

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13th September 2021 at 7pm.

Present (physically): Councillors Lewis (Chair), Bassinette, Richardson, Sutherland-Rogers and Whiting. Only Councillors physically present can speak (except during the public forum or if standing orders are temporarily suspended) and vote. No Councillors joined remotely.

Also in attendance (remotely via Zoom) were one (1) other member of the public, District Councillor Beavan, Mark Knight, Parish Clerk and Simon Ashton, Responsible Financial Officer.

084/21-22 Chair's welcome.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and those attending by Zoom. He mentioned that there were two new agenda items being introduced at tonight's meeting (Clerk's Report and Matters Arising). He suggested that if Councillors found them helpful, they would continue.

085/21-22 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Sutton.

086/21-22 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation.

None.

087/21-22 Open Forum

None.

088/21-22 To receive a report from County Councillor Richard Smith

Cllr. Smith was not in attendance.

089/21-22 To receive a report from East Suffolk District Councillor David Beavan

Cllr Beavan reported that he has recently been appointed to the Planning Committee, but that there was nothing from Walberswick on the agenda for the next meeting of the 14th September. He has also submitted a request for a constitutional amendment to allow the 'calling in' of planning applications onto the agenda if the local Parish/Town Council objected as used to be the practice.

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Cllr. Beavan has also submitted a question to the District Council regarding the number of holiday lets that received business grants during the pandemic who may not have been entitled to them. This will form part of a tribunal in December where the implications on Council Tax can be assessed.

The Council has been discussing the situation with affordable housing with 4,000 applicants currently on the waiting list. The need of 5,500 homes by 2024 has recently been reduced to 4,800 by 2024 which is good progress but much more needed to reach the 2024 target.

Sizewell C has been progressing with EDF now needing water from the River Waveney which is not possible. They are now proposing a temporary desalination plant but there is no evidence that water will ever be available during construction or operation.

090/21-22 To consider the minutes of the meetings of 12th and 27th July and 11th August 2021

The minutes of the 12th and 27th July and 11th August 2021 were **APPROVED** with the Chair to sign the minutes and to retain them until they can be handed to the Clerk in person.

091/21-22 Planning

091/21-22.1 To consider and approve the Planning Scheme of Delegation to the Clerk

The report was considered and the Chair gave a brief verbal report on the legality and process detailed in the associated report. The Council discussed in particular the proposed delegation and the limits thereof related to the handling of Planning Applications. The Scheme was **APPROVED** and will be reviewed annually at the Annual Council meeting.

092/21-22 Finance Matters 2021/2

092/21-22.1 Review bank receipts/budget & payments/budget (as at 31 August 2021)

It was **AGREED** to accept the report. It was noted that the bank balance held was primarily for ring fenced reserves in particular to have the funds to take down the pavilion. It was also requested that the Council consider in October whether there would be an expenditure marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in conjunction with monies that could be provided from the SCC locality budget.

092/21-22.2 Approve bank reconciliation (to 31 August 2021)

It was **AGREED** to accept the figures as presented. Cllr. Richardson signed the documents which will be passed to the RFO.

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092/21-22.3 Approve items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet

Cllr Bassinette pointed out that the Insurance Cover Renewal included an increased cost for an increase in the amount of coverage for the Pavilion and the Heritage Hut. She said that she wanted to question this under the following agenda item and therefore proposed that the insurance payment not be approved yet. It was **AGREED** to pay all items in the sheet with the exception of the insurance premium. Cllrs. Bassinette and Sutton were authorised to carry out the electronic payments.

