

**Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the virtual meeting held Monday 5 October 2020 at 7pm**

Present: Cllrs C Harvey (Chairman), Mrs E Aldred, Mrs A Arnold, T Alston, D Brown, Mrs E Cain, Mrs H Green and M Pease. County and District Cllr A Stringer and three members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs Mrs E Escourt, Mrs S Gibbs and B Lacey.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** - none.

**3. Reports**

Police – available online at <http://Suffolk.police.uk>

County Council – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes).

District Council – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes).

Additional items raised included the Government's white paper on proposed changes to the planning system and the leaflet drop in Wetheringsett from a proposed developer. There had been a pre-application discussion with MSDC Planning Officers, pre-application consultations were confidential and the district councillor stated he would have no knowledge of the consultation.

The Chairman queried whether the proposed changes to the planning system would affect Neighbourhood Plans. Cllr Stringer added there were still issues in the proposed document that needed to be clarified.

Cllr Mrs Aldred reported there were many highway signs that needed to be removed from completed highway work areas in the village – the War memorial, Broad Green and others. Cllr Stringer offered to arrange removal with Highways.

Footpaths – no new faulty areas were reported. Cllr Stringer added a new footpaths officer had been appointed. The appointment would see the backlog of faults being dealt with.

Trees – Cllr Mrs Aldred hoped the delivery of ordered trees would arrive early December. If so a note to parishioners would be included in the parish magazine.

**4. To receive/consider comments raised by Parishioners**

Bockford/Mendlesham Road - A parishioner expressed concerns regarding the recent applications and appeals relating to Rockford/Mendlesham Road. A huge amount of aggregate had been delivered to The Paddocks over the last few weeks and more families had arrived at the sites.

District Cllr Stringer stated The Paddocks had approval for 10 caravans and it appeared the concrete had been delivered to an area where approval had not been granted. The Enforcement Team were aware and action was being taken against the breach. Cllr Stringer suggested the parishioner contact him direct should he require any further information.

Land east of Hockey Hill – a member of the public enquired as to the parish council's view on the proposed development. The Chairman stated no formal application had been received by the council, he understood this was pending and would be considered at the November meeting if received.

**5. To consider for approval Minutes of the video meeting held 7 September 2020**

Cllr Pease proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Aldred and agreed.

**6. Matters arising from the Minutes for report** – none.

**7. To consider Planning applications for recommendation to MSDC**

1. APP/W3520/C/19/3238584, APP/W3520/C/19/3238585, APP/W3520/C/19/3238586 – Plot 5, Two Oaks, land east of Brockford Road – appeal against enforcement notice issued 6.9.19 – without planning permission change of use of agricultural land for stationing of caravans for residential occupation, laying hard standing, erection of building, formation of new access. A recommendation to reiterate the parish councils refusal of the proposal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the following grounds: MSDC had a 5 year land supply for gypsy/traveller and housing stock; there were already 23 approved static caravan pitches in Bockford/Mendlesham Road; the site was within a level 3 flood plain; the proposal was outside the settlement boundary and would involve destruction of an historic water meadow adjacent the River Dove – H12, SB3 & Prop 1; the site was not sustainable it being in open countryside with no safe pedestrian access to services; the access was one of many recent accesses made onto a 60mph stretch of road with no adequate visibility splay; Mendlesham/Brockford Road was unsuitable for the proposed increased vehicular activity, particularly touring caravans; concerns had been raised over waste and sewage disposal in a flood plain; waste collection would cause obstruction of the highway during collection days; the proposal compromised the amenity of existing

neighbouring residents due to noise nuisance from the constant use of a generator, light pollution and visual impact.

