

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The ***unapproved*** minutes of the **Annual Meeting*** of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 30 June 2025 in Westleton Village Hall.

*By prior notice and arrangement this had been carried over from the normal May meeting (minute 25/83 refers)

Ian Haines
Clerk of the Council

There were Present

Cllr Andrew Turner (Chairman), Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chair), Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Barry Banks, Cllr Colin Fisher, Cllr John French, Cllr Paul Holmes, Cllr John Matthews, Cllr Nick Shearme, Cllr David Watson, Cllr Ian Webber

In Attendance

Ian Haines (Clerk)

25/103 Election of Chair

Cllr Andrew Turner was unanimously elected as Chair and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

25/104 Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Ian Johnson was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

25/105 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from County Cllr Richard Smith & District Cllr Paul Ashton.

25/106 Declaration of interests

Council members to declare possible interests they may have in any items on the agenda, either pecuniary or non-pecuniary and to consider requests of dispensation.

Cllr D Watson in relation to discussion on future Allotment provision - see minute 25/116(c).
Cllr C Fisher, Cllr J Alexander and Cllr N Shearme to receive separate cheque reimbursement from the Parish Council - see minute 25/115 (d) below.

25/107 Open Public Forum – Contributions from Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

25/108 Appointment of Members to Advisory Groups

Councillors were appointed or re-appointed to Advisory Groups as follows:

- (a) **Community Field** – Cllr P Holmes (Chair) & Cllrs J Alexander, N Shearme.
Co-opted Chris Freeman, Amanda Freeman, Jonathon Alexander
- (b) **Bonfire** – Cllr N Shearme (Chair) & Cllrs B Banks, C Fisher, J French,
P Holmes, J Alexander.
Co-opted Kevin Berry, Craig Alexander, Jonathon Alexander, Chris Freeman,
Amanda Freeman

- (c) **Commons** – Cllr N Shearme (Chair) & Cllrs J Alexander, B Banks, J French, I Webber.
Co-opted David Rouse, John Bebbington, Joyce Burkenshaw, Chris Freeman, Amanda Freeman
- (d) **Planning** – Cllr J Matthews (Chair) & Cllrs J Alexander, C Fisher, P Holmes, I Johnson, A Turner, D Watson.
- (e) **Housing Needs** – Cllr C Fisher (Chair) & Cllrs J Alexander, B Banks, C Fisher, P Holmes, I Johnson, A Turner, D Watson.
- (f) **Allotments** – Cllr J Alexander (Chair) & Cllrs C Fisher, P Holmes, A Turner, D Watson.
- (g) **Energy Projects** – Cllr A Turner (Chair) & Cllrs J Alexander, C Fisher, N Shearme, D Watson, I Webber.
- (h) **Finance** – Cllr I Webber (Chair) & Cllrs J Alexander, I Johnson, J Matthews & A Turner.
- (i) **Complaints** – Cllr A Turner (Chair) & Cllrs I Johnson, J Matthews.

24/109 Appointment of Representatives to Organisations/Roles

Councillors were appointed or re-appointed as follows:

- (a) **SALC** – Cllr B Banks
- (b) **Sizewell C Forum, Northern Transport Forum & B1125 Working Group** – Cllr A Turner
- (c) **Tree & Footpaths Warden** - Cllr I Webber
- (d) **Village Hall Committee** – Cllr B Banks
- (e) **Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and Villages Community Partnership** - Cllrs A Turner & I Johnson

25/110 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor

No report this time.

25/111 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor

No report this time.

25/112 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 19 May 2025

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2025 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

25/113 Matters Arising from the Minutes 19 May 2025

None this time.

25/114 Audit 2024/25

The SALC Internal Audit report had recently been published and the Parish Council considered the findings and main points and the Clerk reported on follow up actions which would be undertaken. Overall, Members were very pleased with the results which demonstrated that our Governance and Financial Control systems and procedures are on a sound basis and operate very well.

Action – Clerk to put in place further measures as necessary and report back - including revision/review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which routinely take place annually every July.

The Clerk explained that with the Internal Audit now complete, the next stage in the process required the AGAR forms to be sent to the External Auditors (KPF Littlejohn in London) for them to sign off. It was anticipated that this process would be completed by the end of September.

25/115 Council Finances and Accounts

(a) Projected year-end figures – first quarter details and forecast noted.