092/21-22.4 To consider and approve the Council's insurance cover renewal

Per the comments of Cllr Bassinette above, it was **AGREED** that there should be no increase in the amount of insurance coverage for the Pavilion and the Heritage Hut. For the Pavilion, it was agreed that the RFO should go back to the insurer and explain that the building was unusable and without value and that insurance should only be for the necessary public liability insurance. For the Heritage Hut, it was pointed out that the valuation had just occurred and that the insurance had been increased in the last year to cover at value of £120,000 from £50,000. Therefore, a increase was not considered appropriate. The Council therefore **APPROVED** the insurance cover renewal with the exception of the payment for these two properties until after the increases were re-considered. It was further **AGREED** that the RFO would consult with the insurer, revise this part of the proposed cover and then resubmit the reduced coverage to be paid electronically as per the Authorisation to Pay above.

092/21-22.5 To consider adding the Council Chair as an authorised approver of online payments

It was **APPROVED** that the Chair (currently Cllr Lewis), be authorised as an approver of online payments so that there continued to be three authorised approvers following the resignation of Cllr Winyard. The Council also **AGREED** that the Chair should always be amongst the authorised approvers. The Responsible Financial Officer was asked to undertake the necessary paperwork and processes as soon as possible.

The Responsible Financial Officer then left the meeting at 7.44pm.

093/21-22 Southwold and Reydon Emergency Plan Group update

The Chair gave a verbal update on a recent meeting which included representatives from the other two authorities. It was agreed that there was a lot that the three authorities could learn from each other and that a further update would be made in the October meeting of this Council.

This group has a remit to deal with the logistics and process of an emergency in the area, the focus is naturally flooding due to the location, but takes into

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account Covid-19 and other types of emergency situations. It is important to keep databases of contacts and volunteers up to date and have a central point to co-ordinate any first responders who will help while the primary authorities such as the emergency services and District Council step in.

094/21-22 Southwold Harbour Stakeholder Advisory Group

Standing orders were suspended to allow Cllr. Beavan gave a verbal update on the set up and remit of this group. Standing orders were then re-instated. Disappointment was expressed in the approach of ESC in terms of encouraging a genuine role for local stakeholders in the decision-making. There are concerns that the Advisory Group will only be a 'talk shop' and will have little meaningful impact on ESC decision-makings. Given Cllr Bassinette's earlier involvement in the Southwold Harbour issues, it was **AGREED** that she would be appointed to attend the first meeting of this group and report back to the Council on whether the group was likely to be effective.

095/21-22 Councillor & Trustee Vacancies

The Chair reported on the recent resignation of Parish Councillor Jon Winyard and thanked him for all his hard work over many areas for Walberswick and the Parish Council. This was enthusiastically echoed from everyone else in attendance. The Parish Clerk then gave a brief verbal update as to the statutory process which would now be followed regarding elections and possible co-option which could take place if the deadline of the 23rd September 2021 did not result in a request to hold an election.

It was also reported that Karen Lewis has stepped down as a Trustee of the Walberswick Common Lands Charity and, as she had been an appointee from the Parish Council, it was now the responsibility of the Parish Council to nominate a replacement to complete the term. It was **AGREED** that the vacancy should be announced at the upcoming Parish Meeting and advertised in the next Village News. Expressions of interest should be submitted to the Parish Clerk for consideration in a closed session at the October meeting.

096/21-22 Policy Review. It was explained that the review and approval of these existing policies was part of the Council's agreed 3 year rolling policy review process.

096/21-22.1 Correspondence Policy

The policy was **APPROVED** without change.

096/21-22.2 Grievance Policy

The policy was **APPROVED** without change.

097/21-22 Oral Updates from Councillors on areas of responsibility if relevant.

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097/21-22.1 Footpath and Highways

Cllr Sutherland-Rogers explained how she had asked people who had complaints about footpaths to please the reporting tool on the Suffolk County Council website. It was agreed to provide information on this again on the village website and Village News.

097/21-22.2 GDPR, SALC and Website

It was reported that royalty free images must be used on the village website, and that a small budget should be considered to subscribe to a service for such images. It was **RESOLVED to AGREE TO THIS IN PRINCIPLE** and for the matter to be part of the upcoming budget setting procedure.

