

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 4 MARCH 2025 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

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

In attendance: Mrs Fuller, Clerk, District Cllr Overett and 3 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

It is with regret that Mr Gallagher has resigned as a councillor. He is thanked for all his hard work whilst in office.

2. Public comment: It is noted that the silos have been moved on the Tilia part of the Bury Road development.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

County Councillor's report: The government confirmed that Suffolk and Norfolk are included in the Devolution Priority Programme, and have agreed to the request from the Suffolk County Council administration to cancel this year's local elections in May. This means that councils in Suffolk now need to work on proposals for reorganisation to submit to the government, initial proposals by 21 March, full plans by the autumn, with a view to one or more unitary councils being created, instead of the current two-tier system. Suffolk County Council has announced that it will be proposing one single unitary council for Suffolk, although district and borough councils have been clear that they would prefer two or three. The plan is for a mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk to be elected in May 2026. The government has launched a public consultation on proposals to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk. On Monday 10 February, The Home Office published a report of its recent inspection of Suffolk's Fire and Rescue Service. Although the inspection found that the service was good at preventing fires, protecting the public and that it met requirements for responding to major incidents, the report was also concerning as it identified several areas where the service needed to improve, including improving culture and morale, senior leaders to act as role models and show they are committed to the values of the service through their behaviour, improving communication between staff and senior leaders and making sure employees are confident raising concerns. You may have read in the press recently that the Fire Brigades Union is alleging that Suffolk County Council has made mistakes processing firefighter pay and pensions for years and has not addressed them or listened to employee concerns about the errors. Suffolk County Council has subsequently announced additional investment of an extra £1.6 million over two years to improve the service, and this proposal will be decided at Cabinet in March. Suffolk County Council has announced that from 1 June 2025, its libraries service will be moved back in-house. Currently the libraries are run by a local charity, Suffolk Libraries, but negotiations on the new contract have now broken down. The council made the decision to divest its libraries in 2012 and they have been run by Suffolk Libraries ever since then. The council is reassuring residents and library employees and volunteers that no front-line jobs will be cut, that libraries will remain open and there will be no reduction to opening hours. Running the library service had been financially challenging in recent years, with the council agreeing to provide an extra £720k in May 2023 for that financial year. The council is also keen to reassure Friends groups that money raised for local libraries will still be used for those libraries. At Cabinet on 25 February, a Local Transport Plan for the county from 2025-2040 was considered. The plan is needed by law to access funding from the government for active travel and major transport schemes, and details how the council plans to prioritise walking, cycling and wheeling in town centres to reduce congestion and air pollution. It also describes the projects that will be needed to

improve transport links for Suffolk, such as works at Ely and Haughley railway junctions, better public transport, and how to manage the transition from fossil fuels. Also agreed were 15 Area Transport Plans detailing the council's transport ambitions for towns around Suffolk.

District Councillors' report: There is a full Council meeting on 27 February where the main item on the agenda will be the budget. The recommendation is for a council tax freeze and an increase in council house rents. Other agenda items include the local development framework and a new policy for community engagement for planning. The Government consultation on proposals to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority launched last week and is due to run for the next eight weeks. There is a brief update on the news section of the MSDC website and it will also be mentioned on social media channels, urging people to have their say. Councillors across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk will be attending workshops about the Local Government Review and Devolution next week. All the district councils in Suffolk are collaborating to produce a business case to present to the Government. MSDC and Babergh are now working on a new local plan because the uplift in housing numbers imposed by the new Government would have meant that the current part 1 plan would become out of date too soon and we would run the risk of no longer having a 5-year housing land supply. The call for sites has now ended but all the bids can be found on the website. The local development framework to be discussed at the Council meeting includes the timetable for the new updated local plan to be delivered in 2029. MSDC enforcement officers issued a temporary stop notice on the businesses at the Eurogarage services a fortnight ago. The highway works and some Anglian Water works are scheduled to be carried out during the first weekend in March. Once the highway safety works are complete the businesses will be able to re-open. There is a live planning application for the lighting on the site which will hopefully be determined by committee. The planning application for amendments to the third building have now been withdrawn. Housing Services have launched a new Tenant Handbook providing information about tenants' rights and responsibilities, as well as setting out what our responsibilities are as their landlord. All locality funding for 2024-25 has been allocated. There was a rush of applications, and we have recently awarded funding to the following organisations: Woolpit Arc, Woolpit WI, Woolpit Cricket club. The next round of locality funding which should open end of May/beginning of June. Monthly drop-in sessions are 10-12 Thursday 20 March at Teacups Café and 10.00-12 Tuesday 3 April at the Wesley Café. The signs for the car park are on order with SCC Highways and the contractor has been chased to install the EV points.

