

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council
Minutes of the video meeting held Tuesday 6 April 2021 at 7pm

Present: Cllrs C Harvey (Chairman), T Alston, D Brown, Mrs L Cain, Mrs H Green, B Lacey, Mrs R Leech and M Pease. County and District Cllr A Stringer, Mr R Townshend (Neighbourhood Plan [NP] Working Group Chairman), Andrea Long (NP Consultant) and one member of the public

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs Mrs E Aldred, Mrs A Arnold and Mrs C Escourt.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – Cllr T Alston item 11.1.1. – fallen tree at VH.
3. **Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan(NP) – report from Steering Group Chairman and Steering Group Consultant**

The Chairman of the Working Group, Mr Robert Townshend, introduced Andrea Long the NP Consultant to the meeting. Andrea was qualified in Town Planning and specialised in helping Neighbourhood Plan Groups. It was reported a Neighbourhood Plan was a statutory document with equivalent weight to a local plan, one of its primary functions being to help in determining planning applications. There was a process to go through before a NP was adopted. It was hoped the Wetheringsett NP would be nearing completion this time next year. The process would involve consultations with the community and it was important the community was comfortable with the content of the plan. There were five main stages in preparation of the plan:

1. The initial informal stage for evidence gathering of parishioners views for the future of the village and subject to covid regulations an event to enable parishioners to put forward ideas.
2. Pre-submission stage – formal draft plan published with 6 week consultation to enable local people and statutory bodies to comment on the document.
3. Submission of the plan to MSDC
4. MSDC to run their own consultation on the document
5. Following completion of the consultation the document would be submitted to an independent examiner.

Work so far included designation of the plan area, preparation of a draft of objectives, a character appraisal of the village, housing need, setting up a NP website and application for the next round of funding.

It was important that parishioners took part in consultations to enable the Group to understand the needs of the village and the Parish Council was asked to encourage parishioners to respond to consultations.

Comments raised included Wetheringsett being a widespread village made up of several hamlets. Cllr Pease would provide the NP website link on the parish website.

The Chairman thanked Mr Townshend and Miss Long for their attendance and report to date. Members would look forward to receiving updates as and when available.

4. Reports

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

2. County Councillor - Cllr Stringer present his written report (copy attached to the Minutes) no queries were raised.

3. District Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Queries raised included the coppicing of the Station Road hedge to ground level. Had this been due to its proximity to the road. Cllr Stringer stated Highways could claim 1 metre of ground from the edge of the highway, a hedge should technically be 1 metre back from the highway.

A complaint had been received from a parishioner concerning plastic waste from compost spread on fields adjoining Wetherup Street. The parishioner believed this had become an environmental issue, when the wind blew the plastic was being blown everywhere including into adjoining water courses. Cllr Stringer was asked whether this was a matter for MSDC Environmental Health. Cllr Stringer stated most composts contained an element of plastic but if the compost was substandard it would be a matter for the farmer or contractor to complain to the vendor. Cllr Stringer would however raise the complaint with the County Waste Dept. It was understood the contract farmer would remove the plastic and that he would be mindful of future compost purchases.

The Chairman reported the highway sign at the Town Lane/A140 junction had been demolished by an HGV, tyre marks had been left on the road by the vehicle causing the damage. Cllr Stringer stated he would look into repair or replacement of the sign with County Highways.

4. Footpaths - Cllr Mrs Cain reported none of the signs reported as damaged or fallen down had as yet been replaced.
5. Trees – no report.

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – no comments

6. To consider for approval Minutes of the video link meeting held Monday 1 March 2021

Cllr Mrs Leech proposed approval of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Brown – proposal supported.

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

8. Planning applications for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/21/01271 & DC/21/01272: 1 Turnpike Cottages, Norwich Road – replacement boiler. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and agreed.
2. DC/21/01774: Dane Lodge, Church Street – erection of single storey extension. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and agreed.

9. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/20/05638: Wetheringsett Manor, Church Street – erection of non-illuminated informative directional and advertising sign – **Advertisement Consent Granted**
2. DC/21/00550: Green Lane Cottage, Green Lane – erection of single storey rear extension. **Planning Permission Granted**
3. DC/2100642: Moat Farm, Town Lane – discharge of conditions DC/19/03473, Condition 3 Materials, Condition 4 Fenestration. Approved with Conditions – **Approved subject to agreement of materials and agreement of fenestration.**

10. Planning Correspondence:

1. Town Lane – report on MSDC action into container stacking. A planning application had not as yet been submitted to MSDC. Cllr Stringer would progress through MSDC Enforcement.
2. Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan – consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) - response date 12 April 2021. Parish Council members had no comment to make to the consultation.

11. Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Pease presented the Committee monthly report as follows:

1. Hall Report

1. Insurance Claim Progress / Urgent Repairs

Hall roof - A tree had fallen onto the roof on 13th March 2021 and had cracked 2 – 3 metres of roofing. The roof had been cleared and the tree debris removed. Loss adjusters from Zurich Insurance Company would be reviewing the claim. Asbestos Contractors would be assessing the overall damage to the roof on 8th April and overseeing replacement of the damaged panels.

An urgent repair had also been completed on the Gentleman's urinals. A replacement valve costing approximately £250.00 had been fitted.

2. Meeting with Diocese

A meeting had been held with St Edmundsbury Diocese regarding the lease negotiations and discussions centred on the option of a 99-year lease if available. A 50-year lease had been on offer during the last negotiations, which may have to be accepted. Once the agreement was finalised, arrangements with the schools would be formalised.

3. Wave- on-going problems

The problem with the water bill had been sorted for the time being. A formal complaint had been made, and quarter of the bill totalling around £122 had been paid so far pending resolution. The account had been put on hold and Wave would take an accurate meter reading.

4. Accounts and Banking

There had been no income coming in from the hall due to closure. An invoice was due to be sent to Wetheringsett Primary School for next term's use.

When the HSBC Internet banking was in place, the committee would look at opening a Deposit account.

5. Charitable Status

The new Constitution had been signed by all trustees and all pages initialled in accordance with requirements. When HSBC acceptance for internet banking had been received the committee would look at changing the charity status to CIO

6. Accounts

The bank balance currently stood at £5,419.75 as at 1st April 2021.

The next committee meeting was due 6 May 2021.

Additional items:

Cllr Pease stated the Primary School would start to use the Hall from 12 April 2021.

Thanks were recorded to Mrs Sue Stanndard for keeping the hall clean.

Cllr Mrs Cain reported some 6 – 8 cooking oil bottles were stored outside the Hall. These probably belonged to the School. Cllr Pease would inform the School.

The Chairman reported a hirer of the Hall for a wedding in July had offered to paint the outside if the Parish Council supplied the paint. Cllr Pease stated the Committee would need to consider the offer.

2. **Re-opening measures following lockdown** including Parish Council Meetings – Cllr Pease stated the Hall would be ready for re-opening on 12 April, local elections on 6 May and parish council meetings if required.

3. **To consider Parish Council payment of annual insurance premium**

It was agreed the premium would be paid from Village Hall funds.

4. To consider concerns raised over dogs and dog fouling on School Field and Play Area

The school had dealt with signs for the field. Cllr Mrs Cain would look into obtaining a 'No Dogs' sign for the play area.

12. Play Area report

Cllr Lacey reported some of the rubber was disintegrating on the footholds of some of the equipment. Cllr Lacey would obtain replacements. The brambles growing through the fencing would be cut back by the grass cutting contractor.

13. Grasscutting – to confirm Cemetery and Play Area grasscutting 2021

Cllr Lacey reported the grass contractor was prepared to carry on with grass cutting on the same basis as last year including some strimming. Cllr Lacey had passed on to the contractor the positive comments received from parishioners and visitors to the cemetery.

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

To agree Wetheringsett locations for inclusion in the Project - The following sites were agreed: Brockford Street, Wetherup Street and Park Green.

15. To consider quotation for repairs to road sign at Wetherup St/Debenham Road

The sign had one arm missing, one broken and was generally looking untidy. Cllr Stringer offered to look into replacement of the sign together with repair or replacement of the recently damaged sign at the Town Lane/A140 junction. The Chairman would provide Cllr Stringer with site location details for the Debenham Road sign.

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

17. To agree date for Wetheringsett Annual Parish Meeting (APM) 2021

It was agreed the APM be held at 7pm before the Annual Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 4 May 2021 both meetings would be remote via video call.

18. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests - a donation request had been received from Fresh Start, a small Suffolk based charity providing a service to abused children. Cllr Pease proposed a donation of £50, seconded Cllr Lacey. 7 in favour, 1 abstention. Proposal carried.

