

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

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

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Mrs Estcourt.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda**

Item 8.3 – Cllr T Alston

3. **Report on Parish Council vacancy**

Following publication of the statutory notice informing parishioners of the vacancy, three expressions of interest in joining the council had been received. All were in attendance at the meeting to observe the council in action. The Chairman proposed the co-option to fill the vacancy was considered at the January meeting.

4. **Reports**

Police – report published online. No questions were raised.

County Council – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). No queries were raised.

District Council – Cllr Stringer stated there was no report from the District. Queries raised included the container stacking and encroachment at Town Lane.

Cllr Stringer stated a breach of the planning conditions had been found and was now the subject of an ongoing investigation. A report had been prepared and would be forwarded to the parish council. A query was raised as to the legal limit for stacking containers. Cllr Stringer stated four was the allowed legal limit. Containers had also been stacked on land not designated as the lorry park.

Footpaths – Footpath 29 Wetherup Street - Cllr Mrs Aldred reported she had been approached by a resident prepared to erect a handrail on the hedge side of the four sleepers at footpath 29 near the dog bin. It was thought this would be the responsibility of Suffolk CC public rights of way. An enquiry would be made to either request a handrail or seek their approval for one. Thanks were recorded to the resident for the offer made.

Trees – no report.

5. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Parish Council Vacancy – the Chairman reported three parishioners were in attendance to observe the meeting having expressed an interest in joining the Council. Although there was currently one vacancy the Chairman urged the parishioners not to give up on joining if unsuccessful on this occasion and mentioned there were also other community groups in need of additional members should they be of interest.

Planning Application DC/20/04921 – Land east of Hockey Hill. One member of the public raised an objection to the application on the grounds it was believed a large scale development (14 dwellings) would spoil the unique hamlet of Hockey Hill, the existing line of bunglows would be overlooked, there was insufficient infrastructure to support the proposed development, ie highways – Hockey Hill was narrow, the road and connecting roads were not wide enough to support the increased traffic that would be generated and would add to the congestion during school drop off/pick up; drainage – the current drainage system cannot cope with surface water drainage. The Chairman thanked the parishioner for the comments raised, these would be considered at agenda item 8.3.

Meeting closed to the public

6. **To consider for approval Minutes of the virtual meeting held Monday 2 November 2020**

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

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

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

1. APP/W3520/C/19/3238594 & 3238595: Plot 2, Meadow View, land east of Brockford Road – appeal against enforcement notice – without planning permission change of use of agricultural land for stationing caravans for residential occupation, laying hard standing, erection building and construction of new vehicular access off Brockford Road.

A repeat of the Parish Council's objection as in previous appeal notifications was proposed, seconded and agreed.

2. APP/W3520/C/19/3238600 & 3238601: Plot 1, Primrose Place, land east of Brockford Road – appeal against enforcement notice – without planning permission the change of use of

of

agricultural land for stationing of caravans for residential occupation, laying hard standing, erection of building and formation of new vehicular access off Brockford Road. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to repeat the Parish Council's recommendation of objection, on the grounds outlined in the previous appeal applications.

3. DC/20/04921: Land east of Hockey Hill – outline planning application (some matters reserved, access, layout and scale to be considered) – residential development of 14 dwellings including 4 affordable dwellings, garaging, construction of access and associated parking

Having declared an interest, Cllr Alston left the meeting

Cllr Stringer confirmed the application would go to the Mid Suffolk Planning Committee for determination.

Members had viewed the application prior to the meeting. It was noted there were at present nine parishioner objections, two objections had been sent to the parish council for information. Members considered the application including the objections put forward. A recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed on the following grounds:

- MSDC had in excess of a 5 year housing land supply for new dwellings - 7.6 years as at October 2020
- The site was not included in the MSDC draft Local Plan for proposed new development sites
- The proposal was not sustainable - health centres, public transport, shopping could not be accessed by foot, all would need to be accessed by car
- The Parish Council was focusing development for the parish on Brockford Street this area would provide services within walking distance, ie public transport, local convenience shop
- The proposal would impact on a neighbouring listed dwelling - HB1
- To gain access to the site the proposal involved the demolition of 11 Hockey Hill residents' garages to be replaced by 7 car parking spaces. The Hockey Hill cul de sac was already short of car parking spaces, the loss of 4 parking/ disabled/garage spaces would severely impact upon existing residents and their safety, particularly the elderly.
- The current infrastructure would be unable to cope with increased surface water disposal on Hockey Hill which already flooded during heavy rain - water cascades down Hockey Hill and collects in the road in the area of the cemetery gates.
- The site had historically been amenity land used by the community and was a habitat for numerous wildlife including birds of prey and bats.
- The proposal would generate potentially in excess of 28 vehicles plus delivery vehicles accessing and exiting the site on to Hockey Hill, adding to the existing congestion due to parking on the Hill by those residents without parking spaces and garages and particularly during school drop off and pick up times when sections of the Hill were reduced to single track only and reduced visibility.
- Access to the main A140 was via narrow roads with sharp bends, often reduced to single track in places. The proposal would considerably increase traffic on these roads, hence the Parish Council's focus for any new development in the village to be directed at the Brockford Street area.
- The proposal would considerably impact upon existing dwellings on Hockey Hill backing on to the site, and those similarly in the cul de sac, as far as noise, light and overlooking was concerned.
- The continued use of the agricultural access next to Broadoak had been questioned. Large agricultural vehicles crossing through a residential development raised safety implications for children playing in the vicinity, pedestrians and residents' vehicles accessing the site.

