

## Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council

### Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Monday 4 December 2023, 7pm at the Village Hall, Wetheringsett.

Present: Cllrs Mrs E Cain (Chairman), T Alston, C Harvey, B Lacey, N Lingard, Mrs K van Zyl and Mrs J Weir  
County and District Cllr A Stringer, 4 parishioners and the parish clerk.

1. **Apologies for absence** – apologies were received and approved from Cllrs Mrs E Aldred, Mrs L Drury and Mrs R Leech.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **Reports**

1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk> – no queries were raised.
2. County Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his monthly report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Stringer went on to report he had attended a Flood Team meeting at County Council regarding outstanding flood issues and had received a report from a Wetheringsett parishioner on future flood management. A Suffolk CC document setting out riparian responsibility for clearance of river and waterways had been circulated to parish councillors and interested parishioners. The importance of residents registering flood damage via the Suffolk CC reporting tool was reiterated. Issues contributing to Wetheringsett flooding were discussed including recent tree felling between Wetheringsett and Thorndon which appeared to have resulted in debris blocking some of the River Dove tributaries. Cllr Stringer stated the tributaries were the responsibility of landowners. It was requested Wetherup Street should be included in future flood reports and the issues in Brockford Street were outlined.

The provision of Kill your Speed signs in the village was raised. Cllr Stringer stated he did have funding available for such signs, a formal application would need to be made. The location of the signs would need to be approved by Suffolk CC Highways.

3. District Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his monthly report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Stringer added the District Council was continuing to work with residents and businesses affected by recent flooding events in Mid Suffolk. The County Council had published a scheme of government grants to support residents and businesses. Those affected should report flooding via SCC highways reporting tool – these would be assessed and passed to MSDC for processing payments of £500 for residents and £2,500 for businesses. Affected households may also be eligible for a discount on council tax as well as the availability of a £5000 grant for installing future preventative flood measures
4. Footpaths - no report.
5. Trees – all new trees allocated to Wetheringsett had been distributed in the village.

#### 6. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Members of the public questioned how the village could move forward following the recent floods. It was stated there was an area of Old Rectory land that could be excavated to create a barrier. It was reported the area concerned was already a registered weir and if on private property would be the responsibility of the landowner. Cllr Stringer stated he would submit the village report to the Environment Agency/Suffolk CC Flood Team for consideration. A discussion followed regarding clearance of ditches at the rear of All Saints Close and surrounding ditches, parishioners believed the blocked sections contributed to the flooding. A Brockford resident enquired what action the parish council would take with regard to emergency action to help motorists stranded on the A140 due to flooding and provision of a rest centre. A discussion ensued on these issues resulting in Cllr Harvey and member of the public leaving the meeting at 8pm.

The Chair stated these were all important concerns for parishioners that would need to be resolved and at this stage it would be necessary to await the report from the authorities concerned, Suffolk CC and the Environment Agency, on future preventative action and emergency action that could be put in place locally. The Chair thanked members of the public for their attendance at the meeting and concerns raised, it was hoped early guidance would be received from the responsible authorities.

*Members of the public left the meeting 8.10pm. Meeting closed to the public*

#### 4.To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 6 November 2023

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

#### 5.Matters arising from the Minutes for report – none.

#### 6.Planning applications for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/23/05467: The Old Forge, Mendlesham Road, Brockford – application for Listed Building Consent – repair oak doorstep/sole plate at east side, removal of concrete plinth render from

internal brickwork at base of walls and soleplate, installation of temporary flood prevention measures to external doorway openings. A recommendation of approval was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

#### **7.Planning Decisions received from MSDC**

1. DC/23/04366: 14 Hockey Hill – erection of single storey rear extension following demolition of existing extension. Planning Permission Granted.
2. DC/23/03643: Rectory Cottage, Church Street - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/22/04668 – Condition 8 (Works to Underlying Fabric), Condition 9 (Insulation) and Part Discharge of Condition 10 (Render Mix and Finish). MSDC Refused and/or Approved conditions.
3. DC/23/02949: Rectory Cottage, Church Street - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/22/04668 – Condition 3 (Brickwork), Condition 4 (Fenestration). MSDC Part Refused/Part Approved.

#### **8.Planning correspondence – none.**

**9.Wetheringsett cum Brockford Emergency Plan** – to review and appoint working group to prepare updated Emergency Plan - Item deferred to the next meeting. In the meantime Cllr Mrs van Zyl offered to obtain and circulate a model emergency plan document.

