

**WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**The Minute of a meeting of Walberswick PC held on Monday the 17th July 2017 at 7.15pm in the Annexe of the Village Hall**

**Present:** *Councillors Bassinette, Mackay, Richardson (in the chair), Sutherland-Rogers, Sutton and Winyard. Clerk Mary Mitson-Woods and a number of Walberswick electors.*

**89/17 Chairman's welcome** – The Chairman welcomed members of the public and councillors. Councillor Sutherland-Rogers was welcomed to her first meeting. Councillor Richardson told the Meeting that the Clerk had received a large number of letters from a few villagers with multiple complaints about the administration of WPC. This had taken the Clerk away from the running of the Council's affairs. The Clerk is producing a Complaints Procedure which is currently in draft form while it awaits an opinion from a solicitor at the National Association of Local Councils. This will allow the public to better understand how to complain and what response complainants can expect.

**90/17 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.** The Clerk reported that District Councillor Catchpole is too unwell to carry out his duties at present and sent his apologies. He has asked the Council to keep him up to date via email. The Clerk was asked to send him a warm message from Councillors and the village.

**91/17 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation:** Councillors to declare any interests. Notwithstanding this item Members may declare an interest at any point in the Meeting. There were none.

**92/17 Open Forum:** The Chairman opened the Meeting for 15 minutes for members of the public to give their views on issues on the agenda or raise issues for future consideration in accordance with S.O. 3f – 3k. Members of the public may not take part in the Parish Council meeting itself. During the forum, it was noted with appreciation that the floodgate had been put back in place in response to a concern raised at a previous meeting.

**93/17 To consider the Minute of the Extraordinary Meeting of 5th June** for accuracy and for the Chairman to sign as a true record. This was signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting

**94/17 To nominate Councillors to the following responsibilities:**

The Clerk introduced the item by explaining that two villagers had written to object to assigning such responsibilities. She explained that sharing responsibilities was a standard practice of well-run councils in order to assist parishioners in knowing to whom it is most appropriate to raise an issue. Additionally the Transparency Regulations state that Councillor responsibilities must be listed on the Council website. The Councillor with responsibility takes no decisions on behalf of the Council, but rather can report issues directly via email to SCC/SCDC if appropriate or forward the issue to the Clerk for action.

- a) **Election of Vice Chairman** - it was resolved that this role be shared between Councillors Bassinette and Sutton.

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- b) **WPC property/playing field and playground.** Councillor Winyard pointed out that this was a very large responsibility and property should be separated from the playing field and playground. The Council agreed with this suggestion and it was resolved that Councillor Richardson would take responsibility for property and that **Playing field/playground equipment** would be the responsibility of Councillors Sutton and Winyard.
- c) **Notice boards** – It was resolved that Councillor Winyard would take responsibility for posting notices emailed by the Clerk on the Village Hall and Stocks Lane boards and would keep them up to date and tidy. The WPC has the use of the right hand side of the Stocks Lane Board.
- d) **Footpaths/Litter** – It was resolved that Councillors MacKay and Sutherland-Rogers would take responsibility.
- e) **Highway Matters, traffic management and Car Parks** - It was resolved that Councillor Bassinette would take responsibility.

