

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7pm.

Present (physically): Councillors Lewis (Chair), Bassinette, Dadswell, Richardson, Sutton, Watson and Whiting. Only Councillors physically present can speak (except during the public forum or if standing orders are temporarily suspended) and vote.

Also in attendance (via Zoom) were Mark Knight the Parish Clerk and Simon Ashton the Responsible Financial Officer and one member of the public.

001/24-25 To elect the Chair of the Council for the year 2024/5 and for that person to sign the Acceptance of Office for the role of Chair.

Cllr. Bassinette nominated Cllr. Lewis for the Chair, this was seconded by Cllr. Whiting. It was noted that this nomination was exceptional as it extended beyond the 3 years set out in the Standing Orders. The Councillors considered it prudent and sensible to continue with the current chair given that the WPC was in the middle of two very important pieces of work – the drafting of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the process of fighting Lionlink’s proposed landing site in Walberswick. There being no other nominations for Chair the standing orders allowed Cllr. Lewis to stand and a vote was then taken with all being in favour. Cllr. Lewis was then elected Chair of the Council for the year 2024/5 and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in view of those present.

Cllr. Lewis thanked his fellow Councillors for their continued support.

002/24-25 To elect the Vice-Chair of the Council for the year 2023/4.

Cllr. Lewis nominated Cllr. Whiting, this was seconded by Cllr. Richardson. There being no other nominations Cllr. Whiting was then elected as Vice-Chair of the Council for the year 2024/5 and the Declaration of the Acceptance of Office was signed in view of those present.

003/24-25 Welcome by the Chair.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

004/24-25 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.

All Councillors were in attendance.

005/24-25 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation.

The two standing non-pecuniary interest declarations were made: Cllr. Whiting in item 9 pertaining to planning and Cllr. Lewis in items 15 and 19 pertaining to SALC.

006/24-25 Open Forum

A member of the public expressed their views about a planning item on the agenda

Signed.....

Dated.....

007/24-25 To receive a report from Suffolk Council Councillor Richard Smith

C Cllr. Smith was not in attendance.

008/24-25 To receive a report from East Suffolk District Councillor David Beavan

Cllr Beavan was not in attendance.

009/23-24 Planning

009/24-25.1 To note the decisions made under delegated authority

009/24-25.1.1 Millside, The Street DC/24/0825/AME

It was reported that **OBJECTION** to the application was made due to the materials proposed would not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

009/24-25.2 Applications for consideration

009/24-25.2.1 Herons, Church Field DC/24/1242/FUL

The Council **RESOLVED** to **OBJECT** to the application due to the application leading to an overdevelopment of the site, impacting on the rural setting of the Conservation Area, impact on the character and amenity of the adjacent footpath, being not in keeping with the street scene, loss of visual amenity to neighbouring properties, an inadequate preliminary ecological assessment, lack of a lighting plan, inappropriate materials used in the development, loss of residential amenity to neighbours, an increase from 3 to 6 bedrooms, concerns about biodiversity and not being in keeping with the housing needs of the village which are identified as smaller properties in the Housing Needs Assessment.

010/24-25 To consider the minutes of the meeting of 15th April 2024

The minutes of the 15th April 2024 were **APPROVED** with the Chair to sign the minutes and to retain them until they can be handed to the Clerk in person.

011/24-25 Finance Matters 2024/25

011/24-25.1 Approve items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet

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

011/24-25.2 Review bank receipts/budget & payments/budget as at (31 March 2024)

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the figures as presented.

011/24-25.3 Approve bank reconciliation (to 31 March 2024)

Signed.....

Dated.....

The paper was presented and it was **RESOLVED** to accept the figures with Cllr. Richardson being authorised to review and sign as appropriate.

011/24-25.4 To approve the Asset Register (31 March 2024)

The report already circulated was discussed with the Responsible Financial Officer giving a brief verbal report and the Asset Register, as presented, being **APPROVED**.

011/24-25.5 To confirm the Council's arrangement for insurance

It was **CONFIRMED** that the arrangements for insurance for the Parish Council were up to date and adequate and would be renewed as usual in September.