2. Accounts for payment

1. Community Heartbeat Trust – defibrillator battery and pads	£328.80
2. Glasdon UK – 2 dog waste bins	£319.25
3. SALC – annual sub 2021-22	£340.92
4. M Pease – reimbursement – VH sound system	£2,893.72
5. Compass Point Planning – NP consultancy fee to 31.3.21	£1,080.00
6. Clerk sal-expen March 2021	£284.54
7. Fresh Start – donation	£50.00

Cllr Pease proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech – unanimously agreed.

3. To confirm Asset Register 2020-21

The Asset Register with the addition of the two new dog waste bins and VH sound equipment had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Alston proposed adoption of the document, seconded Cllr Lacey – proposal agreed.

4. Finance Report – Cllr Alston suggested the council considered converting to online banking. Item to be included on agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

19. Clerk's report/correspondence

Dog waste bins - installation- Cllr Alston would arrange for installation of the two new bins at the agreed sites: Town Lane/Station Road junction and Church Street opposite the Manor entrance.

Village History Booklet – Cllr Lacey had been in contact with a former parish councillor and reported an electronic copy of the booklet was held by a Wetheringsett parishioner. Cllr Pease would report at the next meeting.

SALC – response to the NALC remote meetings consultation – parish councillors were encouraged to make individual responses.

20. Chairman's Report

The Chairman informed the meeting that Cllr Brown would be resigning from the council following the meeting as he and his wife would be moving from the village. The Chairman recorded thanks to Cllr Brown for all his work on behalf of the council and community during his time as a councillor and wished him well with his move. Notice of the vacancy would need to be given to MSDC.

The Chairman stated he had been Chair for the last 2 years and it may be time for members to consider whether another councillor should take over as chairman. This would be the first item for consideration at the May meeting.

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

Coppiced hedge: Station Road – Cllr Mrs Leech stated she had been approached by two parishioners querying why the hedge had been coppiced to ground level. It was reported there had been complaints that the hedge was encroaching on to the highway making it difficult for vehicles to pass. The hedge had been coppiced to ground level to enable it to be managed as it re-grew.

22. Date of next video link meeting: Annual Parish Council Meeting - Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed 8.57pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Council Cllr Report – April 2021

LDGI Group motion on carer’s database receives unanimous support

On March 18th the LDGI Group presented a motion designed to improve the county’s support offer for carers. The motion will see the Council working with Suffolk Family Carers to create an opt-in register for carers, who will be offered increased support including advice, signposting to key services, and the option to be consulted on key policies affecting carers. The motion received unanimous support from the Council.

Automatic number plate recognition camera project (ANPR)

Suffolk County Council is working with the police to run a 2-year ANPR camera trial in speeding hot spots across the county. The cameras will be used to help detect and deter speeding offences that have been highlighted in towns and villages and educate drivers on the importance of road safety.

An ANPR camera will be installed at a site where it has been identified by a local council, with support from their county councillor, that there is a problem with speeding and/or rat-running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit. The devices will be moved between sites and will remain in situ for up to one week per site. There is the option of extending this period if needed.

An ANPR device identifies a speeding vehicle by capturing an image of the number plate of the vehicle. Data will then be shared with the Police and the County Council. The County Council will write to the owner of the vehicle on behalf of both parties explaining that their vehicle has been registered as speeding. Repeat offences at a particular location could prompt the deployment of SafeCam (the Police’s enforcement team) and the issuing of fines to those who breach the speed limit. I have registered an interest in this project with all villages in my division that have current SID devices.

Freeport East bid successful

A combined bid from Suffolk and north Essex for a designated freeport has been approved by the Government. Freeport East will have sites at Felixstowe, Harwich and Stowmarket, and could create 13500 jobs over the next ten years. Trade would increase by an estimated 1.3 million tonnes and £66.4m gross value added. The freeport will operate its own customs zone, allowing businesses to import goods without paying duties until the goods are exported again. This allows for raw materials to be imported, refined into a finish product, and then exported again while only paying one round of customs duties. Part if this Freeport is due to be “Gateway 14” in Stowmarket, this project is being hailed as a huge economic boost, but we need to make sure that any economic benefits filter into our local economy, and that the traffic generated doesn’t out-way any economic benefit.

Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund

As part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Suffolk Public Sector Leaders have established the £1.65m Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund (SIGIF), with contributions from Suffolk’s pooled business rates and New Anglia LEP.

