

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting held Monday 5 July 2021, 7pm at Wetheringsett Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Mrs E Cain (Chairman), Mrs E Aldred, Mrs A Arnold, T Alston, Mrs C Estcourt, Mrs H Green, C Harvey and Mrs R Leech. County and District Cllr A Stringer. Six members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs B Lacey and M Pease.

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 Council – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Stringer added the Bus Back Better scheme was basically a re-regulation of bus services allowing cross subsidisation. The County Council could also become a bus operator.

3. District Council – Cllr Stringer reported on an appeal decision for 18 homes in Gt Finborough. The Mid Suffolk Planning Committee had refused the application based upon the parish council comments. The Appeal Inspector also had upheld the comments from the parish council.

4. Footpaths – Cllr Mrs Aldred reported the following items for action:

 Fallen tree on bridleway at Green Lane – Cllr Alston would action maintenance.

 A dog running loose on the footpath running through meadow at Pitman’s Corner to Wetheringsett Hall – it was reported the owners of the dog were aware and were dealing with the problem.

 Footpath 28 – 30 at Wetherup Street overgrown with giant hogweed. Clerk to report to Suffolk CC PROW.

 Footpath at Knaves Green 47 – 48 opposite the railway was overgrown. Clerk to report to PROW.

5. Trees – no report available until September.

4. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Planning Application - DC/21/03140 – Clay Cottage, Pitman’s Corner. A number of parishioners were Present at the meeting concerning the application.

Mr L Huggins, the applicant, addressed the meeting to provide details on the nature and operation of his Business, the background to the application and to elaborate on the information provided in it. Mr Huggins stated he was the owner of the business, a bespoke joinery company making kitchens and joinery items. Materials were purchased in bulk enabling some materials to take up to four years to be used, ie tubing. The applicant gave details of the timescale for individual jobs, journey’s incurred and delivery of materials. The water course and existing trees would not be affected - 15 saplings had been planted. Regarding waste and storage collection – the business did not generate too much waste and an average of three kitchens were made per year involving two deliveries of timber. Large delivery vehicles, ie oil/septic tanks already accessed existing dwellings. The neighbouring farmer had no objection. The applicant had sought advice from the Fire Service regarding wood dust and advised there would be no danger. The current workshop had involved felling five trees to which there had been no objections. Suffolk Highways had raised no objections. With the use of modern machinery noise levels would be no higher than 80 decibels.

Questions raised by Councillors included:

Future plans should permission be granted – the applicant stated he had no plans to employ additional staff at this stage.

Hours of working – these were preferred at 8am – 5pm Monday/Friday and 8am – 12noon Saturday. The applicant had no objection.

Through the Chair, Cllr Alston stated the access track was a public road, unmade but in no individual ownership. It was understood the track was jointly maintained by residents, the applicant stated he would be prepared to take two shares for maintenance.

Mr M Laycock addressed the meeting to raise his objections to the application. These hinged around the access track, an unadopted lane extending some 170 metres, less than 3 metres wide and until the 1960’s had been a footpath. The proposed increased traffic was a concern. The track was jointly and severally managed on an informal basis, there was no turning circle and all delivery vehicles reversed into the track – delivery of materials could pose a danger to walkers and cyclists, the visibility splay was currently inadequate. Other concerns raised by Mr Laycock included noise pollution, the lack of information as to the proposed machinery to be used, sustainability of local fauna and its impact on the health and wellbeing of surrounding residents. The application was at odds with planning policy. It was recognized that local business was vital for rural areas but provision of local employment was not proposed.

Mr M Allmey stated there was no planning site notice posted at the property. The proposed noise levels of 80 decibels and heavy traffic in a rural area were a concern.

The applicant added the workshop would be fully soundproofed, the machinery was modern and much quieter and delivery vehicles would be able to turn around at the property.

Through the Chair, Cllr Harvey stated the application was for a change of use.

The applicant stated the workshop would use the current footprint, it would be clad on the outside and insulated on the inside.

Town Lane haulage site – a parishioner queried the position regarding the stacked containers at the site. District Cllr Stringer informed the meeting that MSDC Planning Enforcement had inspected the site, there was a contravention of planning conditions, 4-stacked containers were permissible with planning permission, 5-stacked would be in breach. The owner of the site had been informed of the breach and it was understood receipt of a planning application was imminent.

The Chairman thanked parishioners for their comments, the planning application DC/21/03140 would be considered by council members under item 8.1 of the agenda.

5. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 7 June 2021**

Cllr Harvey proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Green and agreed.

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

7. **Report on Parish Council Vacancy**

It was reported a parishioner had expressed an interest in the vacancy and would attend the August meeting.

8. **Planning applications for recommendation to MSDC**

1. DC/21/03140: Clay Cottage, Pitman's Corner – change of use of domestic outbuilding to workshop.

Members considered the information contained in the application papers and comments raised by parishioners. It was stated the property had previously been business premises, a builders yard. Cllr Alston understood there was concern as to the future of the property should the applicant move, traffic and access on to the main road had been raised, the track was not adopted and concerns over noise levels – from a distance of 40 meters it was believed noise levels from 80 decibels would not be heard.

