

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Full Parish Council meeting held on Monday 12th April 2021 at 6pm.

Present (remotely via Zoom): Councillors Bassinette (in the chair), Lewis, Sutherland-Rogers, Sutton and Winyard.

Also in attendance (remotely via Zoom) were three (3) members of the public, Cllr. David Beavan – District Councillor and Mr. Mark Knight – Parish Clerk.

203/20-21 Chairman's welcome.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

204/20-21 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Richardson. County Cllr. Smith had also previously indicated that he would not be in attendance.

205/20-21 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation.

None.

206/20-21 Open Forum

A member of the public spoke on agenda item 10 stating that she believed the problem with ESC planning process was not just lack of transparency, but primarily because they did not pay sufficient attention to the application details itself and simply pushed things through without reading the details of the application nor the comments provided by interested parties. She pointed out the recent case of 2 Anchor Cottages where attachments to the application were not even related to the property or the application.

207/20-21 To receive a report from County Councillor Richard Smith

Cllr. Smith was not in attendance.

208/20-21 To received a report from East Suffolk District Councillor David Beavan

Cllr Beavan reported that the Harbour Management Committee was looking for independent Board members with expertise in harbour operations and finance. He encouraged anyone with interest and the skill set to get involved. On the Bailey Bridge, he noted that this was a later item on the agenda but that he was glad that the 2 SCC representatives had come around to supporting a delay until September. However, he did not think that SCC would agree to this delay. He mentioned that Southwold was working with Norse to do some rewilding of their Green rather than cutting all the grass. Also that Southwold had installed an electric car charger and it was hoped that this would encourage more use of electric vehicles. Finally he mentioned the Southwold to

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Dated.....th 5 MAY '21

Walberswick Coastal Board of which he was chair. He said that they would invite anyone interested and with views to share to take part in a meeting in September. More information will be forthcoming.

209/20-21 To consider the minutes of the meetings of 8th March 2021

The minutes of the 8th March 2021 were **APPROVED** with the Chairman to sign the minutes and to retain them until they can be handed to the Clerk in person.

210/20-21 Finance Matters 2020/21

210/20-21.1 Approve items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet

It was **APPROVED** to pay all items in the sheet. Cllrs. Winyard and Bassinette were authorised to carry out the electronic payments.

210/20-21.2 Approval of 2021/22 allotment fees and payments

The report was considered paying particular attention to the recovery of water bills which had not been allocated to the allotment holders since 2019, and also the comparatively low fee for hiring a plot in Walberswick compared to other towns in the immediate area.

The Council discussed the pricing structure and how best to include the cost of water usage to the allotment holders. It was agreed that, in principle, the costs of allotments should be relatively in line with those in adjacent villages and that water usage costs needed to be passed on to the allotment users. It was felt that given the amount of staff time involved in invoicing the allotment holders, that it would be best to move to a system where one annual charge – including the rent and recouping the cost to the Council of the water usage – was used. The Council did not reach an agreement, however, on whether the annual allotment fee in 2021 should be increased slightly to align better with neighbouring allotments and whether an estimated water cost should be built in or whether the actual water cost should be added to the rental cost in the following year. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council would alert allotment holders to these pending changes to solicit views before coming to a final decision.

210/20-21.3 Approval of the Grass cutting contract FOR 2021/2

The quote received from Norse was reviewed. The Council **RESOLVED** to suspend Financial Regulations in accepting only one quote given that Norse was the only firm in the area that had been found that was willing to quote for the contract. It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the quote from Norse as presented.

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211/20-21 Planning**211/20-21.1 Jove Cottage, Lodge Road DC/21/0986/FUL**

The report was considered and it was **AGREED** that the Council would **OBJECT** to the application until the following points were addressed to ensure that the shed was of a reasonable size, its impact on any trees was understood and agreed and to confirm that it could not be further developed into a building that was not for storage:

- Differing dimensions of the shed to be clarified
- Distance of the shed from the house to be advised
- Distance of the shed to the west boundary to be advised
- Trees and hedges located in close proximity to the shed to be retained, as per the declaration on the application form
- Use of the shed restricted to storage only

211/20-21.2 Creek Cottage, The Green DC/21/1418/VOC

The report was considered and it was **AGREED** to **OBJECT** to the application due to the height of the roof and its conspicuous nature as pointed out in the PAG Report. It was, however, noted that the rest of the application was able to be supported as it stayed within the normal boundaries of the dwelling. It was also noted that the application was related to making the cottage a family dwelling rather than a large holiday let which was the case with other recent applications to which the Council had objected.