#### 95/17 Finance Matters

- a) **Assistance with financial administration.** As authorised by the Council at the meeting on 15th May 2017 Minute 76/17, the Clerk had interviewed and found a suitable company to assist her with financial administration matters. The Clerk reported that she had explored three choices. After finding that SALC does not offer such a service and that a second well-qualified candidate would charge £90.00 per month, she identified a third smaller well-qualified company that would be able to fulfil the responsibilities at a cost of £50.00 per month. The Clerk said that the company had asked not to be publicly named so as not to be contacted directly. Since the role was strictly a support function to the Clerk/RFO, the Council agreed to accept the Clerk's recommendation. The Council reiterated that there was no change in responsibilities and reporting relationships and that the Clerk retained full responsibility and would present reports to the Council and that any questions/issues from Councillors or Parishioners would continue to go to the Clerk/RFO. **Based on the Clerk's report Councillors resolved that the Clerk should proceed with the appointment.**
- b) The Clerk reported that the balance at **Lloyds Bank is £15,076.51.** This is an unreconciled amount and a full report and budget comparison will be prepared and that it would be presented at an extraordinary meeting in August. **The Council agreed to take up the full report at the next extraordinary meeting.**
- c) The 20mph expenditure agreed at the Meeting of 05/06/2017 of £4,662.27 remained outstanding and would need to be paid upon receipt of invoice. The Clerk also referred back to the Meeting of 23 November 2016, agenda item 47/16a) in which Councillor Catchpole committed £2000.00 from his SCDC Locality Budget to the 20mph project. **It was resolved that the Clerk ask Councillor Catchpole to follow up on this agreement.**
- d) **The WPC insurance policy for its assets** is due to expire on 30 September 2017, with the possibility to extend for an additional year. It was agreed that the Clerk, with the assistance of a Councillor if needed, arrange for a renewal of the insurance. The Clerk was asked to seek specific confirmation that all the WPC assets are covered by the policy and if there are any exclusions or limitations that could impact on decisions related to the management of WPC Assets. In particular, this should include the Heritage Hut and also for the repair of the Village Scroll that currently is included in the Village Hall insurance given its storage there. The Clerk reported that as the WPC own the Scroll it should be properly included in the WPC insurance cover and this will be done at renewal,

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resolved that the WPC should store the absolute minimum amount of materials and the Clerk and Viv Hunt work together to move archived material and other papers to Suffolk County Archive for safe keeping and archiving.

f) Bill Ungless reported that the Committee was concerned not only with the renovation, but that the maintenance and operation of the HH had to be fully considered in determining its future. The Council agreed that this was an important consideration and discussed the need for regular maintenance, insurance and security for the building and the Scroll. It was noted that in deciding the future of the HH, it would be necessary to consider what facilities were also provided at the Village Hall; although the spaces were not equivalent care must be taken not to compete with the Hall bookings. It was discussed that there was no formal agreement for people using the HH at present and no method of charging commercial users and exhibitors or assessing for any damage. In considering how this short-coming might be addressed in the future it was resolved that, as an interim measure, existing bookings would be respected but that no new bookings for the HH would be taken until a booking system was in place. It was further resolved that the Clerk should ask Community Action Suffolk for a template for a hirers' agreement, Health and Safety requirements, etc. and that future bookings would be made through the Clerk. These were temporary measures pending recommendations from the HH Committee that would be considered at future meetings. The chairman, Councillor Richardson, expressed gratitude on behalf of the Council for the work that the Committee had taken on.

#### 97/17 Playing Field

In follow up to an agenda item at the Extraordinary meeting of the WPC in June 2017 with regard to the License and maintenance of the playing field and questions received from some villagers, Councillor Bassinette gave a verbal report based on the available information. In giving her report, she stressed that although Walberswick had a long history of community playing fields, unsurprisingly there were not clear historical records. Councillor Bassinette thanked the Commons Land Charity and others in the village who shared their knowledge with her. She also appreciated the efforts of past clerks who had managed to keep a number of interesting old letters and the Licenses that helped shed light on the history. She stressed, however, that she made no claims that this was a perfect and definitive historical record. Rather she had made best efforts to piece together available information for the purposes of reassuring the Council about any actions they may take with regard to the playing fields. It would also serve as the Council's best effort to reply to the villagers who have expressed an interest in the playing field, its fence and the pavilion.

Councillor Bassinette was thanked for her oral report and it was resolved to put this summary of the oral report (below) into the minutes together with the relevant documents so that they would be available on the Village website. The Council resolved that this report was comprehensive and no further correspondence on the matter would be entered into.