The fund is open to projects which address the significant impact of Covid-19 on Suffolk's businesses, employees, and the local economy. Projects must be sponsored by either a Suffolk local authority and / or the New Anglia LEP. Thus far £367,292 of the money has been allocated to town centre improvements in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, a multi-media improvement hub in Ipswich, and flexible retail 'pods' in West Suffolk. There will be a rolling call for projects with decisions made quarterly (Dec / Mar / June / Sept) – the aim is to have all funding committed by 30 September 2021.

£500k for highways improvements near schools

Locations around schools across Suffolk have benefitted from new road markings and signs, following an investment of £500,000 from the Highways Investment Fund (HIF). The extra funding has been focussed on improving the safety of pupils and parents travelling to and from school, refreshing lines and cleaning and repairing signs in and around school zones. 146 locations were identified as requiring new signs to replace those that were damaged or missing. Additionally, 218 areas with faded road markings are receiving a refresh.

New sustainable travel website launched

The Way To Go Suffolk provides information and advice on walking and cycling, public transport, car sharing and electric vehicles. The new website will feature up to date information on how people can travel more sustainably across the county, and will also include support and guidance on how to write a Travel Plan for a Business, School or a New Housing Development.

SCC plants 10,000 trees in five months

100,000 trees have been planted in just five months, since Suffolk County Council committed £228,000 from its Suffolk 2020 Fund to protect biodiversity. The council has been working closely with the farm tenants, The Woodland Trust, Giles Landscapes, The Suffolk Tree Warden Initiative and local communities to ensure that a total of 102,586 saplings have been distributed and planted in the best possible places available over this last winter. This is of the actions I suggested, in my work on the panel that looked at Our County Farms.

District Councillors' Report for Parish Councils – April 2021

Motion on Green Spaces	<p>Our District group have worked with the Conservative administration to agree a motion regarding Green Spaces.</p> <p>We have agreed to:</p> <p>Carry out a review of green space to ensure that it is optimizing the biodiversity and well-being aspects of natural and amenity green space in Mid Suffolk.</p> <p>Prepare Supplementary planning guidance to support its biodiversity commitments, and inclusion of well-designed green spaces as a material consideration for all new housing developments.</p> <p>This work is to be carried out in line with the Joint Local Plan timetable.</p> <p>This motion received unanimous support.</p>
Gateway 14/ Freeport	<p>The latest financial economic growth idea from The government is to back a “freeport” in this region.</p> <p>Freeports are basically a duty-free area full of sheds, where goods can be shipped to and processed, (re-boxed or used in a manufacturing process) and these goods can be shipped out of this area tariff free.</p> <p>Freeports can be a magnet for manufacturing as well as warehousing etc the government is stating that this development will be zero carbon as the lorries will be running on “blue Hydrogen”</p> <p>What is very curious about this site, is that the District did not put this site forward to house a “gridserve” electric vehicle filling station, because they claimed the road network could not sustain the traffic, but we can open up a 156 acre lorry based warehouse & manufacturing operation without a problem.</p>
Neighbourhood planning	<p>Thorndon's Neighbourhood Plan is progressing, as well as Mendlesham's amended plan to include an allocations policy, bringing it in line with the draft Joint Local Plan</p>

	<p>Last month there was a land-mark planning decision in Fressingfield that clearly laid out what “weight “ should be afforded to a made Neighbourhood Plan that has an allocations policy delivering the required housing numbers.</p> <p>Officers of the District Council had suggested a development in Fressingfield should be approved despite it being in clear conflict with made Neighbourhood Plan, I proposed that the Planning Committee should refuse the application, but the officers stopped the meeting and discussed the legal issues that arose around this issue.</p> <p>The committee agreed to seek legal Counsels opinion on precisely the point of how much weight should be afforded to a made Neighbourhood Plan, the response was concise and clear, a made Neighbourhood plan in an area that has a five year land supply is a sound development plan and carries all weight, this was reported to the committee and the application that was recommended for refusal, was then recommended to be refused based on the legal advice regarding how serious Neighbourhood Plans should be treated.</p> <p>This is a huge vindication of all the hard work that communities put into these plans, as well as a wake-up call to planners to take them seriously.</p>
Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	The Mid Suffolk & Babergh Joint Local Plan has now been formally passed to the Inspector for examination. This is another step towards having an up to date Local Plan, it will be consulted on for 6 weeks after which the inspector will rule if the document is “sound”

Councillor Andrew Stringer