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

There were none.

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

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

25/00666 Application for Advertisement Consent - Construction of signage for service area 1 - Internally illuminated 24hr sign, 2 - Internally illuminated EG on the Move sign, 3 - Internally illuminated Spar Sign, 4 - Internally illuminated Greggs/Subway/Starbucks sign, 7/8/9 - Spar Fascia Sign, 10 - Elmswell Services Sign, 12 - Directional Post and panel, 15 - Banner Frame, 16 - Banner Frame, 24 - EV Directional Sign, 40 - Petrol pump canopy. Eg On The Move, Kiln Lane Elmswell – object local residents' amenity, visual intrusion, and wildlife concerns.

24/05369 Erection of a first floor extension and loft conversion with new roof lights. Wyverne, Borley Green – no comment.

24/05355 Submission of details (reserved matters) relating to 19/03851 Appearance, layout and scale of 2 buildings for development comprising a mixture of B1/B2/B8.

Plot 4, Lawn Farm, Warren Lane, will be considered at MSDC Planning Committee 12 March.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

25/00093 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/18/04247 - Condition 17 (Construction Management Plan) and Condition 28 (Construction Management Plan - Highways and Traffic). Land off Bury Road – acceptable.

24/05318 Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/19/03851 - Condition 5 (Noise Impact Assessment), Condition 6 (Lighting Assessment), Condition 7 (Surface Water Strategy), Condition 12 (Construction Environment Management Plan), Condition 13 (Landscape and Ecological Management Plan), Condition 14 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy) and Condition 15 (Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Design Scheme). Land at Lawn Farm, Warren Lane – satisfactory/acceptable

The following have been approved by SCC

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. 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 SCC C/0084/20MS/VOC. Land to the north of Lawn Farm Quarry Old Bury Road, Wetherden

7. Clerk's Report

Masons Lane – SCC has agreed to carry out jetting of the blocked drain at the junction with Rectory Lane.

Co-option of Councillor – Mr Gregory has withdrawn his application as the Clerk had not acknowledged his email. The Clerk apologised to Cllrs.

Steeles Road sign – the new sign has been installed at the Heath Road end rather than the Green Road end. MSDC to rectify.

Goal on recreation field – a complaint has been received that this has not been moved to allow the grass to regrow. The Clerk has advised that the contractor has been asked to do this on several occasions and we are now looking for someone else to do it.

Fires Grange Path – there have been additional fires which have been reported to the police.

SALC Planning courses – there are four sessions that can be purchased and kept. It was agreed to purchase two at £35.00 each: Planning Law and also Roles, responsibilities, neighbourhood planning, S106 & CIL. *Action: The Clerk*

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

Ron Bailey at Parliament requesting support for Safety of lithium-ion batteries campaign. Cllrs support in principle. **Suffolk Police** cannot help regarding issues of cars queuing on Church Road for the petrol station as it is only a temporary obstruction. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** **SALC** Devolution update 3, 17 February, News Bulletin 10, 24 February, 3 March, Training Bulletin 11, 25 February, 4 March, Devolution briefing note from SCC 19 February, SALC winner and finalist of Star Council awards 2024. **NALC** Chief Executive bulletin 6. 13. 20, 27 February, events newsletter 4 March. **MSDC** Town and Parish Liaison meeting – devolution, Town & Parish update March. **Rural Services Network** Rural Bulletin 11, 18, 25 February, 4 March, Funding Digest February. **MARPA** newsletter Spring 2025. **Landology** Responsible home loans – Warm Home Suffolk initiative with SCC. Copies of **3 residents'** responses to the 20 mph consultation.

