

## Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council

### Minutes of the meeting held Monday 3 June 2019, 7.30pm at the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs C Harvey (Chairman), Mrs A Arnold, Mrs E Cain and B Lacey. County and District Cllr A Stringer and nine members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs Mrs E Aldred, T Alston, R Anscombe and M Pease.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **Election of Vice Chairman** – deferred.
4. **To receive the following reports:**
  - Police – available online. No questions were raised.
  - County Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the minutes).
  - District Councillor – Cllr Stringer suggested a discussion on responses to planning applications. A date outside a meeting to be arranged.
  - Public Rights of Way – no report
  - Trees – a delivery of saplings was expected during the autumn and would be available for planting throughout the village.
5. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held 13 May 2019**

Cllr Mrs Cain proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Arnold and agreed.
6. **Matters arising from the minutes of report** – none.
7. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Wetherup Street - A number of parishioners stated they were at the meeting to put forward comments to the parish council concerning a planning application for two single storey dwellings on Wetherup Street. The Chairman explained that the parish council had not received notification of the planning application; it would therefore not be possible for the parish council to respond to any comments made. Contact would be made with MSDC Planning to find out why the application had not been received. The application would be included on the next parish council agenda.

In the meantime one parishioner commented on the degradation of the landscape around Wetherup Street. Indigenous hedges had been taken out and replaced with laurel or wooden fencing. This was causing an erosion of natural habitat. There was a need to urge local residents when carrying out building work to replace indigenous hedging.

PC members understood replacement with indigenous species would normally form part of the planning application but agreed guidance to parishioners was required to ensure this took place.

Highway Verges - Unauthorised objects on roadside verges close to the highway was raised, these could cause damage to vehicles passing on narrow roads, particularly Station Road. Cllr Stringer stated the County Council had the ability to claim 3ft of verge from the road. Any unauthorised obstacle obstructing the verge within that distance should be reported to the County Council via the website reporting tool.
8. **To consider co-options to the council** for unfilled posts following the uncontested parish council election on 2 May – deferred.
9. **To confirm the appointment of Parish Councillors on Working Groups and/or representatives on other bodies** – deferred.
10. **To consider planning applications for recommendation to MSDC**
  1. DC/19/02185: Bridge Cottage, Church Street – erection of double garage with pitched roof and covered patio/sitting area. A recommendation of approval was proposed, seconded and agreed.
11. **Planning Decisions received from MSDC**
  1. DC/19/01777: Eversons Farm, Brockford Green – erection of 2 bay cartlodge. **Planning Permission Granted.**
12. **Planning Correspondence** – Cllr Stringer reported new flood maps from the Environment Agency showed three quarters of the strip of land along Brockford/Mendlesham Road to be in the flood plain.
13. **Wetheringsett Village Hall report**

A written report from Mr John Leadbetter stated the balance on the village hall account at 3 June 2019 stood at £917.77. Since the April meeting an additional insurance premium of £344.94 had been paid to increase the buildings cover to £500,000. A successful Eastern Angles production on April 10 had produced a profit of £150 for village hall funds. Other bookings included the District elections on May 2 and the European Election was scheduled for May 23. Curtains Up would be using the hall for rehearsals for their autumn production.

Cllr Mrs Arnold agreed to discuss the village hall trustee position with Mr Leadbetter.
14. **Use and maintenance of current hall – medium term plan for village hall**

Cllr Harvey reported plans for three different proposals had been received from the two architects – (1) hall remains largely as it is (2) a complete new hall and (3) rebuild the existing hall with new kitchen and retaining use of existing wc block. The plans were being costed and CAS would be covering the cost of the architects fees. After receipt of the estimates funding would need to be investigated. In the meantime the building would need to be kept watertight and the floor dealt with where necessary. Cllr Lacey offered to oversee any small repairs.

15. **VAS speed awareness** – no report

16. **Play Area maintenance report**

Cllr Lacey reported the woodwork items had been treated and the minor repairs would be monitored. Cllr Lacey suggested the sleepers surrounding the activity slide were removed as some had rotted and that they were replaced with a grass slope. There would then be no sleepers to maintain and their removal would assist grass cutting.