2. APP/W3520/C/19/3238588, APP/W3520/C/19/3238589, APP/W3520/C/19/3238590 & APP/W3520/C/19/3238591 – Plot 4, Woodlands, land east of Brockford Road – appeal against enforcement notice issued 6.9.19 - without planning permission change of use of agricultural land for stationing of caravans for residential occupation, laying hard standing, erection of building, siting of containers, formation of new access. A recommendation and repeat of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the grounds set out to the previous appeal.
3. DC/20/03990: Green Farm, Pages Green – notification of prior approval for proposed change of use of 2 agricultural buildings to 4 dwellinghouses – re-submission of DC/19/05493. A recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the following grounds: MSDC has a 5 year land supply for new dwellings  
The access was via a single track road and unsuitable for the proposed increase in vehicular activity  
The proposal represented overdevelopment of the site - contrary to SB2  
The site was not identified in the MSDC Joint Local Plan - contrary Prop 1  
The proposal conflicted with the MSDC Environmental Report  
The proposal would have an adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents - H16  
The proposed site was unsustainable
4. DC/20/04104: Hill House, Norwich Road – change of use and conversion of barn to dwelling. A recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the following grounds: The parking and access arrangements were inadequate, there appeared to be no room available for turning a car around to ensure forward access back on to the main A140, reversing on to the A140 was not an option; there was inadequate room available for parking and/or garaging for an additional dwelling as well as the existing dwelling; there was confused information regarding sewage arrangements

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

1. DC/20/03386: Wetheringsett Primary School – erection of single storey extension/infill of the front south side of the building to provide a new lobby area for new school reception. **PPG**

#### 9. **Planning Correspondence**

##### Proposed Development – land east of Hockey Hill

The chairman stated there had been a leaflet drop in the Hockey Hill area by the proposed developer of the land and as a result a number of concerns had been raised. It was understood the developer had had a pre-application consultation with MSDC planning, this would have been on a non-prejudicial and confidential basis. It was agreed the parish council was not in a position to comment until a formal application was submitted.

Appeals re. land east of Mendlesham Road/Brockford Road – correspondence between MSDC and the agent had been copied to the parish council for information only. The Chairman suggested a joint meeting with representatives from Mendlesham Parish Council would be useful.

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

##### 1. Management Committee report

Cllr Pease reported due to covid-19 there would no use of the Hall other than by the school - carefully managed - for the remainder of 2020. During that time the refurbishment and renovation of the kitchen and storage area would be completed.

Regarding finances, the payment for the current quarter was due from the school. The large standing order with the Water Co. had been cancelled which would result in a slow increase in the bank reserve. Mrs Sue Payne would be taking over management of the finances with Cllrs Pease and Mrs Arnold as additional signatories. The committee were reviewing the charitable status, converting to C10 status, adding Mrs Sue Payne as a trustee with Cllr Mrs Arnold and the removal of Mr J Leadbetter due to his retirement from the committee. Cllr Alston suggested, as part of the review, the Parish Council became the Charity Trustee with nominated representatives.

2. Maintenance Report – the final invoice from Robin Moore Electrical for the electrical survey work had been received.

#### 11. **Play Area**

1. To consider ROSPA inspection report – deferred pending comments from Cllr Lacey.
2. Maintenance report – deferred pending comments from Cllr Lacey.

#### 12. **Cemetery & Play Area grasscutting 2020**

Deferred to next meeting. Cllr Mrs Aldred reported the Churchyard was now looking very smart following a recent grass cut.

**13. VAS speed equipment report**

The chairman reported the equipment had been at Wetherup Street and was now at Park Green.

**14. Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan report**

Cllr Mrs Green reported on the recent working group meeting:

1. Terms of reference had been agreed
2. A NP website had been created with a link from the Parish Council website
3. A consultant had been identified to help create the plan.
4. A progress timetable had been prepared
5. The designated area of the Parish to be covered by the plan had been identified.
6. Regular progress updates would be included in the Parish Magazine and on Facebook page
7. The group was currently engaged in the research process. This covered biodiversity, green spaces, businesses in the area, heritage and historic considerations, social and community requirements and other areas.
8. Next steps were to apply for funding and apply for designation from Mid Suffolk Council.

Two members of the working group had resigned due to other commitments and the chairman was no longer able to carry on in that role due to her commitments. This now left a working group of 4. To continue at least 3 new members would need to be recruited and a new chairperson appointed.

The Group and Parish Council would need to decide whether it wished to continue with the NP bearing in mind how important it was to have a development plan, particularly as many surrounding villages already had a Plan and in the current climate could leave the village vulnerable to opportunistic or unsuitable development. To recruit new people the group would need to adopt an assertive advertising campaign laying the potential consequences of not having a plan on the line and to be fully supported by the parish council.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Mrs Green for her report and members recorded their thanks to Mrs Melanie Woods for the work she had carried out on the plan during her time as chairperson. Members reiterated their support of the group. Cllr Mrs Green would prepare and report for the parish magazine including the need for new working group members.

