

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 16th October 2023 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Present (physically): Councillors Lewis (Chair), Whiting (Vice-Chair), Bassinette, Richardson, Sutton and Watson. Twenty-seven (27) members of the public attended in person. Only Councillors physically present can speak (except during the public forum or if standing orders are temporarily suspended) and vote.

Also in attendance (remotely via Zoom) were seven (7) members of the public, Mark Knight, Parish Clerk and Simon Ashton, Responsible Financial Officer.

078/23-24 Chair's welcome.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and explained the requirement and process regarding public speaking. He noted that the large turnout was further evidence of the strength of Walberswick's objections to the Lionlink proposals and thanked those attending for their involvement.

079/23-24 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.

All were in attendance.

080/23-24 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation.

None.

081/23-24 Open Forum

One member of the public spoke to thank the Parish Council for their hard work in addressing and responding to the Lionlink proposals as they pertain to Walberswick. They noted that not only Lionlink, but also the energy developments at Friston and Sizewell C were very significant attacks as well on the natural environment, residents and biodiversity of the Suffolk coast. They finished by praising the professional nature of the response document. Another speaker also wholly supported the WPC response and added an additional fact related to the number of people who make use of the camping sites and would be severely impacted by the proposal.

082/23-24 To agree a response regarding Lionlink non-statutory consultation

The Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the response as compiled and detailed by Cllr. Bassinette with the amendments shared at the meeting. Cllr Bassinette thanked those who had sent comments and noted that the final version would also make note of the detail shared by the speaker during the Open Forum. The Parish Clerk was authorised to send the response to the official non-statutory consultation email address and to also copy in all relevant local representatives from District Councillors to the local MPs and Secretary of State.

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083/23-24 To receive a report from Suffolk County Councillor Richard Smith

County Cllr. Smith confirmed that Suffolk County Council shared the concerns and objections of the Parish Council to Lionlink and would be objecting in a similar manner to this and the other sites. He noted that if Sizewell C were allowed to go forward, SCC would do all it could to ensure that funding for Community projects and mitigation was put to maximum benefit for the local communities who would be badly impacted during the long period of construction. He also extended his thanks to Cllr. Bassinette for her work in compiling the response to Lionlink and Sizewell C.

084/23-24 To receive a report from East Suffolk District Councillor David Beavan

Cllr Beavan also confirmed that East Suffolk Council would be opposed to the Lionlink development. He reiterated his view that more social housing was needed in East Suffolk, including in Walberswick. He encouraged the Council to complete the Walberswick Neighbourhood Plan as quickly as possible.

Twenty-six (26) members of the public left the meeting at 7.40pm.

085/23-24 To consider the minutes of the meetings of 11th September 2023

The minutes of the 11th September 2023 meeting were **APPROVED** with the Chair to sign and to retain them until they can be handed to the Clerk in person.

086/23-24 Planning

086/23-24.1 The Council noted the response to planning applications that had been taken previously under delegated authority:

086/23-24.1.1 1 Adams Lane, Walberswick DC/23/3527/FUL

It was **AGREED** to **OBJECT** to this application due to the potential loss of biodiversity and geodiversity not being assessed. The proposals also amount to significant change to the rural quality around the proposed site, with significant loss of hedge, grass verge, trees and garden amenity, all of which contribute positively to the 'green corridor' approach to the village and the transition from open countryside to settlement. The proposal would cause harm the AONB

086/23-24.2 Feedback from Planning Committee – Shorelands

Cllr. Lewis reported on an overall disappointing experience attending the East Suffolk Council planning committee meeting regarding this development. In his opinion the chairing and conduct of the meeting was much improved since our last attendance there but the process itself clearly inclined the Committee towards accepting the planning officer's recommendation rather than considering inputs from the statutory consultees. Most issues we had raised were never addressed or acknowledged in the committee.

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The Parish Clerk was asked to submit a Freedom of Information request to East Suffolk Council which details (in % and number) the number of applications over the last 3 years for which the recommendation of the Planning Officer was overturned as this currently feels like a waste of time for us to attend.

086/23-24.3 To note membership of the Planning Advisory Group

Cllr. Lewis reported that the group had recently taken on Mr. Ben Whiting as a new member. Given that Cllr. Whiting is related to Mr Whiting, Cllr. Whiting will be declaring a non-pecuniary interest in all planning matters in which Ben Whiting is involved as a matter of course. The amended group membership itself would be officially noted at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2024 as usual.

