

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Webpage: <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

CLERK: Jeremy Solnick

e-mail: pc@walberswick.suffolk.gov.uk

Post: Heritage Hut, The Green, Walberswick Suffolk IP18 6TT

Minutes of the meeting of Walberswick Parish Council on the 3rd November 2014

Present: Councillors Esme Richardson (chair), Michael Gower, Lorraine Haslegrave, Ray Goodman, the Parish Clerk Jeremy Solnick and about 15 members of the public. Apologies received from Councillor Chris Hosea and Councillor Lee Sutton.

20mph speed limit and Traffic Calming measures

Presentation and Question and Answer session by Bob Clench, Area Highway Engineer, Suffolk County Council.

- Mr Clench handed out information packs on both the proposed 20mph limit and the vehicle activated sign (VAS). Copies of this are available by e-mail from the clerk.
- The proposal was to have a 20mph limit throughout the whole of the village:-
 - This would start at a point just before Adams Lane. It would include a part of Lodge Road to the edge of the village envelope and Leveretts Lane
 - There would be a roundel sign at Adams Lane and repeat signs every 90 metres.
 - It was a prerequisite for establishing such a limit that the average speeds be less than 24mph. Preliminary surveys showed average speeds of 23 – 24mph going East and 24 to 26 mph going West at the Church. 21mph each way at Manor Close.
 - There needed to be an informal public consultation to establish general support for the concept. This could be done by survey, having a petition in the shop or an internet survey via the website. Formal and further informal consultation would be conducted by SCDC at a later date.
 - If there were objections to the limit it would go to the public rights of way committee.
 - WPC had to formally ask SCDC to prepare a preliminary report. Once that was agreed and accepted SCDC would produce a design for the scheme and commence both formal and informal communications with the village. The cost of this work was £5,500. This covered a survey and design of the zone and two consultations. The Roundel and repeaters cost £100 each. This did not include the cost of erecting them.
 - Enforcement of a 20mph mandatory limit was tricky.
 - The erection of a flashing warning sign was a separate issue and a separate application had to be made for that. The signs cost between £2,500 and £3,500. There were several on the market of varying complexity. The cost of the pole was £150. The village would have to agree to remove the sign for periods of 6 weeks or so to stop motorists getting used to the sign and ignoring it.
- There were a number of questions from the floor. It appeared possible that a 20mph limit could be implemented within 8 - 9 months. This prospect was greeted with enthusiasm.
- **Councillor Goodman proposed that SCDC via Bob Clench be requested to produce the initial report on the scheme. This was seconded by the Chair, Councillor Richardson. The resolution was passed unanimously.**

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Open Forum (if sufficient time available)

No Open forum was held

Item 1 - To receive the District Councillor Report

The District Councillor decided not to make a report because the meeting was running late

Item 2 - To receive the County Councillor Report

There was no County Council report for the same reason

Item 3 - To receive the Police Report

No crimes had been reported but the Clerk had received an alert about fraudsters operating in the Council area who posed as police officers and preyed on elderly and vulnerable people. A copy is available from the clerk.

AGENDA

1. To receive Members' declarations of interest on any matters on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

2. To note, discuss and agree or otherwise apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor Hosea and Councillor Sutton who were both unable to attend due to work commitments. These apologies were accepted.

3. Declaration of Interests/Dispensation Applications Received

4. Agree Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 6th October 2014

The Chair, Councillor Richardson proposed that the draft minutes of the meeting of the 6th October be accepted. This was seconded by Councillor Gower and approved unanimously.

5. To receive and consider the Auditor's Report for the Financial year ended 31st March 2013

Copies of the Auditors report on matters arising for the financial year ended 31st March 2013 and copies of the annual return for that period (comprising the requisite information that was required to be produced) were handed out to all the councillors and to members of the public who were in attendance. The clerk said that the Notice of conclusion of audit for the year ended 31st March 2013 had been posted on the village notice boards and on the website on the 11th October 2014. Copies of the requisite information had been sent to all people who requested it. The Chair, Councillor Richardson then read a statement of response to the auditor's report. A copy of this statement is appended to these minutes as *Appendix I*.

