

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 7 MARCH 2023 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE.

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

In attendance: County Cllr Mellen (in part), District Cllr Mansel, Mrs Fuller Clerk and 1 member of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Mrs Wortley, Mr Howard, Mr Guyler, Mr Griffin and Mrs Jenkins.

2. **Public comment** Mr Hardiman has been asked if the Parish Council will write to the dentist as staff members are parking in The Street. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Mr Chidington who installed the benches at the play area has passed away and it was asked if a plaque in his memory could be attached to a bench. This will be investigated and considered at the next meeting.

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

District Councillors' report: At last week's full Council meeting the administration agreed an amendment to put aside £2M to help residents most in need with energy-saving measures. The MSDC council tax freeze was confirmed. The housing revenue account budget was also agreed, and this includes a 7% increase to council housing rents, just to try to keep pace with costs for some service soaring by almost 40% and to enable continued investment into repairs and maintenance. Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk have agreed to provide a total of £12M to improve the depot facilities for waste and building services. This is likely to end up with a single joint depot for the two councils. Currently the depots at Stowmarket, Sudbury and Gt Wenham are no longer fit for future purpose, and are unlikely to meet the needs of the Council and residents in the medium term. Gateway 14 was officially opened with representatives from Jaynic, MSDC and town and parish councils at the beginning of February. Gateway Boulevard, the main estate road is now complete. Hopefully the pedestrian and cycle links to the estate will be completed soon, and there will also be green corridors and high-quality landscaping to encourage biodiversity on the site. Babergh and Mid Suffolk are to be part of a Government pilot project which aims to get more communities shaping the places they live with a new approach to planning. People and Place Plans are simpler than full Neighbourhood Plans and should be a more accessible way to highlight local planning priorities. Elmswell Neighbourhood Plan is now at the Regulation 16 consultations stage. Written representations are invited on whether or not this plan meets the basic conditions for Neighbourhood Plans. The local elections are taking place on 4 May. The full election time table has now been published. This year for the first time voters will need to bring photographic ID when they attend a polling station to vote. MSDC are running sessions in local libraries to help people get online and to develop their digital skills.

The Lawn Farm hybrid planning application which was previously deferred goes before the planning committee 15 March.

County Councillor's report. The 24 February marked the one-year anniversary since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Suffolk continues to do its part through the Homes for Ukraine programme – hosting refugees fleeing the war. In total, 1256 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Suffolk through the programme. Currently, we have around 330 host families, supporting 750 Ukrainians – with others in private accommodation. Suffolk is in need of new hosts, to continue to offer a safe haven for Ukrainian refugees who are not yet ready to enter private accommodation. Based on numbers, Suffolk needs 50 new hosts in the coming months. Hosts are entitled to £350 per month, which increases to £500 after 12 months. At the beginning of February, the Council's budget for 2023/24 was voted in, confirming an increase in council tax by 3.99% - broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1.99% increase in general tax. Council services have faced a gruelling year of

demand and additional cost pressures. In addition, the Council is not on track to achieve Carbon Net Zero by 2030, as they have promised to do so. The Cabinet met in February to discuss the forecasts for the Council's current budget. The latest forecasts show that SCC is having to use more Reserves than anticipated to cover additional costs in running its services. In addition, the Cabinet agreed to move the West Suffolk Archives in Bury St Edmunds to a new location in the town on Western Way. Some members were concerned about the lack of sufficient public transport access to the new location – being far from the train station with an irregular bus service. Finally, the Cabinet discussed the Fire & Rescue Service's new risk management plan. The plan outlines all foreseeable risks in Suffolk and indicates the service's priorities and proposals to improve the service. Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded SCC's new highways services contract. The contract will last over 20 years and will be worth between £800m-£1bn, will begin 1 October 2023. The service will provide maintenance of roads, pavements, Rights of Way, drainage, hedges, construction of new roads, and snow clearing – this is not an exhaustive list. The Government has agreed to extend the Household Support Fund, meaning local authorities will continue to receive funding to help residents through the current cost-of-living crisis. The grant is distributed through small payments to support vulnerable household meet daily needs such as food, clothing, and utilities.

SCC has advised that officers will not meet with WPC regarding the 20 mph zone. Cllr Mellen needs to commission a report from SCC Safety and Speed Management team.

Cllr Mellen advised that repairs may have been carried out to the drain cover in the Heath Road footway. SCC is trying to get the developer to deal with the missed drop kerb between Steeles Close and Stackyards development.

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

5. To approve the minutes of the meetings 7 February 2023.

The minutes were approved and signed.

