

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY
5 JULY 2022 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

Present: Mrs Ewans (Chair), Mr Griffin, Mr Hardiman and Dr Geake.

In attendance: Mrs Fuller, Clerk, County Cllr Mellen (in part) and 2 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Mr Guylar, Mr Howard, Mrs Jenkins and Mr Auchincloss.

2. **Public comment:** a resident is concerned regarding the danger of antisocial behaviour at the new car park behind the Heath Centre as gates are not being shut. The management agreement will be between MSDC and the Health centre but this has not been finalised. The provision of the car park was brought forward to help with vaccination programme during the pandemic. Mrs Ewans will contact MSDC to try to ascertain when the management agreement will be in place. Concerns were expressed regarding the condition of the footway along Heath Road between Mill Lane and the junction with Church Street. This has been reported to SCC twice recently and the standard response has been received that remedial action is not required at this time. The Clerk will report again and advise of the recent issue experienced by a mobility scooter. Reports have been received regarding the overgrown hedge along Bury Road. Hopkins Homes have already been contacted and are dealing with it. The installation of back net for the football goal started today. Andrew Brain of Woolpit Nurseries has cleared the vegetation over the footway in Old Stowmarket Road, the Clerk will send a letter of thanks.

3. **County & District Councillors reports.**

District Councillors' report: For 2021/22, Mid Suffolk District Council has announced an underspend of £1.2 million against budget with net expenditure on services down by £1.6 million against a budget of £12.7 million. Total reserves stand at just over £24 million up nearly £4 million on the previous financial year. Capital expenditure was £13.3 million against a budget of £30 million. Recent capital expenditure includes £756,000 on the solar carport at the Stowmarket Leisure Centre (not yet operational due to issues with obtaining inverters), £666,000 on the Needham Lake café and £4.5 million on Gateway 14. At last month's Council meeting the HRA business plan was agreed. It sets out the long-term priorities and plans for the future of council housing in the district. The main priorities include tackling climate change, developing new council housing, involving tenants and improving the neighbourhoods. The Range has announced a £200 million investment to base a major distribution centre at Gateway 14 creating 1,650 jobs (across three shifts). The UK Shared Prosperity Fund has been set up by Government as a replacement for EU funding (although with less funds available) and in order to access it Councils must submit an investment plan. Funding is expected to be approximately £140,000 for the rest of this year, £280,000 next year and £780,000 the year after. A new fund for community-based carbon-reduction projects is now open. Projects could include promoting cycling/walking, improving energy efficiency and raising awareness of climate change. The reserved matters application for 86 homes and a pre-school on School Road, Elmswell was approved at planning committee in June. The developer is soon to start work on the highway improvements along School Road including a shared use cycle path. This will form part of the Woolpit-Elmswell community path. There are ongoing discussions with both MSDC and SCC officers regarding the route for this path. Three out of five Assistant Director posts at MSDC are vacant.

County Councillors Report: There is a full council meeting 7 July. The opposition group have submitted a motion calling for SCC to declare a Cost-of-Living Emergency, and for the Council to redirect funds and efforts towards targeting those most vulnerable. Prices for fuel, food and energy are increasing as the real value of

wages are cut by the rise in inflation. The motion calls on the government to provide further support to those falling below the poverty line. In addition, the motion calls on the government to make it easier and cheaper to insulate homes and asks to waive VAT on energy-saving materials, such as insulation, and adequately fund a retrofitting programme so that households can save money on their bills during winter where energy prices are due to rise even further. The Cabinet met on 20 June to vote on funding the next phase of SCC's programme to build more capacity for SEND children in education. The cabinet agreed a package of £15.9m, as part of a £45m programme. Currently, there is a high demand for SEND services, with requests for placement going up by 32% since 2020. The funding Cabinet have agreed will create three new specialist units across Suffolk. The Cabinet agreed a third phase was required, which will be discuss later this year. SCC's response to the National Grid East Anglia GREEN consultation was submitted and is very much aligned with others. MPs, the affected district councils and individual councillors have all expressed concern about the proposals and have called for an off-shore cable route, as part of a strategic power network linking North Sea windfarms into the grid. There will be a further debate on these issues at the full council meeting on 7 July. The petition requesting that SCC produces an in-house bid for the new Suffolk Highways contract is still open. Detailed plans are now being drawn up for the reconstruction of the bridge on A1088 at Stowlangtoft which is currently under a 7.5T temporary weight restriction due to faults discovered during a routine inspection. This temporary restriction expires in November 2023, but Highways are looking to extend this, which probably gives an indication of how long the works are likely to take (Nov. 2023 is two years since the restrictions first came in).

