

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council
Minutes of the virtual Parish Council meeting held Monday 4 January 2021 at 7pm

Present: Cllrs C Harvey (Chairman), Mrs E Aldred, Mrs A Arnold, T Alston, D Brown, Mrs C Estcourt, Mrs H Green, B Lacey and M Pease.

County and District Cllr A Stringer and five members of the public

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs E Cain.

2. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

Cllr Alston: items 8.1 and 8.3.

3. To consider co-option to fill Parish Council vacancy

Following statutory notification of the vacancy in the parish three parishioners had expressed an interest in joining the council: Mrs Rachel Leech, Mr Nigel Lingard and Mrs Fiona Townshend.

The Chairman welcomed all three candidates to the meeting and thanked them for their interest. The Chairman stated a process of members' voting would be required and the candidate with the majority vote co-opted.

For the information of members, the Chairman invited each candidate to give a brief presentation about themselves and their interest in the parish and community.

Members listened to the presentations during which Mr Lingard stated he was quite content to withdraw his application, he believed Mrs Leech and Mrs Townshend were well-placed candidates and wished them success with their applications. Mr Lingard had expressed an interest in joining the neighbourhood plan group. The Chairman thanked Mr Lingard for his interest in the council and for his offer to join the neighbourhood plan group.

The Chairman proposed that votes were cast via email and sent to the Clerk and Chairman.

The majority of votes cast were received by Mrs Rachel Leech with two abstentions. The Chairman congratulated and welcomed Mrs Leech on her co-option to the council and thanked Mrs Townshend for her interest. Vacancies did sometimes occur between the four yearly parish council elections, these were always notified to the parish should Mrs Townshend wish to continue her interest. Mrs Leech stated she was delighted to be joining the Council.

The declaration of acceptance of office form and members' register of interests form would be sent to Mrs Leech for completion and return to the clerk before the February meeting.

4. Reports

1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>

2. County Council – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Additional items included the re-launch of the Home but not Alone helpline following the county's move to tier 4 following an increase in covid infections and possible further lockdown.

3. District Council – Cllr Stringer was pleased to report the John Peel Centre would now include the old National Westminster Bank building, which had been the original entrance to the building on Market Place and would also incorporate the old Victorian ballroom.

4. Footpaths – Cllr Mrs Aldred reported other than an issue involving discarded facemasks, footpaths were in good order.

5. Trees – Cllr Mrs Aldred reported 100 trees had been delivered just before Christmas. 30 had gone to the School enabling each pupil to plant one tree each with 2 over for the helpers. The remaining trees would be planted in the village.

The Chairman reported on a wildlife project in Risby, areas in the village had been planted with wild flowers to attract wildlife and he suggested a similar project in Wetheringsett. Item to be included on a future agenda.

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – no comments.

6. To consider for approval Minutes of the video link meeting held Monday 7 December 2020

Cllr Pease proposed approval of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Brown, 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

7. Matters arising from the Minutes for report - none.

8. Planning application/s for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/20/05679: The Cedars, Cedars Hill – application to determine if prior approval is required or the proposed erection, extension or alteration of a building for agricultural or forestry use – Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2 Part 6 Class A/B/E – erection of storage barn.

Cllr Alston left the meeting

The Chairman proposed both applications DC/20/05679 (8.1) and DC/20/05680 (8.3)

were considered. Following consideration of both applications a recommendation that the Parish Council could see no reason why both applications should not proceed was proposed and seconded. 7 members were in favour, 1 abstention. Proposal carried.

Cllr Alston returned to the meeting

2. DC/20/05630: Hill House, Norwich Road – Outline PP (some matters reserved, access to be considered) – Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – erection of 2 dwellings.
Following consideration of the application a recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the following grounds:
MSDC had in place a five year land supply for the development of new dwellings
The proposed site was outside the settlement boundary and had not been identified in the Joint Local Plan
The proposal would create a doubling of dwellings outside the village boundary
The proposed access is directly on to a 50mph section of the A140
The Parish Council carries out regular VAS checks of traffic speed on the A140 at Brockford - speeds in excess of 100mph within the restricted limits had been and were still recorded
The proposed site was not sustainable and contrary to NPPF: there were no pavements in the vicinity of the site access. Due to the very busy A140 in regular use by HGV traffic as well as commercial and domestic vehicles it would be necessary to access local services from the proposed dwellings by car, ie local primary schools, shop and health centres, none of these were within safe walking or cycling distance.
The busy vehicle movement on the A140 would pose a challenge for refuse collection
3. DC/20/05680: Old Trowel Barn, Station Road – application to determine if prior approval is required for the proposed erection, extension or alteration of a building for agricultural or forestry use – Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2 Part 6 Class A/B/E – erection of barn for storage of straw – see 8.1 above
4. D /20/05685: All Saints Church, Church Street – replace of 2 north side plain glass windows with 2 stained glass windows in adjacent bays of the north wall of the church. A recommendation of approval was proposed, seconded and agreed.

9. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/20/05113: Wetheringsett Manor, Church Street – change entrance gate pillars so that existing metal gates can be hung from steel posts encased within brick piers as opposed to hanging gates directly from piers. **Approved**
2. APP/V3520W/20/3256247 (DC/20/00296) - Existing Sugar Beet Pad, Blacksmiths Green – change of use of existing sugar beet pad to residential - erection of private dwelling, creation of new vehicular access and associated works – **Appeal Dismissed**

10. Planning Correspondence

Town Lane – container stacking. Awaiting report from MSDC Planning with regard to any breach of planning conditions.

11. Village Hall:

1. Management Committee report – Cllr Pease reported Wetheringsett Manor School had expressed an interest in using the Hall. Discussions were taking place between the Primary School, Hall Committee and the Manor School with regard to its use.
Cllr Mrs Leech had expressed an interest in joining the committee.
Village Hall grants promoted by Community Action Suffolk did not apply to Wetheringsett VH.
2. Maintenance report
Cllr Lacey stated the gutter on the south side of the Hall had fallen away from the Hall and water was pouring down wall during rain. Cllr Pease would arrange repair funded from the VH grant fund.

12. Play Area report

Cllr Lacey stated he would cut back overgrowth through the fence. He would review the bank and sleepers when the weather improved.

13. VAS speed equipment report

A report and statistics covering 2020 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Speed in excess of £100mph had been recorded in Brockford Street and 67mph in Wetherup Street. The report would be forwarded to the Police and Crime Commissioner and investigations made into whether the high speeds formed part of a pattern.

14. **Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan progress report**

Following recent publicity Cllr Mrs Green was pleased to report three parishioners had been in contact expressing interest in joining the working group. This was good news and would enable the plan to progress. With the assistance of Andrea Long, the consultant, the group would now progress the application to designate the plan area and the funding application.

15. **To consider quotation for repairs to road sign at Wetherup St/Debenham Road** – deferred to next meeting.

16. **Defibrillator at Village Hall**

Cllr Pease reported he and Cllr Brown were in the process of registering with Community Heartbeat Trust to enable them to monitor and carry out regular equipment checks.

17. **Finance**

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

2. Accounts for payment

MSDC – Play Area ROSPA inspection fee £60.82

Clerk sal-expen Dec 2020 £282.35

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

3. To consider for approval precept proposals 2021-22

A proposed budget and precept for 2021-22 had been prepared and circulated by Cllr Pease. The proposal was to retain the precept at £8850 with changes to three of the budget heads as follows: Village Hall - following extensive maintenance work during 2020 with the assistance of parish council funding, it was proposed the budget was reduced from £1000 to £200. Any further maintenance issues during 2021-22 could be covered by the VH grant from MSDC.

Village Fete – increase the budget to £500.

Village sign maintenance/repair – a new budget to maintain existing signs

A query was raised as to whether the VH budget was sufficient. Cllr Pease stated as the majority of the current refurbishment work was complete any additional maintenance items occurring during 2021-22 could be covered from the balance of the MSDC grant. The Village Fete budget had been increased to help with a village celebration later in the year to bring the village together when hopefully the current covid restrictions were lifted.

Notification had not as yet been received from MSDC of the 2021-22 tax base. Cllr Stringer explained the impact of the tax base on the precept fund. Members having considered the proposed budget put forward, Cllr Pease proposed approval of a precept of £8850, seconded Cllr Alston and unanimously agreed. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Pease for his work on the budget figures.

4. Finance report

Notification had been received from NALC of their proposed increase in clerks hourly rates and salaries with effect from 1.4.20. The clerk was currently at spinal column 19, the proposed increase amounted to 10p. per hour. Cllr Mrs Leech proposed acceptance of the increase, seconded Cllr Pease and agreed.

