

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Parish Council held in the annex of the Village Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 10th January 2011.

PRESENT

Councillors: Mr D C B Webb (Chairman), Mr A E Hunt (Vice Chairman), Mr B Tibbles, Mrs R Woodcraft, Mr K G Webb, Mr NJ D Crocker, Mrs A Aldridge and, Miss M Verneti (Clerk). County Councillor R. Leighton and District Cllr Mr P Austin.

1. No Apologies were received
2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** held on Monday 6th December were proposed by Cllr B Tibbles, seconded by Cllr A E Hunt and agreed by those present at the last meeting. The Chairman signed them as a true record.
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**
There were no declarations of interest.
4. **REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND THE POLICE**

County Cllr Rae Leighton told those present that The County Council had made as many savings as it could in order to find the £40 million required to “balance the budget” and it was now a case sadly of cutting services. The extent of these cuts was still unknown as it was still being worked on but finding 5.5% of their revenue was a substantial sum of money and not easy to do.

He also mentioned that there was still money in his Locality Budget and that the Parish Council should give some thought as to projects that may benefit the village, and applications must be in by the end of March.

District Cllr P Austin reiterated what Cllr Leighton had said adding that SCDC needed to find a further 4.1% reduction in their grants. He also reminded the Parish Council that any comments on the latest version of the LDF were due on the 23rd January.

The Clerk had received a report from PCSO Newson stating that there were no recorded crimes in Walberswick for the month of December 2010.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**
 - a. With regard to the potholes in Church Lane, the Clerk had been in touch with Suffolk County Council Highways Department who had confirmed in a letter dated 2nd December that it was not their responsibility. The previous Clerk had provided a phone number at the Highways Department, but as yet the Clerk had

been unable to contact this person. It had been suggested that the relevant Housing Association be contacted, as it was most likely down to them.

- b. Playquip Leisure had replaced the horse's head on the common.
- c. There had been no news on the street light timers, and the meeting with Anglian Water was still to be arranged regarding the Sewage problems.
- d. It was stated that works to remove the diseased beech tree at Alexandra Cottage had started.
- e. The Chairman had been told by Royal Mail that a new sub-post mistress had been appointed for Yoxford, and they stated that they would approach her in the New Year to see if she would be prepared to continue the outreach service to Walberswick. The Chairman stated he would follow this up
- f. With regard to the Public Toilets NPS had confirmed that nothing was due to be done until 2012/2013 but if we wished to discuss taking control of the Toilets then they would be happy to discuss the matter – it was agreed to leave it for the time being.
- g. The Clerk had written to Natural England with regard to the Windpump. They had written back to say it was being handled by Adam Burrows and we await a response from him.
- h. A donation of £150 had been received from the BBC for the Community Benefit Fund for filming the Hairy Bikers and the Clerk had written and thanked them.
- i. The Chairman had written to SCC with regards to their plans for the Visitor Centre – it was planned to allow them a bit of time to respond before booking the meeting between all the interested parties.
- j. The clerk agreed to chase up the differences on the ROSPA report.
- k. With regards to the whether or not the new/refurbished beach hut on the beach required planning permission, the Chairman had checked with the Planners and whilst a minor technicality meant that it did it was suggested that unless the Parish Council were unhappy with the new beach hut that it be left.
- l. The Chairman had received a lovely email from the people that had ended up with the old village sign, and they had stated that they felt it should be returned. It was agreed to contact them to arrange this and to invite them to Walberswick as the guests of the Parish Council and make an event of it. It was also agreed that it should probably be put back where it originally was, at the entrance to the village.
- m. Cllr Crocker gave an update on where he was with the research on the Broadband. He confirmed that he had completed initial research on the issue and had just obtained a copy of the Government's report "Britain's Superfast Broadband Future" issued in December. This does consider issues facing rural areas and following a full review of it he will prepare a summary report of his findings for the next PC meeting.

6. PLANNING

There were no planning matters this month

7. ACCOUNTS

a) Receipts

- a. BBC Donation from Hairy Bikers to Community Benefit Fund - £150.00
- b. Allotment Rents for 2010 - £211.00
- c. Bank interest all accounts Sept – Nov - £1.02

b) Payments:

- a. Village Hall Hire Costs 20.12.10 - £15.00
- b. Playquip Leisure – Repairs to Equipment - £329.00
- c. Essex & Suffolk Water – Sports Field Water June – Dec 2010 - £20.66
- d. Waveney Norse Grass Cutting for 2010 - £490.42
- e. Miss A Verneti – Salary Oct – Dec - £1,084.20
- f. Miss A Verneti – Expenses – Oct – Dec £173.03
- g. Mr Kevin Oram – Christmas Tree - £90.00

Cllr R Woodcraft proposed and Cllr A Aldridge seconded that the accounts were agreed for payment and the receipts acknowledged, and this was unanimously agreed. It was also agreed to write and thank Mr Philip Kett for once more collecting all the allotment rents.

8. SEA DEFENCES UPDATE

The Chairman had received a phone call from a gentleman in Cornwall who had developed a form of sea defence made out of old tractor tyres. Details had been sent on to the Sea Defence Group.