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The Chair then said that because this was such a serious issue, standing orders would be suspended for 10 minutes to allow discussion from the public. An individual asked if the Chair's statement would form part of the minutes. This was agreed. There was considerable discussion about the advance precept which had been requested in late 2011, and an individual argued that WPC was wrong to have done this. Councillor Gower responded that none of the present WPC councillors were Councillors at the time. All the present councillors could do was rely on the minutes which clearly showed that Councillors were concerned about cash flow and worried that WPC might run out of money. There was also discussion about other items of expenditure including a Christmas tree order that had apparently been cancelled in 2011. The Chair then re-instated standing orders. Councillor Gower then proposed the following resolution:

That the Auditor's report for the financial year ended 31st March 2013 be accepted subject the points made in the Chair, Councillor Richardson's statement. This was seconded by Councillor Goodman and unanimously approved.

6. To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's record of receipts and payments and the bank reconciliation and statement of balances for the financial year ended 31st March 2014.

Copies of these documents were handed to Councillors and to members of the public in attendance. These documents comprised WPC accounts. They had already been approved by the internal auditor and posted on the WPC website in August. Councillors had been sent copies by e-mail prior to this meeting so they would have a chance to go through any figures and make any queries. No queries had been received. The Clerk confirmed that as Responsible financial officer he had certified that these statements properly represented WPC's receipts and payments and its financial position at the 31st March 2014. He had done this in July before the accounts had been sent off to the internal auditor.

Councillor Gower proposed that the record of receipts and payments and the bank reconciliation and statement of balances for the financial year ended 31st March 2014 be approved by the Council and the Chair be authorised to sign them. This was seconded by the Chair, Councillor Richardson. The resolution was approved unanimously.

7. To consider the accounting statements set out in the Annual return for the financial year ended 31st March 2014 and, if thought fit, to approve such statements and to resolve that the Chair of the meeting sign and date the Annual Return.

The Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer explained that the external auditors had raised a number of issues about the completion of the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2014. Copies of the Annual return and copies of the External auditor's 'issues arising report were handed to all Councillors and to the members of the public in attendance. The Clerk read out the Issues Arising Report from the external auditors. There were two main issues:

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- i It appeared that the annual return had not been approved by the council meeting as a whole
- ii Amendments were made to the Annual Return after approval that were not approved by the Council.

The clerk explained that he had amended the Annual Return because the figures were incorrect. They failed to take into account an invoice of £104 from the Walberswick Village Hall. Councillors confirmed that they understood how sections 1 and 2 of the Annual return had been completed and they approved the figures in section 1 as amended.

Councillor Gower proposed that the annual return as amended be approved and that The Chair, Councillor Richardson be authorised to initial the amendments and to re-sign section 1 and section 2 and that the clerk as Responsible Financial Officer, also be authorised to re-sign and re-date sections 1 and 2 of the annual return.

8. To receive the Clerk's Report?

- a. Finance report for period to 1st November 2014.

The Clerk handed out to all Councillors and to members of the public present 4 sheets comprising the bank reconciliation and cash position up to 31st October 2014 and the draft budget for the year 2015/2016. (Copies of these are appended to the minutes as *Appendix II*). The Bank reconciliation showed that the parish had £19,454.91 in its bank account on the 31st October. There was a slight discrepancy with the cash book which he had not been able to resolve because of a missing bank statement. The draft budget was for discussion purposes and the clerk said that he would welcome comments and suggestions. He wanted to be in a position to finalise the budget at the December meeting. The third column of the budget contained the statement of payments and receipts up to 31st October 2014. The Clerks assumptions in preparing the final column were shown in the supporting pages.

- b. Discuss and agree and make any payments required of the Council

- i. Materials for repairs and decorations to Heritage Hut (if any)

There were none but a sum of £200 was still budgeted.

- ii. External Auditor's Fee

The external auditor's fee for the year ended 31st March 2013 amounted to £2,506.80. This was over ten times the normal fee. This large fee arose because of the difficulties with the audit mentioned above. The clerk had queried the fee and the auditor's had written an explanatory letter. The clerk read out the letter in full. (a copy of the letter is annexed to these minutes as *Appendix III*)

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- iii. SALC invoice for Clerk's training courses - £153.60
- iv. Payment for Clerk's Services – The clerk had worked 40 hours in September and 62:40 hours in October. He was not charging overtime and was paid his basic salary of £257.50 a month totalling £515.00
- v. Playsafe Limited – For equipment inspection report - £166.80
- vi. Community Action Suffolk -£74.80 – Additional insurance premium for fireworks party. This would be reimbursed by the fireworks committee.

Councillor Gower proposed that all the payments be approved by the Council and that the clerk be authorised to arrange for the payments to be made. This was seconded by the Chair, Councillor Richardson. The resolution was approved unanimously.