**15. Road sign repairs – Wetherup St/Debenham Road** – deferred to next meeting awaiting report from Cllr Lacey.

**16. To consider community collection point for plastic bottle fastenings**

Cllr Mrs Aldred reported that Websters Newsagents in Debenham collected the bottle tops.

Enquiries to be made whether Wetheringsett parishioners could use Websters as a collection point.

**17. To review Parish Council insurance cover 2020-21**

The insurance renewal documents including level of current cover had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Pease proposed adoption of the policy and current cover provided, seconded Cllr Alston unanimously agreed.

**18. Finance**

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

2. Accounts for Payment

One Suffolk – annual website hosting 2020—21	£60.00
Information Commissioner – GDPR annual	
Registration fee	£40.00
Clerk - sal/expen Sept 2020	£283.50

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

3. Finance Report

Current bank balances were reported as follows:

PC Business Premium a/c at 4.9.20	£9,342.03
PC community a/c at 18.9.20	£17,095.62
New VH community a/c at 18.9.20	£4,059.73

Receipts 17.9.20:

Second half precept payment 2020-21	£4,425.00
-------------------------------------	-----------

Cllr Pease to look at allocating reserves for certain items in preparation for agreeing the budget and precept 2021-22. Initial suggestions included 30mph stickers for parishioners wheelie

bins, refurbishment of the outlying parish notice boards and maintenance of the village hall walls.

**19. To review the following policy documents for adoption:**

**1. Parish Council Financial Regulations 2020-21**

A revised copy of the Financial Regulations NALC model copy 2019 as recommended by the Internal Auditor with amendments tailored to the Parish Council as in the previous document had been circulated prior to the meeting.

**2. Parish Council Risk Assessment 2020-21**

A copy of the updated Risk Assessment document had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. No amendments were suggested to the above documents. Cllr Mrs Aldred proposed adoption of both documents at items 1 and 2, seconded Cllr Pease and unanimously agreed.

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

Refurbishment of outlying parish notice boards – a local person would need to be asked to provide a quotation to provide new backing.

Suffolk CC – North West Suffolk Integrated Neighbourhood Team including health care services (Hartismere Hospital) - invitation to Zoom meeting date to be agreed. Cllrs Mrs Arnold and Mrs Green offered to attend.

Boundary Commission Review – consultation documents circulated. Members to make individual response by deadline date 23 November 2020

**21. Chairman's urgent business**

Town Lane haulage site to be included on next agenda for report on container stacking and encroachment of agricultural area

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

RBL Poppy Wreaths – Cllr Mrs Arnold reported that she had ordered two Wreaths, one for Wetheringsett and one for the Mendlesham USAAF Memorial. Cllr Mrs Aldred to attend the Wetheringsett service and Cllr Mrs Arnold the Mendlesham service.

Book Exchange – Cllr Pease reported the library had now closed for the winter and would reopen April 2021. Notices to that effect would be posted on Facebook and the parish magazine.

New Village Hall Committee – Cllr Alston queried the current position regarding the new VH committee, the purpose of the upgrade to the current hall being to gauge its use. If use of the hall could not be demonstrated funding would not be available for a new hall. It was suggested the new VH committee would re-convene if and when required.

