

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held Monday 7 March 2022, 7pm at the VILLAGE HALL, Wetheringsett

Present: Cllrs Mrs E Cain (Chairman), Mrs E Aldred, Mrs C Estcourt, Mrs H Green, C Harvey, B Lacey, Mrs R Leech and M Pease.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Mrs A Arnold, T Alston, Mrs L Drury and County & District Cllr A Stringer
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **Reports**
 1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. Cllr Pease offered to attend the Police Locality meeting at Eye on 14 March 2022.
 2. County Councillor - a written report from County Cllr Stringer had been circulated to members (copy attached to the Minutes). No queries were raised.
 3. District Councillor – a written report from District Cllr Stringer had been circulated to members (copy attached to the Minutes). No queries were raised.
 4. Footpaths

Discover Suffolk Footpath leaflets – a supply of leaflets containing the Wetheringsett footpath network had been received from Suffolk CC Public Rights of Way. Cllr Mrs Aldred would distribute these in the village including a supply for the Church porch.

Pitman's Corner /Joes Lane broken sign – Cllr Mrs Cain would supply a new post.

Report of waste on the Griffin Lane footpath - this had been waste from the nearby garage and building development that had blown onto the footpath during the recent storms. This had been reported to the garage and development contractors and the waste had been removed.
 5. Trees – Cllr Mrs Aldred stated she would be attending a Tree Warden's course to be held at Holbrook.
4. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** – none.
5. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 7 February 2022**

Cllr Pease proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech and unanimously agreed.
6. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report** – none.
7. **Planning applications for recommendation to MSDC**
 1. DC/22/00726: Tyes Hill Cottage, Blacksmiths Green. Erection of detached cartlodge/store.
A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
 2. DC/22/00800: Land east of Ashlea, Brockford Street – Outline Planning Permission (Access points to be considered, Appearance, Landscape, Layout and Scale to be reserved). Town & Country Planning Act 1990. Erection of a pair of semi detached dwellings.
A recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the following grounds:
The proposed development would impact upon Brockford Street which was in Wetheringsett parish.
Any planning permission would be dependent upon access via an unrelated development currently under debate by MSDC
A pair of semi-detached dwellings and would represent overdevelopment of the site
The proposed site was outside the settlement boundary
The application stated the site was a short cycle ride to Wetheringsett and Mendlesham. This would require a cyclist to ride along the busy A140 for some distance - an unsafe method of transport to those villages.
The site was awkwardly shaped - as stated by the applicant.
The proposal would increase the number of vehicles accessing the busy A140 from the site.
MSDC already had a 5-year land supply for new dwellings.
 3. 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. A recommendation of approval was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
 4. APP/W3520/W/21/3285874 – Notification of Appeal – The Acorns, Nursery Gardens - Erection of 1 dwelling and cartlodge. A repeat of the Parish Council's recommendation of refusal to the Planning Inspectorate was agreed.
8. **Planning Decisions received from MSDC**
 1. DC/22/00313: Wetheringsett Manor, Church Street – notification of tree works in a Conservation area –

