

# WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall annexe at 7.30pm on 14 May 2012.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mr A Hunt, Mr B Morton, Mr A Pearson, Mr B Tibbles, Mr D Webb, Mr K Webb, Mrs R Woodcraft, County Council R Leighton (arrived late), District Councillor M Gower (arrived late) and Mrs J Gomm (Clerk).

## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Cllr D Webb was proposed by Cllr Tibbles and seconded by Cllr Woodcraft as Chairman. There were no other nominations and so Cllr D Webb was elected. He signed the declaration of acceptance of Office before Mrs Gomm, the Proper Officer of the Council.

## **2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Tibbles was proposed by Cllr K Webb and seconded by Cllr Woodcraft as Vice-Chairman. There were no other nominations and so Cllr Tibbles was elected.

## **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

PCSO Newson (Suffolk Police).

## **4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2012 were **approved** and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Tibbles. The minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2012 were **approved** and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Tibbles.

## **5. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Prejudicial interests: none

Personal interests: Cllr K Webb declared he had been appointed to the Walberswick Common Lands Charity (WCLC).

## **6. REVIEW OF DELEGATION ARRANGMENTS TO EMPLOYEE**

The Clerk explained that items 6 to 16 were required to be on the agenda of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council by standing order 2 j).

As the arrangements for delegation to the Clerk had been reviewed at the meeting held on 2 April 2012 it was **agreed** to make no changes to the present delegation arrangements to the Clerk.

## **7. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS**

These had been adopted in March 2011. The Clerk suggested that standing order 22 b) (relating to relations with the press/media) be permanently revoked as it would be replaced by the proposed policy for dealing with the press and other media as agenda item 15. It was **agreed** by a majority to revoke standing order 22 b).

## **8. REVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

These had been adopted by the Council in December 2011. It was **agreed** to make no changes to the Financial Regulations.

## **9. REVIEW OF REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES**

The following representations on bodies were reviewed:

**Walberswick Common Lands Charity:** Nigel Hunt, Clive Brynley-Jones, James Darkins, Madeline Dabbs. The term of office for each trustee was fixed and so no changes were proposed.

**Village Hall Management Committee:** It was **agreed** Cllr Pearson be the Council representative.

**Walberswick Car Parks Ltd:** Cllr Hunt was prepared to remain on the board of directors until his term of office expired. So **agreed**.

**Parish Plan Steering Group:** Cllr Hunt was prepared to remain on the Steering group until the Parish Plan had been finalised. So **agreed**.

**Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC):** **Agreed** Cllr Morton be the representative for the forthcoming year.

**Sizewell Parishes Liaison Group:** **Agreed** Cllr Woodcraft be the representative for the forthcoming year.

**Natural England's Wind Pump Group:** **Agreed** Cllr K Webb be the representative for the forthcoming year.

**Visitor Centre Working Group:** **Agreed** Cllr D Webb and B Tibbles be the representatives for the forthcoming year.

**Tree Wardens:** **Agreed** Tony Lancaster and Aubrey Pearson remain as tree wardens.

**Saxmundham and Framlingham Safer Neighbourhood Team Tasking Group:** **Agreed** to leave a vacancy.

**Sea Defence Group:** **Agreed** Cllr D Webb remain as representative.

**Blyth Estuary Group:** **Agreed** Cllr D Webb remain as representative.

**Suffolk Passenger Transport:** **Agreed** to leave a vacancy.

**Environment Agency flood gate key holders:** At present the only key holder was Cllr K Webb. The Clerk had agreed with the Environment Agency that it was desirable for there to be more people who could be contacted by the Environment Agency when necessary. Cllr K Webb reported that when closing the gate it was often necessary to use a vehicle as well as people. It was **agreed** that Ms B Priestman and Cllr Tibbles also become key holders and that the Clerk arrange for keys and contact lists of willing helpers be provided to the key holders.

## **10. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S MEMBERSHIP OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

It was **agreed** to retain membership of the following bodies:

- Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC)
- National Association of Local Councils
- Suffolk ACRE
- Sizewell Parishes Liaison Group

## **11. REVIEW OF INVENTORY OF LAND AND ASSETS INCLUDING BUILDINGS AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT**

In addition to the changes made to the assets register at the meeting held on 3 April 2012 it was **agreed** to add to the register the pink filing cabinet purchased from the previous Clerk, to add in the "Bun and Mac" seat and delete the "Mrs McClelland" seat as the "Bun and Mac" seat has physically replaced Mrs McClelland's seat. The Chairman suspended standing orders to allow Mrs Hunt to speak. She explained that whilst she was Clerk it had become too difficult to carry on insuring the seats and recharging the owners of the seats for the insurance. It had therefore been agreed that Mr P Kett would maintain the seats and charge the costs to the WCLC, but that the Council would carry on insuring the seats.

