

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 Parish Council Meeting Held on Wednesday 3rd September 2014 in the Village Hall Annex.

Present: Cllrs Esme Richardson (Chair), Lee Sutton, Michael Gower and Ray Goodman. The Parish Clerk – Jeremy Solnick, plus about 15 members of the Public.

7:15pm, Open Forum:

Item 1 - To receive the District Councillor Report

Cllr Gower reported that an appeal by Hopkins Homes for a housing development at Yoxford had been turned down by the Planning Inspectorate but an appeal has been submitted to the High Court. This indicates how fiercely these housing developments can be contested. Cllr Gower highlighted some of the successes achieved by local parishes in providing new services to their villages. He expressed his hope that Walberswick was now in a position to move on from some of their recent difficulties and get on with delivering projects that will help the village.

Item 2 - To receive the County Councillor Report

Cllr Gower reported that he had attended a consultation meeting on education and the problems of funding smaller schools. There was still enormous budgeting difficulties which were likely to result in cuts to services.

Item 3 Police Report :-

The Clerk had made several attempts to contact Jamie Newson, the liaison officer but he had not responded

7:15pm, Open Forum:

A member of the public suggested that it would be a good idea if the Council were to publish a program of action items or things they would like to achieve during the year. The member suggested that this would give parish Council and something to focus on and a way of measuring progress during the year. Councillors felt this was a constructive and positive idea and Councillor Gower replied that he had produced a list of things he would like to see done and perhaps this should be updated. The Clerk said he would update the list and put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Another member of the public said that footpaths were becoming overgrown particularly those footpaths across the common. There was some discussion as to who was responsible for upkeep of footpaths. This fell on a number of different bodies. Some were maintained by Suffolk County Council. The Council office had a special number for this. The person responsible for footpaths was Bob Clench. The paths across the common were maintained by the Common Lands Charity. Jane Tibbles was the secretary.

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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 had been received from Councillor Chris Hosea and Councillor Lorraine Haslegrave

3. Declaration of Interests/Dispensation Applications Received

None had been received

4. Agree Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday 4th August 2014

The minutes were agreed without amendment and initialled by the chair.

5. Declarations of Acceptance of Office

The Clerk reported that the declarations of acceptance of office for Councillors Ray Cameron-Goodman and Chris Hosea had been misplaced. Enquiries had been made and it appeared that these had originally been signed at witnessed at the first meeting at which the respective councillor attended. Advice from Suffolk County Council was that replacement declarations should be signed at the earliest opportunity. Councillor Goodman signed a replacement declaration which was witnessed and dated by the Parish clerk. As Councillor Hosea was not at the meeting arrangements would be made for him to sign one at the earliest opportunity.

6. To receive the Clerk's Report?

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

The clerk reported that he had carried out a bank reconciliation with the cashbook up to the 1st September. The reconciled balance was £15,695.52. This month he was asking the Parish council to make payments totalling £1,261.00 (see below) which would leave a balance of £14,334.52. The only income was small amounts of bank interest totalling less than £2.00.

- b. External Auditors reports for the years ended 31st March 2013 and 31st March 2014.

The external Auditor's reports for these years were still outstanding. The clerk had been told that these would be dealt with during September. He would contact the auditors for an update. As reported the previous month, electors had raised a number of queries on the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2013. The clerk had no idea what the auditor's report on this year would say and he apologised if he had given any other impression at the meeting on the 4th

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August. The auditor's had issued a qualification notice in respect of the year ended 31st March 2014 because a risk assessment had not been carried out during that year (see below).

c. Risk Assessment for the Current Financial Year

The audit regulations require a risk assessment to be carried out in every financial year. The clerk had looked as the current model of risk assessment which had been adopted by the Parish Council on the 1st October 2012. The Clerk was uncomfortable with this as it delegated a considerable amount of power and control to the clerk. The clerk felt this was unnecessary. The auditors had a standard model which was simple and appropriate. A copy had been sent to Councillors for consideration on the 21st August. The Clerk recommended its acceptance. Councillor Goodman moved that the model Risk Assessment be accepted, Councillor Sutton seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

d. Review of Budget and Anticipated Expenditure

A full budget review had not been carried out. This would be carried for the next meeting at the six month period. The only large outstanding obligations the clerk was aware of were:

- i. The auditor's fees :- The clerk and the chair had both been told that these might be somewhere in the region of £4,000. However, it now appeared that they might have been somewhat reduced to something in the region of £2,000
- ii. The insurance cover renewal notice had been received. The premium was £885.88. The clerk was reviewing this as part of the Risk Assessment process.

