

DRAFT

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held Monday 4 April 2022, 7pm at the VILLAGE HALL, Wetheringsett.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr Mrs C Estcourt. Cllr Stringer would arrive late due to a previous meeting.
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** – written report read to the meeting – copy attached to the Minutes.
 3. **District Councillor** – written report read to the meeting – copy attached to the Minutes.
 4. **Footpaths**

Footpath 26 – 27 – Cllr Mrs Aldred reported debris on the footpath.
Broadgreen – not cleared as yet.
Footpath sign posts at Joes Road and Broadgreen to the Mill – both posts were rotted.
An email from a parishioner had been received regarding the footpath running alongside Clay Cottage at Pitmans Corner, reporting dogs on the footpath preventing walkers using the path. Cllr Mrs Aldred reported she had replied to the complainant stating this would be monitored.
 5. **Trees**

Cllr Mrs Aldred reported she had attended the recent Tree Warden meeting held at Holbrook. There had been a very interesting talk on hedgerow maintenance followed by a walk to view specimen hedges.
6. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** – no comments
4. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 7 March 2022**

Cllr Mrs Aldred proposed adoption of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech and unanimously agreed.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report** – none.
6. **Report on Parish Council Vacancy** and vacant councillor roles for re-allocation:

The chairman reported on the resignation of Mike Pease. Members recorded their thanks to him for his efforts during his time as a parish councillor, particularly his work on the village hall refurbishment project.
The vacancy would be reported to the MSDC Returning Officer who would issue the statutory notice informing parishioners of the vacancy. The vacancy would also be reported in the Parish Magazine.
This left the following working group vacancies: Village Hall (currently represented by Cllr Mrs Arnold, Cllr Mrs Leech and Cllr Harvey), Finance vacant – for consideration at the May meeting , Defibrillator Cllr Mrs Leech and Mr M Pease and Website – Cllr Mrs Leech with the assistance of Cllr Harvey.
8. **Planning applications for recommendation to MSDC**
 1. DC/22/01351: Land at Woodlands, Mendlesham Road, Wetheringsett – creation of new vehicular access and associated hardstanding, erection of post and rail fencing. A recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the grounds of additional vehicular access on to Mendlesham Road
 2. DC/22/01576: Dove Cottage, Church Street – Householder Application – replacement of all white wooden windows with white uPVC windows, replace brown wood front door with Painswick Green composite door and replace rear dining room window with Agate Grey uPVC patio doors. A recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the grounds the proposed uPVC windows did not appear to be in keeping with the conservation area.
 3. DC/22/01525: Willow Barn, Hall Lane – Householder Application – conversion of and alterations to three bay garage to provide annexed accommodation ancillary to host dwelling. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
 4. DC/22/01505: Meadow Farm, Blacksmiths Green – application for Listed Building Consent – erection of cart shed with solar panels to roof and garden shed to replace fire damaged structure that was curtilage listed. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
 5. DC/22/01766: Meadow Farm, Blacksmiths Green – reconstruction of outbuilding and attached stores (following destruction of original building due to fire). A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
9. **Planning Decisions received from MSDC**
 1. DC/22/00759: The Old Forge, Church Street – application for tree works in Conservation Area. Fell 1 Holly due to proximity to listed building, 1 dead Pine to provide space for adjacent trees, 2 dead Elms to be replaced by 1 Oak and 1 Hazel. **MSDC had no objection**

2. DC/22/00770: Land at Norwich Road, Wetheringsett – Discharge of conditions application DC/20/00324 – Condition 5 Noise Control and Condition 10 Archaeological - **Approved**
3. DC/22/00726: Tyes Hill Cottage, Blacksmith Green – erection of detached cartlodge/store. **Planning Permission Granted**

10. Planning correspondence

1. SN/22/00122/SN: New development – Land, Norwich Road, Wetheringsett – Parish Council had been asked to suggest two road names for the development.
The suggestion of Ribbons Way, in memory of the late Mrs Ribbons the former owner of the land, or Brockford Way was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed. Ribbons Way being the Parish Council preference.
2. Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan – Addressing issues identified during examination of the modification draft – comments to MSDC by 29 April 2022. Consultation noted.

