

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 18th March 2024 at 7pm.

Present (physically): Councillors Lewis (Chair), Whiting (Vice-Chair), Bassinette, Dadswell, Richardson, Sutton and Watson. Also present in person was C Cllr. Richard Smith, 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 Mark Knight, Parish Clerk, Simon Ashton, Responsible Financial Officer and one (1) member of the public.

172/23-24 Chair's welcome.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and those attending by Zoom.

173/23-24 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.

None.

174/23-24 Declaration of Interest and Dispensation.

Cllr. Whiting declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 180/23-4 pertaining to planning but is permitted to take part in this discussion.

Cllr. Sutton declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 186/23-4 pertaining to Trustees of the Walberswick Common Lands Charity and took no part in the discussion.

175/23-24 Open Forum


None.

176/23-24 To receive a report from County Councillor Richard Smith

C Cllr. Smith reported on the huge challenges in determining the County Council budget given the nationwide shortfall in funding for social services and for financing school transportation for children. Although SCC has reserves to get through this year, unless proper funding for nationally mandated programs is provided, SCC will be facing the same kind of financing crisis as has hit a number of Councils already this year. 70+% of all SCC funding is now going to these mandated programs leading to cuts in all other county services.

C Cllr. Smith reported that the £500 Locality Budget grant promised for the play equipment in the village has now been delivered.

He also announced that he was extraordinarily displeased with the decision of Lion link to proceed with the Walberswick and Southwold landfall options. This went completely against all local opinion and recommendation of SCC. He said that he had never seen such well reasoned and numerous submissions as those that had come from the WPC and Walberswick residents and that it was inconceivable that LL had ignored these. He said that SCC would be considering a motion on the unacceptable approach of NGV in Suffolk Coastal

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and that he would be speaking on this issue and would continue to fight this. He said that the proposals for the onshore infrastructure were particularly troubling because they provided no benefit whatsoever for the area.

Cllr. Bassinette asked if a possible change of government would change any of the approach by NGV to onshore infrastructure. C Cllr. Smith stated that he thought a change of policy would be unlikely in the short term.

177/23-24 To receive a report from East Suffolk District Councillor David Beavan

D Cllr Beavan was not in attendance.

178/23-24 To consider the minutes of the meetings of 12th February 2024

The minutes of the 12th February 2024 meeting were **APPROVED** (one typo amended) with the Chair to sign and to retain them until they can be handed to the Clerk in person.

179/23-24 Lionlink: Proposal for responding to the Scoping Opinion of the National Planning Inspectorate

Cllr. Bassinette gave a brief report on the process in line with her written report. She noted that National Grid Ventures pre-consultation report had virtually ignored all of the input from all the local authorities and over 1,000 members of the public and had persisted in the most damaging approaches. There was nothing but the most perfunctory explanation of why they had rejected other options such as offshore, brownfield and colocation of cables, and had given no reasons at all why the Walberswick or Southwold sites were "preferable".

LL followed their pre-consultation report immediately with an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report and that WPC was being consulted on its content by the National Planning Inspectorate as one of the Statutory Consultees. Cllr Bassinette explained that the document was over 800 pages long and that it was a mammoth project to be asked to respond. She pointed out that she was working closely with members of the WALL group for input into the WPC response and that she was extraordinarily grateful that the group was organised and able to finance work with barristers and others to help fight the Walberswick landfall option.

It was **RESOLVED** to delegate authority to Cllr. Bassinette to complete the WPC Response in time for the deadline on the 4th April and, with the agreement of the Chair, would submit the response and then share with Councillors, SCC, ESC, other local Councils and post on the Village Website.

C Cllr. Smith left the meeting at 7.21pm.

180/23-24 Planning

180/23-24.1 Applications to Consider

180/23-24.1.1 Longroof, Leveretts Lane DC/23/0671/FUL

It was **RESOLVED** that the WPC could **SUPPORT** the application.

180/23-24.1.2 The Boathouse, Southwold Harbour DC/24/0601/FUL

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It was **RESOLVED** that the WPC could **SUPPORT** the application

180/23-24.1.3 The Yacht Yard, Southwold Harbour DC/24/0675/FUL

It was **RESOLVED** that the WPC could **SUPPORT** the application.

180/23-24.1.4 Green Gates, The Street DC/24/0486/FUL

It was **RESOLVED** that the application should request that the application be withdrawn and subject to a request for re-consideration and more information on the form and material of the 'Tower'. It was thought the design was inappropriate and would also have an impact on the Conservation Area. The WPC had no issue with the rest of the application content.

180/23-24.1.5 Millside, The Street DC/24/0825/AME

It was **RESOLVED** to **OBJECT** to the application, as the materials being proposed would not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

180/23-24.2 To note responses made under delegated authority

180/23-24.2.1 Box Bush, Seven Acres Lane DC/24/0415/FUL

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the decision taken under delegated authority to object to the application.

One (1) members of the public left the meeting at 7.35pm.

181/23-24 Finance Matters 2023/4

181/23-24.1 Review of Receipts & Payments Budget Reports (29 February 2024)

It was **AGREED** to **ACCEPT** the figures as presented.

181/23-24.2 Review & Approval of Bank Reconciliation (29 February 2024)

It was **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the report as presented. Cllr. Whiting was authorised to sign the document.