## **12. REVIEW AND CONFIRMATION OF INSURANCE COVER IN RESPECT OF ALL INSURED RISKS**

The Clerk explained that the Council held two insurance policies, both arranged through Suffolk Acre with Zurich.

The first policy covered the pavilion and ran from April to March. It cost £45.23 this year, slightly less than last year and provided cover for £25,643.01. It was **agreed**

that at the next renewal of the second policy the Clerk would try to amalgamate the policies.

The second policy covered everything else. The policy ran from October to September. It cost £689.39 this year and was the third year of a three year contract which had provided a discount.

The fidelity guarantee cover had been increased from £10,000 to £15,000 as a result of the meeting held on 3 April 2012 (the cover increased in bands so £13,000 wasn't achievable) and no extra premium was being charged for the increased cover this year.

The cover for the November 5<sup>th</sup> bonfire event had been provided at no extra cost this year.

The cover for the unveiling of the village sign and for the picnics and games on the Village Green were being provided at no extra cost provided the conditions were complied with as agreed at a previous meeting.

An additional premium for the village sign would be payable once it was erected, pro rata at an annual premium of £64.84 for this year.

The scroll and case are insured by the Village Hall Management Committee, but discussions are ongoing and the Clerk will report back.

Apart from the Jubilee Seat the other seats in the village are insured to a value of £5,570. It was **agreed** that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would discuss with the Clerk which seats were in the ownership of the Council with a view to making a decision at a further meeting on which seats should continue to be insured.

The Clerk also explained that before the next renewal she would discuss with the insurance officer at Suffolk Acre other insurance packages which may be more suitable for the Council.

It was **agreed** that the insurance arrangements were sufficient.

### **13. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The procedure was adopted on 16 January 2012. It was **agreed** to make no changes to the Complaints Procedure.

### **14. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING REQUESTS MADE UNDER THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998, THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2004**

The Clerk explained there was no policy for these issues except that contained in the Complaints Procedure. Her procedure for dealing with these issues had evolved as issues changed. Her present procedure was to scan read anything incoming to check whether it could be construed as falling within any of the relevant pieces of legislation. If so, she dated its received date and also the deadline for answering it. It was clipped with other items from the same person and put in a "to action box" which was separate from other in trays for the Council. She then dealt with it as soon as possible, responding in accordance with the relevant Act. She tried to deal with requests in batches, person by person, as she found this easier and less time consuming. If a request came by email then she responded by email, if as a hard copy then the response was by hard copy. She keeps separate actioned files, both paper based and digital by person and also holds a general file with advice from the Information Commissioner's Office etc. It was **agreed** to make no changes to the procedure.

### **15. ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLICY FOR DEALING WITH THE PRESS AND OTHER MEDIA**

A draft policy had been emailed to Councillors on 3 May. It was **agreed** to approve the draft as the Council's policy for dealing with the press and other media and to post it on notice boards and the website.

### **16. THE SETTING OF DATES, TIMES AND PLACE FOR ORDINARY MEETINGS FOR THE COUNCIL FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR**

The following dates were **agreed**:

- 11 June 2012, 2 July, 3 September, 1 October, 12 November, 3 December, 7 January 2013, 4 February, 4 March, 1 April all in the village hall annexe to commence at 7.30pm.
- 17 December 2012 in the main village hall for carols and mince pies for the village and 18 April 2013 in the main village hall for the Annual Parish Meeting to commence at 7.30pm.

#### **17. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR FINANCIAL CONTROLLER UNTIL NEXT ANNUAL MEETING**

It was **agreed** to appoint Cllr Woodcraft, proposed by Cllr Tibbles and seconded by Cllr D Webb.

#### **18. REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND THE POLICE**

County Councillor Leighton said that there would be a community meeting at Snape on 28 May concerning the possibility of a third nuclear reactor at Sizewell. It was being sponsored by the Joint Local Authority Group of relevant County and District Councillors and the intention was develop a local authority strategy and hear from EDF.

District Councillor Gower had nothing to report.

There was no report from the police.

#### **19. PLANNING MATTERS**

##### **a) Planning notifications:**

##### **Little Meadow, The Street, C/12/0401**

Planning permission had been granted for the extension of the close board fence and installation of an oil tank.

##### **The Village Hall, The Street, C/12/0304**

Planning permission had been granted for replacement cladding to the west elevation and the erection of a weather vane.

##### **b) Tree works:**

##### **Slinfold, The Street, C/12/00032/TCA**

##### **Westons, The Street, C/12/00030/TCA**

##### **Ferry House, Ferry Road, C/12/00031/TCA**

No objections had been raised by Suffolk Coastal District Council to the proposed tree works in each case.