#### **10. Village Hall**

1. Management Committee report – Electricity charges had settled into a regular pattern, Hall bookings had increased to the middle of next year, promoting to a wider area to increase bookings was important, the Ten Parishes Magazine was suggested. A lockable cupboard was planned for cleaning materials. Finances were sound with a current balance of £1083, some funding had been received from donations.
  2. Report on School Licence Agreement and Diocesan Lease – the School licence had expired and was rolling forward on a monthly basis. No report regarding the Diocesan Lease.
  3. Proposed Solar Panels on part Hall roof report – Cllr Lingard reported Suffolk CC had commenced its match funding process for the New Year. An energy consumption and decarbonization audit would be required. A Lotto application had also been submitted with a response expected in 12-15 weeks – this action would keep the £8500 grant alive.
11. **Grasscutting report** - an invoice for £75.00 for the final trim was due from the contractor.
12. **Play Area report** – no report.
13. **VAS speed equipment and ANPR report** – the inaccurate information in the ANPR document had been reported to the Suffolk CC Officer. The next visit was planned during the Spring.
14. **Community Speed Watch Scheme** – no report
15. **To consider provision of Kill your Speed highway signs** – County Cllr Stringer had confirmed funding for the signs would be available. A grant application would be made when quotes were available. Cllr Mrs Weir to obtain quote/s for the signs.
16. **To consider a community First Aid Course** – item deferred.
17. **Finance**
1. To consider s.137 donation requests  
Donation requests had been received from Headway Suffolk and Mid Suffolk CAB. The Chair proposed a donation of £100 to each organization, seconded Cllr Lingard – unanimously agreed.
  2. Report on Local Government pay awards 2023-24 – notification of clerk pay awards had been received from NALC. This amounted to an increase of £1.00 per hour backdated to 1.4.23. Cllr Alston proposed approval of the increase, seconded Cllr Mrs Cain – unanimously agreed.
  3. Accounts for payment  
Clerk – sal/expen November 2023: £481.10
  4. Finance report including to consider draft precept 2024-25  
A draft precept had been circulated. Further items for inclusion were discussed, ie the ex-telephone kiosk maintenance, proposed community speed watch expenditure, VAS expenditure, a contingency allowance. It was agreed a decision was deferred to the January meeting pending inclusion of these items.
18. **To consider for approval Parish Council Asset Register**  
Following refurbishment work it was agreed the value of the Village Sign was increased from £2500 to £3000. This resulted in the Asset Register document showing assets totalling £72,233.82. Approval of the revised Register was unanimously agreed.
19. **Clerk's report/correspondence**  
Village Sign insurance claim – the two final invoices had been submitted to the insurers and now awaiting insurer's approval. If approved the excess would be £100.
20. **Chair's Report** – none.
21. **Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests** – none.

## **22. Date of next meeting - Monday 8 January 2024, 7pm at the The Village Hall, Wetheringsett**

Meeting closed 9.05pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

### **County Councillor Report – December 2023**

#### **Extra £10m Investment in Residential Roads**

At Cabinet on Tuesday 7 November, we heard the details of the council's additional £10m investment in resurfacing urban and residential roads, which was announced in May after the local elections. The council plans to use reporting of poor road surfacing on quieter residential roads and cul de sacs where residents live to plot a programme of repairs from now until the end of March 2025. Our group also had a recent meeting with the council's new contractor for highways to discuss how works would be undertaken in future. The council's new highways contractor is called Milestone, and the new contract began on 1 October 2023. They will be picking up works started by Kier in the last few months of the previous contract and finishing them as soon as possible.

#### **Budget Monitoring**

Cabinet reviewed the quarter two monitoring report for the council budget at Cabinet on Tuesday 7 November, with a net overspend of £11.4m now predicted for 2023-24. Budget pressures for the year include placements for children in care, special educational needs (SEND) and adult care. The council is worrying overdrawn on its Dedicated Schools Grant fund, which will be at -£48m by the end of the financial year; this is because government funding for education is not enough to provide it. On the plus side, the council has predicted £7m more in business rate income than forecasted, and £10m of income is expected from the Energy from Waste facility at Great Blakenham from selling energy back to the National Grid.