11. Parish Council Loan application to the Dept for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to fund replacement of Wetheringsett Village Hall floor

1. Application progress report – Parish Borrowing at the Government’s Levelling Up Dept had queried the amount of the loan, whether £17,000 or £16,867.
Members confirmed the amount of the loan required was £16,867. **It was RESOLVED to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for a loan of £16,867 from the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Church and Town Estate charity over the borrowing term of 9 years for the replacement of the Village Hall floor. The annual repayments would commence at November 2022 the first repayment totalling £2168.67 (including 1% interest rate) decreasing to a final payment of £884.34 at November 2030.**

It was intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by £980 for the financial year 2022-23 the total precept being £9830. This precept represented a Council Tax Band D amount of £34.25, an increase of 7.66% on 2021-22 (as assessed by Mid Suffolk District Council).

A consultation with parishioners via the Parish Magazine, which was delivered to every household in the village, had taken place.

The Chair, Cllr Mrs Cain, proposed acceptance of the above Resolution, seconded Cllr Mrs Arnold and unanimously agreed.

2. Report on consultation with parishioners
As a result of the consultation with parishioners (February 2022 parish magazine), so far a written response had been received sending sincere thanks in full support of the refurbishment work and support of the increased precept to facilitate some of the work.

In additional Councillors had received verbal support for the work and increased precept – the village hall being a vital asset for the community.

A village Tea had been held on 20 March 2022, being an opportunity to show the hall to parishioners. The Tea was well attended and parishioners had been very complimentary of the refurbishment work.

12. Village Hall

1. Management Committee report

It was report Cllr Harvey would take over as Chair of the Village Hall Committee. Thanks were recorded to Mike Pease for all his hard work on progressing the refurbishment work.

At the year end 31.3.22 there was a balance of £1003.62 in the VH bank account with £500 earmarked for the Platinum celebrations. With electricity charges due to rise the committee would look at reviewing the hire charges later in the year. Other items being looked at included the current charity status and whether this should be converted to a CIO.

2. Report on School Licence Agreement and Diocesan Lease – the committee were in contact with the Diocesan Agent and School regarding renewal of the Lease and Licence.
3. Report on Platinum Jubilee celebrations 2022

Cllr Mrs Leech reported arrangements for the celebration Tea on Friday 3 June 2pm – 5pm were well underway. Parishioners would be encouraged to put up bunting in the village and the celebrations would link with activities at the Church.

13. Play Area Report:

1. Replacement of sleepers with grassed slope – Cllr Lacey reported it would be necessary for the contractor to hire mini digger to spread the soil when the sleepers had been removed.
2. New bark chipping surface under climbing frame – Cllr Lacey reported the bark chippings had been ordered and he would arrange to deliver them to the play area but would appreciate help transporting them from a trailer in to the play area. Cllrs Mrs Cain, Mrs Drury and Mrs Green offered to help over the Easter weekend. Cllr Harvey stated the lease for the Play Area would be discussed with the Diocesan Agent at the same time as the Village

Hall lease. In the meantime the Chair would contact the previous Play Area Trustees for information on the lease for the play area site.

3. Any other items for report – Cllr Lacey reported the grass had been cut and edges sprayed.

8.15pm County Cllr Stringer arrived

14. Grasscutting report

Cllr Lacey reported some areas of the cemetery would be cut to keep it tidy but the older part would be left uncut until after May.

Item 3 – County and District Cllr reports

Cllr Stringer went through his written reports. Items raised included provision of electric car charging points, a crushed manhole cover at the entrance to the Brockford Street development (reported via the County reporting tool), missing and damaged Park Lane highway sign on A140 (Cllr Mrs Arnold would check the website reporting tool for status of reinstatement of the sign) and breach at the Town Lane site re. containers stored on the ‘no container’ area.