212/20-21 To consider a response to a survey concerning East Suffolk Council Planning Protocol

Standing orders were suspended so that Cllr Beavan could take part in this agenda item.

Cllr. Bassinette reported on the survey that had been launched by Theberton Parish Council and other Councils in the former Suffolk Coastal District who were extremely unhappy with the ESC planning process. The WPC **AGREED** that East Suffolk Council planning performance is not what should be expected from the principle authority and it did not appear that the opinions of the residents of Walberswick and the Parish Council were being heard nor reflected in the planning decisions. Referring to the comments made by a member of the public during the open forum, the Councillors agreed that the planning authorities appeared to pay little attention to details and very often ignored obvious problems even when alerted to them. In addition to the example given for 2 Anchor Cottages, the example of a supposed 'canoe store' at another property in Walberswick where the planning officer who went on site failed to notice that the owners had physically separated the new building from the main property by a fence and hedge, had created a new parking space in the verge and installed a separate entrance and still approved the

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application. It was also **AGREED** that East Suffolk Council planning should be allowing the participation of the Councillor who represented the area at Committee. As it was now, the planning committee lacked any local knowledge and was almost always inclined to take the simplest route of agreeing to the development.

Cllr Beavan suggested that if he could be notified of problems early, he could try to intervene before a decision on the planning application was taken. The Councillors expressed dismay if, as reported, the planning officers were coming to a judgement before the end of the consultation period and were not fully taking into account the views of interested parties. Cllr Beavan agreed that the system was not working. He suggested that WPC may wish to join Suffolk Preservation Society to get some additional support. It was agreed to discuss this at a later meeting. It was also agreed that getting a neighbourhood plan in place would help constrain ESC planning approvals.

Several other issues such as GDPR compliance in relation to planning applications were also briefly discussed.

It was **RESOLVED** to delegate authority to the Parish Clerk and Cllr. Bassinette to draft a response to the survey, and that this would be circulated to Councillors before being finalised.

213/20-21 Report on the Bailey Bridge and on Safe Spaces

- Cllr Bassinette made the following report:
- As delegated by the WPC, she is continuing to work with Suffolk County Council (primarily Michael Ladd), Suffolk Highways (SH) and others to do all we can to mitigate the impact of the bridge closure. The second opinion engineering report is expected at the end of April/early May. According to SH, there is some risk that this engineer may recommend immediate closure if the bridge is deemed unsafe but we hope that this will not be the case. Local representatives continue to push for September while SH maintains that working in the summer months would be preferable.
- When the bridge is closed, mitigation will be around a greatly expanded ferry service – both in time (earlier mornings to early evening) and with a bigger boat and more crossings. The Ferry Operator has made significant progress by securing a larger boat, looking at additional crossings and providing expertise on what is possible. To have an expanded service, having two crossing points will be necessary. Originally, the working group was looking to have a second crossing further up river across from the Harbour Master. But upon inspection of the proposed jetty and pontoon, this has proved infeasible because of very limited public access and a lack of space to queue on the Walberswick side. Therefore, we are now exploring the possibility of having 2 boats crossing at/near the site of the existing ferry. The working group is also discussing the possibility of a late bus that could take people from dinner/pubs after the ferry closes.

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- Assuming arrangements can be made for the increased ferry service, the biggest issue is associated with cost. In the view of the representatives, unless the crossing is very low cost, it will deter use by previous users of the Bailey Bridge. This would require that SCC funds be used to subsidise the normal cost of the ferry service. This is matter for continued consideration. Costs would also have to be considered in relation to a 'late shuttle'. Finally, to deal with a likely increase in road traffic related to the closure of the bridge and national Covid restrictions leading to increased staycations, Cllr Bassinette is in discussion and meeting separately with Suffolk Highways to put in limited emergency work to control parking and traffic gridlock with additional yellow lines on the Street. In particular, Suffolk Highways are expected to make use of the schematics done by the Walberswick Safe Space Team to consider proposals, on an emergency basis, to put in limited (single yellow) and no parking areas (double yellow) on the Street in the area of the Church and on the approach to and around the Village Hall/Jubilee seat. Cllr Bassinette will continue to update the Council going forward and to update the village via the Village News and on the Walberswick Website.

214/20-21 Three-year Policy Review

Cllr. Lewis presented the item:

214/20-21.1 To consider and approve the Privacy Policy: General Public

It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the policy as presented with no changes. All in favour.

214/20-21.2 To consider and approve the Privacy Policy : Councillors and Staff

It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the policy as presented with no changes. All in favour.