District Cllr Stringer advised – Suffolk CC had no objection in terms of highway impact. Similar applications where noise was an issue, it was quite common for the Planning Authority to impose noise limits and a condition that permission was personal to an applicant in the event the property was sold.

An interjection from a parishioner re. the premises at Saxon Street, Stowmarket stated those premises had a wide access and were not in a residential area, the concern was that a light industrial business at the end of a track could in future be exacerbated by future use. Encouragement of young people in business was suggested by a councillor with the proviso that the working times were changed to 8am – 5pm Monday/Friday and 8am – 12noon Saturday.

Having considered the application papers and comments raised at the meeting a recommendation of support was proposed and seconded subject to the following conditions:

Any permission granted was personal to the applicant only; permission was subject to adequate sound proofing of the workshop and working times limited to 8am – 5pm Monday/Friday and 8am – 12noon Saturdays. 5 members were in support of the proposal, 3 abstentions – proposal carried.

9. **Planning Decisions received from MSDC**

1. DC/21/01271 & DC/21/01272: 1 Turnpike Cottage, Norwich Road – Listed Building Consent and Application for replacement boiler. **Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission Granted**
2. DC/21/02779: Wetheringsett House, Church Street – discharge of conditions Application DC/20/01479: Condition 3 (archaeological evaluation part 1), Condition 4 (archaeological evaluation part 2), Condition 5 (archaeological evaluation part 3). **Conditions approved.**

10. **Planning correspondence**

Town Lane container stacking – reported by District Cllr Stringer under item 4.

Pages Green – resident's banner/sign regarding unwanted development in the area.

A sign of the size displayed would need planning permission. A photograph of the banner/sign would be sent to Cllr Stringer for advice.

11. **Village Hall Management Committee report**

A written report prepared by Cllr M Pease had been circulated to Council Members as follows:

1. Village Hall improvement funding proposal

Following last month's proposal for improvements to the Village Hall, the following improvements with outlined costs were proposed:

- Replacement of the windows in the Village Hall with double glazed uPVC units in Grey Anthracite – Cost £9,396 inc. vat

- Installation of 2 1800mm double glazed Aluminum French Doors and upper fanlights in place of 2 of the existing south wall windows – Cost £8010 inc. vat
- 200mm Rockwool loft insulation for 23m x 6.5m over main hall – Cost £999.84 inc. vat
- 7 Replacement ceramic wall/ceiling heaters to bring all heating in the Hall up to the same standard – Cost £2,461.20 (awaiting formal quote from Robin Moore Electricals)
- New guttering (which may be included in the insurers work) – Cost £500 inc. vat
- Total Cost of improvements £21,367.30 inc. vat, £17,806.09 ex. Vat
- At least 2 quotes would be obtained for the windows and French Doors, the current quote had been supplied by Hadleigh Glass who provided the glazing for Wetheringsett School.
- **Proposed that the funding was split, £8,000 from the Village Hall Committee and £15,000, from the Parish Council - approval was sought for this funding. The figures included vat and contingency.**
- Grant funding had been sought from MSDC through the Capital Grant funding scheme, unfortunately the scheme was currently closed, with no indication of when it might open again. There was however a £1,416.80 Village Hall Developer Contribution/S106 available, which would be pursued.

The south wall of the Village Hall would be replaced by funding from an anonymous benefactor and the issue of vat relating to the cost was being looked into. The funds would be paid to the Village Hall Committee as a charity. The contractor had indicated they could commence work on 31st August completing by 29th October. The roofing contractors had been informed and the roof replacement work could commence on 1st November, completing by 26th November. This would mean the Village Hall would be closed from 31st August until 29th November. The schools would not be charged for that period.

Members considered the proposal put forward: that the Parish Council funded up to £15,000 of the work intended. There were sufficient funds available in the Parish Council general fund to cover the cost. Any work commissioned by the Parish Council, as holder of the lease with the Diocesan Board, totalling over £3,000 and under £25,000 would require three quotations. Cllr Alston proposed adoption of the above proposal, seconded Cllr Mrs Green – 5 in favour, 3 abstentions: proposal carried.

2. Village Hall Birthday Party & Village fete

Notification of the Village Hall centenary tea party on 29th August 2021 had been included in the July Parish Magazine, the August edition would include the invitation to parishioners which would also be used as a raffle ticket.

3. Lease discussions with Diocese

A proposal to extend the lease by 25 years had been sent to the Diocese with details of the planned improvements to the Hall. A response was awaited.

4. Scottish Power

A second meter reading had been provided to Scottish Power to facilitate the refund due to the Village Hall.

5. Accounts and Banking

The HSBC internet banking application was being processed. The bank balance at present stood at £12,197.95, inc. £8,000 from the Government Restart Grant Scheme.