4. To receive declarations of interest. There were none.

5. To approve the minutes of the meetings 7 June 2022. The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

22/02993 Application for advertising consent – erection of illuminated fascia sign and 1 illuminated pylon display signage. Land at Stag café, Old A45 – object light pollution in the countryside and will have an adverse effect on wildlife. If minded to grant permission the signage illumination should be restricted to the opening hours of the business.

22/02819 Erection of one and a half storey rear extension and front porch extension. 3 Steeles Road – no comment.

22/03293 Erection of front porch extension and conversion of attached store to provide additional living accommodation. 26 Steeles Road – no comment.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

22/02660 Erection of single storey side extension (following removal of conservatory) and external alterations including replacement of roof structure. Pinlea, The Heath – permission granted.

7. Clerk's Report

Traffic sign illumination at double roundabouts – the lights to the Give Way signs are coming on at night but the streetlight above is bright and the sensors think it is daylight and turns the Give Way signs lights off. The developer has advised that the matter is in hand but will not be completed until December.

Graffiti on the Recreation Field – all signs and benches have been scribbled on with a permanent marker pen.

Pump light – the Clerk is having difficulty in persuading Eon-next we already have a smart meter. A copy of the email confirming it was fitted in March 2021 has been sent.

Accounts to 31 March 2022 – have been sent to the auditor and electors rights published.

Football net – being fitted this week but goal net security anchors are required at a total cost of £36.60 + VAT which the Clerk has authorised under emergency powers.

Weed killing on amenity areas – whilst we currently do not have weed killer used on the recreation ground the Clerk has completed the registration form with Defra so we are covered if needed in the future.

8. To receive correspondence/communications and deal with any matters.

Resident unhappy that WPC has written to them to cut their hedge for better visibility from a junction. The Clerk will respond that a Cllr called to discuss the matter on 3 occasions but no one was in, that the rules that hedges cannot be cut between March and August to not apply to householders and an item will be published in the next Diary for all to check curtilage for trees, hedging and vegetation causing issues.

Easthams Solicitors with a possible injury claim against the Parish Council for a fall at an event at the Village Hall in February. All documentation has been passed to our insurers to deal with this matter. **Explore Outdoor** would like to hire the Recreation Ground to run activities for children such as archery, Geocaching and other outdoor games for two dates in August. Cllrs agreed this is not possible as it is public open space and not suitable particularly for archery. **Resident** regarding safety of disabled residents. There seems to be a misunderstanding regarding the checking of ramps in the church as these do not come under the jurisdiction of WPC. The path in Mill Lane has now been made fully accessible which the resident has confirmed. The issues along the path in Heath Road will be referred again to SCC. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** MSDC planning search website update 13/14 June, MSDC response to East Anglia GREEN consultation, Babergh Mid Suffolk Parking Strategy roadshow events, online survey, UK Shared Prosperity Fund engagement, Corporate Peer Challenge review results. **SCC** Community Emergency Planning Group table top exercise, Rest Centre initial training 10 September.

Connecting Communities Suffolk Rural Transport conversation 22 July. **Onelife Suffolk** update regarding onelife Suffolk contract. **SALC** AGM 20 July, news ebulletin 13, 20, 27 June, 4 July, training and networking ebulletin 14, 21, 28 June, 5 July, Suffolk Community Awards 2022 nominations open. **Rural Services Network** Rural Bulletin 14, 21, 28 June, 5 July. **Resident** update on boundary trees.

9. To approve accounts for payment.

Payments to Mid Suffolk District Council of £1,369.68 for dog/litter bin emptying 2022/23 and Anglian Water (Business) Ltd £34.59 allotment water 6/3/22-6/6/22 were unanimously ratified. Mr K Harknett £67.35 litter picking June, Mr M Gardiner £425.70 Highways Ranger salary June, Mr M Bailey £13.00 reimbursement for printer cartridge Diary Distribution Manager, Suffolk County Council £308.61 pension payment, Mrs P Fuller £658.23 back pay for 2021/2022 salary increase and expenses April-June, Woolpit Institute £416.00 office rent August-October, Woolpit Institute £275.00 meeting room hire January-June, Woolpit Nurseries £524.50 (£424.50 planting pump garden £100.00 filling pots and tier planter), Mr J Wiley £47.99 repairs to brush cutter, Equity pc £152.40 laptop service + security software 2years, Mr T Howard £6,159.75 reimbursements for Jubilee costs. Direct Debit set up for garden waste bin annual fee £54.50. Payments by standing Order/Direct Debits Mrs P Fuller £955.22 June salary.

10. To receive a monthly financial report.

The Community Account at the end of June was £312,659.91 of which CIL funding is £192,635.01, earmarked reserved £96,708.05 and general funds £23,316.85.