e. Revue of Insurance Cover

See above

f. Discuss and agree and make any payments required of the Council

i. Clerk's Pay For July and August

The clerk had worked 33 hours in July and 52:50 hours in August. His contract required him to provide his service for no more than 25 hours per month. As he had exceeded this in both months the clerk was asking for the following payments:

July: 25 hours @£10.30 per hour	£257.50
August 25 hours @£10.30 per hour	<u>£257.50</u>
	£515.00

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The clerk requested that in accordance with clause 8.1 of his contract the council make a payment of £515 to Walberswick Parochial Church Council.

- ii. Materials for repairs and decorations to Heritage Hut

None

- iii. Village Hall Charity

Rental of the village hall annex for July and September: - £26

Councillor Gower proposed that these payments be approved and the clerk be directed to make them. This was seconded by Councillor Richardson.

7. Discuss planning applications.

a. Receive Planning decisions.

Application No.	Location (within Walberswick)	Decision	Consultation Period Expires or decision
TPO 251:2014	The Gables, Millfield Lane	Tree Preservation Order made 13 – 8 - 2014	This had been made urgently by the County Council objected to the application made to fell the tree

b. Planning applications and notices of appeal received at time of publishing this agenda

Application No.	Location (within Walberswick)	Proposal	Consultation Period Expires
Heath House Palmers Lane	To crown lift 2No. Holm Oaks to improve access and lift off hedge To prune Yew to allow access along path	DC/14/2554/TCA	24 Sep 2014 No objection

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The Gables Millfield Road	To fell Lime Tree in front garden.	DC/14/2272/TCA	24 Aug 2014 See above
The Pump House,	The Green, Walberswick	DC/13/2130/FUL	25th September 2014 See comments below

The Pump House, The Green, Walberswick.

This is an appeal from a refusal of a planning application made in mid 2013. Councillor Gower abstained and did not comment. The newly formed Planning Advisory Group ('PAG') was asked if it could assist the Council by making some observations on the appeal. The PAG did this and also provided the Council with a copy of the plan. Councillors considered the appeal with reference to the plan. Councillors were inclined to agree with the PAG. Councillor Cameron-Goodman went further and said the application could damage the character of and the look of the Green. It was proposed by Councillor Goodman that the clerk be asked to write to the appropriate authority and lodge an objection. This was seconded by the Chair. The resolution was passed unanimously. (A copy of the PAG observations are appended as Appendix I).

8. Action Items Report

- a. On progress of installation of a Vehicle Activated Sign and on meeting regarding 20MPH speed limit

Councillor Goodman reported on his meeting with BOB Clench from SCC. A copy of his report is annexed as Appendix II

The clerk reported that he had not been able to contact the person in Blythburgh Council who dealt with the sign

- b. Parish plan steering group update

This group reports quarterly

- c. Planning Advisory Group update

Details of the activities of this group over the past month are appended

- d. Report on Proposals for the Heritage Hut

Further works are planned on the 6th September and will be organised by Councillor Hosea.

- e. Goalposts and Football Field

The goal posts have been received and Councillor Hosea and Councillor Sutton are making plans to erect them and mark out a 9 a side pitch as well as retaining

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a five a side pitch. Councillors felt it was time to consider upgrading the sports facilities and perhaps renovating the pavilion. This would be of benefit to the village as a whole. A proper appraisal needed to be produced. This idea was greeted with enthusiasm by the Councillors and members of the public present but no specific resolution was passed

f. Reviving the Crabbing Competition

Councillor Sutton said he had not made further progress with this.

9. Parish Council Communications

The clerk had withdrawn this from the website and was reviewing it following the publication of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

10. Public Toilets and Washing Facilities

These had come under pressure because of the influx of visitors in the very warm weather. At times they were in an unpleasant condition. SCDC were contacted and arrangements were made for the cleaner to visit more frequently. This resulted in an improvement.