15. Report on Spring Litter Pick held Saturday 26 March 2022

Cllr Mrs Aldred reported on a very successful morning of litter picking, also attended by children wearing high viz vests. The litter bags were collected by MSDC on the following Monday.

16. Report on Hockey Hill/Church Street surface water flooding

Following reports of a blocked drain at the last meeting, enquiries had revealed the drain under the entrance to the school drive was blocked with leaves. It was understood that section of drain belonged to the school. Cllr Stringer stated Highways were not responsible for drains not under the highway, it would be a landowners responsibility.

17. VAS speed equipment and Automatic Number Plate Recognition Camera Project (ANPR) report

Cllr Harvey stated the equipment appeared to be more successful at the A140 location. The A140 data had been sent to Suffolk Constabulary.

18. Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan - report circulated.

The working group would appreciate Parish Council comments on the draft submitted to MSDC. Members were asked to view the draft circulated and to send in comments to the working group.

19. Parish Pond, Wetherup Street – to consider provision and cost of Pond Sign. Deferred to next meeting.

20. Wetheringsett Village Sign – report on repair from storm damage

Cllr Alston reported repair work on the sign had totalled some £500 to date. When the repair was complete it would need to be re-painted. When complete Cllr Alston would contact the original designer to ask whether she would like to be involved in the re-painting. The excess for any claim would total £250. An invoice for the cost of the work, including re-painting plus photographs of the damage would be required for the purposes of making a claim.

21. Finance

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

2. SALC – notification of clerks’ National salary award 2021-22 – hourly rate increased by 1.75%. The pay award was noted and agreed.

3. Accounts for payment

SALC – annual subscription 2022-23 342.59

Material Change – Play Area bark chippings 467.52

Clerk – sal-expenses March 2022 – including backdated increased hourly rate 341.16

Compass Point Planning – Neighbourhood Plan

Consultant fees – invoice for work to 28.3.22 2,610.00

Groundwork UK – refund of grant underspend 2021-22 3,200.90

Cllr Alston proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Mrs Aldred and unanimously agreed.

4. Closure of New Village Hall bank account

A letter requesting closure of the above bank account and transfer of the funds totalling £59.73 to the Parish Council BPA account was signed by Cllrs Mrs Cain and Mrs Aldred.

5. Finance report – none.

22. **Clerk’s report/correspondence** – none.

23. **Chair’s Report** – none.

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

Annual Parish Meeting – Cllr Alston suggested the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was asked to give a presentation on the benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan at the annual parish meeting. This was agreed by members. Clerk to contact the Chairman of the Group.

25. Date of next meeting - Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting - Monday 9 May 2022, 7pm at the The Village Hall, Wetheringsett

Meeting closed 9.20pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Suffolk CC report from Cllr A Stringer – April 2022

COVID-19

Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirushave

International Women’s Month, and Day 2022 – #BreaktheBias

In March, we celebrated International Women’s Month 2022. This is a time to acknowledge and celebrate the amazing achievements of women and push further for equality around the world. This year’s theme revolved around breaking the bias, focussing on a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination.

Our group was immensely supportive of this celebration. Suffolk GLI’s Spokesperson for Women, Cllr Caroline Page, called for the flag for Women’s History Month to be flown high next year at Endeavour House. Suffolk County Council agreed this was an important step forward.

Cabinet 1st March

The Cabinet met to vote on the disapproval of the current plans by Sunnica to build the country’s largest solar farm in Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire. Suffolk County Council have asked the Government to reject the plans in its current form, arguing the application fails to properly mitigate the impacts of such a large project.

In addition, the Cabinet voted on approving the National Grid’s project to scale up its energy infrastructure from Bramford to Twinstead, as part of the Government’s Net-Zero plan to increase low-carbon energy in the UK. Our Group, while we approve of the increased capacity for low-carbon energy, argue that this rush into large projects is a result of decades of inaction from Government. This means it is now a lot harder to develop a coordinated plan with regards to energy supply, disruption, and sufficient mitigation.

Both were voted for by the Cabinet unanimously.