6. Charitable Status – no progress to report.

12. **Play Area maintenance report**

Cllr Lacey had requested approval for expenditure up to £300 for the purchase of a picnic table and bench. Cllr Mrs Arnold proposed approval of the expenditure from the Play Area reserve, seconded Cllr Harvey and agreed.

13. **Grasscutting** – cemetery and play area

A written report from Cllr Lacey stated both areas were due for a further grass cut in approximately three weeks time.

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

ANPR - Cllr Harvey reported the necessary forms to take part in the ANPR scheme had been completed. One site had been nominated, Brockford Street. A decision would need to be made as to whether the equipment

would face north or south. Permission would be required from residents in the vicinity. It was agreed Cllr Harvey and the Chairman would meet to agree a site on Brockford Street.

VAS - Cllr Harvey reported the data from Brockford Street would be forwarded to Suffolk Constabulary.

15. Report on repairs to road sign at Wetherup St/Debenham Road – the maintenance required had been reported to Suffolk CC Highways via the website reporting tool.

16. Report on operational procedure for Parish Magazine – deferred to October meeting.

Cllr Alston stated it was important the newsletter contained news content as well as advertisements.

17. Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan report – a written report had been circulated. No queries were raised.

18. Report on Litter Pick held 12 June 2021

Due to the overgrown verges the event did not go ahead and was deferred to spring 2022.

19. Festival of Suffolk 2022 – to consider nominating a Festival Community Champion

Nomination of Champion deferred to next meeting. The Chairman had a map of the Village Walk organized for the last Jubilee event and would circulate for information should this be of interest for a Festival and Platinum event 2022.

20. Finance

1. (a) To review current s.137 donations. A list of donation made over the last five years had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Alston suggested a minimum of £100 should be considered for future donations. Donations to be agreed as and when received.

(b) To consider s.137 donation requests - none received.

2. Accounts for payment

PGM Home and Garden Services – May & June Cemetery/Play Area grasscutting: £310.00

Clerk – sal/expen June 2021 £282.00

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

Receipts: April – June 2021:

12.4.21 – MSDC first half precept: £4,425.00

19.4.21 – MSDC – parish grant (part of finance settlement from Central Gov to make up for drop in Tax Base – one off 2021/22 £231.00

28.5.21 – Groundwork UK (Neighbourhood Plan grant) £8,912.00

7.6.21 – Barclays BPA interest: 0.23p

Bank Balances to end June 2021:

Barclays Comm a/c £25,493.36

Barclays BP a/c £9,344.01

Barclays Comm a/c VH £4,059.73

3. To consider report on allocation of reserve for village hall maintenance – see item 11.

21. Wetheringsett Village History Booklet – report on updated version

Cllr Mrs Arnold would provide a copy of the original version for the next meeting.

22. Wetheringsett Village Celebration Sunday 29 August 2021 – progress report

Notification of the Village Hall centenary tea party had been included in the July Parish Magazine, the August edition would include the invitation to parishioners also be used as a raffle ticket

23. To review and consider for adoption the following policy documents:

1. The Suffolk/Members Code of Conduct

2. GDPR Policy compliant documents

The documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. No queries or amendments were requested. Date of the next GDPR review to be updated to July 2022.

Cllr Harvey proposed adoption of both documents, seconded Cllr Mrs Estcourt and agreed.

24. Clerk's report/correspondence

Parish Council meetings – during closure of the Hall due to maintenance and repairs, meetings would be held at Wetheringsett Manor. Arrangements as yet to be confirmed.

25. Chairman's Report – none.

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

Cllr Mrs Estcourt tendered her apologies for the next meeting.

27. Date of next meeting - Monday 2 August 2021, 7pm at Wetheringsett Village Hall

Meeting closed 8.55pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Bus Back Better

Bus Back Better is being launched by central government essentially as a reaction to Covid 19, But on closer inspection it is an initiative that could lead to re-regulation of Bus services.

For this reason, it could be a positive move for Rural Suffolk.

The de-regulated services we have at present, have lead to the decimation of rural services in many communities, as this policy renders it unlawful to cross subsidise routes, I.E if an operator makes profit on a busy route, they cannot use that money to subsidise a loss making route elsewhere, This policy was originally aimed at city's and towns where multiple operators basically had turf wars on routes, this was a problem that never existed in rural areas.

Re-regulation will mean that an operator can cross-subsidise once again, this should allow for greater choice and service to our rural community.

Once again the offer from government asks for a plan from participating authorities, to bid into a central pot, to help fund not only this renewal of services, but also government are offering 4000, zero emission electric buses that can also be bid for.

We have asked the conservative administration how many of these zero emission buses will we secure for Suffolk, I am disappointed they would not commit to any number, as the small print in the government offer asks for up to 30% of the cost of each Bus bid for. With this being the case, it is highly likely that the most of these Buses will end up in a large Town or City. On a population split, Suffolk ought to able to secure 40 of these Buses, if they were focussed in say Ipswich or Lowestoft, we could radically reduce emissions as well as encourage much needed "Modal Shift" in transport.