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

Parish Notice Boards – Cllr Mrs Arnold stated replacement of the backing on the notice boards at Wetherup Street, Pitman's Corner and Town Lane were in hand.

Pitman's Corner – a parishioner had raised a query concerning road names at Pitman's Corner. Cllr Mrs Green clarified these. This information would be forwarded on to the parishioner.

Brockford Road – a suggested reverse of the one way system to entering Brockford Road at the A140 junction travelling to Mendlesham rather than the current Mendlesham to A140/Brockford Road Junction had been raised at the last meeting and put to Suffolk CC Highways. A response had been received from Highways that due to the narrow entry at its northern end (A140), it would be difficult for north bound vehicles on the A140 to make a left turn into Brockford Road so only right turning vehicles travelling south on the A140 could make the turn. This could make it problematic to residents living on Brockford Road.

Any changes would require a new traffic regulation order and would require consultations with residents living on that section of road. The cost of the consultation, drafting and advertising the traffic order and the implementation costs would have to be found from a local funding source and could potentially cost up to £15,000. Members noted the above response.

19. **Chairman's Report** – none.

20. **Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests**

Dog Bin – Cllr Brown had received a request from a parishioner for a dog bin in the Church Street/Dale Hill area. Item to be included on the next agenda.

21. Date of next video link meeting: Monday 1 February 2021 at 7pm

Meeting closed 8.40pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

County Councillor Report – 4.1.21

Wishing you All a Happy New Year

Biodiversity strategy adopted

At Full Council on the 3rd December, Suffolk County Council unanimously passed a motion that will see Suffolk County Council developing a biodiversity strategy and embracing biodiverse land management practices. The motion was proposed by the LDGI Group and supported by all other groups. The motion will ensure:

- Delivery of a biodiversity strategy that will set out how we could increase Suffolk's biodiversity, halt the loss of habitats and species, and reintroduce declining species in suitable locations.
- Assessment of how the council can lead organisations across the county in efforts to improve biodiversity.
- Adoption of biodiverse land management options on council land.
- A letter to the Secretary of State asking what further support can be made available to local authorities to enhance bio diversity within their areas.

Resisting the decision to reclaim local highways budgets

The Suffolk County Council cabinet will be reclaiming unspent Local Highways Budgets from councillors on the 31st of December. Local highways budgets can be spent by councillors in their divisions, on projects like new yellow lines, resident parking areas or zebra crossings. The LDGI Group has fought against this decision, arguing that the pandemic has increased delays to work which was already difficult to complete due to cumbersome processes and excessive red tape. Lockdown meant that officers weren't allowed to go out and look at sites, and teams were overwhelmed by the amount of work caused by the pandemic. Some larger projects will not be ready to receive payment by the 31st. This reclaiming of the budget would not have become absolutely necessary until March, when the financial year ends.

Our Group has been fighting against this decision, taking it to Cabinet and senior officers, as well as the press. This decision means that dozens of projects will now remain unfinished and local communities will not benefit from the money.

Preparing budget amendments for 2021-22 budget

SCC is currently preparing its budget for 2021-22 and the LDGI Group has been preparing its amendments. My Group has chosen three key priorities for our budget amendment: Warm homes, Supporting community groups and charities through the pandemic, and Income generation & the climate emergency. We will be proposing multiple projects and policy decisions around these three key themes.

Consultation on the Street Guide

SCC is currently running a consultation on its proposed Streets Guide, which will assist with the design of new residential developments showing how best to create sustainable transport layouts that promote walking and cycling. A new Street Guide has been commissioned to update guidance for residential streets. Comments on the draft guide are welcomed and there is a survey to complete. The consultation closes at 5pm on 10th February 2021.

Link: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/suffolk-design-streets-guide/>

Consultation on the Suffolk Climate Change Action Plan

SCC is currently running a consultation on the Suffolk Climate Action Plan, and you are invited to comment on the following areas:

- Sustainable Buildings
- Large Industrial & Commercial Energy Users
- Transport & Air Quality
- Small Industrial & Commercial Energy Users
- Energy & Planning
- Community Action & Schemes

Link and further information here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/initiatives/pledge-to-climate-emergency-declaration/>