Cllr Alston returned to the meeting

9. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/20/04283: Billywitch, Park Green – discharge of conditions DC/19/00328, condition 5 materials. **Approved.**
2. DC/20/03990: Green Farm, Pages Green – notification of prior approval for change of use of 2 agricultural buildings to 4 dwellings. **Prior approval given subject to conditions.**
3. DC/20/04104: Hill House, Norwich Road – change of use of barn to dwelling. **PP Granted.**
4. DC/20/03928: Wetheringsett Manor, Church Street – Discharge of conditions – application DC/19/01752 condition 6 (vehicle parking) and condition 7 (travel plan). Vehicle Parking Approved. Travel Plan Refused.

10. Planning Correspondence

Town Lane – see District Councillor report above

MSDC – second draft Joint Local Plan – Pre-submission consultation – comments by 24 December 2020

The Parish Council had no further comments to add. Members were at liberty to make individual

comments by the deadline date.

11. Village Hall report

1. Management Committee report

Cllr Pease reported repairs were continuing. The kitchen refurbishment was complete and a huge improvement and the storeroom floor was now in the process of being replaced. It was intended a skip would be hired for removal of debris and to get the hall ready for potentially the primary school and Wetheringsett Manor school. A risk assessment was currently being carried out. To comply with current requirements, help would be needed with cleaning after each use. It was understood the school would undertake its own cleaning after each use.

The finances were in a good position following reimbursement from the Parish Council for the faulty water charges. Cllr Pease stated it was unlikely the hall would be offered for public use before March or longer.

12. Play Area report

Cllr Lacey report the grass had been cut for the winter. The potential removal of the sleepers and replacement with a grass slope was on hold for further consideration in early spring.

13. Cemetery Grass Cutting

Cllr Lacey stated the cemetery was now looking very tidy, a final cut and strim having been carried out. This would now last until late March/April next year.

14. To consider reversing the one-way system at Brockford Road

The Brockford Road/A140 junction had been the subject of a series of accidents over the years. Cllr Alston believed it would be safer to turn into Brockford Road and suggested Suffolk CC Highways was asked to consider reversing the one way system. Comments raised stated this would create a sharp turn left for vehicles travelling north, particularly long vehicles. It was agreed Suffolk Highways was asked to investigate and report on the suggested reversal.

15. VAS speed monitoring equipment report

The Chairman reported the equipment had been in Brockford until recently. Cllr Mrs Cain would forward the data collected to PCC T Passmore and publish in the newsletter and website.

16. Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan report

Cllr Mrs Green reported a plea for new working group members had been included in the parish magazine and until there were more group members it would be difficult to progress. Currently there were four members. There was a suggestion of approaching those parishioners who had made comments on the proposed new developments in Hockey Hill. Item deferred to the January meeting.

17. To consider quotation for repairs to road sign at Wetherup St/Debenham Road – deferred to next meeting.

18. Report on collection point for plastic bottle fastenings

It had not been possible to find a suitable collection point and therefore deemed not practical or viable for the village. The resident raising the project would be thanked for putting the suggestion forward.

19. Defibrillator at Village Hall – to appoint representative to monitor and carry out defibrillator checks

Cllrs Pease and Brown offered to take on the monitoring of the equipment on a temporary basis.

20. Finance

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

2. Accounts for Payment

RBL (K Goudy) – 2 parish council poppy wreaths	40.00
C Harvey (Currys) – 2 councillors headsets for remote mtgs	83.98
Clerk sal-expens Nov 2020	279.70
Wetheringsett VH – reimbursement of water fault charges	1527.76
PGM Home & Garden Services – cemetery/play area	
Grass cutting Oct/Nov	375.00

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

3. Finance report

1. To consider draft precept proposal 2021-22

A draft calculation prepared by Cllr Pease covering each budget head had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The proposed precept totalled £8,850 a nil increase on last year.