#### Summary of Councillor Bassinette's Oral Report:

- Walberswick has benefitted from the playing fields in excess of 50 years depending on the interests and efforts of villagers. At times it was predominately for cricket, other times it was football and today, primarily for children's activities and for dog – walkers. The fields were marked out from the Commons Land. We understand that the Charity obtained the consent of the Charity Commission to provide space for a playing field and to rent it for £1 a year. We understand that this consent goes back to the 1960s at least.
- According to an exchange of letters in September and October, 1981, the WCLC and the WPC agreed that the WPC would take over the License on the expiration of the License that was held at the time by the Walberswick Sports Club. This was in response to the desire of the

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villagers to ensure that the facility was open to all members of the Community. A 20 year license was subsequently signed on 15 July 1982.

- As long-time residents are aware, and as correspondence from the time show, because of variable rabbit populations, there were constant considerations by various organisations and individuals in the village with regard to the need for fencing the playing fields to make them safe and serviceable as sports facilities. Against this, there were some villagers who raised concerns about the possible negative impact of fencing Common land both for reasons of the grazing of animals and related to questions about whether it was permissible to fence common land.
- At the time of the 1982 License, the field was not fenced. A debate ensued in the village for approximately 10 years with regard to the possible construction of a fence as a barrier to rabbits and to how the proposed barrier should be financed. Finally, in 1991 as substantiated by a minute of meeting that included representatives of the Charity, WPC and the Sports Club, an agreement was reached to allow a rabbit barrier fence to be built. According to a letter from August 1993, the barrier fence was completed on 8 August 1993. Since then, clearing of the gorse and repair of the rabbit barrier fence have occurred periodically over the ensuing 24 years. The latest was in June 2017 following approval by the WPC.
- It is noteworthy that the 2009 Scheme of the Charity specifically provides, for avoidance of any doubt, that the Trustees have the power to have a part of the Common enclosed for purposes of a playing field. This of course does not oblige the WCLC to do so, but makes it permissible.
- In terms of the Pavilion, it was built in the 1960s (or possibly before) using local fund raising and self-work. A Mr. Burgess seems to have been a driving force. We understand that there was an annual fete on the playing field which, in its day, rivalled the fete held today on the Green. In honour of Mr Burgess, the Pavilion had a sign calling it the 'Burgess Pavilion' that still exists today.
- The 1981 letter makes mention of the Pavilion and that it was the "intention that the Pavilion would be brought back into a proper state of repair" by the Council.
- It can be assumed, therefore, for those who have expressed interest in why/how the Council had responsibility for the Pavilion, including its insurance, it is from that time – 1982. As an aside, Councillor Bassinette mentioned that a letter in the file from 1984, with a cut out of a newspaper article entitled "Teenagers' game wrecks pavilion" stating that 4 teenage boys had played soldier around the pavilion and shot at it with air rifles and broke things inside and the outside. They paid £40 to the WPC out of a total bill for repair of £120 and sent a letter of apology saying that they had thought the pavilion was derelict. Councillor Bassinette said that she found this a nice bit of Village history, but also to say that given that the Saxmundham Court fined the boys and ordered that they pay compensation to the Council, there should be no doubt that the WPC was the responsible party for the Pavilion.
- The next date of real interest is 12 June 1995, when the Walberswick Football Club quit the village and no longer wanted to use the Pavilion. There is a short letter to the Council announcing this and saying that the keys were being returned to Mr. Philip Kett. From that time, there was no longer any major 'full time' user of the Pavilion.
- The last bit of relevant information with regard to the Pavilion is a report that was very helpfully provided by the WCLC of an asbestos survey that was done in July 2016. This shows that the Pavilion, in line with buildings of its type and era, has a medium-risk asbestos rating. This assessment, obviously, is material should any consideration of renovation or removal be considered by the Council sometime in the future.
- The next and last action of interest occurred in 2009 when a new License was signed between the Clerk and President of the Council and the Charity. It would appear that the 1982 License should have been renewed in 2002 when its 20-year term ended, but there is no license from that time. Nevertheless, the arrangements continued in the Village without incident.