6. Planning

a) to consider current applications

23/00076 Erection of a single storey rear extension, alterations to rear dormer extension and insertion of rooflights. Willowbrook, Heath Road – no comment.

23/01023 Erection of lean to conservatory to rear of property. 18 Melvin Way – no comment.

b) to receive MSDC decisions.

23/00172 Erection of a single storey rear extension. The White Elm, White Elm Road – permission granted.

22/05616 application for non-material amendment 21/01132 addition of a substation. The Clerk has contacted the Planning Department to ask how this can be considered non-material. District Cllr Mansel has also contacted the Chief Planning Officer sending photographs and he is looking into the matter.

7. Clerk's Report

Survey for bus use in villages – MSDC has advised that Communities Team and Economic Development Team are unable to take the lead in this. The Clerk has contacted the other parishes to see if they want to hold a further meeting.

Community Speedwatch – the new group has started sessions. 15% were speeding and reported to the Police.

Drop kerb between Stackyard development and Steeles Close – SCC confirms that this appears to have been missed from the original agreement and will negotiate with the developer to see if they will act on this during maintenance period or SCC will look for funds elsewhere to resolve.

Fly tipping by the bus stop – the Highways Ranger has remove and disposed of this.

Fly tipping Heath Road to Green Road – full oil containers have been dumped at the field gate. A resident has reported to MSDC but there is some concern as one of the containers is leaking and the oil could get into the water supply.

Ownership of new car park – a resident has asked who owns the new car park. This has been referred to District Cllr Mansel to take up with MSDC.

Manhole covers, The Street – SCC has been out to check and cleared the ingress of mud and debris and the covers now sit more flush with the footway. One cover is damaged and has been reported to the relevant organisation for attention.

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

Good Neighbours Scheme is organising a warm space on Monday 20 March at Woolpit Institute when the electricity is being cut off in the Wrights Way/White Elm Road area from 8.30 to 16.30. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs** **SALC** training bulletin 8, 14, 21, 28 February, 7 March, news bulletin 13, 20, 27, February, 6 March, Mid Suffolk area forum 14 March, Nationally Strategic Infrastructure projects SALC Focus Group. **MSDC** VCFSE Resilience Fund – council launch third sector 'lifeline;', supporting people to vote in May 2023, Mid Suffolk Town & Parish Liaison meeting 7 February slides and feedback form, CIL funding bid window May 2023, Spring litter picks 2023, Town & Parish update March, election and nomination information. **SCC** funding opportunities, Greenest County Community Network newsletter, Claire Ling appointed our Community Support Officer, exciting initiative – community energy support. **National Highways** A14 J47a-J49 reconstruction - start of works information. **Suffolk Cloud** NALC Recommendations for .gov.uk domain names. **Stowmarket Striders** Friday Five road race route details 30 June. **Suffolk Police** Constable County January 2023. **Rural Services Network** Rural Bulletin 14, 21, 28 February, 7 March, fantastic response to rural cost of living survey, funding digest March. **SISK** letter from project manager A14 Haughley to Tothill roadworks. **Stowmarket and District Scouts** looking for people to join Board of Trustees.

9. To approve accounts for payment.

Payments to Travis Perkins Trading Co Ltd under CIL £5235.46 kitchen units for ARC and S B Hire Ltd under CIL £411.00 materials for artificial grass for ARC were unanimously ratified. Mr K Harknett £67.35 litter picking February, Mr M Gardiner £415.80 Highway Ranger salary February, Suffolk County Council £328.99 pension payment were approved and cheques issued. Mid Suffolk District Council £77.47 for annual play inspection 2022 including a Full DDA. It does not appear that we have received the Full DDA and has queried this with MSDC. Payments by Standing Order Mrs P Fuller £1056.91 February salary, e-on next £41.54 pump light supply 1/12/22-28/2/23, BT £176.97 quarterly bill.

10. Finances

a) To receive a monthly financial report.

The Community Account balance at the end of February was £412,414.98 of which CIL is £330,118.17, Recreation Ground £225.80, earmarked reserves £68,920.46 and general funds £13,150.55.

b) To consider increasing the Clerk's pay scale and take any necessary action

It was unanimous agreement to raise the salary of the clerk to SCP Grade 25 from 1 April 2023. The Chair asked that at the first meeting of the new WPC that consideration be given to taking on a general power of competence which gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. The power requires a PC to have a CiLCA qualification.

11. To discuss traffic issues in the parish

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

SCC has advised that Cllr Mellen needs to commission a report from SCC Safety and Speed Management team.