181/23-24.3 Approve items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet

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

181/23-24.4 Review & Approval of Year End Virements (31 March 2024)

The following transfers from reserves were **AGREED**:

- £1,647 from Playground & Green (CIL Receipts) Earmarked Reserve.
- £410 from Noticeboards Reserve.

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It was noted that the budget line items had been very well managed and that they had come in very close to the original budget. In line with the Council's financial regulations, the following virements were **AGREED**:

£35 to Staff Expenses.
£340 to Professional Fees.
£500 to Information Technology.
£125 to VAT.

181/23-24.5 Review & Approval of Implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations

The Council considered and **APPROVED** the recommendations and noted that they were confident that the process was robust.

181/23-24.6 Review & Approval of Annual CIL Report (2023/4)

The Council considered and **APPROVED** the report. It was **NOTED** that a total of £12,374.91 of CIL was retained at the end of year. This was made up of £10,468.95 carried over from previous years, plus £3,552.96 received in the year, minus £1,647.00 spent. This expenditure was confirmed as being on the Cockerel Playground Equipment.

181/23-24.7 Review & Approval of Completed Internal Controls Checklist (2023/4)

The Council considered and **APPROVED** the Review of Internal Control document that has been prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer and Cllr. Whiting. The Council expressed their appreciation of the excellent work by the RFO and thanked Cllr Whiting for the time and effort she had taken in going through the checklist and preparing her report.

181/23-24.8 Confirmation of Date of Internal Audit (2023/4)

The date of the audit was confirmed as being the 15th April 2024. It was **NOTED** that this date was earlier than in previous years and would work very well in helping the Council complete the AGAR report.

182/23-24 Policy Matters

182/23-24.1 Approval of Disciplinary and Capability Procedure

The new policy was **ADOPTED** as presented.

The Responsible Financial Officer left the meeting at 7.55pm.

183/23-24 Provision of Post Office services in Walberswick

Cllr. Lewis reported that the WPC had been informed that the current postmaster was retiring as of the 28th March 2024 and therefore the PO was unwilling to continue to support the Tuesday and Thursday service in place in Walberswick. The only option possible was to accept a one hour a week mobile service between midday and 1pm on Wednesdays in the

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Village Hall car park. The Councillors expressed great disappointment on the PO's decision and felt that it would be extremely difficult for people to have only 1 hour of local service. However, the Council was not given any choice in the matter. Cllr. Lewis would continue to liaise with other Councils in similar position in case any alternative provision could be found

184/23-24 To agree a quote regarding fencing at the Playing Fields

The quote as presented was discussed and **APPROVED** for the purposes of repairing the fencing on the common lands surrounding the Playing Fields. It was noted that the WPC and WCLC had worked co-operatively on the project. It was also noted that the WCLC had committed to regular clearing of the Gorse within a metre of the fence so that major repairs would not be necessary in the foreseeable future.

185/23-24 To confirm the date of the Annual Parish Meeting

The date was confirmed as the 17th April 2024 to be held in the Village Hall. All Councillors were encouraged to attend as Electors of the Parish.

186/23-24 To confirm a Trustee appointment to the Walberswick Common Lands Charity

Hannah Sutton was re-appointed as a Trustee for a four-year term. The Council noted, with thanks, the great work Mrs Sutton had done to date as a Trustee and as a Director also of the Walberswick Car Parks and were grateful for her willingness to take on another term.

187/23-24 Oral Updates from Councillors on areas of responsibility if relevant.

187/23-24.1 Footpaths

It was reported that Footpath 7 was now cleared and that the clearing and replacement boardwalk were excellent.

187/23-24.2 Highways

Cllr. Bassinette reported that the B1125 Working Group had not met for a while now following the WPC agreement to the design for the B1125 closure at Blythburgh related to the Sizewell C construction.

187/23-24.3 GDPR, SALC and Website

Cllr. Lewis reported that he now sat in his capacity as Chair of SALC on the Sizewell C Oversight Partnership Group. The first meeting has taken place in March. These were planned to take place twice a year.

187/23-24.4 Playing Fields and the Green play area

Nothing further for the meeting.

187/23-24.5 Harbour Management and Car Park

Two Councillors asked about cars parking illegally on the track to Cliff Field car park. Councillor Bassinette confirmed that this was not allowed and that Councillors who

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witnessed it should speak to those parking there if they felt comfortable doing so. They could also take photos of the reg plates and post these on ESC parking enforcement website.

187/23-24.6 Sizewell and other power related developments

Nothing for this meeting beyond the previous agenda items.

187/23-24.7 Neighbourhood Plan

Nothing for meeting, but it was **AGREED** that another meeting was needed as soon as possible by the working group to continue progress.

187/23-24.8 Village Hall and Heritage Hut

Cllr. Watson reported that a Village Hall meeting would be held on the 9th April 2024.

187/23-24.9 Village News

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

188/23-24 Oral Committee reports if relevant.

None.

189/23-24 Clerk's report

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

190/23-24 Matters arising

It was **AGREED** to retain the meeting with East Suffolk Council Planning Officers on the Clerk's Report and for the Clerk to continue to push for a meeting to be held in the Village with Councillors and the Chair of PAG. The Clerk and Chair were asked to write to Cllr Beavan about the unwillingness of ESC planning officers to have a meeting in person. The Council agreed that this was wholly unacceptable and that planning officers must come to see the area if they were to understand the impact of their decisions.

191/23-24 Date of next meeting was confirmed as being Monday, 15 April 2024 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.27pm.

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