011/24-25.6 Confirm that the expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 is shown separately in the accounts

It was **NOTED** that although there had been no expenditure under this power the relevant procedures and systems were in place to record this accurately.

011/24-25.7 Approval of Use of Bank Direct Debits (2024/5)

The existing direct debits for the coming year were **APPROVED** and it was **NOTED** that these would also now involve use of the PayPal account as codified in the Financial Regulations. Specifically, these payments included: Crashplan, Adobe, Zoom, Parish Online and Microsoft 365.

012/24-25 To approve the Financial Risk Assessment to 31st March 2025

The document was **APPROVED** as presented. The high quality of the Assessment was noted with thanks.

013/24-25 Agree the 2024/5 meeting Calendar

It was **AGREED** to stay with the second Monday of each month (excluding August) starting at 7pm. The proposed meeting calendar, therefore, was approved.

The Responsible Financial Officer then left the meeting at 7.33pm.

014/24-25 To consider the use of the General Power of Competence

Cllr. Lewis gave a brief verbal report on the matter and explained how this benefits the Council when considering expenditure and resolutions in relation to powers and duties.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council is eligible as it has more than two-thirds of the Councillors elected and had a Clerk with the Certificate in Local Government Administration. It was **RESOLVED** to continue with the adoption of the General Power of Competence for the whole of this electoral term. The Council expressed their gratitude for having a Clerk with the qualifications to allow the use of General Power of Competence.

Signed.....

Dated.....

015/24-25 Councillors to be appointed to outside bodies

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Councillors to the following outside bodies for 2024/25:

- 015/24-25.1** Suffolk Association of Local Councils: Cllr. Lewis
- 015/24-25.2** Village News Committee: Cllr. Whiting.
- 015/24-25.3** Heritage Hut Management Committee: Cllr. Watson.
- 015/24-25.4** B1125 Working Group and Northern Transport Group Forum (associated with Sizewell C): Cllr. Bassinette
- 015/24-25.5** Harbour Management Committee Advisory Group: Cllr. Bassinette.
- 015/24-25.6** Southwold to Walberswick Flood and Coastal Board: Cllr. Bassinette.
- 015/25-25.7** Village Hall Committee: Cllr. Watson.

016/24-25 Councillors to be appointed for areas:

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Councillors to take the lead on the following areas for 2024/25. It was further **AGREED** that reports to the Council would on be 'if relevant' and not a standing item on each agenda going forward. All were in favour of this approach

- 016/24-25.1** Footpaths and Highways: Cllr. Dadswell and Richardson.
- 016/24-25.2** Highways and Car Parks: Cllr. Bassinette.
- 016/24-25.3** Playing Fields and Greens: Cllrs. Richardson and Sutton
- 016/24-25.4** GDPR, Website and SALC: Cllr. Lewis
- 016/24-25.5** Sizewell C and other energy projects: Cllr. Bassinette.
- 016/24-25.6** Village News: Cllr. Whiting.
- 016/24-25.7** Village Hall: Cllr. Watson.

017/24-25 To review delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference for Working Groups and Committees:

017/24-25.1 Planning Advisory Group

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference with no changes. These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

Signed.....

Dated.....

017/24-25.2 Walberswick Scroll Advisory Group

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference with no changes or changes to membership. These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

017/24-25.3 Employment Committee

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference with no changes or changes to membership. This to be the Chair (Cllr. Lewis), the Vice-Chair (Cllr. Whiting) and one other Councillor which was confirmed and agreed as Cllr. Bassinette. These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

017/24-25.4 Safety Committee

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference with one addition to membership (Cllrs. Lewis. Richardson and Sutton with the addition of Cllr. Dadswell). These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

017/24-25.6 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference with no changes or changes to membership (Cllrs. Bassinette, Lewis, Whiting, Dr. Paul Bradley and Mr. Alan Gomm and the Parish Clerk). These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

018/24-25 Policy Review

The following polices were reviewed and approved:

018/24-25.1 Standing Orders

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with no changes.

018/24-25.2 Financial Regulations

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with no changes.

018/24-25.3 Complaints Procedure

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with no changes.

018/24-25.4 To review and confirm the Council's obligations under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts are being met

It was **CONFIRMED** that the Parish Council was compliant in all aspects.

