

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023 AT 7.30 P.M.

Present: Mrs Ewans (Chair), Mr Gallagher, Mrs Symons, Mr Hardiman, Mr Foster and Dr Geake.

In attendance: District Cllrs Mansel and Overett, County Cllr Mellen (in part), Mrs Fuller, Clerk and 5 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Jenkins and Mr Achincloss. These were accepted by Cllrs.

2. Public comment: Mrs Wortley reported that the trial bus service, although there were a few teething problems it went well and she would use it again. Whilst she was a Councillor, Mrs Wortley was looking into a footpath to Ladyswell and would like to work with WPC to get one in place. The One-Suffolk walking group is well established but finding some of the verges and footpaths overgrown and slippery. The Clerk advised that SCC was responsible for cutting both but our Highways Ranger is strimming some to make walking the paths easier. A resident asked regarding putting a mirror up to help with visibility. The Clerk advised these have to be on private land as SCC does not allow them in verges. Planning permission may be required and it would be best to contact MSDC on this. The problem of dogs fouling along the footpath to Drinkstone was raised. Until owners become responsible and clear up after their pets there is not much more the parish council can do. Bins have been provided all around the village and an item is published in each issue of Woolpit Diary.

3. County & District Councillors reports.

County Councillor's report: The decision to adopt the Energy Infrastructure Policy by the Cabinet in February 2021 required that a review of the Policy was undertaken after two years and this was discussed at Cabinet on 16 May. The following changes were proposed: to expand the scope of the policy to cover water resource infrastructure, including, but not limited to reservoirs, pipelines, and desalination plants, and to make modifications to the policy wording to ensure that it is up to date and robust. The policy was also renamed the Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy. The current Highways Services Contract with Kier Integrated Services Limited, which includes provision for Street Lighting Services, comes to an end on 30 September 2023, having been extended to its full 10-year term. The Cabinet report for 16 May set out the process and timeline for the new procurement, with reference to the Scrutiny Committee report 'The Procurement of a new Highways Services Contract' from 15 February 2022, which set out lessons learned from the last procurement and how these would be incorporated in the procurement process and new contract to ensure a more rigorous procurement and selection process, and delivery of high quality and sustainable street lighting services for the county. Final tender submissions are due to be received on 19 May 2023 and will be evaluated and scored during the following two weeks with a view to awarding the new contract in June 2023. Feedback from VCSE organisations shows that many people are not benefiting from the support they are eligible for. Whilst recognising the good work done by council officers and the voluntary sector to support those in need as cost-of-living pressures continue, a motion was proposed to put in place an additional programme of communication, to improve the take up of benefits and support available. This motion was passed by the Council at the Annual General Meeting on 25 May. The council received £7.8m from the government which it will spend on seven projects around the county, encouraging cycling and walking via cycle lanes, shared use paths and improved road crossings. There will be a period of consultation with Suffolk residents during 2023, with work starting on all schemes in

2024. The Council confirmed that £10m would be set aside to be spent over the next 20 months on the surfaces of smaller, local roads where people live, in partnership with Milestone, the new highways contractor.

Cllr Mellen advised that he will speak to SCC to commission a report from the Safety and Speed Management Team for a 20 mph zone. Where our speed surveys were conducted only Broomhill Lane and the southern end of The Street met the criteria, the rest of the area would require traffic calming. Cllr Mellen thinks that SCC needs to review their criteria and will take that forward. A group of parishes are meeting 22 June to discuss 20 mph in Suffolk which Mrs Ewans will attend.

District Cllr Mansel rode along the Heath Road footway between Mill Lane and Church Street on a disability buggy to experience the difficulties involved. She said it was petrifying and there is no drop kerb at the Mill Lane end. Cllr Mellen will ask for a price to see how much it would cost to make the footway level and put in a drop kerb. Cllr Mellen has asked if the funding for a school crossing attendant is to be reinstated.