11. To receive an update on Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan.

The draft referendum version will be ready in the next few days. We have permission to go to referendum which MSDC will organise which is likely to be

September/October. The referendum will be decided on a simply majority. If the vote is no to accepting the plan then we will need to start from scratch. If the current version is adopted it can be amended. It was agreed that an item will be published in the next Diary to inform residents. A courtesy meeting will be arranged with the Steering Group when we have the referendum version. *Action: Mrs Ewans/the Clerk*

12. To consider a quote for an additional bench in the pump garden to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and take any necessary action.

Quality Equipment will fabricate and supply a bench seat for Woolpit as per the design for the Golden Jubilee seat. Inscription to read "1952 Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee 2022" For the sum of £1,060 + VAT. The cost is actually only the materials and painting, as Mr G Baker will fabricate the seat at his own cost. Cllrs acknowledge this generous offer and the quote was unanimously accepted. *Action: the Clerk*

13. To consider a revised quote for repairs/replacement of part of the notice board in Lower Broom Road and take any necessary action.

To add a pinboard to the noticeboard increases the costs of repairs to £148.00. This was unanimously accepted. *Action: the Clerk*

14. To consider the purchase of a brush cutter for the Highways Ranger and take any necessary action.

This should be a hedge trimmer not a brush cutter. Mr Hardiman has researched and the best option is an Einhell 36-volt cordless hedge trimmer with twin battery for extra power and running time for £176.96. The Clerk advised that PPE is being provided by SCC. Cllrs approved the cost of £176.96. *Action: Mr Hardiman*

15. To consider a request from the Woolpit Diary Distribution Manager for plastic boxes and take any necessary action.

The distribution Manager would like to purchase 16 plastic boxes to enable him to safely leave Woolpit Diaries at deliverer's homes in all weathers. It was agreed that he can spend up to a maximum of £50.00. *Action: the Clerk*

16. To consider a request that Woolpit Parish Council contributes to a new lighting system at the Village Hall and take any necessary action.

It was agreed that WPC can do nothing until a request is received from the Village Hall Committee as Cllrs need to know who will own it and will it be available for all groups.

17. To consider a request for a bus shelter opposite Costcutter and take any necessary action.

It is likely that a new licence will be required from SCC before taking any action. Shelter Solutions have provided a quote for a two-bay pitched roof shelter (cantilever) for £3,135.00 + VAT with the options of a timetable case for £140.00 and flagpole bracket for £80.00 both + VAT. The shelter on this side of the road would not be able to have sides due to the path width. It was agreed to purchase the shelter once a licence from SCC has been received. This will be funded from CIL funding. *Action: the Clerk*

18. To consider a request for a clothes bank in the car park at the village hall and take any necessary action.

Cllrs wonder why there is a need for a further clothes bank as there is already one at The Bull car park from the same group. It was also suggested that it would be better placed at the bottle bank area. The Clerk will write to Planet Aid UK with these questions. *Action: the Clerk*

19. To consider a response to the Cambridge Maths School consultation and take any necessary action. (consultation ends 29 July 2022).

Cllrs do not wish to comment.

20. Update on 20 mph in the centre of the village.

SCC has been contacted regarding carrying out a survey but it is very difficult to ascertain how many roads will need to be surveyed and therefore the costs involved. Cllrs asked if the company can be instructed to come to the village and tell WPC which roads have to be surveyed. It was proposed that the surveys are requested with a cap on costs of £3,000.00. This was seconded and approved.

Action: Mrs Ewans/the Clerk

21. To receive a report on the allotments, and take any necessary action.

No report.

22. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for 13 July.

Woolpit PC as Trustees of Woolpit Recreation Ground Charity**23. To consider a request from Woolpit Village Hall Committee for permission to have 2 electric charging posts installed in the car park and take any necessary action.**

The two posts will create four charge points and can be fitted with minimum disruption to the car park. There are issues regarding supply of electricity and responsibility for maintenance. It was unanimously agreed that for Woolpit Parish Council to grant permission it requires the Village Hall Committee to pass a formal resolution, recorded in the minutes, to sign a written licence agreement with Woolpit Parish Council and the Woolpit Recreation Ground Charity to confirm that Woolpit Village Hall Committee agrees to supply the electricity without interruption to the charging points, take full responsibility for repair, maintenance and replacement of units including entering into a maintenance agreement and pay the fees for the maintenance agreement, insure the installation and enable village residents to benefit from reduced electricity charges. This licence will initially be for a two-year period before it is reviewed.

Action: the Clerk

24. To receive a report from the Clerk.

Nothing to report.

25. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 2 August 2022. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.21 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....