- Councillor Bassinette said that this was speculation, but she felt that it was plausible that no one really realized that the License had run out and needed renewing until 2009 since that was the time that the Charity updated its Scheme and therefore may have served as a reminder to update and renew the License. The License of 2009 is for a period of 10 years. The current WPC can find no mention of this License renewal in the WPC Minutes of 2009. The License was executed, however, by Southwold lawyers, Margary Miller, signed by the then Clerk and witnessed by the then Chairman of the WPC. There is absolutely nothing to suggest that this License was not accepted by both WCLC and WPC as valid and both parties have acted accordingly to this date. It would appear, therefore, to have been a simple administrative oversight that putting in place the new License was not recorded in WPC minutes. This is unfortunate, but given that the License simply continued an arrangement that had existed without incident in the village for half a century, it is hard to see that there was anything but good intention in the License renewal and an administrative error of an overworked Council.
- It is helpful, however, that this issue has arisen since it brings to the attention of the Council that the 2009 License will expire in only two years. It would seem sensible, therefore, for the WPC to resolve to begin discussions with the WCLC about putting in place a new License. It was suggested that it would be useful to have a proposal ready for consideration by the end of 2017 or early 2018. Learning the lessons of the past, the WPC should ensure that the actions are properly documented and the necessary administrative steps taken. The Council may wish, in parallel to consider how any investment and maintenance costs would be budgeted and financed.

The following documents to be posted on the website could include the following:

- 2 letters from 1981
- License from 1982
- Letter from 1993 on fence completion
- Letter of 1995 announcing the withdrawal of the Sports Club
- 2009 License

#### **98/17 Planning Matters**

**Ref. No: DC/17/2494/FUL Saltmarshes Lodge Road, Walberswick IP18 6UP** The proposal is to amend this extension with a pitched roof containing a master bedroom and a ensuite bathroom. The existing bedroom below will be adapted to be suitable for use by a disabled person.

The Council considered this application and responded with reference to the PAG report that the property lies on the north side of Lodge Road and is the third house from the west end of the village. It is not in the Conservation Area. It is a chalet-style bungalow with an existing flat-roofed side extension. Externally the proposals are in keeping with the main part of the house and relatively modest in character. The PAG had no objections to this application. After careful consideration it **was resolved the Council should recommend approval be given to this Application.**

#### **DC/17/2296/FUL Single storey extension at White Barn, Leverett's Lane. (See Appendix 2)**

Councillors discussed the points raised in the PAG report and found them highly valid. They discussed that the proposed changes were out of proportion and not in keeping with the village. They noted that changes already made to this important house, especially the destruction of the hedge and new entrance had a negative impact on the street as was pointed out in the PAG report. **It was resolved that the Council recommends that the application be refused.**

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**99/17 Request from parishioner for a Speed Indicator Display**

The following was sent to the Clerk:

*"I write to kindly request if you are able to include an item on the Agenda regarding the installation of a Speed Indicating Device (SID) on the Village Street.*

*You will recall that I raised this matter at the Annual Parish Meeting and that the County Councillor and District Councillor supported this project and urged the Parish Council to 'get on with it'. It was also pleasing to hear that the District Councillor and the Walberswick Common Lands Trust were willing to contribute to the cost!*

*Many vehicles, coming in and going out of the Village are still exceeding the speed limit and I had hoped that the Parish Council could have implemented this device to be operational before the July/August busy holiday period."*

Councillors considered this request and asked County Councillor Richard Smith whether funding from the SCC Locality Budget could be provided. Councillor Smith, who was present at the meeting, refused this request. It was resolved that a Speed Indicator Display was desirable to increase compliance with the 20mph limit and improve safety. The Council felt strongly that this was a worthy project and only lack of funding was delaying it. It was agreed that the WPC would look for means of funding this including seeking cost-sharing with WCLC. It was understood that such an indicator would cost in the region of £3000.00. **It was resolved that the Clerk would follow up on the letter received and get further information on the cost and report at the next meeting.**

**100/17 Date of next meeting:**

The Council agreed to meet on Monday 14th August in order for the Council to receive a full financial report and budget comparison. The meeting closed at 9.22pm

**Appendix 1 REPORT OF HERITAGE HUT & SCROLL COMMITTEE TO WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 17 JULY 2017**

At a meeting held on 15 May 2017, the WPC set up a new Heritage Hut/Scroll Committee. It includes two Parish Councillors and the former members of the Scroll Committee; this new Committee replaces the earlier Scroll Committee.