Full Council 24th March

Full Council presented a rare opportunity of solidarity between Councillors, as our Group and the Conservatives shared a single motion in support of Ukraine. Our Group recommended a motion condoning the actions of the Russian government, as well as commitment to supporting and welcoming refugees as they become a part of our Suffolk communities. The Conservatives supported our idea and together we showed how politics can be put aside through difficult times.

Cabinet 29th March

The Cabinet met to vote on a plan to establish ‘Freeport East’. This is part of a national strategy to create freeports across the country, in an attempt to generate economic activity through tax incentives. Felixstowe Port, Harwich Port, and Stowmarket’s ‘Gateway 14’ Business Park are set to become part of Freeport East. Our Group is severely concerned with this project, as foreign direct investment is being prioritised over local businesses, many of which will find it difficult to compete with the overseas businesses receiving Business Rates, VAT and National Insurance Tax relief. The project poses many other challenges, such as potential increase in money laundering etc, a lack of clear strategy towards net-zero, and a risk of high-skilled jobs being imported, excluding the Suffolk workforce.

The Cabinet also voted on the Enhanced Partnership between SCC and bus operators, in line with the new Bus Back Better strategy, aimed at improving services across Suffolk. The improvement plan was voted for in October 2021, and this partnership outlines how the various stakeholders will interact with one another during the implementation of the improvement plan. Our Group have concerns on the Government’s promise of funding, as no funding has yet been confirmed by the Department for Transport.

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Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](#)

District Councillor Parish Council Report

April 2022

Budget & Buses	<p>On the 24th of February the District Council agreed the budget for 2022/2023, this budget agreed a zero% increase in council tax for the district portion of the Bill, this was entirely predictable as the council had not managed to spend almost 1/3 of its circa £9,000,000.00 budget last year and in fact has had significant underspends for the last 8 years.</p> <p>Our Group submitted an amendment to the budget which the conservative administration agreed to take forward, the amendment agreed that the district council will fund two electric minibuses to help tackle the shortfall in bus provision witnessed over the last decade or so.</p> <p>These Buses are highly likely to be operated by existing Community Bus operators. And will help reconnect some communities that have had services drastically reduced in recent years.</p>
Peer Review (s)	<p>Back in November, The District Council had a Peer review into our planning service, a number of parishes and members of the public have expressed concerns regarding the experience of the current system being, challenging and at times a waste of their time, this situation needs to be improved. The review investigated how we might improve our practises, The report has now been published and the findings will be implemented, and recommended changes will now be worked on, to improve our service.</p> <p>This month another Peer review has been conducted into our Communities service.</p>
Mid Suffolk re-affirms its support for Neighbourhood Plans	<p>Given the recent issues surrounding the Neighbourhood planning process and administration. our group proposed a motion that called on Mid Suffolk to re-affirm their support for the communities that are working on or who have made neighbourhood plans. Surprisingly most of the Conservative Councillors did not back this motion, but it was approved by the council due to the amount of administration councillors not attending. Mid Suffolk recently has had another member of staff join to help with moving these local plans forward.</p>
Judicial Review	<p>A judge has quashed planning consent for 210 homes in the village of Thurston following a two-day hearing at the High Court. Thurston Parish Council had lodged a judicial review against Mid Suffolk District Council's planning permission for the Bloor Homes estate off Beyton Road.</p> <p>The parish council alleged district council committee members were wrongly advised on the weight to be given to the Neighbourhood Plan, which did not allocate the site for development. It also believed the committee was wrongly advised on planning balance and that the decision prejudices the Local Plan process, which has not yet been completed, and indeed has stalled.</p> <p>The judge has ordered that the planning permission for the Bloor Homes scheme be quashed and sent back to Mid Suffolk District Council to be re-determined. This is yet another case of Neighbourhood plans being given too little weight by MSDC when assessing planning applications</p> <p>This should mean that Mid Suffolk take more account of Neighbourhood Plans in future, although MSDC could appeal this decision with the High Court. Although Mid Suffolk are considering taking this decision to the High Court. This would be MSDC using public money to legally argue against a community owned plan.</p>