11. Correspondence Received and Sent

- a. Luke Jeans:- had written to the council about problems on the 'Kissing Bridge' which provided access across the Dunwich River from the car-park to the salt marshes. This was being used for crabbing and this was hampering pedestrian access. It was decided to erect a suitable sign. Councillor Goodman would try and come up with some wording.
- b. Pru Ford-Crush:- had written expressing anxieties about conflicts between the Village Hall Charity and the Heritage Hut particularly if this was offering facilities to the village free of charge. Councillor Goodman said he did not think there was a conflict and that the Heritage Hut was providing something additional and different. He and the clerk would compose a suitable reply to Mrs Ford-Crush.
- c. John MacCarthy:- had written a long letter to the Chair, Esme Richardson making serious allegations against the way WPC as a body corporate had acted in the past and continues to act, and the way past councillors acted and present councillors continue to act. His letter was read out in full to the meeting by Councillor Goodman. Esme Richardson on behalf of the Council, and all the councillors, read out her reply in full which rejected and rebutted all of these allegations.

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

No such matters discussed

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13. Date of next meeting –

6th October

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:46

APPENDIX I

Observations of the Planning Advisory Group on the Pump House Planning Appeal

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/13/2130/FUL

Planning Appeal ref APP/J3530/A/14/2220357

The Pump House, The Green, Walberswick

02.09.2014

Comment

1 This application, to extend and convert The Pump House to provide a live/work unit, was refused planning consent by Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) in July 2013. The reason given for the refusal was the undesirability of introducing further residential accommodation into an area of long term flood risk. The applicant has appealed the decision and the application will now be determined by the Secretary of State.

The Parish Council made no comment on the original application, in accordance with its policy at that time. Letters of objection were submitted by four local residents, disputing, amongst other matters, the applicant's claim that the provision of residential accommodation is necessary to make The Pump House commercially viable and expressing concern that this partial change of use might prove the first step in converting the premises from retail use to holiday accommodation.

The following comments deal with considerations other than flood risk which is a matter of national planning policy.

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2 In December 2013, subsequent to the refusal of this application, SCDC approved the Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal. The Appraisal identified The Potters Wheel, the adjoining shop premises and The Pump House as a group of unlisted buildings, described as 'simple hut structures.....', that contribute positively to the character of the Green. A photograph of the three buildings was included in the Appraisal.

In order to provide the additional space required for the residential unit, it is proposed to raise and offset part of the roof of the existing building and to widen the rear half of the plan. These extensions will detract from the simple character of the Pump House noted in the Appraisal and its relationship to The Parish Lantern, the adjacent Grade 2 listed building.

3 The economic case proposed to justify part change to residential use is not convincing. It is not consistent with the experience of other businesses along the Green, none of which have or require live in accommodation for their viability. The conversion will reduce the retail area by more than a third and substantially add to the cost of renovation. The concern is that, as expressed by the objectors, the residential element will in due course take over the whole building. Residential accommodation amongst the otherwise exclusively commercial properties in this location would not be appropriate.

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Appendix II

Councillor Goodman's report of his meeting with Bob Clench

The proposal is to create a buffer zone where the speed limit drops from unrestricted to 30mph at the entrance to the village. Here the speed limit will remain at 30mph. From approximately twenty yards from the entrance to Adams Lane it would drop to 20mph. This is the earliest point at which we can do this, as it is not possible to extend the 30 zone further out of the village. There would be roundels every 90metres bearing the 20mph sign, and these would extend into all of the side roads (Adams Lane, Palmers Lane, Lodge Road etc).

Mr Clench is organising the recording of speed data at two key locations - one will be based near the bus shelter opposite the church, the other at the entrance to Alexandra Close (between the tuck shop and Leveretts Lane). If the average speed recorded falls below 24mph then we have a stronger case for the reduction in the speed limit. If the average speed is over 30mph we do not - as the position is that where drivers do not adhere to a 30 limit, they are unlikely to adhere to 20. This information will be available at the PC meeting in October, which Mr Clench has kindly offered to attend.

The approximate cost of the traffic legislation would be between £3,500 and £5,500 - dependent in no small part on the quantity of objections and queries which need to be dealt with. (Mr Clench has suggested that he hold an informal Q&A type session in order to gauge these at an early stage). This is exclusive of the cost of signage etc, which we were advised is considerably less.

Key points for and against our proposal:

Against;

- * B class roads will not normally be considered for 20mph restrictions*
- * If mean speeds are in excess of 30mph*
- * There having been no reported traffic accidents in the past five years*
- * Impact, visually, on the conservation area*

For;

- * If mean speeds are below 24mph*
- * Depth of residential development and evidence of pedestrian and cyclist movement (photographs would be useful)*
- * Being, effectively, a cul de sac*
- * Significant community support*

Mr Clench has kindly agreed to attend the November WPC meeting.