#### **20. ACCOUNTS**

##### **a) Receipts:**

Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC), ½ year precept minus advance paid in 30.04.12 - £6,000

Mr J MacCarthy, Subject Access Request, Data Protection Act 1998 - £10.00

Norse, recycling credits - £4.23

##### **b) Payments:**

SCDC, election 02.02.12 - £61.47

SCDC, election 22.03.12 - £663.68

Total £725.15 (no vat)

WCLC, rent for sports field on Common - £1.00

Trevor W Oram, aeration of Village Green - £50 plus £10 vat

Sizewell Parishes Liaison Group 2012, subscription 2012 - £30

Cllr Morton proposed and Cllr Tibbles seconded that the payments be made and it was **agreed**.

J K Gomm (also known as J K Linley), net salary April 2012, 128 hours - £954.99

HMRC, tax for £83.60 and NI for £55.17 for J K Linley - £138.77

J K Gomm, expenses, postage 19.03.12 – 03.05.12 - £6.36

Cllr Tibbles proposed and Cllr K Webb seconded that the payments be made and it was **agreed**.

#### **c) Proposed expenditure**

It was **agreed** the Clerk attend a Clerk's networking day at SALC on 30.05.12 at a cost of £15.00 plus vat, the budgetary provision to be transferred from the proposal to send the Clerk on a course on PAYE and vat.

It was **agreed** the Clerk attend a CiLCA course on the "General Power of Competence" which replaces the "Power of Wellbeing" module, the cost of £40 plus vat to come from the CiLCA budgetary provision.

#### **d) Consideration of the report by the Responsible Financial Officer and Councillor Financial Controller on the effectiveness of the Council's internal audit**

The Council considered the report by the Clerk (as Responsible Financial Officer) and Cllr Hunt (as Councillor Financial Controller) which had been emailed to Councillors. The Clerk added to the report that the cost of Heelis & Lodge carrying out the internal audit would be £90. It was **agreed**:

- To appoint Heelis & Lodge as the Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2012-2013
- That the terms of reference for Heelis & Lodge be that the firm is able to report satisfactorily on the Annual Return, section 4, Annual Internal Audit report
- In due course the Council approves a written internal audit plan
- The new Councillor Financial Controller (Cllr Woodcraft) be given appropriate training.

#### **21. CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSAL TO DISPLAY DRAFT UNAPPROVED MINUTES ON THE WEBSITE**

The Clerk read the notice that she proposed to put on the website to accompany the draft minutes. It was **agreed** that draft minutes be displayed on the website for a trial period of three months.

#### **22. JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS**

The Clerk reported that all arrangements seemed to be running smoothly and that the only issue left for decision was whether to grant permission for the WCLC to place a beacon on the Village Green in the evening of Monday 4 June. Cllr K Webb said he understood that the WCLC had written to residents and house owners surrounding the Green who had generally replied positively to the suggestion. It was **agreed** to give the WCLC the required permission.

The Clerk reminded the Chairman he needed to complete risk assessments for the unveiling and picnic and games on the Green and that Councillors needed to decide amongst themselves who would be responsible for the invited guests to the unveiling. Cllr K Webb explained that Mrs and Ms Whittenbury had altered the banner to be displayed near the Village Green and asked the Clerk to thank them. The Clerk so **agreed**.

#### **23. THE SUFFOLK COAST AND HEATHS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2013 – 2018, CONSULTATION**

It was **agreed** to make the following comments:

- The AONB needs to make the public aware that they must clear up after their dogs. At present it is very noticeable, especially after a bank holiday weekend, that the beach and footpaths are covered with dog excrement or abandoned dog bags.
- The AONB needs to address (together with the Environment Agency, Natural England and District Councils) the protection of the sea defences and dunes which suffer greatly from the impact of people.

## **24. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR THE SPORTS FIELD**

Ms M Rouke had, following the Parish Plan survey set up a toddlers group in the village. She had also requested that the Council provide large goal posts, a basketball stand and net and a zip wire on the sports field. The Clerk had agreed with SCDC that the zip wire could be provided from the play space s106 monies and the other items from the sports field section 106 monies being held in respect of Walberswick Parish. The Council would need to provide three quotes and make application to SCDC. The money would be provided 50% upfront and 50% upon a satisfactory site visit from SCDC once the work was complete. It was **agreed** that Cllr D Webb would obtain three quotes for the items requested and the Clerk would then make the application.

