

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council
Minutes of the video link meeting held Monday 1 March 2021

Present: Cllrs Mrs E Aldred, Mrs A Arnold, T Alston, D Brown, Mrs E Cain, Mrs C Estcourt, Mrs H Green, B Lacey, Mrs R Leech and M Pease. County and District Cllr A Stringer and two members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from the Chairman, Cllr Harvey. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chair, Cllr Mrs Cain, chaired the meeting.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – item 7 Cllr T Alston.
3. **Reports**
 - 1 **Police** available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>
Notification the area had been the target of thefts of tools from trade vans had been received. Suffolk Police were asking vehicle owners to be vigilant and to ensure their vans were safely locked and parked securely. Note to be included in the parish magazine.
 - 2 **County Councillor** - written report from Cllr Stringer had been circulated and attached to the Minutes. No queries were raised.
 - 3 **District Councillor** – Cllr Stringer reported on the landmark decision on refusal of a planning application for an 18 dwelling development in Fressingfield. This had been against the village Neighbourhood Plan and clear evidence the District Council was taking neighbourhood plans seriously. Similarly the Hill House planning application had been refused based on comments from the Parish Council.
 - 4 **Footpaths** :
 1. Notification of temporary closure of footpath 46 (March 2021) due to work at the MSLR.
 2. Footpath 29 Wetherup Street – handrail . Confirmation had been received from Suffolk CC that a handrail would be fitted to the lefthand side of the bridge.
 3. Footpaths 5 and 6 – Brockford to Collingsford Bridge – Cllr Mrs Cain gave a report on the damage caused to these footpaths due to use by horses and cycles making it very difficult for people on foot to use them. Following discussion with the Chairman, Cllr Mrs Cain had obtained twenty plastic signs stating ‘Footpath Only, no Bikes, Horses or Vehicles’ at a cost of £77.60. One had been put up at each end of footpaths 5 and 6 and one at the bridge. The remainder were available for use as and when required.
 4. None of the footpath signs had been reinstated despite reports via the Suffolk CC reporting tool. Cllr Mrs Aldred would provide the clerk with a list of maintenance work required with footpath numbers/names for further reporting to Suffolk CC.
4. **Trees** – Cllr Mrs Aldred stated she would contact the Headteacher at the Primary School to ask whether the school would be interested in taking part in the orchard scheme.
5. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
Neighbourhood Plan – The Chair of the Steering Group, Mr Robert Townshend, stated the Group was now making good progress but it was important that parishioners contributed to the plan through comments via the consultation process. The Group would be providing regular updates in the parish magazine and parish council encouragement of local opinions would be much appreciated.
6. **To consider for approval Minutes of the video link meeting held Monday 1 February 2021**
Subject to the following amendment: correct spelling of parish magazine editor’s name at item 16, Cllr Mrs Aldred proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Pease and agreed.
7. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report** - none.
8. **Planning application/s for recommendation to MSDC**
 1. DC/21/00550: Green Lane Cottage, Green Lane – erection of single storey rear extension. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and agreed.
 2. DC/20/05495: Land south east of Low Road Farm, Mendlesham Rd – change of use of land as Gypsy & Traveller site to stationing 1 mobile home & 1 touring caravan erection of hard standing. Members were of the view the application proposed no changes as far as development in the area was concerned. A recommendation of refusal on the same grounds as those given to previous applications was proposed, seconded and agreed.
 3. AP/20/00116: The Acorns, Nursery Gardens – appeal against refusal for Outline Planning Permission (with some matters to be reserved, access to be considered). Town & Country Planning Act 1990 – erection of 2 detached dwellings. It was agreed the parish council’s recommendation of refusal of the application, on the same grounds as made to MSDC Planning, was made to the Appeal Inspector.
 4. DC/21/01053: 1 Station House, Brockford Green (Cllr Alston declared an interest) – internal alteration to

provide additional living accommodation, repair and refurbishment of second floor, reinstatement of second floor window to south west elevation. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and agreed with one abstention.

5. DC/21/01048: Cherrygate Farm, Norwich Road – change of use of land and building from poultry unit to structural insulated panels manufacturer (Class B2). It was reported there would be a slight increase in HGV movement but that within 18 months it was proposed personnel at the site would be robotic resulting in a decrease in employee movement to and from the site. The office for the company was based in Ipswich and the factory in Cambridgeshire. Having considered the information provided a recommendation of approval was proposed, seconded and agreed.