9. Delegations to the Clerk

The clerk said that he had given this some thought but was not yet ready to propose delegations to the Council.

10. To Adopt New Financial Regulations.

NALC had issued a new model Financial Regulations. As the previous Regulations dated for 2011 and there had been many changes in legislation it was wise to adopt these. They were slightly amended for WPC to put into effect the commitments regarding the clerk's salary set out in the Chair's statement referred to above. A copy will be posted on the website.

Councillor Haslegrave proposed that the New regulations be accepted. This was seconded by Councillor Goodman. The resolution was approved unanimously

11. Discuss planning applications.

a. Receive Planning decisions.

Application No.	Location (within Walberswick)	Decision	Consultation Period Expires or decision

b. Planning applications and notices of appeal received at time of publishing this agenda and any that may be received after publication of this agenda

Application No.	Location (within Walberswick)	Proposal	Consultation Period Expires
Blyth Reach The Street	<u>Replacement of existing studio building.</u> <u>Replace with timber</u>	DC/14/3249/FUL	26 Nov 2014. The Planning Advisory

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	<u>constructed single storey garden studio including granny annex.</u>		Group had made observations on this application which had been circulated to Councillors. Councillors looked at the plans and the application and decided there was no objection
Tows Cabin Ferry Road	<u>1. Ground bearing Oak beam north boundary to mark formal boundary 200 x 300mm</u> <u>2. Fencing north/east boundary - 1500mm. Feather edge boarding and chain link</u> <u>3. Fence south/west boundary - 1500mm. feather edge boarding</u> <u>4. ASHP south/west of building.</u>	DC/14/3251/AME	29 Oct 2014 – This application had been withdrawn at the request of the Planning authority.
Heathwold Palmers Lane	<u>T1 Horse Chestnut. To coppice tree suffering fungal decay and bacterial canker</u> <u>T2 Horse Chestnut. Crown reduction by 4m and deadwood, also fungus and canker infected.</u>	DC/14/3152/TCA	5 Nov 2014 No objection
The Gables Millfield Road	<u>To reduce height of Lime Tree by front gate by 50%, for safety reasons.</u>	DC/14/3041/TPO	16 Nov 2014 No Objection

12. Action Items Report

a. Traffic Calming Measures

This had been dealt with fully above.

b. Parish plan steering group

i. Report on meeting with SCDC Planning and Policy Team

As a result of a meeting in September with SCDC Planning and Policy team, the Parish plan steering group had advised assisted the clerk in the preparation of a letter to SCDC planning and policy scheme about the Local plan and future development proposals. A copy of this letter is

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available from the clerk. The clerk thanked the group for their invaluable assistance.

c. Planning Advisory Group

A copy of the observations made on the Blyth Reach application is appended to these minutes as *Appendix iv*

d. Heritage Hut

Further repairs and decorations had been carried out by a working party.

13. Correspondence Received and Sent

Letters had been received from various parties and some of these were read out by the clerk.

14. To discuss any other matter the Chair will allow.

The Chair, Councillor Richardson said that the Playsafe report on the equipment in the Play areas on the Village Green and on the Sports field revealed a number of deficiencies. These needed to be addressed in the short term. In addition the Football goals needed to be erected and some of the equipment for older children needed to be re-sited. This was important but obviously it would be expensive. WPC could not fund it by itself and would look for donations and fund raising.

15. Date of next meeting –

1st December 2014

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Appendix I –Chair’s Statement on the Audit Report for the year ended 31st March 2013

Chairman’s Response to the Auditor’s report for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2013

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You should all have a copy of the Auditor’s report for the Financial year ended 31st March 2013 and a copy of the Annual Return for that year. If anyone does not have copies please can you share. It is an important document.

This Parish Council accepts the report. The Parish Council needs to pause for reflection. We cannot undo the past but we can try to do better in the future. I am determined that the Parish Council I chair, will conduct itself in a fair and transparent manner and follow best practice in its administrative functions and its financial affairs.

Turning to the specific matters raised by the auditors:

1. “No” to question 2 in section 2 of the Annual Return

The Parish Council answered “No” to question 2 in section 2 of the Annual Return. This was because the Council accepted the failings in the salary review process identified in the EELGA report which the Council commissioned in early 2013. This question requires the Parish Council to confirm it has taken all reasonable steps to assure itself that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business in the future.