District Councillors' report: At the Annual Council Meeting held on 22 May, the 24 Green Party councillors officially became the administration at Mid Suffolk. Andy Mellen, as leader outlined initial priorities to lead and work with other bodies to address the challenges faced by our communities, cost of living, affordable homes, local services, public transport and climate change. There will be initially a cabinet of 6 councillors. Cllr Rowland Warboys was elected as Chair of the Council, with Cllr Dan Pratt as Vice-chair. The outgoing Chair, Cllr James Caston raised over £4k for his chosen charity – Stowmarket ASD Saturday clubs during the past year. Cllr Warboys' chosen charities for this year will be The Forge Workshops in Thornham Magna and 'Beyond the Wall', a charity based in the Walled Garden at Thornham Estates. A number of activities for children and young people were organised for half term. These include family cooking sessions, fencing and dance classes, kids clubs. Children who receive free school meals will be able to swim for free at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre. Bloor Homes have now completed the section of cycle path alongside School Road in Elmswell from their development to the church. SCC is now working on detailed design of the wider scheme, focussing initially on the section from St John's church to A1088. The next steps are surveys for underground utilities. A CIL bid is to be submitted to MSDC by the end of May. Cllr Mansel is to be the Chair of planning committee and there is to be a change to the schedule of planning committees. The first daytime planning committee will be held on 21 June and then every 4 weeks. In between those main meetings provisional meetings will be scheduled for 17:30 on the intermediate fortnightly Wednesdays. Planning officers are negotiating with Hopkins Homes about the unauthorised electricity sub-station. It is a complicated planning situation and hopefully an acceptable compromise can be agreed.

Cllrs Mansel and Overett are looking to hold drop in sessions in the village and will advise dates when arranged.

4. To receive declarations of interest.

Mr Foster declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 17 as his property backs onto part of the land to be discussed. He duly signed the interest book.

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting 16 May 2023.

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

23/02352 Erection of 1 replacement dwelling (following demolition of existing dwelling and detached garage/store). Spooners, The Heath. It was proposed and seconded to object to the proposal as overdevelopment of the site. A vote was taken and with 4 for, 1 against and 1 abstention this was carried.

23/02441 Erection of a single storey rear extension. 5 Brickyard Court, Old Stowmarket Road – no comment.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

EN23/00255 The White House. MSDC Enforcement has sent a letter to the owner asking to be provided with the permissions that allow them to rent out The Bungalow as a separate dwelling and if they are unable to do so to remove the listing from Rightmove. The officer will follow up the response prior to deciding on further action.

7. Clerk's Report

Anti-social behaviour in car park behind Health Centre – this has been referred to MSDC and nearby residents have been asked to keep a log of incidents.

A14 roadworks issues – a lady was hit by a wing mirror in Broomhill Lane and additional signs have now been put up at the junction with Rags Lane warning of pedestrians and a reminder of 30 mph in a residential area. Complaints have been received regarding other areas and Sisk Ltd has arranged for the safety camera van to be stationed in Heath Road for a few days. Issues will be reported to SCC and the Police. Pedestrian signs have been installed at either end of Heath Road. The signs are on one side of the road only as the road is too narrow to have on both sides.

White lines near pump area – SCC has confirmed work has been ordered.

No cycling sign, Meadowlands – the pole has broken off due to corrosion. SCC has been informed and the broken stump has been taped up for safety.

Request for a Cllr to become a Community governor at Woolpit Primary School – nobody volunteered. It is noted that it can be anyone in the community, not just a parish councillor.

Noisy manhole covers, The Street – this has been reported to SCC who has advised that they believe that at this time it does not warrant remedial action.

Drain grid, Heath Road footway – this has been reported to SCC again as it is a trip hazard.

Contract and Procurement course – the Clerk would like to attend this on 11 July at a cost of £30.00, Cllrs approved.

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

A resident looking for support from the parish council for additional signage and temporary speed limit in Rags Lane. Cllrs would not support this amount of signage in the Conservation Area. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:** SCC tour of community garden at Campsea Ashe 22 June, Woolpit-Elmswell pedestrian/cycle link – update, rural transport in Suffolk 2023 survey. **Rural Services Network** Rural bulletin 23, 31 May, 6 June. **MSDC** Planning page outage 8 & 9 June, Town and Parish update from MSDC June. **SALC** Area Forums June 2023, news bulletin 22, 30 May, training bulletin 23 May, funding opportunity – IP14 wellbeing fund, AGM 19 July, Climate Forum 6 June. **Sisk Ltd** May's newsletter for A14 Haughley to Tothill reconstruction scheme. **Bradt Guides** Suffolk guidebook request for photos. **Energy Price Direct** savings on energy tariff for non-profit organisations.