Cllr Pease stated following the work undertaken on the Village Hall during 2020 the village hall maintenance budget had been reduced to £200. The Village Fete budget had been doubled to £500 to allow for a village celebration at the end of covid and a new budget created for Village Sign repair/cleaning with an allowance of £500.

A query was raised with regard to the village hall fund, if there were further ongoing works, ie the roof repairs, west wall and possibly redesign/rebuild of the main hall a budget for design plans would be

needed. Cllr Pease stated to obtain large scale funding to cover such repairs and refurbishment use of the hall would need to be demonstrated. Repairs so far had improved the hall to make it attractive for the next 5 years to attract new bookings and to gauge use when the hall was re-opened after covid. It was agreed a decision be deferred on the precept request until the next meeting pending any further tax base information from MSDC. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Pease for his work on the draft figures.

2. Bank Balances and Receipts 1.4.20 - 30.11.20:

Receipts:

Community a/c:	15.4.20 – MSDC first half year precept	£4440.73
	26.6.20 – CAS refund sub	£5.00
	30.7.20 – HMRC	£378.39
	21.9.20 – MSDC 2 nd half precept	£4425.00

Community a/c VH	7.9.20 – Gudgeons Prentice – refund	
	Lease fees	£60.00
Bus Premium a/c	3.7.20 Interest	£2.51
	7.9.20 Interest	£1.29

Balances 30.11.20: Community a/c VH	£4,059.73
Community a/c	£17,770.20
BP a/c	£9,343.32

21. **Clerk’s report/correspondence**

Suffolk CC – Quiet Lanes scheme. Details had been circulated for consideration. There had been no suggestions put forward for inclusion in the scheme.

Parish Notice Board refurbishment – Cllr Mrs Arnold stated she was looking into providing cork backings for three of the notice boards.

22. **Chairman’s report** – none.

23. **Any other business for information exchange agenda requests**

Surface water drains – Cedars Hill: reports of surface water running off Cedars Hill on to the A140 after rain. This would need to be reported to Highways via the Suffolk CC reporting tool.

Meeting closed: 8.45pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Suffolk CC Report – December 2020

Proposed biodiversity motion

At Full Council on the 3rd December, the LDGI Group proposed and had agreed a biodiversity motion. this motion will ensure:

- Delivery of an SCC biodiversity strategy.
- Assessment of how SCC can lead partner organisations in this field.
- Adoption of biodiverse land management options on SCC land.
- A letter to the Secretary of State calling for a clear and ambitious national biodiversity strategy.

Submitted response to Pavement Parking Consultation

Following the Government’s announcement of a consultation on potential reforms to the law on pavement parking, my group has submitted a response supporting Option 3: a nationwide roll-out of a London-style ban on pavement parking.

Cllr Lindsay, the group’s Spokesperson for Highways, Transport and Rural Issues, commented:

“For too long the rules about parking on pavements have been an unnecessary grey area. People looking to park are confused whether it is better to block the roadway or the pavement and end up parking half on and half off pavements – the worst of both worlds.”

Submitted response to Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on draft recommendations

My Group submitted a response to the LGBC consultation. The Group objected to the proposed reduction in councillor numbers, which makes little sense given Suffolk’s expanding population and the consequential increase in councillor workload.

The Group also registered concern that the proposals from the boundary commission adhered too closely to suggestions received from the Conservative administration at the County Council. Some of the proposed division boundaries appear to divide traditionally non-Conservative communities and attach them to strongly Conservative areas. This means that the five council seats lost will largely impact non-Conservative councillor held areas.

The proposed divisions will also destroy previous efforts in multiple areas to align County Council divisions with those of the District Councils.

Finally, the Group objected to multiple instances of cohesive communities are being divided. and lumped into divisions with other towns and villages with which they are not closely connected. Most notably Wetheringsett being removed from Upper Gipping when Wetheringsett was argued by the commission to be warded with Mendlesham in the District review in 2018.

OFSTED initial report on SCC’s SEND services released

An initial report has been published by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) looking into the support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Suffolk was one of eighteen local authorities taking part in the study to gather evidence to inform future national improvements for children and young people with SEND across Education, Health and Care. The initial findings of the report suggest that SEND services were maintained during lockdown in Suffolk, and workers have increased collaboration and co-production. The stress level of young people and families had risen, but the County Council has established dedicated services to provide support, including distributing family support boxes to over 2000 families, and running a campaign called Back to School, aimed at helping SEND children transition back into school life.

“I know that many families in Suffolk found the lockdown restrictions extremely difficult to cope with and struggled with isolation. Suffolk County Council’s officers and social workers have done great work to improve the lives of children with special needs, especially during the lockdown period when those children and families were in the greatest need of support.”

The findings of the initial report can be read here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/council-news/Area-SEND-Interim-visit-summary-note.pdf>