In order to address this issue the council has required the Parish clerk to attend the necessary courses given by SALC which he has now completed. The clerk will be asked to ensure he keeps up to date with the latest legal and regulatory developments. Councillors will also attend courses from time to time. The clerk will

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ensure that the Council's standing orders and its financial regulations are kept up to date and that these are complied with.

2. Salaries

The auditor's report on this point is comprehensive and speaks for itself. The findings are accepted by the Council which has taken the following actions to ensure this does not happen again:

- a. The Current clerk and any future clerk will have a job profile that is kept up to date and is based on the work that the Council requires the Clerk to do, and a contract on the standard terms drawn up by NALC for Parish Clerks. Any amendment to the contract or the job profile will be approved by the full council.
- b. Any salary review or job evaluation will be dealt with strictly in accordance with NALC pay scales and will be properly reviewed and assessed in accordance with best practice. Any salary review will be fully documented.
- c. The clerk is required to keep a detailed time sheet for all time worked for WPC. No overtime can be claimed without the authorisation of the full council which shall have regard to whether the additional hours are required and budgeted for.
- d. The WPC Financial Regulations have been amended to incorporate these provisions.
- e. The Council has been asked to consider if the expenditure in 2012 / 2013 was appropriate. The council accepts the auditor's finding in relation to the salary review. However, it does not consider the expenditure in 2012/2013 inappropriate.

The auditors also asked the Council to consider whether there were any grounds to reclaim any overpayments. I asked the clerk who has many years of legal experience as a solicitor to comment on this specifically. He had the following comments:

- i. The Council would undoubtedly have to go to court to recover any money.
- ii. In the light of the decision of the Upper Tier Tribunal that leave to appeal in the cases of MacCarthy v Information Commissioner and Walberswick Parish Council and Harvey v Information Commissioner and Walberswick Parish Council has been refused, the expenditure cannot be considered inappropriate. A court looking at a claim from WPC to recover the expenditure would consider that WPC would probably have needed external assistance from a solicitor or barrister, which may well have cost more.
- iii. There is no finding of dishonesty or that services were not provided to WPC.
- iv. The money was paid in good faith by the council (as BDO recognise) and received by the clerk in good faith.

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- v. The Clerk's salary increase was approved by the full Council and agreed with the clerk. Therefore the Council was contractually bound to pay the increased salary to the clerk even though review procedure was 'seriously flawed'.
- vi. This could possibly be a deterrent to anyone interested in becoming a clerk or a councillor in the future.

For the reasons set out in i, ii, iii, iv and v above the present clerk believes that legal action to recover the expenditure would not succeed and it is possible that legal costs would not be recovered. This would be therefore be throwing away more money and wasting more of Councillor's and the Clerk's time.

Having considered all factors, I and my fellow Councillors do not consider there are any grounds to recover overpayments.

3. Donated Assets

This was raised as a preliminary issue before the full report was received. It arose from an error in the way the Heritage Hut was treated in the Asset Register. It was shown on the books as coming in at its insurance value instead of at a nil value. The auditor's recommendations have been followed. This was corrected prior to the issue of the Accounts prior to the year 31st march 2014 year end.

4. The Auditors have also stated in Section 3 of the Annual return (page 4) that: "The Council also obtained an advance precept which was not necessary." Unfortunately the auditors did not provide any evidence in support of that statement. In fact the advance precept was received in December of the previous financial year (the year to 31st March 2012). The minutes of the time show that councillors had serious concerns about the financial position of WPC at the time they requested an advance precept. The present Councillors are unable to form any view on this wholly exceptional situation other than to say that the judgement of the Councillors at the time, as evidenced by the minutes, was that the advance was necessary.

I therefore propose that the auditor's report for the year ended 31st March 2014 be accepted subject to the points I have made above and that this be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

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Appendix II – Bank Reconciliation and Draft Budget for 2015 – 16

Bank Reconciliation for 31st October 2014 (September statement missing)

	£	£
Balances shown on Bank Statements		
Business Instant Access (Deposit) Account (07147051) on 9-10-2014	<u>19,027.70</u>	
		19,027.70
Treasurers (Current) Account (00281763) on 1-10-2014	756.40	
<u>Plus: Cheques Paid in -</u>	=	
	756.40	
<u>Less Unpresented Cheques</u>		
4-8-2014 Ridgeons (950)	232.83	
06/10/2014 Solnick (Clerks Stationery) (955)	62.76	
06/10/2014 SALC (training) 956	<u>33.60</u>	
		<u>427.21</u>
Balance of Cash at bank on 31st October 2014		<u>19,454.91</u>
Opening Balance on 1.4.2014 (from Accounts)		