214/20-21.3 To consider and approve the Publication Scheme

It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the policy as presented with no changes. All in favour.

215/20-21 To consider a proposal from the Scroll Advisory Group to approve making of postcards of The Anchor Inn

The Council considered the proposal and it was **AGREED** that a license can be granted to print 200 postcards from the digitised copy of the Walberswick Scroll. The Council added that this permission should be subject to the following conditions to be agreed between the Scroll Advisory Group and the Anchor pub: (i) once a suitable percentage of sales as a donation was agreed, this amount should be paid in advance based on a run of 200 cards. (ii) the license was for the first 200 cards and if additional cards were to be printed, then a new request would be required.

Signed.....*Ael*.....

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216/20-21 To consider purchase of Audio Visual equipment for the Heritage Hut

It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would purchase this equipment as detailed in the paper with the equipment added to the WPC's asset register as appropriate. The cost for the equipment would be covered by the financing already raised for this purpose and currently held by the WCLC (to be transferred to the WPC) and from a Locality Budget Grant of £1,000 from District Councillor Beavan.

The Council delegated Authority to Cllr. Lewis to purchase the equipment and to work with Cllr Winyard and the Heritage Hut Management Committee to install the equipment in Heritage Hut. Cllr Winyard would confirm with the WCLC that the contents insurance for the HH, provided through the WCLC, would include the cost of the AV equipment.

One Member of the Public left the meeting at 7.52pm. Standing orders were also suspended to allow the meeting to run over the 2 hour limit so that the remainder of business could be completed.

217/20-21 To consider a return to face-to-face meetings

Cllr Lewis briefed the Council on the current complexity around the legislative position on virtual meetings and discussed the problem of holding meetings in the next six weeks, as the current legislation that allowed remote meetings was due to come to an end after 6th May but COVID restrictions still prevented meeting in person! This was agreed by all to be unacceptable and frustrating.

It was then **AGREED** to move the date of the Annual Council Meeting from the 10th to the 5th May 2021 in order to allow the meeting to still proceed via Zoom.

It was also **AGREED** to move the Annual Parish Meeting to the 6th May 2021 to allow the meeting to proceed via Zoom. In the case of the APM, it was agreed that this would be held only to meet the legislative requirement and that a longer, more purposeful APM would be held in the summer or autumn, when COVID restrictions were sufficiently eased that a meaningful face-to-face meeting could take place as in previous years and to include presentations by the many Walberswick organisations.

218/20-21 Oral Updates from Councillors on areas of responsibility if relevant.

218/20-21.1 Footpath and Highways

Cllr Sutherland-Rogers reported making five reports via the Suffolk County Highways Reporting Tool on <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk> details of which can be seen there by members of the public who are also encouraged to use this easy and quick way to report any problems they come across around the village.

Signed.....*Ael*.....

Dated.....*5/5/21*.....

218/20-21.2 GDPR, SALC and Website

No report was given.

218/20-21.3 Playing Fields and the Green play area

It was reported that the chain on the gate to the playing field was faulty and needed repair. It was **AGREED** to include this in the work for the contractor.

It was also noted that the contractor had now completed work on The Green.

One piece of play equipment was showing damage and that Cllr. Lewis would investigate the cost with the supplier and purchase if the amount came to under the delegated amount to the Safety Committee of £400.

218/20-21.4 Safe Spaces and Car Parks

It was reported that East Suffolk Council had provided two additional toilets near the current toilet block to provide additional facilities for the expected busy summer. Cllr Bassinette said that they had also been contacted for an extra litter bin and dog poo bins including at the car parking area where visitors were leaving rubbish.

218/20-21.5 Heritage Hut

Cllr. Winyard reported that the track would be resurfaced to a different standard and that the Management Committee was working through a snagging list with the contractors.

218/20-21.6 Sizewell and other power related developments

No report was given.

218/20-21.7 Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Clerk gave a brief report on the progress and it was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Parish Clerk to arrange a meeting with Cllrs. Bassinette, Lewis and Winyard and officers from East Suffolk Council to make initial plans to form the Steering Group and take the next steps.

218/20-21.8 Village News

It was agreed on items to include in the next monthly report through Cllr Sutherland-Rogers. The deadline for the next edition being the 25th April 2021.

219/20.21 Oral Committee Reports if relevant

No reports were given.

Signed.....*Ael*.....

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220/20-21 Date and Time of next meeting was confirmed as Monday 5th May 2021 at 6pm.

The time and date of the meeting was confirmed as above.

The meeting closed at 8.14pm.

Signed.....*Ael*.....

Dated.....*5/5/21*.....