9. Finance

a) To receive a monthly financial report from the Clerk

At the end of February, the current account balance was £14,869.55; which includes 25 payments of £60.00 for Diary adverts 2025/6 and the Instant Access account was

£608,225.96 giving total funds of £623,095.51. Of this CIL is £496,511.50, , earmarked reserves £58,543.45, general reserve £37,000.00 and general funds £31,040.56.

b) To approve accounts for payment.

Mr M Gardiner £534.00 Highways Ranger February, Mrs P Fuller £1,029.47 Clerk Salary February, Suffolk County Council £419.37 pension payment February, Mr N Foster £100.00 reimbursement for the deposit for Swing Machine band for VE80 event. Woolpit Recreation Ground Charity £326.67 payment of all money held for the charity now that it has separate bank account. All payments were approved for authorisation.

c) To consider the appointment of an internal auditor for 2024/5 accounts and take any necessary action

Mrs Brown is no longer available. SALC provide this service but unable to commit to taking Woolpit on this year as they have lost a lot of their internal audit team, Heelis and Lodge can complete at a cost of £400.00 for £200,001-£300,000 income/expenditure banding and Tania Jones of Woolpit will charge £60.00 per hour. It was proposed and seconded to use Tania Jones; this was unanimously carried.

Action: The Clerk

10. To consider the nomination of a Trustee to The Poor Lands Trust and take any necessary action.

Mr Guyler and the Clerk met with Hayley Clifton, Manager of ARC. Although she does not live in Woolpit, she has worked at Woolpit ARC for ten years and knows the needs of children and families in Woolpit. Hayley was recommended as our nomination as a Trustee which was unanimously accepted by Cllrs. *Action: The Clerk*

11. To consider filling the casual vacancies by co-option and take any necessary action.

Dr Geake and the Clerk attended a course on recruiting and retaining councillors. We need to have a marketing campaign to attract people to the council. It was agreed to have a working group to come up with ideas to approach this. The Clerk will circulate the handout to all Cllrs. *Action: the Clerk*

12. To consider the purchase of outdoor cinema equipment, also a cinema event 15 August 2025 and take any necessary action.

The Cricket Club would like another film event on 15 August. If WPC agree to fund this Mr Hardiman would be able to be there to see how the equipment works and how to put the screen up. He would also be able to find out the life and cost of replacement bulbs and the cost of speakers that we would need to buy. Cllrs agreed to fund the event with a budget of £500.00. *Action: Mr Hardiman/ the Clerk.*

13. To consider quotes for framing an old map of Woolpit for public display and take any necessary action.

A suitable place in the Institute has been identified and the Clerk will write to the Institute Committee to seek permission to hang it there. 3 quotes have been received for framing and it was unanimously agreed to use Eastern Frames and have non reflective glass at a cost of £120.00. *Action: the Clerk*

14. To consider a quote from SCC for a new pole, modified lantern and connection for a new streetlight in The Street and removal of one lantern from Bury Road due to the proximity of the lights by the new roundabout and take any necessary action.

SCC has quoted £1,950.00 + VAT but the pole would have to be erected near the end garden wall of Edale House so it would be near to a UKPN underground supply. It was agreed to consult the residents of 5 properties closest to the proposed column before making a final decision. *Action: the Clerk*

15. To consider quotes for the overhaul of the Millennium Garden and take any necessary action.

Various quotes have been received ranging from £760.00 to £3,650.00. These were not like for like quotes as contractors were asked to come up with their ideas how to make the area as low maintenance as possible. After discussion it was proposed, seconded and carried to accept the quote of £760.00 from Stuart Langston.

Action: the Clerk

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

This was deferred to the next meeting as quotes have not been received.