- fell small group of self-sown poplars due to excessive shading. **Approved.**
2. DC/21/06866: Green Farm, Pages Green – demolition of existing agricultural buildings and erection of 2 new residential units. **Planning Permission Granted.**
 3. DC/21/06278: Land, Norwich Road – Discharge of Conditions Application DC/20/00324 –
 - Condition 3 – Noise Prevention Measures
 - Condition 8 – Contamination
 - Condition 9 – Archaeological works
 - Condition 12 – Improvement of existing access
 - Condition 14 – Provision of roads and footpaths
 - Condition 16 – provision of parking
 - Condition 18 – Construction management**MSDC approval and action required**
 4. DC/22/00104: Paxes House, Hockey Hill – discharge of conditions Application DC/21/05273 – condition 3 (details of roofing materials), condition 4 (details of door). **Conditions approved**
9. **Planning correspondence** - none.
10. **Parish Council Loan application to the Dept for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities** to fund replacement of Wetheringsett Village Hall floor
1. Application progress report – awaiting reponse on application progress from the Dept. of Levelling Up
 2. Report on consultation with parishioners – a report on the replacement floor work and application for loan approval had been reported in the February Parish Magazine by the Chairman. Parishioners had been invited to make comments on the loan requirement and increased precept.
11. **Village Hall report**
1. Refurbishment and Management Committee report – Cllr Pease was pleased to report the refurbishment work was now complete. Due to increased electricity costs from 1 April 2022 the Committee would in due course review the hiring rates and use by the Primary School including a review of the usage times. Discussion on setting up an Internet Café had been held with a representative from the Wetheringsett Church & Town Estate Charity and suggestion of a Mother and Baby Group had also been made. The Committee was looking to purchase 60 new adult size black chairs at a cost of £976.00. The Chair and Cllr Pease had met with the School Headmistress to discuss review of the School Licence. Cllr Pease would produce costings for school use to cover increased electricity charges, cleaning costs and any damage would all be factored into the licence. A Quiz Evening was to be held on 23 April 2022.
 2. Report on Platinum Jubilee celebrations 2022
Cllr Mrs Leech gave an update on preparations for the Celebrations on 5 June 2022 – full details of activities on the day would be reported in the Parish Magazine. The Committee was also looking into a commemorative gift for children in the village.
12. **Play Area Report:**
1. Replacement of sleepers with grassed slope – Cllr Lacey stated a mini digger would be required to remove the Sleepers. He would obtain a quotation for hire of a machine for consideration.
 2. New bark chipping surface under climbing frame – as agreed at the last meeting Cllr Lacey would obtain the chippings at the quoted price of £467.00.
13. **Grasscutting** – to confirm arrangements for 2022
Cllr Lacey reported the grass contractor was prepared to continue on the same basis as last year. The Play Area would also be included as well as one or two strims, as required. Cllr Lacey would agree a date for the first cut. A ‘No Mow May’ was also agreed.
14. **Spring Litter Pick Saturday 26 March 2022**
The litter pick had been publicised in the parish magazine. Councillors and Volunteers to meet at the Village Hall at 10am. Equipment would be supplied. Cllr Pease stated he would publicise the litter pick at the Village Hall Open Afternoon. Brockford Street would not be included.
15. **To consider action re. reported Waste & Litter issues** – Griffin Lane wood and Cedars Hill Bus Shelter
The Griffin Lane debris had been removed by Garage and the Development workmen. Cllr Alston had cleared the debris from the Cedars Hill bus stop.
16. **To consider action relating to Hockey Hill/Church Street surface water drains resulting in flooding**
It was believed the problem arose from a blocked drain under the Village Hall drive towards the Cemetery gates. Cllr Mrs Aldred would speak to the Churchward with regard to any work that could be carried out by the PCC and the Chairman would speak to County Cllr Stringer with regard to any improvements that could be carried out by County Highways.

Cedars Hill surface water

Cllr Alston had previously reported the verge gully's had been cleared which should result in an improvement.

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

Cllr Harvey stated no further report was available.

18. Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan report

A written report from the Working Group had been circulated. No queries were raised. Members recorded thanks to the group for their work to date.

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

20. Wetheringsett Village Sign – report on storm damage Friday 18 February 2022

The sign had been taken by Cllr Alston for repair. A further photograph of the damage would be required if an insurance claim was to be made. It was anticipated the oak post would need to be replaced. Two options were suggested: That a quotation for repair was obtained from the original designer or the Chair was aware of a local resident able to carry out repair free of charge except for the cost of materials, ie the oak post. It was agreed Cllr Mrs Aldred would speak to the original designer before taking further action.

21. Finance

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

2. Accounts for payment

Wetheringsett Village Hall – Parish Council Hire of Hall for meetings Nov 2021 –

March 2022 £25.00

Clerk sal-expen Feb 2022 £281.51

The Chair proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Pease and unanimously agreed.

3. Finance report

Parish Council new Village Hall bank account - Following part payment of £4000 for the new Village Hall windows from the new Village Hall bank account, a balance of £59.73 remained in the account. The account was no longer required following refurbishment of the current hall. The Chair proposed closure of the account and transfer of the balance to the parish council community account, seconded Cllr Pease and unanimously agreed.

Clerks pay review - notification had been received from NALC that the Local Government clerks pay review 2021-22 had been agreed by Unison at a 1.75% increase in the hourly rate. Parish Councils were encouraged to backdate the increase to 1 April 2021.