Signed.....

Dated.....

018/24-25.5 To consider and approve the policy for dealing with press and media

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with no changes.

018/24-25.6 To consider and approve employment policies and procedures

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the documents with no changes.

018/24-25.7 Review of arrangements including legal arrangements with other local authorities and not for profit bodies

It was **AGREED** to **RECONFIRM** the arrangements in place with the Walberswick Common Lands Charity.

018/24-25.8 To consider and approve the Code of Conduct

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the LGA Code of Conduct and to be immediately bound by the responsibilities and implications of this.

018/24-25.9 Publication Scheme

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with the changes highlighted in the new version circulated for the meeting.

018/24-25.10 Holiday leave and absence policy

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with the changes highlighted in the new version circulated for the meeting.

019/23-24 Confirm Memberships of:

019/24-25.1 Suffolk Association of Local Councils

Continued membership was **APPROVED**.

019/24-25.2 Staff Subscriptions

It was **AGREED** to continue part-funding of the SLCC Membership of the Responsible Financial Officer, noting that the cost was shared by the RFO with other Councils with whom he worked.

019/24-25.3 Information Commissioner’s Office

Continued membership was **APPROVED**.

020/24-25 Oral updates from Councillors on areas of responsibility if relevant:

Signed.....

Dated.....

020/24-25.1 Footpath

Cllr. Bassinette suggested to the Council that WPC should purchase and install some signage to indicate that cycles are not allowed on the newly renovated footpath that runs along the river from the Ferry to the Bailey Bridge. The Council agreed that the investment made by SCC Highways in restoring the footpath needed to be protected and that a formal proposal would be made to the Council at the next meeting.

020/24-25.2 Highways

Cllr Bassinette raised the issue of illegal parking on the Village Green particularly in the corner with Leveretts Lane. The Council agreed that steps should be taken to stop this illegal parking which was damaging the Green and making the area unsafe. It was noted that homeowners around the Green had a responsibility for informing tradespeople and workers at their homes not to park illegally. The Council agreed that no parking signs should be installed there.

Cllr. Whiting suggested it would be appropriate for some no parking signage to be installed by the Jubilee Seat Green also. The Council also agreed with this proposal. It was also **AGREED** to place this issue in the Village News and then to follow up.

020/24-25.3 GDPR, SALC and Website

No report was given.

020/24-25.4 Playing Fields and the Green play area

Cllr. Lewis reported that the see-saw was now completed and asked if permission had been given in perpetuity for the Parish Council to hire a portaloos for the annual cricket match. It was **CONFIRMED** that this was agreed for this year and in perpetuity.

Cllr. Dadswell asked if any attention was being given to the rabbit holes on the Village Green. Cllr. Lewis stated that he and other volunteers normally do this ahead of the Village Fete in August.

020/24-25.5 Harbour and Car Parks

Cllr. Bassinette reported that a consultation was ongoing about a Harbour Management order and would close on the 15th June 2024. Cllr. Bassinette would endeavor to bring a report to the June Parish Council meeting for consideration.

020/24-25.6 Sizewell and other power related developments

Nothing further for the meeting.

Signed.....

Dated.....

020/24-25.7 Neighbourhood Plan

It was reported that meetings were now taking place every fortnight and the vision, objectives and approach were currently being reviewed and draft policies were now being developed.

020/24-25.8 Village Hall and Heritage Hut

Cllr. Watson reported that a pop-up event had recently taken place and was very well attended. There had also been some changes to the Village Hall committee. Cllr Lewis reported that a new flagpole had unfortunately been broken before it had been installed, but that a replacement should be in place by the end of May

020/24-25.9 Village News

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

021/24-25 Oral Committee Reports if relevant

No reports were given.

022/24-25 Clerk's Report

The report already circulated was discussed and the Clerk was requested to chase the meeting with East Suffolk Council Planners. Also requested was that the Sizewell C Deed of Obligation matter be removed from upcoming matters on the report as this had been completed.

023/24-25 Matters Arising

None.

024/24-25 Date and Time of next meeting was confirmed as Monday 10th June 2024 at 7pm.

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

The meeting closed at 8.31pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....