The new Committee comprises Bill Ungless (Chair), Josie Bassinette (Secretary), Pat Lancaster (treasurer), John English, Richard Scott, Jeremy Solnick, Nigel Walpole, and Jon Winyard. In this report it is referred to as the Hut Committee.

At its first meeting the Hut Committee agreed the following report to the WPC.

1. As a matter of record, a former Clerk of WPC has informed the Hut Committee that there was a transfer of the Hut's ownership in 2012 from Suffolk County Council to WPC and that this has been registered at the Land Registry as a Possessory Title convertible after 12 years to an Absolute Title.
2. The Hut Committee has set out its terms of reference to be a representative group from the village which will provide recommendations to the WPC on how to preserve and display the Walberswick Scroll properly and how to renovate, finance, use, maintain and operate the Heritage Hut.

The Committee's role is only advisory, as any decisions about the Hut would need to be taken by the WPC with due regard to the interests of the village, financing, the Hut's relationship with other facilities in the village and the like. The Hut Committee recommends that the WPC accepts these terms of reference

3. Whereas the earlier Committee was primarily concerned with the Scroll, the new Committee has to consider the Hut in the longer term. With this in mind it is important to start by having a structural survey carried out which includes the neighbouring trees. The Walberswick Common

Lands Charity has kindly agreed to arrange and pay for this survey. The Hut Committee recommends that the WPC accepts this offer from the Charity.

4. The original tender for the improvements to the Hut was approximately £13,000. However it should be borne in mind that the structural survey could determine that other work may be necessary. To raise funding for this several methods are in progress. Following the approval of WPC, the Co-op were approached and have established Green token boxes in their Shops. In addition approximately £200 of donations have been received. In view of this we recommend that the WPC sets up a separate bank account specifically for this project, and decides on the signatories for this.

5. The Exemplar Committee of East Suffolk District Council has now approved our application for a grant of £6000 (subject to the statutory call-in deadline of 20 July 2017). This will leave a shortfall of at least £7000. The Hut Committee is of the view that the Walberswick Common Land Charity could provide the best possible source of additional financing. In addition, it was felt that a concept should be explored by which the WPC could grant a License to the Charity for the Hut for an extended numbers of years, under which the Charity would undertake the necessary renovations and the maintenance and operation of the Hut for the agreed purposes. The Committee feel that the Charity is the best village organization to do so given its more secure financing sources, its charitable status and mandate, and its experience and professionalism with managing assets. The Hut Committee recommend that the WPC directs it to make such an exploration and report on this.

**6 Maintenance and Operation.** The Committee consider that any decision about the use of the Hut and its financing would have to give due regard to the maintenance and operation including the need for a well-functioning and transparent booking system, regular maintenance, insurance, security and the like. It was in this regard that the Hut Committee notes that the uses of the Hut would have to remain modest as set out in the points above, and that the Charity would be the most able organization to manage operations. The Hut Committee recommends that the WPC directs it to include this in the above exploration.