9. To approve accounts for payment.

Mr Hardiman £13.50 reimbursement recreation field key for Parkers Pitches, Mr K Harknett £100.60 litter picking May + balance of holiday pay 2022/23, Mr M Gardiner £780.85 Highways Ranger pay May + balance of holiday pay 2022/23, Gipping Press £387.00 June/July Diary, Mr R Raisey £105.00 edit June/July Diary, Suffolk County Council £305.91 May pension payment, Mr T Howard £2,031.58 Coronation expenses, Woolpit Luncheon Cub £432.37 Coronation expenses, Proludic Ltd £127.98 dog head panel replacement, Mrs S Brown £90.00 internal audit of accounts 2022/23. All accounts were approved and cheques issued. Payment by standing order Mrs P Fuller £1,056.91 May salary.

10. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

There was no report this month as the Clerk has been dealing with the audit.

b) To discuss issues with Barclays Bank and take any necessary action.

Issues still continue and the Clerk is still receiving letters requesting further business information. During a conversation with Barclays on 25 May the Clerk was told we needed a different account as our turnover is above £100,000.00. This is due to CIL payments. Barclays were due to ring the Clerk 1 June to discuss the account we now need to have but this did not happen. The Clerk suggested that we change our bank account to Unity Trust Bank and also look to put some funds in a savings account now that interest rates have risen. The Clerk was asked to produce a synopsis of banks, savings rates and comparisons for the next meeting. *Action: the Clerk*

11. To complete and sign the Statement of Assurance and Annual Return for year ended 31 March 2023.

The forms was duly completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

12. To consider a battery powered strimmer for the Highways Ranger and take any necessary action.

It was unanimously agreed to purchase an Einhell Agillo 36/255 BL-Solo 36V Li-Ion Power X-Change Brushless Cordless Scythe at a cost of £179.95.

13. To consider the co-option of a councillor and take any necessary action.

An advert will be included in the August/September Woolpit Diary. *Action: the Clerk*

14. To resolve that Woolpit Parish Council meets the conditions of eligibility set out in the Schedule to The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, to enable it to use the General Power of Competence. This will remain valid until the annual meeting following the next ordinary election in May 2027.

This was unanimously approved.

15. To consider setting up a food bank and take any necessary action.

This was deferred to the next meeting.

16. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

a) A14 roadworks

Already covered in the Clerk's report.

b) To receive an update on 20 mph in the centre of the village.

Already discussed with County Cllr Mellen.

c) to receive an update on solar powered Speed Indicator signs and locations and take any necessary action

The site at The Heath has been approved by SCC. The Clerk was asked to contact SCC to expedite the installation of the poles due to traffic using the roads as a rat run to avoid the A14 roadworks. *Action: the Clerk*

17. To receive an update on the Bury Road development.

a) Resolution to proceed with the acceptance to take over the car park, amenity land, burial ground and all other areas of land lying between the development and the village and Cricket Club.

Mrs Ewans gave a report on correspondence and discussions with Hopkins Homes. If WPC do not take over these areas they will become the responsibility of a management company. Both the Cricket Club and the Tennis Club would like to expand into the amenity land. Some discussion ensued regarding sports facilities at the new school being available for community use after 4pm and at weekends. Other areas by White Elm Lane were discussed. It was proposed, seconded and carried to support the resolution. Mrs Ewans was requested to go back to Hopkins Homes to

find out if there is an opportunity for WPC to take on the green buffer area alongside White Elm Road, not including the attenuations basins. *Action: Mrs Ewans.*

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

The grass strip between the allotments has been cut. The thistles on the old allotment site have been scythed. There are two half plots to be re-let.

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

The Committee met last week. There is an emerging CIL project for solar panels on the roof and refurbishment of the toilets and hallway. There is a larger refurbishment/modernisation project including an extension. Three architects have been asked to quote for design up to the planning permission stage. These ideas will then be costed. The ambition is to take the hall into a more attractive venue for the future. The committee has now got a programme of fundraising activities.

Woolpit PC as Trustees of Woolpit Recreation Ground Charity

20. To consider a request for an additional bench in the Recreation Field and take any necessary action.

The Clerk was asked to research costs for a plastic bench for the next meeting.

Action: the Clerk

21. To receive a report from the Clerk.

Dogs on the Recreation Field - A resident has queried the no dogs' policy on all area of recreation ground and why can it not be just the children's play area. The Clerk has responded that the MUGA and football area are outside the children's play area and therefore the policy remains unchanged and dogs are not allowed anywhere on the recreation field.

22. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 4 July 2023. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

Signed.....approved

Dated.....4 July 2023.....