It was clear that the tides had washed away virtually all of the fencing on the seaward side, with many of the Waveney District Council signs being washed away as well. The Clerk was asked to contact WDC about this and to let them know that the lifebelts, although there, were just hanging on, and the Chairman agreed to inform the Environment Agency.

9. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

No further progress had been made on this item.

10. ROYAL WEDDING CELEBRATIONS

The Chairman had asked for ideas of how the village could celebrate the Royal Wedding – the Councillors had fond memories of celebrating other Royal events, and it was agreed to put something in the Village Newsletter asking for suggestions. It was also agreed to contact the VHMC and if they hadn't booked the hall for the day then to do it on behalf of the Parish Council.

11. CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. A letter had been received from Ipswich and East Suffolk Headway thanking the Parish Council for its donation.
- b. A letter had been received from the Environment Agency explaining why works along the riverbank were taking so long and why the walks would continue to be closed for the foreseeable future.
- c. A response to the Chairman's letter regarding coastal erosion was received from Dr T Coffey, our MP, stating her commitment to getting fair compensation and hopefully not turning her back on the problem of coastal protection.
- d. Homestart had written to the Parish Council asking for a Grant. It was agreed that the Clerk would respond that WPC did not give Grants and finances meant that we could not give out any more donations.
- e. SCDC had written to state that the developer for the proposed houses on the site at Alexandra Cottage had completed his Section 106 obligation, which meant that full planning permission could now be granted. A notification letter would be sent out in the normal way.

- f. A letter was received from SCDC dated 6th January with 20 leaflets enclosed with the heading “How many homes should we have” This leaflet was supposed to have been distributed to homes in the region as part of the LDF Core Strategy consultation, but it was felt that a) the leaflet was being sent out far too late as the end of the consultation period was 23rd January, and b) sending 20 leaflets for a village with an electoral roll of 351 was of no use. The clerk was asked to write and complain.
- g. The Royal British Legion sent details of their “Great Poppy Party” to be held in June. The Clerk was asked to pass it onto Mrs Judith Heatherington.

12. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

- a. The Chairman read out some paragraphs from one of many letters that he had received continuing to criticise the Parish Council. He stated that in the case of this letter the statements made were in fact, a distortion of the truth. Cllr K Webb stated that the author of the letter should either substantiate his statements or make an apology.
- b. The matter of Ship-to-Ship Oil Transfers was brought up again. It now seems that the area off the coast of Southwold/Lowestoft is the only area around the UK where these transfers will be permitted. The Parish Council’s view is that regardless of regulations and controls in place, accidents can happen with potentially devastating consequences to our coastline. Problems highlighted were that the equipment to deal with oil spills was not stored locally and our nearest coastguard station, Great Yarmouth was earmarked for closure. A letter would be sent to our local MP expressing the Parish Council’s concerns.
- c. Cllr Crocker raised the subject of the apparent division in the village and felt that a “substantial community project” could bring the village together by harnessing the wide range of skills available and potentially create an iconic legacy for future generations. It was agreed to put something in the Village News to encourage ideas.
- d. Cllr A Hunt proposed that letters of thanks be sent to Mr John Flack for organising the musicians, and Cllr Aldridge and Mrs P Webb for organising the coffees in the village hall on the night of the Carol Service round the tree. Brian Fisher was thanked for officiating, and together with the wonderful carol singers who went round the village on Christmas Eve, £398.60 was raised for the East Anglian Children’s Hospice, Treehouse Appeal.
- e. Cllr Hunt also brought up the fact that the church gates were in a state of disrepair and they represented the only memorial to some of the villagers who died in the wars. Mr Walpole, representing the History Group was asked if anything was being done, and it appeared that the project had stalled. The suggestion was maybe some of County Cllr Leighton’s locality budget could be used.
- f. Cllr Aldridge stated she had been approached by someone asking if steps could be put on the marsh side of the allotment bank as it was very steep. It was agreed that the Chairman would draft a letter to the Environment Agency and the Landowner.
- g. Cllr K Webb stated that most of the grass seed had taken on the Green, but that it might be a good idea to get it fertilised before the growing season got underway. The Clerk was asked to do some research into this.

- h.** Cllr K Webb also mentioned that the bark chips on the green needed replacing, this had been mentioned as part of the ROSPA Report and the Clerk agreed to get prices.

13. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

- a.** Mr A Walpole asked to be kept informed regarding the visitor centre. The clerk stated she had a copy of the letter for him at the end of the meeting.
- b.** Mrs V Hunt questioned the gas boiler flue at the Stables, The Street, being at a low level onto a public highway and the Clerk was asked to check with Building Control.
- c.** Mr T Kohn brought up the issue that the Parish Council appeared to be on the receiving end of a great deal of criticism from a few people in the village, and asked if a vote of confidence from the village would be in order. He then formally asked for a slot on the Agenda at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 14th April 2011.
- d.** Mr J MacCarthy asked two questions as to why his requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act had not been carried out and why his letters were not being responded to. The Chairman pointed out that he had been sent everything that he was entitled to, and that the Parish Council had issued an exclusion notice against him.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 7th February 2011 at 7.30 pm.

The Meeting was closed at 8.40 pm

Signed.....

Date.....