

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Full Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th March 2021 at 6pm.

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

Also in attendance (remotely via Zoom) were two (2) members of the public, Cllr. David Beavan – District Councillor, Cllr. Richard Smith – County Councillor, Mr. Simon Ashton – Responsible Financial Officer and Mr. Mark Knight – Parish Clerk.

184/20-21 Chairman's welcome.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and explained that the Parish Clerk had been delayed by traffic problems and it was AGREED that Cllr. Sutherland-Rogers would take minutes until his arrival.

185/20-21 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.

None.

186/20-21 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation.

None.

187/20-21 Open Forum

None.

188/20-21 To receive a report from County Councillor Richard Smith

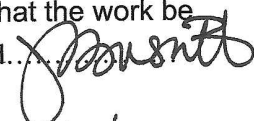
Cllr. Smith reported that he welcomed the change of Walberswick's meeting times to allow him to attend more Council meetings. Suffolk County Council's elections will be held on May 6th and he will stand again as a candidate. Therefore due to the purdah regulations he will be unable to attend Parish Council meetings from March 25th until after the elections.

Suffolk County Council's total net spending for the year 2020/1 is £600 million of which 75% is allocated to Social Care. He was disappointed that the County Council had voted to increase the Council Tax. He said that the Suffolk Police Tax would also be increased.

The Planning Inspectorate are holding preliminary meetings about Sizewell C in March, and possibly a day in April. He will not be speaking at these preliminary meetings as he has been informed that a barrister will represent the County Council. The barrister's fees will be paid by the County Council. He noted that the planning process is time-limited. He said he would wish to participate once the elections and purdah were finished.

He spoke about the proposed renovation of the Bailey Bridge and that he understood there were concerns about the timing. On the other hand, he felt it essential that the work be

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completed especially as he was concerned that the monies allocated could potentially be redeployed elsewhere. He said the County wanted to hear from Walberswick and reported that he will be Chairing a meeting later this month to discuss the closure and repairs to the Bailey Bridge which would include the Chair of the Parish Council. Other invitees to this small meeting included, the Walberswick-Southwold ferry owner, the Clerk to Southwold Town Council, the Clerk to Reydon Parish Council and the Southwold Town Development Manager. The latter will be contacting businesses in both Southwold and Walberswick and represent them all. No decision has been taken yet as to the timing of the bridge closure but he thought it would probably have to be in the summer months.

In response to this report, each Councillor spoke and expressed their strong objections to closing the bridge during the summer months and the extremely negative impact that this would have on local business, residents and visitors on both sides of the river. The Councillors expressed the view that the work would best be delayed or, if not, some type of temporary footbridge solution would be needed whilst the Bailey Bridge underwent renovation. Councillors explained that the ferry could in no way be seen as a suitable substitute given the enormous usage of the bridge. Cllr. Smith acknowledged the strength of feeling and said that more would be known after the upcoming meeting.

The Paris Clerk then joined the meeting at 6.10pm.

189/20-21 To receive a report from East Suffolk District Councillor David Beavan

Cllr Beavan reported that he shared the concerns of the Parish Council around the possible timing of the repair of the Bailey Bridge, and that it was concerning that local business were not being consulted at this stage. Especially after the tough year they have all had due to Covid-19. It was also advised that a second opinion from an engineer should be sought.

It was also reported that the recent increase in Council Tax from East Suffolk Council was necessary as opposed to freezing it due to the huge expense of the Covid-19 relief effort. Officers were also being asked to do more with less.

The preliminary hearing of Sizewell C was reported as being only to address the process and the purdah issue was further complicating the matter. It was hoped that more use of sea transport communicated from the developers would also include detail on the impact on the coast, but this had not been forthcoming.

Cllr. Beavan also urged the Parish Council to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan project which would give local people more say in housing and planning development.

There will also be a motion on Climate Change Bill at the next Cabinet Meeting which is a real effort to reduce carbon emissions.

The Covid-19 relief effort is also progressing well, with a focus on young people's mental health which has suffered in the multiple lock downs in the past year. It was also concerning that there appeared to be a lack of supply of the vaccine at the Reydon surgery at this stage. The vaccine centre there was operating really well, but it was essential that

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there was a regular flow of vaccine from central government.

190/20-21 To consider the minutes of the meetings of 8th and 16th February 2021

The minutes of the 8th and 16th February 2021 were **APPROVED** with the Chairman to sign the minutes and to retain them until they can be handed to the Clerk in person.

191/20-21 Finance Matters 2020/21

191/20-21.1 Review bank receipts/budget & payments/budget (as at 28 February 2021)

The Responsible Financial Officer gave a brief report on the documents circulated. Councillors asked if it would be appropriate to consider any virements at this stage. It was suggested that £285.25 be vired from the Village Hall line to the Playgrounds to cover a shortfall, and for £14.75 be also vired from the Village Hall line to cover expenditure in the IT line. It was **RESOLVED** to make appropriate virements and it was further agreed that the RFO would look at this after the meeting and make the appropriate adjustments. The amended final budget would be published with the draft minutes showing the appropriate virements.

It was **AGREED** to accept the report pending the amendments showing the appropriate virements.

191/20-21.2 Approve bank reconciliation (to 28 February 2021)

It was **AGREED** to accept the figures as presented. Cllr. Bassinette was authorised to sign the necessary documents which she will do at the first opportunity when the Council meetings in the presence of the RFO.

191/20-21.3 Approve items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet

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

191/20-21.4 Approve the Annual CIL statement

The statement was **APPROVED**. The RFO was also authorised to report this to East Suffolk Council as necessary.