A quote totaling £1181 for replacement parts had been received from Kompan, plus £1300 for installation. Cllr Lacey had queried the parts quote resulting in the slide panel being supplied without charge and the other small parts would total no more than £400.00. Cllr Lacey stated he and Mr S Easter of SS Operations would be able to fit the parts, SS Operations fee would be no more than £350.00, plus fuel costs for Cllr Lacey. Members agreed this course of action and thanked Cllr Lacey for his work in resolving the maintenance issues.

17. **Cemetery and Play Area grass cutting**

An invoice for grass cutting totalling £250 had been received, this covered a mid May cut for both the cemetery and play area. Responsibility for the play area would need to be clarified as on occasions the school contractor appeared to cut the grass. Cllr Lacey would speak to the local contractor regarding timing of the next cut.

18. **Proposed Neighbourhood Plan** – deferred

19. **Wetheringsett Cycle Route** – no update report. Item deferred.

20. **Finance**

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

2. Accounts for payment

Age UK Suffolk – donation £50.00

EACH – donation £50.00

SS Operations – play area maintenance £750.00

Clerk sal-expen April 2019 £277.82

PGM Home and Garden – May cemetery/playarea grass cutting £250.00

Cllr Mrs Cain proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Mrs Arnold and agreed.

3. Finance report -

One of the two remaining cheque signatories, Cllr Alston or Mrs Aldred would need to contact Barclays Bank to request a mandate form to add the two new additional signatories.

21. **GDPR** – to consider for adoption proposed policy documents

Revised documents prepared by Cllr Pease had been circulated. Members thanked Cllr Pease for his work on the documents which appeared in line with GDPR requirements. The item was deferred to the next meeting pending confirmation all members were familiar with their content.

22. **Clerk's report/correspondence**

1. Environmental Agency consultation document on draft strategy flooding and coastal change – document circulated for information and individual response

2. Suffolk CC Highways – revised action re stopping at school entrances with yellow zig-zag lines

3. SALC Area meeting – Tuesday 11 June 2019, 7pm at Eye Town Hall – noted

4. Suffolk CC – notification of grass verge cutting improvements 2019 - noted

23. **Chairman's Urgent Business** – none

24. **Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests**

Planning discussion – a session preceding the July or August parish council meetings was suggested. A convenient date to be confirmed with Cllr Stringer.

Parish Council Website – the chairman reported Cllr Pease had expressed some interest in managing the website. Include item on next agenda.

Grass verges – the following overgrown areas were reported: Cedars Hill/A140, Town lane/A140, Town Lane hedge. These would need to be reported via the Suffolk CC website reporting tool.

25. **Date of next meeting – Monday 1 July 2019, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Wetheringsett**

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

## **Report to Wetheringsett Parish Council June 2019**

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### **The New Look Council**

The new cohort of councillors have decided the makeup of the new “administration” of Mid Suffolk’s political management, The conservatives have the largest amount of councillors with 16, the green party has 12, the Liberal democrats have 5, with one independent, given there are 34 seats even with the independent already siding with the conservatives, the Conservatives with one independent cannot form a working majority. but a odd quirk of council procedure meant that at the first meeting the outgoing chairman has a casting vote, meaning that the conservatives gained 41% of the votes at the election but have gained 100% of their positions in the cabinet. We had suggested that we form a joint administration of all the groups because this “hung” position means that everyone has to turn up to every meeting as the council is on a knife edge.

### **Five Year Housing Supply**

Mid Suffolk in March claimed the five year land supply figure was 6.3 years and went out to public consultation on the figure, to then revise this to 5.06 years, after the government revised its housing figures the supply figure has now been calculated at 5.24 years.

### **New Local Plan**

The draft new joint local plan is set to be published in June 2019, with adoption planned for summer 2020. This plan is being looked at during the upcoming June Full Council meeting. One of the reasons for the latest series of delays was that the administration wanted the newly elected members to be able to influence the content, given this document is not yet published the time for influence is very tight, with officers now declaring if we want the new intake of councillors to amend this document we will have to ask for it to be delayed further.