D Cllr. Beavan and all but 2 remaining members of the public left the meeting at 7.56pm.

087/23-24 Finance Matters 2023/4

087/23-24.1 External Audit Report & Certificate (2022/3)

The Council **NOTED** the document with a brief explanation from the Responsible Financial Officer. The Council expressed its thanks and appreciation to the Responsible Financial Officer for obtaining another completely clean audit.

087/23-24.2 Notice of Conclusion of External Audit (2022/3)

The Council **NOTED** the document with a brief explanation from the Responsible Financial Officer.

087/23-24.3 Review and Approval of mid-year Virements

The following mid-year virements were **APPROVED**:

(+£10) Staff Expenses
(-£190) Allotments
(+£45) Village Hall
(+£70) Elections
(+£65) Lionlink

In addition to this £3,200 has been taken from the Noticeboard Reserve to cover the purchase the Notice Board that will be erected on the Stock's Lane Green.

087/23-24.4 Review of Lloyds Bank Mandate arrangements

It was **AGREED** to remove all signatories who were not current Parish

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Councillors from the banking mandate. The Responsible Financial Officer to action.

087/23-24.5 Approve items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet

It was **AGREED** to pay all items on the sheet. Cllrs. Bassinette and Sutton were authorised to carry out the electronic payments.

The Responsible Financial Officer left the meeting at 8.05pm.

088/23-24 To discuss next steps regarding the Village Green Christmas Tree

The Chair gave a summary of the Parish Meeting held on 13th September at which the decision of the Parish Council to plant a permanent Christmas tree on the Green was discussed. As a result of the discussion and a proposal from the Parish Meeting, the Council decided to postpone its decision to plant a tree this year and instead agreed to allow a working group of interested villagers to organise the purchase, installation, decoration and removal of the Christmas Tree as was proposed by those Parishioners at the Parish Meeting. The Parish Council further **AGREED** that, for this year (Christmas 2023) it would match fund the purchase of the tree up to a maximum of £250 to give the volunteer group time to organise itself going forward.

089/23-24 Oral Updates from Councillors on areas of responsibility if relevant.

089/23-24.1 Footpaths

Nothing for this meeting, but it was stated that any issues should be reported to the Suffolk County Council reporting portal, multiple times if necessary.

089/23-24.2 Highways

Nothing further for this meeting.

089/23-24.3 GDPR, SALC and Website

Cllr. Lewis reports that SALC now had one Chair and three Vice-Chairs after a governance review. He also mentioned that SALC and SCC had organised training for Councils faced by the huge number of Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIPS) proposed for Suffolk.

089/23-24.4 Playing Fields and the Green play area

It was **AGREED** to hold a meeting of the Safety Committee and to report back to the November meeting. The annual ROSPA inspection reports had now been received.

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089/23-24.5 Harbour Management and Car Parks

Cllr Bassinette reported that a consultation by East Suffolk Council was underway to consider adding Walberswick Quay to the Conservation Area. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Bassinette would draft a response which would be considered by the Council at the November meeting.

089/23-24.6 Sizewell and other power related developments

Cllr. Bassinette reported that a meeting would be taking place for Walberswick residents with representatives from Sizewell C on Monday 6th November at 7pm. Everyone was encouraged to attend.

089/23-24.7 Neighbourhood Plan

It was reported that the document was being drafted and a meeting would be held soon.

089/23-24.8 Village Hall and Heritage Hut

Cllr. Watson reported that the Village Hall car park would be resurfaced at the end of October. He also noted that the Heritage Hut was being used for many activities.

089/23-24.9 Village News

The items to include in the Village News were discussed and agreed.

090/23-24 Oral Committee reports if relevant.

There were none. It was **AGREED** that a meeting of the Safety and Employment Committees would take place before the next Council meeting.

091/23-24 Clerk's report

The Clerk presented the report. Questions were asked on some of the items with further explanation given by the Clerk.

092/23-24 Matters arising

It was reported that matters concerning Walberswick Quay, ROSPA reports, budget setting, polling review, .gov email accounts and committee reports would be added to the next agenda.

093/23-24 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 with after the item that confirms details of the next meeting.

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This was so **RESOLVED** and all members of the public left the meeting both online and in person at 8.41pm.

095/23-24 Date of next meeting was confirmed as being Monday, 13 November 2023 at 7pm.

094/23-24 To discuss co-option of Councillors

The applications were discussed for all eligible candidates.

The meeting closed at 8.52pm.

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