9. Planning Decisions received from MSDC :

1. DC /20/05685: All Saints Church, Church Street – replace 2 north side plain glass windows with 2 stained glass windows in adjacent bays of north wall of the Church with parish War Memorial mounted between them. **Planning Permission Granted.**
2. DC/20/05630: Hill House, Norwich Road – Outline Planning Permission (some matters reserved, access to be considered). Town & Country Planning Act 1990 – erection of 2 dwellings. **Outline Planning Permission Refused.**

10. Planning Correspondence:

1. Town Lane Haulage site – report on MSDC investigations into container stacking. There appeared to have been an increase in HGV movement to and from the site. Cllr Stringer stated receipt of a planning application was anticipated by MSDC Planning and HGV movements would form part of any planning permission if granted.
2. Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan – consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) - response date 12 April 2021. Deferred to next meeting.
3. Thorndon Neighbourhood Plan – consultation on proposed provision of the Local Green Space Policy THN11 – response date 1 April 2021. It was agreed the parish council would make no comment.

10. Village Hall Management Committee report

Cllr Pease provided the following report:

1. The Hall would be ready for the schools to start using again from 8th March
2. The Risk Assessment had been completed and had been circulated to Parish Council members for approval, once approved it would be sent to Wetheringsett School and Wetheringsett Manor School. A legionnaires check was raised. Subject to inclusion of that item Cllr Mrs Cain proposed approval of the document, seconded Cllr Mrs Aldred and agreed.
3. The maintenance contractor would be unable to carry out any work for a minimum of four weeks due to illness.
4. In the meantime a leak in part of the new roof would need to be dealt with. A local tradesmen would be asked to carry out the repair.
5. A confidential donor had offered a substantial amount in matched funding for refurbishment of the Hall to start by Oct 2023. Cllr Stringer had been asked for links to CIL funding to investigate options.
The work would need to be carried out with minimal impact on the schools.
6. At the next Village Hall meeting on 4th March, Cllr Pease proposed the Village Hall committee was asked to take on the planning work for the Hall refurbishment and that other parishioners were asked to join the committee for that task via the Village Newsletter, seconded Cllr Mrs Cain and unanimously agreed. The committee was working through the Constitution with a view to converting to a CIO.
7. The web-based booking system for the Hall would be put in place by April, there were currently 3 major booking for the Hall this year, 2 weddings and 1 wedding anniversary, it was hoped that the Yoga classes could begin again as soon as legislation allowed.
8. The May 6th elections would be hosted at the Hall as usual, all signage for a one-way system was in place
9. Two new Trustees had been appointed to the Village Hall charitable trust, Sue Payne and Mike Pease had joined Ann Arnold as trustees, John Leadbetter had been removed from the list of Trustees, 2 years after his resignation.
10. Administration of the Village Hall bank account had been transferred from Sue Gibbs to Sue Payne. Internet Banking facilities would be added as soon as possible.

11. The Charitable Trust constitution had been drafted and would be formally accepted at the Village Hall committee meeting on the 4th March, this would allow for conversion to a CIO from the existing charitable unlimited liability status.

Accounts

The bank balance currently stood at £5,726.70 as of 4th January. Wave had submitted an estimated water bill of £488.80, they had been asked to produce a bill based on an actual reading.

Thanks were recorded to the committee for their hard work.

11. Play Area report

Cllr Lacey had made an inspection. The play equipment looked clean. Brambles were growing through the fence, Cllr Lacey would arrange for these to be cut back funded from the play area maintenance fund. The sleepers had still to be dealt with, this had been deferred until the weather improved.

The bark mulch under the climbing frame would need to be replaced and the covid signs had faded. Cllr Pease would replace the signs.

12. Cemetery and Play Area – to consider grasscutting arrangements 2021

Cllr Lacey suggested P G Home & Garden Services were asked to continue with the grassing cutting during the forthcoming year. Their work last year had made a huge improvement to the cemetery. Cllr Mrs Cain proposed Cllr Lacey obtained a quotation from PG Home & Garden Services 2021, seconded Cllr Mrs Aldred and agreed.

13. VAS speed equipment report

The equipment was currently at the Park Green site.

14. Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan progress report

Cllr Mrs Green reported the Steering Group was making good progress and another new member had joined the group. Councillors and parishioners were encouraged to view the Place Check website to add their comments. The group was currently working on gathering information covering all aspects of the village in preparation for consultation with parishioners.

The group was keen to obtain a copy of the Village History book. Members believed this would probably need to be re-issued and would be included in the next NP report for discussion.

15. To consider quotation for repairs to road sign at Wetherup St/Debenham Road

Cllr Lacey was hoping to recruit a metal fabricator to carry out the work after April. Item deferred to next meeting.

16. Report on operational procedure for Parish Magazine – deferred to next meeting.

17. To agree date for Annual Parish Meeting 2021 – deferred to next meeting.

18. MSLR – notification of works taking place March 2021 – members noted the report from the Chairman of the MSLR.

19. To consider request for additional dog waste bins – Park Green area

A request had been received for a dog bin in the area of the Town Lane T-junction. Cllr Pease proposed approval for a standard size green bin, seconded Cllr Mrs Aldred and agreed.

20. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests – none received.