Meeting closed 9.10pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

## District Councillors' Parish Council Report – October 2020

Annual Council meeting	The annual meeting was held virtually on 24th September. Barry Humpheys was elected as Chairman and Paul Ekpenyong as Vice Chair. The Committees and Chairs were all agreed, with the Chairman using his casting vote to elect all the chairs and vice chairs from the Conservative and Independent Group, except for Overview and Scrutiny which is traditionally chaired by an opposition member and will continue to be chaired by Keith Welham, with Keith Scarff as vice chair.
Government consultations on planning	<i>Changes to the current planning system</i> is about changes to planning policy and regulation including how the housing numbers for each local government area are calculated (which would be upwards for Mid Suffolk). It also recommends changing the threshold of homes built (from 10 to 40) on a development before which affordable homes must be built. The Council's response to this consultation was discussed at the September Council meeting, following which the response has been amended by the Corporate Director in consultation with the portfolio holder for planning and the opposition spokesperson for planning, and has now been submitted. <i>Planning for the future</i> is a White Paper that proposes major reforms to the planning system. These include reducing the timeframe in which a Local Plans must be created to a maximum of 30 months; and dividing land into zones for development, renewal (brownfield) and protect (green belt, national parks etc) then automatically granting outline planning permissions within the development and renewal zones. Planning Committees at a district council would therefore only consider design and not the principle of development. The White Paper also considers greater digitalisation, a different system for developer levies and a fast-track system for "beautiful buildings". The consultation closes on 29 <sup>th</sup> October and the Mid Suffolk response to this will be discussed by a cross-party working group of members before being submitted.
Public Realm	A Joint Cabinet meeting was held in September to discuss the findings of a review of the management of the public realm service. The review occurred because Babergh's contract with an outside contractor is due to end in October 2021. Mid Suffolk Cabinet decided to continue with an in-house team and Babergh Cabinet decided to be part of the same arrangement. The Public Realm service for both districts will now be managed by the same in-house team.
Homelessness	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils have been awarded a grant of £100,000 to help cover the cost of temporary accommodation for homeless people over the winter. In Mid Suffolk there are few (possibly only 2) people sleeping rough but pre-Covid many others had been sofa-surfing or staying with elderly relatives. In order to protect vulnerable people, some of these people became homeless and have been accommodated in hotels. This will need to continue for some months at least.
Stowmarket Leisure Centre/ High School site	Officers are working together with representatives from Stowmarket High School to develop the school and leisure centre site to improve leisure facilities. Stakeholders from local sports clubs will be consulted in order to fully assess what is needed.
Gateway 14	A public consultation on proposals for Gateway 14, which now includes land up to A14, was launched on Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> September and continues until 31 <sup>st</sup> October – to comment or just to see the scale of the development, go to <a href="http://G14yoursay.co.uk">G14yoursay.co.uk</a> .

Councillor Andrew Stringer 07774199061 [andrew.stringer@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.stringer@midsuffolk.gov.uk)

**Andrew Stringer (Upper Gipping) 'Robin' Blacksmith Road Cotton, Stowmarket IP14 4QN**

07545423842 [andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk)

**Children's Centres cuts given go-ahead by Scrutiny Committee Following the Cabinet's decision in August to close 10 children's centres, my group joined forces with the Labour group to challenge this decision. Our challenge focused on concerns over the lack of financial analysis and the lack of clarity over the new outreach**

model.

The challenge was discussed by the Scrutiny Committee on 11 September. Unfortunately, the majority of the Committee voted against our challenge and endorsed the Cabinet's decision. This means that the planned changes to children's centres in Suffolk will go ahead.

**Suffolk County Council decides to oppose Sizewell C** The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council agreed on 22 September that they can no longer support EDF Energy's proposals for Sizewell C in their current form. However, the Cabinet maintained their support for the principle of a new nuclear power station in Suffolk.

The Cabinet's key concerns were regarding transport impacts, site design and the environmental impact on the Suffolk coast. The Cabinet also believe that the current proposals do not sufficiently avoid, minimise, mitigate or compensate impacts of the proposed development.

These concerns will be submitted as Relevant Representations to the Planning Inspectorate.

#### **Financial impact of Covid-19 on Suffolk County Council budget**

Suffolk County Council has published their Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report. This focuses heavily on the impact of Covid-19 on the council's finances.

The council is currently forecasting a net overspend of just £0.4m (0.1%) for the 2020-21 budget. The headline figures are:

- Additional expenditure from core budget - £41.2m ○ £43.9m—additional expenditure and lost income due to Covid-19 ○ Offset by underspend of £2.7m from non-Covid business as usual activity

- Additional funding - £40.8m ○ £39.1m – non-ringfenced Covid-19 grants from the Government ○ £1.7m – additional funding from business rates

#### **Boundary review restarts with consultation on draft recommendations**

Following a delay due to Covid-19, the Boundary Commission has restarted the boundary review for Suffolk with a consultation on their draft recommendations, which include a reduction to 70 councillors. Any boundary changes will not be implemented until the 2025 elections.

The draft recommendations and boundary changes are available to view on the Boundary Commission's website:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/suffolk-county-council>

The consultation on these recommendations will run from 15 September – 23 November and can be found here:

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/18495>