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	13,015.73	
Plus: Receipts in as shown in cash book on 31.10.14	12,494.15	
Less: Payments as shown in cash book on 31.10.2014	<u>5,839.54</u>	
Balance as shown in Cash book		19,670.34

Difference of £215.43 accounted for by Ridgeons cheque and unknown payment in

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Walberswick Parish Council - DRAFT BUDGET for 2015-2016

31/03/2014	Receipts	31/10/2014	Budget 2014	Estimate to 31/03/2015	Budget for 2015- 2016
£		£	£	£	£
4,796.29	Opening Balance	-			
-					
16,000.00	Precept	12,183.52	12,184.00	12,184.00	9,000.00
4.66	Bank Interest	3.11	5.00	5.00	5.00
-	Recycling Credits	-	-		
229.00	Allotments	-	230.00	230.00	230.00
-	Grass Cut Re-charges	-	-		
24.39	Rents/Wayleaves	73.80	25.00	25.00	25.00
-	Grants	-			
150.00	Donations	142.00	-	142.00	-
-	Other Income (misc)	91.72	-	91.72	-
=	VAT refund	=	=	<u>383.00</u>	=
16,408.05		12,494.15	12,444.00	13,060.72	9,260.00
	Payments				

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5,239.64	Salaries	2,812.19	4,890.00	4,614.50	5,944.00
373.01	Administration	167.63	500.00	2,970.00	
-	Elections		800.00	-	800.00
-	Training	933.95	960.00	1,000.00	750.00
885.88	Insurance	885.88	920.00	960.00	1,000.00
189.00	Subscriptions	158.00	190.00	190.00	190.00
-	Allotments		150.00	-	
1,262.14	Village Facilities	737.85	2,625.00	1,042.00	670.00
-	Grants/Donations/ Gifts		-		-
-	Section 137		-		-
<u>238.94</u>	VAT paid	144.04	-	-	-
	Contingency and Reserve		<u>3,000.00</u>	=	<u>9,000.00</u>
8,188.61		5,839.54	14,035.00	10,776.50	18,354.00
Receipts and Payments Summary					
4,796.29	Balance b/fwd	13,015.73	13,015.73	13,015.73	15,299.95
16,408.25	Add total receipts	12,494.15	12,444.00	13,060.72	9,260.00
<u>8,188.61</u>	Less total payments	<u>5,839.54</u>	<u>14,035.00</u>	<u>10,776.50</u>	<u>18,354.00</u>
13,013.73	Balance c/forward	19,670.34	11,424.73	15,299.95	6,205.95

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Represented by

Funds in Current Account	756.40
Funds in Deposit Account	<u>19,027.70</u>
	19,784.10

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Adjustments for 31-3-2015

Salaries

Salary to 31-10-2014	2,812.00
Due to be paid 2 months @ £257.50	515.00
Plus 5 months @ £257.5	<u>1,287.50</u>
	4,614.50

Administration

Spend to 31-10-2014	167.63
Estimate for internal auditor	100.00
External auditor (BDO)	2,506.80
Allowance for misc stationery	<u>200.00</u>
	2,974.43

Village Facilities

Spend to 31-10-2014	737.85
Village hall - 8 occasions @£13 p.o.	104.00
Materials for Heritage hut	<u>200.00</u>
	1,041.85

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Adjustments for 2015-2016

Salaries

Clerks Salary 1-4-2015 to 31-10-2016	4,955.00
Estimate 40 hours per month @ £10.30 ph	
Clerks PAYE and NHI @ 20% of salary	<u>989.00</u>
	5,944.00

Administration

Spend to 31-10-2014	167.63
Estimate for internal auditor	100.00
External auditor (BDO)	2,506.80
Allowance for misc stationery	<u>200.00</u>
	2,974.43

Village Facilities

Village hall - 13 occasions @£13 p.o.	170.00
Materials for Heritage hut	<u>500.00</u>
	670.00

Contingency and reserve

Refurbishment of Heritage Hut

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	3,000.00
Traffic Calming measures	3,000.00
General reserves	<u>3,000.00</u>
	9,000.00

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Appendix III – Auditor’s Explanatory letter on invoice

Dear Mr Solnick

Thank you for your email.