097/21-22.3 Playing Fields and the Green play area

It was reported that the pirate ship on the Common needed to be inspected and reviewed for safety as soon as possible. The Parish Clerk advised that the annual ROSPA survey was expected imminently and would take into account the pirate ship.

097/21-22.4 Safe Spaces and Car Parks

It was reported that there was good feedback from the public on the new yellow line and parking bays added by the Church and around the jubilee seat/Village Hall. As a result, it was expected that the WPC would not ask the SCC to remove them (as they had been done under emergency powers related to the closure of the Bailey Bridge over the summer.)

097/21-22.5 Heritage Hut

Cllr. Lewis reported that the Heritage Hut had recently hosted the Neighbourhood Plan consultations.

097/21-22.6 Sizewell and other power related developments

Cllr. Bassinette reported that the issue specific hearings has been continuing which most recently mainly involved QCs representing EDF, SCC and ESC discussing issues with the Planning Inspectorate with relatively less input from other interested parties. Whilst Cllr Bassinette was an official attendee at most of the hearings, it was primarily through written submissions that concerns and challenges to EDF's proposals were made on behalf of Walberswick. The biggest issues now related to efforts of EDF to minimise legal remedies if it did not complete agreed mitigation. Also EDF had introduced a material change to the DCO in terms of its water strategy since the water company had made clear that it would not be able to provide potable water to the site (necessary for both consumption and industrial purposes) during construction and potentially even during 60 years of operation. This was because of a general level of water scarcity in this part of

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East Anglia. EDF was suggesting to build a desalination plant.

Cllr Bassinette also reported that there are up to five new energy projects coming to the coast which involves solar farms, a large power cable being connected from Belgium with five or six sub stations being built on the coast and the wind power projects proposed by Scottish Power. This will impact all villages along the coastline.

097/21-22.7 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Whiting reported that two consultations had taken place along with two meetings of the steering group since the last WPC meeting. 82 visitors had attended the consultations which was a great start and was a mixture of residents and half visitors to Walberswick.

There is also a dedicated page now on the village website.

There would also be a full report at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 14th September, but consultations are expected to continue frequently to collect evidence based information necessary for the construction of the policies.

097/21-22.8 Village News

It was agreed that items on the Trustee vacancy for the WCLC, update on the Bailey Bridge (if appropriate) and Sizewell should be submitted to the next edition. Cllr Sutherland-Rogers would coordinate as usual.

098/21-22 Clerk's report

The Chair explained that this was a new item that would be included in all future agendas. It was meant to be an opportunity for the Parish Clerk to briefly update the Council on any communication that had occurred in the previous month. The Council welcomed this new item. The Clerk reported that correspondence had been relatively light due to his recent two week holiday, but that several residents had contacted the Council regarding planning issues. One resident had also generously offered a donation towards a street party for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

099/21-22 Oral Committee Reports if relevant

No reports were given.

100/21-22 Arrangements for Parish Meeting on 14th September 2021

Cllr. Lewis reported that the meeting would take place in the Village Hall and would start at 7pm. 18 local groups had submitted reports which had been posted on the website in advance and would be done as oral reports on the night. There would also be an opportunity to ask questions. Whilst the meeting not officially the "Annual" Parish Meeting, it fulfilled this role since the APM had been held earlier in the year by Zoom and therefore without the

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normal presentations.

101/21-22 Matters arising

The Chair explained that this was the second new item on the agenda that would be included in all future agendas. It was meant to be an opportunity for the Parish Clerk to briefly update the Council on any pending agenda items or things that needed to be followed up by Councillors. It was a way to help ensure that actions were not left uncompleted. The Parish Clerk reported that there were no items to announce as this was the first time and August had been a relatively quiet period. It was expected that this would change going forward. The Councillors agreed that this was a potentially useful agenda item going forward.

102/21-22 Date of next meeting was confirmed as being Monday, 11 October 2021 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.41 pm.

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