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

This has not been received from the Village Hall Committee. Mr Foster will get a copy sent to the Clerk.

Action: Mr Foster

18. To adopt new financial regulations and review Standing Orders and take any necessary action

The Clerk had circulated the proposed new financial regulations which were adopted with a unanimous vote. The review of the Standing Orders was accepted. Both will be reviewed in 2026.

19. To review Data Retention Policy, Subject Access Policy and Procedures and take any necessary action.

There are no changes other than the new Clerk email address. These will be reviewed again in 2026.

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

After the vegetation has been cut back and surveys carried out, District Cllr Overett will chase for a further meeting. An application for CIL funding was lodged in October with an estimated figure. District Cllr Overett will contact County Cllr Mellen to find out progress.

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

Since the previous contractor has not moved forward with this, it was agreed to get further quotes for a rustic bridge.

Action: the Clerk

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

Mr Hardiman has taken over as the Chair of the working group. The beacon is nearing completion. It has been decided to hold the organisation fair later in the year. The VE80 events on 8 May will be the Proclamation at 9.00 am, followed by raising of the commemorative flag at the church with tea and coffee available and a church service at 10 am. At 6.30 pm there will be a barbeque and music at the cricket ground and at 9.30 pm the lighting of the beacon will be preceded by a bugle call for silence in memory of those who perished followed by the hymn I Vow to Thee My Country. On Saturday 10 May a dance will be held in the village hall with music of the 40s and 50s provided by Swing Machine Band. The school has been invited for the morning event.

23. 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 has been pushed over and the SID is in storage until it can be installed in Church Street. A new pole will be put up in Green Road.

b)to receive an update on 20 mph zone

SCC has sent consultation letters to residents

24. Completed training details for February 2025.

Mrs Osborne-Lomax has completed councillor basic training and a finance course. Dr Geake and the Clerk have completed the recruiting and retaining councillors' course.

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

Notes from the liaison meeting 19 February have been circulated to Cllrs. The Deputy Clerk and Mr Guyler will attend the meeting 5 March. Residents in the vicinity of the development have received a letter from WPC asking to let the representatives know of any issues and they will raise them at the meetings.

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

In late February and early March, great strides were made by the New Woods for Woolpit team working with Richard Parmee, the MSDC Biodiversity Leader and Will Hardy of the Woodland Trust. Each of them arranged for an impressive quantity of hedging plants, little trees, guards, canes and post to be given to Woolpit. Richard recruited a team from the IT department of BUUK, a national company with offices at Energy House on the Woolpit Business Park to help with the planting. They generously gave us a day of their time to plant something like 750 hedging plants and trees. This work has restored the hedges lost over the years around the edge of the field. The New Woods team finished the planting over the following weekends by creating more hedging and a stand of 70 trees at the top of the field.

27. To receive a report on the allotments including**a)consideration of closing the Allotment for the Labouring Poor, Woolpit Charity and take any necessary action.**

It was unanimously agreed to contact the Charity Commission to close the Charity Woolpit Allotments for the Labouring Poor as it is the Parish Council who now provides the allotments not the charity.

Action: the Deputy Clerk

b)consider a request from a tenant to have a polytunnel on their plot.

A tenant would like erect a 3mx2mx6m white or green polytunnel at the rear of his full plot. Cllrs approved this request.

Action: the Clerk

Two half plots are available and have been offered to those on the waiting list but no response has been received. An advert will be included in the April/May Diary.

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

Plans have been received from the architect and the Village Hall Committee are pleased with some of their ideas. The bronze plans which would just be refurbish toilets, kitchen, install solar panels and redecoration – estimated cost £300k, silver which includes an extension is estimated at £1.1m and gold £1.6m. The VHC will bring ideas to the next CIL meeting. Mr Foster was asked about the public consultation; this is still to be arranged.

29. Date and time of the next meeting – Tuesday 1 April 2025 at 7.30 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.39 p.m.

Signed.....approved

Dated.....1 April 2025