

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting held Monday 2 October 2023, 7pm at the Village Hall, Wetheringsett.

Present: Cllrs Mrs R Leech (Vice Chair) , Mrs E Aldred, T Alston, C Harvey, B Lacey, N Lingard, J Weir.
County and District Cllr A Stringer, Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Chair Mr R Townshend and one member of the public

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs Mrs E Cain, Mrs L Drury, Mrs K van Zyl and the Clerk. Consent to absence was given. In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Mrs Leech chaired the meeting. The Chair welcomed Cllr Mrs Weir to her first meeting.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda**
Item 7.1 – Cllr Alston declared an interest.
3. **Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan** – to consider for agreement amended Neighbourhood Plan following report from the Working Group Chairman, Mr R Townshend
A report on the latest updates to the Plan were given by Mr Townshend. The amended Plan was agreed unanimously, proposed Cllr Harvey; seconded Cllr Alston.
4. **Reports**
 1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.
 2. County Councillor – Cllr Stringer went through his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). No queries were raised.
 3. District Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Stringer added the Joint Local Plan had been approved by the Independent Inspector and there was no progress to report regarding the Town Lane appeal.
 4. Footpaths - Cllr Mrs Aldred reported having received a message regarding fly tipping on a footpath but had not been able to identify the footpath concerned at present.
 5. Trees – Cllr Mrs Aldred reported on a complaint regarding trees at the Churchyard affecting BT cables. It was understood BT would only take action if a cable was actually damaged. A further supply of saplings for local planting were expected in December.
6. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** – no comments.
5. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 4 September 2023**
Cllr Alston proposed adoption of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Weir – unanimously agreed.
6. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report** – none.
7. **Planning applications for recommendation to MSDC**
 1. DC/23/04244: Land to south west of Brockford Campsite, Brockford Green – retention of change of use of agricultural land for use as Dog Park.
Cllr Alston left the room for this item. Cllr Lingard reported two Parishioners had contacted him to express concern over potential increased traffic on a narrow road with the access being on sharp bend. Having considered the application a recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
Cllr Alston returned to the room.
 2. DC/23/04366: 14 Hockey Hill – erection of single storey rear extension following demolition of existing extension. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
8. **Planning Decisions received from MSDC**
 1. DC/23/02906: Land adjacent The Laurels, White Horse Corner -Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/22/05821 - Condition 9 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy)
9. **Planning correspondence** – none.
10. **To consider proposed improvements to parking spaces at Wetheringsett School Area to include designated disabled space**
Members agreed the School could proceed with a designated disabled car parking space assuming the space would be on the school designated area of the car park otherwise the proposal should be referred back to the Parish Council.
11. **Village Hall**
 1. Management Committee report - Cllr Harvey reported that Wi-Fi had been successfully installed, with free “ Guest” access for visitors to the Hall. The Hall’s finances remained stable, with good forward bookings and events planned.

21 Chair's Report – none.

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

The Chair referred to the Memorial services due to be held on 12 November 2023. It was reported Mrs Ann Arnold would obtain two wreaths for the village, one for the 34th Bomb Group Memorial Service at Mendlesham and the other for the Wetheringsett Memorial Service. Mrs Arnold would be willing to attend the Mendlesham service to lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council and Cllr Mrs Aldred would attend the Wetheringsett service. The above arrangements were proposed by Cllr Lingard, seconded Cllr Harvey and unanimously agreed.

23. Date of next meeting - Monday 6 November 2023, 7pm at the The Village Hall, Wetheringsett

Meeting closed 8.20pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

County Councillor Report – October 2023

Condition of School Buildings

On 7 September councillors from our group attended Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to question council officers from the Schools Infrastructure team about RAAC, the schools in Suffolk affected and the support they are being offered. The agenda also included the process for building new schools in the county and how the council works with the Department for Education and housing developers to make sure there are enough school places for children in the county. The meeting also looked at the school admissions and school transport processes and ways they can be made easy for parents to navigate. A local School, is now having to hire a large number of portacabins to contain the builders and over flow of pupils to deal with this issue.

Suffolk County Council Overspend

At Cabinet on 12 September our group raised concerns about the overspend predicted for the financial year 2023-24. The council is forecasting a net overspend of £22.3m, which is 3.2% of the overall budget for the year and will cut into the council's financial reserves with a reduction of £56.9m of the council's 'savings'. Finance officers at the council had suggested a high council tax rise during the budget process to try and lessen the pressures on the council caused by rising inflation, energy costs and increased demands on council services such as placements for children in care, adult care and school transport for children and young people with special educational needs. The Cabinet agreed that senior leaders at the council would look at how money could be saved in each directorate to protect council reserves and prevent cuts to services wherever possible.

New Suffolk Fire and Rescue Control Centre

Officers from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) joined Cabinet on 12 September to explain their recommendation that the council leave the current control centre partnership with Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and open a new control centre in the county by the end of 2024. This would create significant extra cost, but it was agreed that it was necessary for the safety of Suffolk residents. A vote was held and the recommendations were approved. My group were keen to ensure that no fire stations would close and there would be no cuts to jobs or changes to work terms and conditions, but no assurances were given.


Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

District Councillor Report for Wetheringsett – October 2023

	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council has launched a campaign to clean-up neighbourhoods, build community pride and tackle the doorstep issues that voters said mattered to them. The new 'Pride in Your Place' campaign gives every town and village the opportunity to apply for funding for projects to improve the appearance and cleanliness of their community.</p> <p>Once awarded, the money can be used for initiatives like litter picking, sign cleaning, graffiti removal, the maintenance/enhancement of open public spaces and more. These projects will complement routine grounds and maintenance work already carried out by the council and partner authorities, but Mid Suffolk's new administration also wants to help communities to tackle local frustrations and issues that voters said were important to them during the recent local elections.</p> <p>Under the funding scheme, parishes with a population over 1,500 are eligible to apply for up to £400 in funding. For those with a population below 1,500, up to £250 can be applied for. Applications can also be made by voluntary, community and social enterprises with support from their parish council and must be made by 31 October. Awards and payments will be made within 21 days of receipt of an eligible application.</p>
Business support available	<p>Mid Suffolk has been allocated £821,658 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund over the next two years. Small businesses and community organisations across the districts will have access to three grants under the fund: the Rural Business Growth Fund, the Rural Culture & Creativity Fund and the Rural Communities Fund.</p> <p>Grants are available between £5,000 - £10,000 per application and will fund a maximum of 50% of total project costs up to the maximum value of £10,000. Eligible projects include net-zero developments, agriculture and farm diversification, visitor economy business expansion as well as SME investment and diversification or investment in community facilities in our rural areas. To apply, visit www.midsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Separately, a programme of support for business start-ups has been launched. See www.heartofsuffolk.co.uk for more information.</p>
Free trees, hedging and wildflower seeds	<p>Mid Suffolk is offering free trees, hedging and wildflower seeds to any community group, including Parish Councils. This is part of our commitment to biodiversity and also plans to increase tree cover across the district. If you know of any areas suitable for planting of trees, it would be good to advise the Mid Suffolk Biodiversity Project Manager. To apply visit www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/plantingschemes .</p>

Councillor Andrew Stringer