2. To ratify purchase of Footpath Only signs (Footpaths 5 and 6) - £93.12 . Cllr Pease proposed approval for the purchase, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech and agreed.

3. Accounts for payment

Cllr Mrs E Cain (Footpath Only signs)	£93.12
Clerk sal-expen Feb 2021	£297.45
Community Heartbeat Trust – defibrillator Expenses 2018 & 2021	£191.60

Cllr Alston proposed payment of the above accounts, seconded Cllr Pease and agreed.

21. Clerk's report/correspondence

SALC - The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had recently launched a consultation seeking views on proposals to create a new Office for Place which would involve each local planning authority drawing up its own design code in consultation with local people that developers would have to adhere to. This would involve some changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There was an eight-week consultation on the proposals which closed on 12 March 2021. Councillors to make individual responses.

MSDC – Sport and Leisure Strategy – survey of facilities in the district. Document circulated.

Local elections 6 May – due to covid restrictions and the inability of candidates to call on parishioners, the prospective conservative candidate had requested attendance at a

parish council meeting to introduce himself to councillors. As per previous elections members were in favour of leaflets being delivered to households rather than attendance at a parish council meeting. Proposed Cllr Pease, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech and agreed.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Pilot Scheme – the guidance information received from Cllr Stringer had been circulated to parish councillors. Due to the speeding issues in the village members agreed that an expression of interest in taking part in the scheme should be made.

Parish Notice Boards – thanks were recorded to Cllr Mrs Arnold and her husband for replacing the backing of two of the notice boards with cork enabling notices to firmly stay in place.

22. Chairman's Report – none.

23. Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests

Village History Book – Cllr Lacey would try to obtain an electronic copy of the published book from a previous parish councillor.

Book Exchange – Village Hall – Cllr Pease stated the book exchange would not take place until there was a dry storage area was available at the Hall to store the books, the Committee was of the view the covered entrance area was too damp.

24. Date of next video link meeting: Tuesday 6 April 2021 at 7pm

Meeting closed 9pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

County Councillor Report – March 2021

Suffolk County Council Budget

The Suffolk County Council Budget was voted through Full Council on February 11th. This year's budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the 3 or 4 year agreement which is usually offered. Key points include:

- A council tax rise of 3.99% (1.99% basic council tax and 2% Social Care Precept), representing an increase of £53.55 for a Band D property, from £1,343.61 in 2020-21 to

£1,397.16 in 2021-22.

- A council tax shortfall of £7.9m less than expected, to be met by using reserves.

- Planned spending is £597.9m, 7.4% more than 2021-21.

- £15.3m of spending to address ongoing COVID-19 costs.

- No proposed reductions in council services or personnel.

LDGI Group Budget Amendment and Group Leader's Speech

The LDGI Group submitted a Budget Amendment to Full Council on February 11th alongside the administration's Budget. The amendment would have authorised the use of the full 3% social care precept to avoid impacting SCC's reserves and generate an extra £3.452m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household. The extra income would have provided funding for a wider service offer for Suffolk residents, including a new officer for the flooding team to unlock more government funding, and the re-enablement of concessionary bus passes on community transport. The amendment was unfortunately not passed.

Suffolk & Norfolk County Council submit joint bid for £6m flood funding

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils have submitted a joint bid to the £200 fund for Flood and Coastal Resilience, requesting £6m to invest in flood protection schemes across both counties. The proposed projects would also capture water for reuse. If the bid is successful town and parish councils will be encouraged to get involved through measures like permeable paving, water butts and 'rain gardens' that can cope with occasional flooding. These projects would be in place by 2027 if the bid is approved.

Government's last-minute approach to local authority grants

Suffolk County Council will receive £27m for highways repairs, maintenance and drainage in 2021-22, a reduction in from £31m the previous year. This has necessitated the use of £2m of reserves to top up the grant. In the view of my Group, these cuts in Government funding make it impossible to plan long-term for road maintenance and repair. Due to the uncertainty as to whether this grant would materialise at all, some vital work has already been postponed.

"It's a bit like someone telling you that they're going to punch you twice in the face and then expecting you to be grateful if they only punch you once."

LDGI Group submits response to Post-16 Travel Policy consultation

The LDGI Group has submitted a joint response to Suffolk County Council's consultation on the Post-16 Transport Policy, which manages transport to schools and education for young people after the age of 16. The LDGI Group's views included:

- Support for the expansion of the post-16 travel eligibility criteria for sixth form students and adult learners aged 25 and under with EHC plans, reflecting the change in age range for compulsory school attendance.
- Support for keeping prices lower for SEND students.
- Use of buses and trains for school transport must be supported. The needs of students and the numbers currently forced to use taxis or private cars to reach their schools must be taken into account when considering public transport. Students should be steered towards buses first, and the school transport service should support our local bus network in maintaining services to rural areas.
- The Travel Training Scheme must be better funded, so that it can expand and promote its services.