful and enjoyed by all. The Working Group were thanked for all their hard work.

15. To consider an event to commemorate VJ 80 and take any necessary action.

It was agreed to form another Working Group to arrange this on 15 August. It was agreed to continue with the film night which had already been arranged for this date together with a barbeque. The beacon will be lit before the film due to the lighter evenings at that time. It was felt that the film would need to be carefully chosen.

16. To discuss a CCTV policy, procedure and control group and take any necessary action.

Mrs Osborne-Lomax, Mr Mallion, Village Hall Manager and the Deputy Clerk have met and have amended the draft document. It was agreed to set up a Control Group made up of two representatives from the Village Hall of which one must be a Trustee and two from the Parish Council of which one must be a councillor. To be quorate the group must have one member from both groups in attendance. The system needs to be registered with the IOC, needs to be secure and the missing signs need to be replaced. Woolpit PC owns the system but it is housed within the Village Hall. The Control Group will report to Council each month. It was agreed that Mrs Osborne-Lomax and Mr Hardiman would be the representative for WPC. The Village Hall will advise their representatives in the next week.

Action: Mrs Osborne-Lomax and Mr Hardiman

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

The CIL funding bid by Suffolk County Council will be discussed at MSDC Cabinet in June.

18. 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

A request has been received for one of the SIDS to be moved to the end of Bury Road near to the Junction of White Elm Road facing traffic leaving the village. Mr Hardiman will arrange this. The pole in Green Road has still to be reinstalled.

b) to receive an update on 20 mph zone

The first draft order has been advertised and any objections had to be received by SCC by 21 May. We await further contact from SCC.

19. To review Grievance Procedures, Disciplinary Procedure and Disciplinary Rules for Employees and take any necessary action.

Mrs Osborne-Lomax has reviewed these and there are a few small alterations required. She will amend and send to Cllrs for agreement at the next meeting.

Action: Mrs Osborne-Lomax

20. To consider a response to BMSDC Proposed Revised Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedules and take any necessary action. (ends 9 July). Cllrs do not wish to comment.

21. Completed training details for May 2025.

Mrs Osborne-Lomax has completed two further planning webinars: one on Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Trees and Enforcement and the second on Levelling Up and the Regeneration Act 2023 and biodiversity net gain. Mrs Hammond and Miss Tomlinson have completed an induction on current council matters and have been offered a councillor buddy if they would like one.

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

A map showing the area of land being offered for Woolpit PC to take on has been circulated. This includes the amenity area previously seen, the area which has been planted with trees next the roundabout and also a stretch beside the footway in front of the area for the possible new school. Due to a misunderstanding between Hopkins Homes and Tilia part of the amenity land still needs to be harrowed and seeded and it was agreed that WPC will not consider taking this on until this work has been carried out and inspected. Cllrs have mixed opinions of how much of the land to take on and it was agreed to ask Richard Parmee, MSDC Biodiversity Officer to look at all the areas with us so Cllrs are better informed to make a decision.

There are various options for the amenity area such as skate park or public open space, or it could be leased to the Cricket Club for a junior pitch. *Action: the Clerk*

23. To receive a quarterly report from the Greener Woolpit Project Working Group and take any necessary action.

There has been no further planting since the last report. With very little rain watering has been carried out and the hedging has taken with only a small amount dying. The Group are going to Walsham le Willows on 4 July to share experience and expertise with other groups.

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

Nothing to report. The Clerk advised that there are three people on the waiting list.

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

Mrs Osborne-Lomax attended and reported that the treasurer gave his report and presented some income and expenditure figures. He explained that they did not expect to make a profit during this financial year, but hope to break even. The transfer from the existing charity to the new charity is not yet complete. Some questions had been raised which the Village Hall has replied to. The assets that are registered with the existing charity will then be transferred to the new charity. Gas and electricity figures are high because they are still paying off from previous years. There wasn't any offered explanation as to why this had occurred or how much was outstanding.

Employee numbers had increased from 2 to 3, with the appointment of Dave Mallion as the Village Hall Manager.

The Chair further explained the financial situation by saying that costs need to be reduced and income increased, but there were no suggestions from any of the trustees about additional ways to add revenue, with the exception of increasing room hire by £1 per hour. Predictions were made on what revenue could be after the

village hall refurbishment project with £5,000 expected from lettings and the additional revenue from the café.

The village hall manager reported that focus has been needed on the requirements placed upon the hall by the Health and Safety legislation and the Fire Safety regulations. It was not clear whether there had been any breaches in these, but policies had not been reviewed. 'Deficiencies and sub-standard conditions identified during the previous two annual inspections had not been followed up and rectified'. The out-of-date Gas Safe Certification has now been rectified and the overdue annual fire extinguisher inspection has now been completed. All of the water fire extinguishers have been replaced as a result of the inspection. The safeguarding policy was not in the folder and concerns were raised about a recent accident a child had during which access to a first aid kit had been problematic. Actions to address these were made.

Work on the new website has ground to a halt and Mrs Osborne-Lomax has offered some assistance with this.

Plans for the new refurbishment were then presented to the meeting. Only a silver option was presented, with no mention of any other options having been reviewed or considered. The silver option that was presented was not identical to that presented by the architects to the parish council and the total expenditure differed. When this question was raised, the response was that it was the same, there was no other silver plan. When evidence was presented, it was agreed that maybe there was a different one. The Village Hall Chair stated that the Parish Council had £500,000 of CIL money, but that an amount had still not been agreed for the Village Hall. He said that a decision on this would be made at the next Parish Council meeting and until he knew how much was being given the plan could not be made. Mrs Osborne-Lomax corrected this statement and took the opportunity to explain the Parish Council's position in relation to the CIL funds. Additional funding was questioned by the users and it was explained that the parish council had asked the village hall to investigate other forms of funding to form a funding plan. The secretary was asked whether the architects had provided assistance with the funding plan as outlined in their email. The Secretary advised that the Chair was writing a funding plan but wasn't sure if this was in place.

When presented with the drawings, the general consensus of the user groups in attendance was that they would find it difficult to operate in the way the plans suggest. For example, mothers and toddlers would not be able to access the kitchen in the manner they do now. Line dancing relies on open windows and doors and loud music, which would not be possible with the café in close proximity. The user group representatives all asked why so much development was necessary and why a café was needed. The line dancing organiser asked why the village hall could not continue with a plan to improve the toilets and kitchen and arrange the contracts themselves. The trustee response was absent in entirety, which resulted in the users asking to meet the architects. A proposed date of 9 June was set, subject to the architect's availability. The Chair said that the village hall still had some CIL funds left which would be used to cover the cost of this meeting.

Despite these concerns, the trustees intend a public consultation to take place on 5 July 2025. Only the silver option will be presented.

In any other business, the CCTV policy recommendations were raised but not attended to by the trustees. The users also offered considerations for ways in which to increase revenue streams. There was no enthusiasm from the trustees to any of the recommendations and no actions made for follow up.

26. Date and time of the next meeting – Tuesday 1 July 2025 at 7.00 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.36 p.m.

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