191/20-21.5 Note report of Implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations 2019/20

The report as presented by the RFO was **NOTED** including that the Council was confident that access to the RFO is adequate.

191/20-1.6 To approve the completed Internal Control Checklist

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The document was **APPROVED**. Thanks were extended to Cllr Sutherlands-Rogers for undertaking the review.

192/20-21 Planning

192/20-21.1 2 Anchor Cottages, The Street DC/21/0487/FUL

The report was considered and it was **AGREED** that the Council would **STRONGLY OBJECT** to the development due to the application causing harm to the Conservation Area and a non-designated heritage asset. It was further stated that the application would denigrate the village.

192/20-21.2 Commonside, Palmers Lane DC/21/0714/VOC

The report was considered and it was **AGREED** to **STRONGLY OBJECT** to this variation of condition due to the same reasons stated in the previous objection, plus the scale and overdevelopment of the property and the loss of amenity for the neighbours.

192/20-21.3 West Wood, Lodge Road DC/21/0465/FUL

The report was considered and that it was **AGREED** not to object to this application.

193/20-21 To consider increasing insurance coverage of the Heritage Hut

It was reported that an appropriate value for a complete rebuild of the newly renovated HH had been obtained from building and surveyor experts was £120,000 as opposed to the current amount of £50,00 coverage. It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the RFO to contact the insurers to raise the coverage accordingly.

194/20-21 Proposal for ongoing maintenance of Green and Playing Fields

Cllrs. Lewis and Winyard expanded on the information already circulated. It was reported that the contract would be twofold, one being to bring the Village Green and Playing Fields up to a suitable standard and the other to maintain it.

It was reported that it would cost £299 for materials to make good the green, with a further estimated £480 labour.

A brief discussion took place regarding the shelter, but this was confirmed as being maintained by the Walberswick Common Lands Charity and not the Parish Council. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Winyard would contact the WCLC for follow up.

It was also reported that the maintenance agreement would include regular inspection reports and would be subject to an annual review by the Full Council.

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It was then **RESOLVED** to (i) suspend Financial Regulations for this vote due to the difficulty in finding 3 suitable quotes as contractors were unwilling to quote for the work and (ii) to **APPROVE** the proposal and for Cllr. Lewis and Winyard to confirm the agreements with the approved contractor.

195/20-21 Proposed amendment to Allotment Policy

Cllr. Lewis presented the document with the amendment agreed at the February Council meeting. It was also **NOTED** that grandfather rights were included in relation to huts on allotments. It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the document and issue it as part of the upcoming annual renewal in April.

196/20-21 Approval of the Financial Risk Management Assessment

The Council considered the document and **APPROVED** the assessment.

197/20-21 To consider the Grass Cutting Contract for 2021/2

Cllr. Bassinette explained that this item was dropped due to the lack of information from Norse and that this would be included in the April meeting.

The RFO left the meeting at 7.26pm.

198/20-21 Acceptance of Safety Committee Minutes from 4th February 2021

The minutes were presented and **ACCEPTED**.

Cllr. Beavan left the meeting at 7.31pm.

199/20-21 Oral Updates from Councillors on areas of responsibility if relevant.

199/20-21.1 Footpath and Highways

Cllr. Sutherland-Rogers reported that an approach could be made to the WCLC concerning trees, and requested that footpath problems also continue to be reported online.

199/20-21.2 GDPR, SALC and Website

Cllr. Lewis reported from SALC that accessibility would be a particular focus of the Internal Audit and that work would continue to ensure that all Council documents on the website are compliant in this regard.

It was also reported that to mark International Women's Day, it was a good opportunity to remove all gendered terms from The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for when they come up for readoption as normal at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Lewis would undertake this work and prepare a draft for consideration in May.

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199/20-21.3 Playing Fields and the Green play area

No report was given.

199/20-21.4 Safe Spaces and Car Parks

It was reported that an item would be in the April agenda regarding this matter.

199/20-21.5 Heritage Hut

Cllr. Winyard reported it was hoped that an application for National Lottery funding could be made for the audio/visual equipment, but that difficulties could be experienced by the group due to the need to have exclusive use of the equipment for five years. It was requested that the Parish Council consider making the application and this was **AGREED** in principle if it was practical.

199/20-21.6 Sizewell and other power related developments

Cllr. Bassinette reported that she had applied to speak at the preliminary meeting that was being held on 23 March. Among the issues to be raised was the necessity of the planning inspectorate to look carefully at the impact on coastal erosion. She explained that the process with the Planning Inspectorate was complex and highly time bound and that she, with backup support from Cllr Lewis, would endeavour to participate in all the planning inspectorate meetings and relevant representations. It was confirmed that Cllr Bassinette would continue to be delegated to represent the WPC in the Sizewell C process.

199/20-21.7 Neighbourhood Plan

It was stated that the Parish Clerk was working with the Chair to apply for the funds necessary to kickstart this project.

199/20-21.8 Village News

It was agreed on items to include in the next monthly report through Cllr Sutherland-Rogers.

200/20.21 Oral Committee Reports if relevant

This was covered under an earlier item.

201/20-21 To consider a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the press and public for the duration of the following items in view of the confidential and personal nature of the business to be transacted. If resolved, such items to be dealt after the item that confirms details of the next meeting.

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This was so **RESOLVED**, all in favour.

203/20-21 Date and Time of next meeting was confirmed as Monday 12th April 2021 at 6pm.

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

202/20-21 To consider employment matters

It was **RESOLVED** to update the employment policy to align it with contract terms in relation to holiday leave and to set a single leave year aligned with the financial year. It was **AGREED** that the updated employment policy would be published with draft minutes.

The meeting closed at 7.53pm.

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