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

The SID location application forms have been sent to SCC Highways for evaluation.

c) cyclepath update

Mrs Ewans and Dr Geake attended a meeting earlier today. Progress has been made. The main issues are in Elmswell near the Alms House and church. The plan is to use the verges going to A1088 and have a pelican crossing (traffic light controlled). Some trees may have to be removed but additional trees can be planted after the work is complete. Speed surveys have been carried out. There will be a further meeting in May where costs and funding sources will be considered.

12. To receive an update on celebrations for the coronation of King Charles III and take any necessary action.

There will be a concert in the church on the evening 5 May, tickets will be sold but WPC will underwrite the event. Any profits will be split between the church and WPC to give to charities. 6 May no formal event as most people will watch the coronation at home. 7 May in the afternoon tea and cakes and children's games at the Village Hall. The WI will arrange the tea and cake. In the evening the Cricket Club will run a bar and barbecue and WPC will fund a large screen to stream the live concert from Windsor. Volunteers will be needed for these events. 8 May Bank Holiday is The Big Help Out and it was felt that a litter pick could be arranged. The Coronation Committee will meet frequently and arrangements are subject to change

13. To consider a litter pick between Woolpit and Elmswell and take any necessary action.

This has been suggested by a member of Elmswell PC. This is a dangerous road with parts of unrestricted speed limit, therefore WPC cannot organise a litter pick here.

14. To consider an additional dog bin in Old Stowmarket Road and take any necessary action.

The Clerk has emailed David Wilson Homes to see if it will be providing bins around the development but has not received a reply. Although there are already two bins, one each end of Old Stowmarket Road, It was agreed to provide a further red 30 litre bin opposite the entrance to Abbots Green development. *Action: the Clerk*

15. To review Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Data Retention Policy, Subject Access Request Policy and Procedure and update as necessary.

All were reviewed and remain unchanged. They will be reviewed again March 2024.

16. To review grass cutting contract and take any necessary action.

Two quotes have been received and looking for a third. This issue will be finalised at the April meeting.

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

a) new car park

Hopkins Homes have asked in WPC wants to become owners of the new car park. MSDC does not appear to wish to be involved and if WPC does not take it on it will be taken on by the resident's management company for the whole site. There are about 27 spaces, of which a small number will have electric charging point infrastructure. The surface must be tarmac. Questions were asked about the green area surrounding the car park. Cllrs need to consider the pros and cons and make a decision at the next meeting.

The Chair has been contacted by the Bury Free Press regarding allegations and complaints from residents regarding Hopkins Homes approach to the development. These include heavy traffic through the centre of the village, mud on the road, accusation that work is starting earlier than in the planning conditions. Signage has been arranged and therefore heavy traffic issues have been eased, the road is swept daily and WPC has no evidence of breach of planning conditions. Cllrs drafted an agreed response that Mrs Ewans can give to the journalist. District Cllr Mansel advised that if residents have any evidence of breaching planning conditions they can send them to her and she will pass to MSDC planning department.

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

All plots have been rented for 2023/4. Land Registry registration paperwork has been sent off and further requisition information has been requested. The Clerk and Mrs Fuller will ensure this is sent as soon as possible. *Action: The Clerk/Mrs Ewans.* Mrs Ewans has received some information from Suffolk Wildlife Trust for usage of the old allotment site which will be discussed at the CIL meeting 29 March.

19. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee (if available).

The next meeting is scheduled for 22 March and the AGM 17 April.

Woolpit PC as Trustees of Woolpit Recreation Ground Charity

20. To consider the annual play equipment report and take any necessary action.

There are a few points which have come from the report. There are trip hazards at the edges of the surfaces and surrounding surface levels should be reinstated to remove the trip points. Parkers Pitches will be asked to do this as it is part of their current contract. There is a lack of growth within the grass area and WPC should encourage growth with grass seeds. There are a few nuts and a bolt cover missing. Brushes need looking at on the swings. All issues are classed as low risk. Mr Hardiman is concerned regarding maintenance issues and suggested that we look again at the Proludic packages available. The Gold protect includes 3 inspections per year, tightening and replacing caps and disassembling of the zip wire and tightening wires. The cost is £1655 per year + VAT. Mrs Ewans pointed out that you have to accept that projects are just not the capital outlay and that everything needs to be maintained. Cllrs are not experts on these matters and they need to be dealt with by relevant companies. The Clerk will circulate the maintenance information received from Proludic for Cllrs to make a decision at the next meeting.

Action: the Clerk

21. To receive a report from the Clerk. Nothing to report.

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

The meeting closed at 9.23 p.m.

Signed.....Approved.....

Dated.....4 April 2023.....