## **25. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS**

Cllr Hunt read from a letter he had written and gave to the Chairman after the meeting. In it he tendered his resignation as Parish Councillor because of further emails and correspondence from a small group of people. The Chairman suspended standing orders to say that he was sorry; Cllr Hunt had served the Council well and been extremely diligent. It was a terrible shame he had been pushed to resign. The Chairman then read an excerpt of an email addressed to Cllr Hunt, but copied to all Councillors and the Clerk. He said he thought the email was quite offensive. Cllr Hunt then read a statement and followed by handing copies of his resignation letter to three of the Council's complainants to save them having to make Freedom of Information requests to obtain a copy.

Cllr Pearson suggested that the Council plant a Jubilee tree. Other Councillors thought this was a good idea and it was **agreed** that Cllr Pearson would make a formal suggestion of tree type and location at the next meeting.

Cllr Morton asked whether it would be possible to have some common sense enter into the debate between the Council and its complainants.

Cllr K Webb set out his concerns about Church Lane asking how it could apparently suddenly have become a private road. The Clerk responded that after extensive research it could not be proven it was a highway maintainable at the public expense. The repairs that had been carried out in the past by Suffolk County Council had been done so as agent for SCDC who owned the Council houses on one side or later as agent for the Housing Association who had taken over the Council houses.

## **26. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Mr Smiley offered himself to go on the list of people able to help with shutting the flood gates. The Clerk said she would put an item in the Village News looking for volunteers. Mr Smiley also asked through the Chairman if it was possible for any of the complainants to explain what their problems were which Cllr Hunt had alluded to in his resignation letter and statement.

Mr MacCarthy said that in September 2010 Cllrs D Webb and Hunt had conspired to prevent him from asking questions into how meetings were run. He said the Council had illegally refused to correspond with him and denied him his rights under the Freedom of Information Act. When the then Cllr Crocker had undertaken a review in July 2011 he had found the Council had behaved appropriately and correctly. In July 2011 the Council asked if a line could be drawn under matters. Mr MacCarthy continued by saying that he had responded by saying the Council should comply with standing orders and apologise to him. He still wanted an agreement to comply with the law and an apology.

Mr Walpole said Mr MacCarthy was right and he could brief Mr Smiley.

Mr Smiley asked whether the complainants could publicise their views as a large number of people in the village had no understanding of the problem except that it was costing a lot of money.

Mr Walpole said that the four of us together, but he was interrupted.

Mr Gilby told Mr Smiley the Parish Council could send to Mr Smiley every piece of correspondence he had sent to it. He got involved in January 2010 because the Parish Council was having to pay the District Council for the cost of papers being sent to it concerning planning matters. He asked the Parish Council to help him in his campaign to stop the District Council charging the Parish Council.

Mr Smiley repeated his request that the complainants publish their complaints.

Mr Walpole said it was all the fault of the Parish Council.

Cllr K Webb said that Mr MacCarthy had called his brother a duplicitous bastard.

Mr MacCarthy acknowledged he had used the word bastard, but not duplicitous.

Mrs Hunt explained that it was very sad for her and her husband that all the work her husband had done for the village had ended this way.

Mr Buncombe said he had listened to Mr Walpole, Mr Gilby and Mr MacCarthy and said that he disagreed with what they said concerning the Council. At two Annual Parish Meetings the Council had received overwhelming votes of confidence, in 2011 it had received a standing ovation, in 2012 none of the complainants had made statements; therefore they had no right to complain now as he saw the Annual Parish Meeting as a forum for holding the Parish Council to account. He disagreed with all they stood for; the Parish Council had met and far exceeded its obligations. He also said that it was not right for individual Councillors to receive sealed envelopes; all correspondence should go through the Clerk.

The exchanges continued, but the Chairman brought the matter to an end.

## **27. DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The date of the next routine meeting was agreed as Monday 11 June 2012.

## **28. JOB PROFILE FOR THE CLERK**

Cllr K Webb proposed and Cllr Tibbles seconded that the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of this item pursuant to section 100 Local Government Act 1972 and section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. This was **agreed**. The public including Mr Hunt left the meeting.

All employees of local councils were expected to be assessed against four job profiles (formulated by the National Association of Local Councils) in order to assess the appropriate level of salary. Within each profile there were three salary scales. The assessment was to be carried out by agreement between the job holder and representative/s of the employer. It had not been done for the Clerk, but her contract of employment acknowledged this and stated it would be done by 01.04.2012 and the salary adjusted from 01.04.12. As required by item 7 of the meeting held on 03.04.12 the Clerk had met with the Chairman and then Vice-Chairman, Cllr Hunt to discuss the Job Profile. The Chairman, then Vice-Chairman and Clerk had agreed that her job fell within the top end of profile 2, LC2.

After discussion, in which the Clerk explained that this would have budgetary implications, it was **agreed** that the Clerk's salary be placed on band 35-38 on LC2 and that her salary be paid pro rata from 01.04.2012 in accordance with this.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