The audit fee set by the audit commission for your normal audit is based upon your income and expenditure levels and is therefore not comparable to time taken when dealing with electors questions.

We received 7 letters from the two electors, 15 emails from the electors as well as numerous phone calls and letters from the non elector in your area. Each of these letters were very long, one was 12 pages, and detailed and required considerable time to review and digest. Each one required a response and advice had to be sought from the Audit Commission technical department over a number of the issues raised and also legal opinion was sought regarding the legality of the increase in the pay scales for the former member of staff. The electors wanted us to declare the payment ‘Wednesbury unreasonable’ and therefore unlawful so legal advice had to be sought to cover this challenge. They also wanted us to obtain a refund of the monies paid. They also raised other queries over the reasons behind the increase in precept and salary payments, challenging hours worked and other issues around budgeting and also challenged that the freedom of information requests resulting in the increased salary costs.

A senior manager dealt with all of the matters in respect to the electors questions, which is our normal protocol. The charge out rate for the senior manager is much higher than the £117 charged per hour under our contract with the Audit Commission but we believe this is required due to the complexity of the questions and matters being raised by the electors. The time on our fees ledger therefore is much greater than that charged to you. Also, we did not charge any of our time taken in dealing with the non elector or for obtaining the legal advice. The time charged was purely in dealing with the elector’s emails and letters and considering our response to their various challenges, which were many. For example one of the letters had 19 issues to consider. There was also considerable partner involvement in the final decision which again has not been charged for, only the senior managers time in concluding on the various matters raised and considering the legal opinions received.

I apologise for the delay in concluding your 2013 audit. You did submit your audit in June, we received the electors questions in September just before we were going to conclude your audit. We sought advice in late September and early October and considered this up to November. Then we received more correspondence from the electors in December. More correspondence was received in February and May. After each piece of correspondence we obtained further advice. In July we were in a situation to close the audit, but due to the 2014 audit being submitted which raised further issues we decided to delay both to close them down at the same time.

The time taken was charged in accordance with the Audit Commission charging protocol and is charged in line with our appointment letter, which was sent to you on our appointment.

I do hope this helps clarify our charges but if you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Just so you are aware we have now received enquiries calling for the electors rights to be redone as they feel that the accounts presented during the original electors rights period was not the ones then subsequently approved by the Council.

Kind regards

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Webpage: <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

CLERK: Jeremy Solnick

e-mail: pc@walberswick.suffolk.gov.uk

Post; Heritage Hut, The Green, Walberswick Suffolk IP18 6TT

Mrs Emma Prince

Council Audit team

For and on behalf of BDO LLP
Arcadia House
Maritime Walk - Ocean Village
Southampton SO14 3TL
UNITED KINGDOM
+44 (0)23 8088 1700
www.bdo.co.uk

Appendix IV –Planning Advisory Group Report on Blythe Reach

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/14/3249/FUL

Blyth Reach, The Street, Walberswick, Suffolk IP18 6UH

31.10.2014

Blyth Reach lies within the Conservation Area at the rear of the house known as Green Gables opposite the junction of The Street and Lodge Road.

The intention is to replace the timber studio in the garden of Blyth Reach with an enlarged single story building incorporating a new studio and a granny flat with bedroom, bathroom, cloak room and entrance hall. The accommodation, which is designed to be fully accessible for a wheelchair user, will remain ancillary to the main house.

The new building will be located in the northeast corner of the garden, on the site of the existing studio. Almost invisible from the road, the garden is well screened from adjoining properties by mature hedges. No trees or hedges will be lost by the development. There are no listed buildings in the vicinity.

The plan comprises two wings of accommodation enclosing a south facing terrace. The form of the building will give privacy to the occupant as well as preserving the privacy of neighbours. The northwest elevation has no windows to the boundary, the northeast elevation has one small bathroom window. Otherwise, windows face to the south and west giving views across the garden of the house itself.

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Policy DM6 of the Local Plan allows the creation of self-contained annexes to accommodate an elderly or disabled dependent, for example, by the 'construction of a new building within the curtilage where it is well related to the existing dwelling'. There must be no adverse effect on residential or visual amenity, and conditions will be applied to prevent future use as a separate dwelling. Potential future use as holiday accommodation would be subject to the provisions of Policy SP8.

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group, the proposal meets the criteria for new development within the Conservation Area.

Two members of the Planning Advisory Group have declared an interest in the application and have not participated in this review.