Andrew Stringer  
Mid Suffolk District Councillor – Mendlesham Ward

### **Suffolk County Councillor Report – June 2019**

#### **New leadership team for LDGI Group**

My political group at Suffolk County Council, made up of Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent (LDGI) councillors, has elected a new leadership team for 2019/20. The group will be led by Cllr Penny Otton (Liberal Democrat), with Cllr Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw (Green) as deputy leader.

#### **Ofsted rates Suffolk County Council Children’s Services “outstanding”**

After a week-long inspection in April, Ofsted have given Suffolk County Council Children’s Services an “outstanding” rating, an improvement from the previous rating of “good” in 2015. Suffolk County Council is one of only seven in the country to achieve this rating, and the positive report is testament to the hard-working frontline staff at the council.

However, the council does still struggle to fill social worker vacancies, particularly given it does not pay social workers as much as some neighbouring councils. Staff at the council are hopeful that this Ofsted report will help in attracting social workers to Suffolk.

Furthermore, this is in stark contrast to the inspection of Suffolk SEND services earlier this year, which Ofsted rated “inadequate”. Although a SEND oversight board has been set up, this is only meeting four times per year and we do not have a representative on the board.

## **Rise in the numbers of care-leavers housed in unregulated accommodation**

BBC Newsnight has reported a large rise in the number of care-leavers being housed in unregulated accommodation. Whilst this is a national issue, the figures for Suffolk were the fourth largest of all English authorities. Furthermore, in Suffolk the numbers of children living in unregulated accommodation has risen from 24 in 2009 to 113 in 2018.

Children in care may move to supported accommodation once they are over the age of 16, to encourage independent living. There are support workers living on site or paying regular visits, but the accommodation is not subject to the same checks and inspections as regular children’s homes.

## **Poverty motion voted down by Council**

At the Council AGM on 23 May, my group proposed a motion asking the Council to acknowledge the findings of the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty following his visit to the UK in November last year, and to set-up a cross-party policy develop group tasked with investigating actions that Suffolk County Council could take to reduce poverty in the county. Unfortunately, the Conservative administration decided to vote against the motion.

The UN report found that 14 million people in the UK are living in poverty. Suffolk has not escaped the national crisis: earlier this month, End Child Poverty published its 2019 statistics which revealed that over 50,000 children (28.5%) in Suffolk are being brought up in poverty.

## **New “task and finish” groups to scrutinise education**

Suffolk County Council has pledged to set up “task and finish” groups to scrutinise education issues, such as home-to-school transport and SEND placements. The council previously had a dedicated Education Scrutiny Committee, but this was dissolved in 2017.

My group has requested that any meetings should be open to both the public and the press, to ensure the scrutiny process is transparent.

## **New system for funding sponsored bus services**

A new system has been agreed for allocating funding to sponsored bus services, following a cross-party policy development panel (PDP).

In the past, decisions on allocating funding were made on subsidy per passenger figures and on the recommendations of officers within the Passenger Transport Unit, with no formal scoring. The new system devised by the PDP sets out a defined methodology for allocating resources, to ensure this process is consistent and transparent.

Factors that will be taken into account include:

1. Average single passenger journeys per day of operation
2. Percentage of English National Concessionary Travel Scheme journeys for both age related and disabled passengers
3. Number of entitled students on bus route (additional weighting of 1.5)
4. Type of service, days operated and consideration of alternative services
5. Integration with bus services that operate on a commercial basis
6. Average cost per passenger journey

## **Restrictions on recycling**

The amount of goods that can be recycled in Suffolk has reduced, with TetraPak cartons and metal items such as pots and pans no longer being accepted in recycling bins. This decision was made by the Suffolk Waste Partnership following a refurbishment of the Material Recycling Facility near Great Blakenham, because the new sorting equipment that is being installed will not be able to separate out cartons.

Cartons and metal items will now need to be taken to household recycling centres.

In addition, new restrictions on composting mean that households can no longer put kitchen waste into brown bins.