#### **Flooding Investigations and Repairs**

Following the recent Storm Babet flooding around the county, Suffolk County Council teams have pumped away 4.7m litres of water, cleared 8,412 drains of storm debris and removed over 100 trees blocking roads. In addition to this, as the lead local flood authority, Suffolk County Council has a duty to investigate the causes of flooding and take action to prevent future floods, and have announced that £1m will be spent on investigating the Storm Babet flooding and improving the county's resilience for further storms and excess rainfall. Additionally, it will be administering the funding recently announced by the government whereby owners of flooded properties are able to apply for up to £5,000 to protect their homes and business from future flooding. Details of how to apply will be shared once they are known.

#### **LionLink Energy Project**

The council has submitted a second, extensive response to proposals for LionLink, an energy project which could see considerable impacts on Suffolk's coastal communities and natural environment. The council is opposed to the current proposed landing points at Southwold and Walberswick and has asked that better coordination be considered with other offshore energy projects like Sea Link to avoid unnecessary disruption to Suffolk communities and landscapes.

#### **Libraries Consultation**

The council is consulting on the new library service for the county as the contract with the current provider ends in May 2025. A consultation has been launched to gather views from residents about what they value about the current service and what they think should be developed, especially in terms of outreach and mobile libraries used in the county. If you would like to share your views, you can access the consultation at the following link:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LibraryConsultation>

### **New Highways Contract for Suffolk Roads**

At Scrutiny Committee on 23 November my group had the opportunity to examine the new Highways contract with Milestone, which began on 1 October 2023. The contract promises better communication with councillors and Suffolk residents, and contains incentives for the new contractor to work efficiently – for example, undertaking other works needed in the same geographical area when they are called out. The committee agreed to review the performance of the contract in 12 months.

### **Suffolk Adult Care Rated Good**

Suffolk County Council's adult social services were inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in August and September, and the judgement is that services are good, with strengths in safeguarding, leadership, use of digital technologies and the way SCC works with other local partners to provide care. Areas for improvement included equity in experiences and outcomes, and gaps in dementia and nursing care provision. Delays in getting through to the Customer First phonenumber – the main first point of contact for social care – were also highlighted for improvement.

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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 Councillors' Report – December 2023**

Joint Local Plan	<p>At Mid Suffolk's Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November, Part 1 of the Joint Local Plan (JLP) for Mid Suffolk and Babergh was approved and hence adopted. The JLP sets out a planning framework to guide development in the districts over the period to 2037. At the Planning Inspectors request, the JLP was split into two parts.</p> <p>JLP Part 1 provides a set of strategic and local development management policies against which planning applications and appeals will be assessed. There are 10 strategic policies (such as on affordable housing, climate change and tourism) and 32 local policies (such as on biodiversity, historic environment and sustainable construction).</p> <p>JLP Part 2, which covers housing policies such as settlement boundaries and housing requirements, is being worked on and will be consulted on next year.</p>
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Proposed Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)	Also, being worked on are a series of supplementary planning documents that will support the JLP and help to inform future planning applications. There are ten SPDs being put forward and these include ones on Biodiversity & Trees, Sustainable Design and Natural & Historic Environment.
Home insulation	<p>The <i>Cosy Homes</i> initiative has been launched with a £2 million fund. Eligible households can apply for free energy efficiency measures in their own homes, including if privately rented. A contractor has been secured to deliver this programme and they have been able to access further grant funding to contribute to this scheme. Full details to be available via <a href="http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk">www.midsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>This initiative is in addition to a programme of retrofit for the Council's own housing stock.</p> <p>Particularly vulnerable households can continue to access this via the wider Suffolk scheme, <a href="http://www.warmhomessuffolk.org">www.warmhomessuffolk.org</a></p>
Energy efficiency improvements for listed buildings	It is currently very difficult to retrofit listed buildings so the Council is looking to help with this. Mid Suffolk is consulting on proposals to put in place a Local Listed Building Consent Order to enable owners of listed buildings to improve the energy efficiency of them. If ultimately agreed, this will safeguard our valuable heritage assets but streamline the process for approving balanced and sensitive energy efficiency improvements.
Flooding	The Council is continuing to work with residents and businesses affected by the recent flooding events in Mid Suffolk. The County Council has now published a scheme of government grants to support resident and businesses. Those affected should report via SCC highways reporting tool - this will be assessed and passed to Mid Suffolk District Council for processing payments of £500 for residents and £2,500 for businesses. Affected households may also be eligible for a discount on council tax.
Locality Award	A reminder that this year's locality awards are still open for applications. Any group or organisation can apply for amounts of £250 or more. Please contact one of us for an application form.

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