**7 Uses of the Hut.** Assuming that the funds could be raised for the necessary renovation and refurbishment the Hut Committee considers that the priority for its use should be as a Village Amenity, as set out below.

a. To be a home for storing and displaying the Walberswick Scroll (which has a value for insurance of £30,000). In respect of this the Hut Committee notes that the existing lock on the front door is inadequate and recommends that WPC should employ a locksmith to provide a suitably upgraded replacement. Also that WPC should decide on who are to be the keyholders to this new lock.

b. To be a place to store securely village files from the WPC, the Charity, and, space permitting, Walberswick Local History Group (WLHG). In this regard, the Committee agreed that it should get an assessment from WPC, the Charity and WLHG about the amount of space needed for its files/archives.

c. To be a place where the WPC, the Charity and other official village organisations could meet publicly and that the Clerks of the Village organisations could work and hold surgeries to meet villagers on a scheduled basis.

d. To be a 'school room' for organised visits by schools or other children groups to the village.

e. The Committee feel that the use of the Hut as a village amenity as set out in points a-d, would preclude its use as a permanent exhibition space (for example as a museum or visitor centre). Nor could it be a place for use by private individuals, or for any commercial purposes since the Village Hall already provides facilities for these. The Hut Committee recommends that the WPC directs the Hut Committee to follow this use-strategy in its future considerations.

***Appendix 2 The Planning Advisory Group report for DC/17/2296/FUL***

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1. *White Barn is one of several notable houses in the village designed by the Arts and Crafts architect, Frank Jennings. Conspicuously sited on a corner of Leveretts Lane, the house is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as an unlisted building that contributes to the quality of the area. The house is subject to on-going restoration and alteration.*

2. *The garden of White Barn has an extensive frontage to Leveretts Lane which, until recently, was screened by the characteristic hedges and trees described in the Appraisal. These have now been cleared and replaced with very visible chain link and close boarded timber fencing, to the detriment of the special quality of the lane.*

3. *The character of the lane has also been eroded by the destruction of the interesting stepped entrance to White Barn, illustrated in the Appraisal and the Historic Assessment Report previously submitted by the applicant. Its replacement by a sheet metal gate flanked by tall brick pillars surmounted by urns is alien to the unpretentious atmosphere of the lane.*

4. *Following the refusal on appeal of a proposed two storey extension to White Barn, a revised application has now been submitted for a single storey studio extension with shower and utility rooms. Unlike the previous application, which sited the extension parallel to Leveretts Lane, the new proposal aligns the building with the existing house, extending towards the lane at an oblique angle.*

5. *The new scheme will be constructed of what is described as 'brickwork dressed flint cobble walls' together with plain tiled roofs, and oak framed windows with steel casements. The west facing terrace will be covered by translucent polycarbonate sheeting.*

6. *The reduction in the area and volume of the extension and its revised siting will result in a less obtrusive development. However, no elevational drawings have been provided to show the two buildings in relation to each other or their surroundings, and it is not possible to assess fully the impact of the proposal on the existing house or the local environment.*

7. *The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application refers to the proposed 'brickwork dressed flint cobble walls [as] resonant with the materials and details used by Frank Jennings in the houses of this period'. The statement is not true of White Barn nor Jennings's other Walberswick designs. The proposal is at odds with the context and does not comply with the requirements of policy DM21 of the Local Plan regarding the choice of materials for extensions to significant buildings.*

8. *The Design and Access Statement also refers to the importance of planting 'to maintain privacy and tune the house into the landscape' but makes no proposals either for the garden (except an ivy screen to the oil tank) or for the boundary with Leverett's Lane, where screening and tuning are most needed. The shrubs planted along the bank are small in scale and ineffectual in screening the fences..*

9. *In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group, the following issues should be addressed before the application can be determined:*

- *Drawings are required showing in full the elevations of the new building and the existing and the relationship between them and their surroundings*
- *The proposed walling of dressed flint cobble should be replaced by materials and finishes that reflect the appearance of the existing house.*
- *The polycarbonate sheeting specified for the roof of the covered terrace is not an appropriate material for use in the Conservation Area and is not consistent with the quality of the materials specified elsewhere in the project.*
- *Landscape proposals are required to screen the fencing along the boundary with Leveretts Lane and to restore the bank to its former appearance.*
- *Consideration should be given to reducing the height of the brick piers at the new pedestrian entrance and replacing the inappropriately designed metal gate*