

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall annexe at 7.30pm on Monday 3 October 2011.

PRESENT: Councillors Mr D C B Webb (Chairman), Mr N Crocker, Mr B Tibbles, Mrs R Woodcraft and Mrs J Gomm (Clerk).

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors Mrs A Aldridge, Mr A E Hunt (Vice-Chairman) and Mr K G Webb.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September were amended at page 4, item 8.a) - Sea Defences where at the end of the sentence the following words were added, "to Southwold Harbour." They were **approved** as amended and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Crocker and seconded by Cllr Woodcraft.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Prejudicial interests: Cllr D Webb declared a prejudicial interest in item 6.c) on the agenda.

4. **REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND THE POLICE**

There were no reports.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- **Beach Clean:** It was reported the gloves and bags had been delivered, but Natural England and the RSPB had failed to reply to the Clerk's request for volunteer help to clean those parts of the beach in front of their ownership.
- **Post Office:** The Clerk reported that Wangford with Henham Parish Council, following the cancellation of the outreach service that was due to commence in their village on 6 September, had asked other parishes whether the lack of the service in Wangford was affecting other parishes. The Post Office had also commenced consultation on the possible mutualisation of the post office. **Agreed** to inform Wangford Parish Council that, as far as the Council was aware, the lack of a post office facility in Wangford was not affecting residents or businesses in Walberswick. To ask Wangford Parish Council whether it would consider co-ordinating a campaign of local parishes which had lost their post offices and wished to see a post office service restored. To circulate the information on the possible post office mutualisation and consider whether to make comments at the next meeting.
- **Potholes in Church Lane:** The Clerk reported that dealing with the potholes in Church Lane was now in the planned maintenance programme of Flagship Housing Association. She was still working with Suffolk County Council to try to rebut the presumption that the road was not a highway maintainable at the public expense.

6. **PLANNING**

a) **Planning Notifications:**

None had been received.

b) **Planning Applications:**

Fishers Garage, The Street, C/11/2179: erection of front boundary wall.

Agreed to raise no objections to the planning application.

c) Tows Cabin, Ferry Road, C/11/1772 and C/11/1773: erection of two storey dwelling (existing dwelling and wc building to be demolished).

Cllrs D Webb had declared a prejudicial interest in this item. He left the room and took no further part in discussions. Cllr Tibbles took over the chair.

At the last meeting it had been agreed to ask SCDC to provide the correct paperwork relating to the applications and to ask the Suffolk Preservation Society to examine the proposals and make comments to SCDC on them. The Council noted that the Clerk had now been provided with a copy of the planning application form, new copies of the Flood Response Plan and the Design and Access Statement which may have had a missing page/s at the last meeting and the full text of an email letter from the Environment Agency dated 04.09.2006. The Clerk reported that she had received no response following her letter to the Suffolk Preservation Society.

Cllr D Webb returned to the meeting and resumed the chair.

d) Retrospective Planning Applications: The Clerk read the email she had received from SCDC planning department in reply to her letter concerning retrospective planning applications.

e) Alleged retail operations in the vicinity of Rosemary Cottage, The Street: The Clerk read the email she had received in response to her letter to SCDC planning department in reply to her letter concerning alleged retail operations at or near Rosemary Cottage.

f) No applications for tree works had been received.

7. ACCOUNTS

a) Receipts:

There were no receipts this month.

b) Payments:

1. Miss A Vernetti, reimbursement for filing cabinet - £79.98
 2. SALC, attendance of the Clerk and Cllr Hunt at the seminar, "Dealing with Difficult People" - £48.00 inclusive of vat
- Cllr Tibbles proposed and Cllr Crocker seconded that the payments be made and this was **agreed**.

8. UPDATES

a) Sea Defences – Cllr D Webb reported that the work had just started on the river bank repairs behind Tinkers Marsh.

b) Village Sign – The Clerk reported that the Highway Authority (SCC) had agreed to the raising of the height restriction in the licence, but that a site meeting would be useful to agree the actual necessary height and any other relevant matters. As the licence had been circulated to Councillors it was proposed by Cllr D Webb and seconded by Cllr Woodcraft and **agreed** to enter into the licence with SCC and for Cllr Tibbles to attend a site meeting with a representative of SCC on 18.10.11.

c) Broadband - Cllr Crocker reported that the Broadband Focus Group of the Parish Plan was being assisted by Suffolk ACRE and it was hoped that within the next few weeks a proposal would be brought forward.

9. THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Councillors had received a briefing paper circulated by SALC and Cllrs D Webb and Crocker had attended a briefing by SCDC on which they reported. **Agreed** that the Clerk should write to the Department for Communities and Local Government making the following points:

- The definition of "sustainable" and "sustainability" within the draft document is not clear enough.

- The Parish Council is concerned that countryside (such as open farm land) which is not specifically designated as Green Belt, AONB, SSSI, Heritage Coast, National Park or with any other specific designation, will become more vulnerable to development if the draft National Planning Policy Framework becomes government guidance than it would have been under the current system of government guidance on planning issues.
- The presumption in favour of conservation which is contained within current government guidance appears to have been removed from the draft National Planning Policy Framework and this is a cause of regret to the Parish Council.
It was also **agreed** that the Clerk should write to SCDC in connection with SCDC's concerns about the transitional arrangements and the possible effects of not having a Local Development Framework in place, urging it to do whatever it can to expedite the adoption of its Local Development Framework.

10. SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL'S REVIEWED CORE STRATEGY SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL AND ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTS

These documents would eventually form part of the Local Development Framework, but had been reviewed and SCDC was consulting on the changes to the documents. It was **agreed** to write to SCDC making no comment on the documents because of their technical nature.

11. SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON THE MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

The consultation document had been circulated to councillors. SCC had asked the Clerk to complete a questionnaire concerning her use of the mobile library service and asked for the Council's views on changing the frequency of visits to Walberswick from 2 weekly to either 4 weekly or monthly. It also requested the Council's views on a proposal to reduce the number of stops in the village from two to one. **Agreed** that the Chairman would find someone who used the service to complete the questionnaire; to respond to SCC that a four weekly cycle would be preferable to monthly as it preserved the same day of the week; to request that two stops remain in Walberswick as in the summer months with one stop, elderly residents would need to drive to the stop where there would be no-where to park.

12. THE COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATIONS STYLE AND METHODS

After raising this matter at a previous meeting Cllr Crocker had informal discussions with individual councillors and had prepared written ideas for consideration which were circulated. **Agreed** that as three councillors were not at the meeting the matter should be considered at a later meeting when more councillors were present.

13. REPORT ON SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS' SEMINARS

The Clerk and Cllr Hunt had attended a seminar entitled "Dealing with Difficult People". It had provided useful advice especially on dealing with difficult councillors or employees. The Clerk had attended two day long seminars in preparation for producing a portfolio for the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). She had also attended a seminar on book keeping, the annual return, audit and precept which she had found very useful.

14. BRIDGE OVER THE CREEK NEAR EAST POINT

The Environment Agency had responded to the Council's letter of objection to their proposed removal of the bridge by suggesting that the Council should consider adopting it. Mr Graeme Godsmark had written a poem about the issue which was read. **Agreed** that provided Mr. Godsmark agreed, the poem be sent to the East Anglian Daily Times for publication; that the matter of taking over ownership of the bridge be referred to the Walberswick Common Lands Charity by the Chairman and the Clerk write to the Environment Agency explaining that the bridge is not on land within the boundary of Walberswick Parish Council.

15. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) SCC had closed footpath number 36 between Tinkers House and 900m west of the Bailey Bridge from 30 August 2011 for a possible six month period.
- b) Waveney District Council had consulted the Council on its draft Open Space Supplementary Planning Document which set out how open space should be provided in new developments. **Agreed** not to respond.
- c) The League of Friends of Aldeburgh and District Community Hospital had made the Council aware that the Primary Care Trust (NHS Suffolk) had decided to go to open tender for the services provided by Suffolk Community Healthcare which may lead to services being provided by a private sector organisation. The League of Friends had a number of concerns including the effect this could have on community support for the hospital. **Agreed** to write to the Secretary of State for Health supporting the League of Friends and stating that the Council understood their point of view.
- d) Community Development Officers for Local Foods with Suffolk ACRE had contacted the Council asking for help in identifying ways they could help the local community. **Agreed** to ask what type of support they could offer and to inform them that Yoxford County Primary School which is attended by children from the village has a gardening club, cooking club and allotment that may benefit from their assistance.
- e) The Rural Coffee caravan in Weybread was fund raising. **Agreed** no action.
- f) The Police had produced advice relating to oil thefts. **Agreed** the Clerk would post the press release.
- g) SCC, SCDC and the Police were holding two meetings to highlight and discuss key issues and challenges facing the district's communities and the opportunities for joint working. **Agreed** that if any Councillor was able to attend a meeting they would contact the Clerk.
- h) SCDC had consulted the Council on proposed changes to the management and charges for its car parks in the district. **Agreed** to make no comment.
- i) The Police had provided advice and posters in relation to Halloween and Bonfire Night. **Agreed** that as there had been no problems in the past in Walberswick not to post up the posters.
- j) Cratfield Parish Council had invited interested parties to a presentation provided by the Parish Council and Windcrop Ltd in respect of 15m wind generators on 1 November at their village hall. **Agreed** to book one place.
- k) The Suffolk Association of Local Council's (SALC) AGM was to be held on 7 November. **Agreed** that although the date coincided with the next Council meeting it was important that someone should attend, the Clerk would arrange this. The SCC questionnaire on its proposed budget had similar problems to its mobile libraries questionnaire. **Agreed** to write to SCC about this issue. Useful information about the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and data protection was attached. This would be circulated. Information about SALC courses was attached, but these were not relevant to the Council.
- l) There were a number of circulars. These would be circulated to all Councillors.

16. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The Clerk reported that since the September meeting she had worked for approximately 62 hours, of which she had spent approximately 29½ hours in dealing with requests for information or related matters. She had received approximately 55 emails and sent 25 emails on these matters and also a number of phone messages had been left and letters had been received and sent. She had dealt with approximately 65 requests for information and there were approximately 11 ongoing complaints against the Council to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) that she was dealing with.

17. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

- a) Cllr Woodcraft raised the question of whether the village committee should book the band for the Queens Diamond Jubilee. The Council had no objection to the band being booked.
- b) Cllr Tibbles asked whether the bonfire committee would approach the Walberswick Common Lands Charity to use the Cliff Field for the bonfire on 5 November. Cllr D Webb said he would do this by letter.
- c) Cllr Crocker said he wanted the Council to consider asking for the parking restrictions to be extended beyond the end of September as a result of the chaos in Walberswick over the weekend of 1 and 2 October when the weather was very hot. Cllr Tibbles asked that the Parish Plan Focus Group on Traffic management consider the issue as part of their parish plan work. The Clerk said that Cllr Crocker's proposal for a community stewardship programme would be put on the November or December agenda.
- d) Cllr D Webb reported that recently he had found the village hall bins had been moved and two youths were on the village hall roof, he would report this to the village hall committee. He also reported that a board walk had been erected on the part of footpath 11 from the block house to the Dunwich River, a footpath that had always been extremely muddy. **Agreed** to thank SCC footpaths department.

18. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr Buncombe reported that he attended a number of parish council meetings in connection with his work and there were other Councils who had expressed similar concerns over the format of questionnaires.

Mr MacCarthy asked whether Cllr Crocker's written suggestions concerning the communication style and methods of the Council could be put on the website. The Chairman replied that they would do so once the suggestions (as amended) had been adopted by the Council. He also said that the burden being placed on the Clerk concerning freedom of information requests was mainly coming from the ICO, not him. Mr Wells-Baker reported that for the first time in 18 months his children's egg money had been stolen from the box at the front gate. He also suggested that a levy be placed on each house or that fund raising be carried out in other ways to pay for items such as the vehicle activated sign or to mend the bridge near East Point. He felt there was a lot of negativity in the village. Cllr Woodcraft replied that she thought it was only coming from a small section of the village.

Mrs Bard asked on fine weekends whether car park charges could be imposed. The Chairman explained that charges could only be imposed when the parking restrictions were in force, otherwise most people would park on street causing problems. The matter could be considered by the Walberswick Car Park Company and the Clerk **agreed** to contact the company.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Monday 7 November at 7.30 pm and the meeting closed at 9.12 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....