22. Clerk's report/correspondence

Wetheringsett Annual Parish Meeting – the annual parish meeting was usually held prior to the Annual Parish Council meeting,. The first Monday of the month this year fell on the early Spring Bank holiday. The date for both meetings was agreed for Monday 9 May 2022 at 7pm.

23. Chair's Report

Council Tax refund – following the Government announcement that residents in the A – D council tax band would be due a refund of £150, the Chair understood only those who paid by direct debit would be refunded automatically otherwise a parishioner would need to apply for the refund. The Chair believed some 50% of people did not pay by direct debit and she offered to draft a piece for the parish magazine informing parishioners of that fact. Any parishioner in need of help applying for the refund could contact the parish council.

24. Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests – none.

25. Date of next meeting - Monday 4 April 2022, 7pm at the The Village Hall, Wetheringsett

Meeting closed 9.10pm

Signed:

Chair

Date:

County Councillor Stringer – March 2022 report

Biodiversity Recommendations

Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county's natural environment, as it confirms plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. Our Group had a major influence in providing recommendations to SCC which are now a part of the Council's ambitions moving forward to enhance

biodiversity. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions. For more information, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/councils-commitment-to-further-enhancing-suffolks-natural-environment>

Changes to Highway Code

Several new changes to the Highway Code are now in force as of the 29th of January. According to The Department for Transport (DfT) the new regulations are about recognising and protecting the most vulnerable road users and making the highway safer for everyone. Suffolk Roadsafes's Quiz helps illustrate the changes that are necessary to know and includes a link to further information - <https://www.quiz-maker.com/QG20TF8NL>. For more Government information on the changes you need to know, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

Devolution Deal

The Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation. A new deal will potentially give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities for the first time. Our Group welcomes the idea of bringing more power to the communities of Suffolk. However, we are concerned about a potential Mayoral position created in Suffolk and the effect this may have on marginalising districts etc in Suffolk.

Full Council Budget Meeting

County Councillors met on the 17th of February to debate and vote on the Council's budget for 2022-23. Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as an innovative project to reduce the energy bills of those most vulnerable, considering the current energy and cost of living crisis. Both ideas were rejected by the Conservatives, but our Group will continue to champion more investment into our social care and green technology. For more information on Suffolk GLI's Budget amendment, visit: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(17-02-2022\),%20County%20Council](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(17-02-2022),%20County%20Council)

Warmer Homes Suffolk

Suffolk residents who are struggling to keep their homes warm can contact a new project, named 'Warm Homes Suffolk', which offers funding and free advice. The project can offer expert advice on reducing energy bills, energy usage and identify benefits that residents may be entitled to, to help keep their homes warm. Visit: www.warmhomessuffolk.org.

Council links to Gazprom

Back in 2017, Suffolk County Council, outsourced its energy procurement to "Vertas" an SCC wholly owned but independent company. The energy deal Suffolk County Council funds has included buying gas from Gazprom, This unfortunate position has been pointed out to SCC, and in the last few days we have sought to extricate SCC from this contract, to enable us to no longer indirectly fund the war currently raging in Ukraine.

Local Highways Matters

Rights of way officer, we have had significant delays in dealing with rights of way reports recently, this has been mainly due to our local officer moving on to another career, we do now at last have an officer in place, his name is Ken Larcombe, and the backlog of issues are now at last being addressed, if there are any more outstanding issues please let me know.

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Instagram (New!) - https://www.instagram.com/suffolkgli_group/

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

District Councillor Parish Council Report – March 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 looked into how we might improve our practises, but to date the report has not been published, we have asked for this report to be urgently made published, so we can get on with implementing any recommended changes and begin to improve our service.</p> <p>This month another Peer review is being conducted into our communities service, I have asked if last Novembers review can be published before we embark on another one.</p>
Mid Suffolk review of office space in Ipswich	<p>Mid Suffolk is recommending that we helve the space we rent from Suffolk County Council in Ipswich, even before the restrictions brought about by Covid 19, Mid Suffolk was only using 65% of the space we rented on a regular basis, so this review recommends we should be able to reduce the space we rent by a half.</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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Cllr Andrew Stringer

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