There is a need for the Working Group/s (Community Field & Common) to individually draw up a 3-4 year Forward Plan. Some other discussion took place around funding for other possible projects in the village and the Chair asked Members to identify and share ideas so that the Finance Committee could then look at further. **Action - All**

(b) Income 2025/26 - Income to date was acknowledged and approved.

(c) Expenditure 2025/26 - Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved.

(d) Invoices and Payments – The following invoices were **agreed** for payment

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£79.34) & salary (£770.90) – June	£850.24
A J Gallagher	Annual Insurance Renewal	£1323.98
HJG Gardening	War Memorial Maintenance (May)	£102.00
SALC	Internal Audit Service	£398.40
Toilets+Ltd	Community Field Village Day Event 6/7**	£288.00*
Kings Landscaping	Supply of materials for War Memorial	£137.37*
Kings Landscaping	Supply of materials for War Memorial	£161.62*
Kings Landscaping	Supply of materials for War Memorial	£61.30*
Kings Landscaping	Supply of materials for War Memorial	£77.14*
Jims Mowing	Spray Ragwort and Thistles on Community Field	£160.00
Colin Fisher	X1 Grass cut of Community Field	£125.00
HJG Gardening	War Memorial Maintenance (June)	£102.00
Acecom Solutions	New Printer for Clerk (£75.00) & cartridges (£15.00)	£90.00*
Julian Alexander	X2 bags of compost as 'top up' for flower barrels	£16.00

*Paid by Debit Card

** It was noted that we had to pay 'up front' for the disabled toilet hire but as the event has subsequently been cancelled Toilets+ have issued us with a credit note although a small cancellation fee of £15.00 +VAT was charged.

(f) Bank balances as at 19/6/2025 noted

Current	£41,187.45
Savings	£50,238.32
Total Bank Balance	£91,425.77

The Clerk highlighted that as previously requested by the Finance Sub Committee he had transferred £25,000 from the Current A/C to the Business Savings A/C in order to achieve a better rate of annual interest/return.

25/116 Feedback from Working Parties

- (a) **Common** – the Suffolk Naturalists had visited the previous weekend and had undertaken a moth survey on the Friday evening. Some of their member/s had also commented on the exceptional range of lichen located across the site.

Noted that Natural England had given their support to reinstating the footpath on the southern boundary running from the bottle bank layby to the new double seat on the ridge. Their advice has also been requested on management of the small area of acid grassland immediately behind the bottle bank which is becoming overgrown with gorse etc. We are waiting for DEFRA's view.

- (b) **Community Field** – feedback given from the recent Working Group held on site. The idea of setting up arrangements so that visitors can make donations by the use of a QR code was still a matter being investigated. Action: Cllrs B Banks & P Holmes [with input/assistance from Jake Barton].
- (c) **Allotments** – Cllr D Watson had shared slide presentations from the two online SALC run courses in which he had recently participated. He had also circulated a briefing paper outlining the main points for consideration. The number one priority appeared to be the need to set up an Allotment Association [of potential users] and so it was **agreed** that he would contact those people from our list who are still expressing interest *plus* extending a general village invite to attend a meeting (date and venue to be arranged). He also agreed to prepare a note on likely costs both to set up and then to run on an annual basis. Action – Cllr Watson
- (d) **Affordable Housing** – it is understood that the Heads of Terms for the land purchase is in the final stages of completion and then Orwell HA hope to finalise details of the option agreement and submit a planning application.

25/117 Planning applications

From	Item	Details
Stranton, Darsham Road, Westleton IP17 3AH	DC/25/1829/FUL	Revised scheme to DC/24/2307/FUL. The latest proposals to existing bungalow: to demolish existing attached garden store and shed; reduce size of existing south element; extend to the east to create a garden room; paint exterior brickwork. Erection of three new dwellings. These are as approved apart from the setting back of the curved wall between the attached dwellings.
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 18/6/25 Response: No objections to the actual Planning Application. However, we continue to have serious concerns about connections to the existing antiquated sewage system (which was constructed at a time of far fewer houses in both Westleton and neighbouring Darsham) and the ability to cope with 'add on' developments.

		<p>This will be an increasingly important issue going forward.</p> <p>The nearby Cherry Lea development (with 15 dwellings) is a particular case in point plus there is the potential impact of the 110 homes site on the horizon near Yoxford which will place even further pressures on the area.</p>
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From	Item	Details
Chatburn Farmhouse, Yoxford Road, Westleton IP17 3BT	DC/25/2413/FUL & DC/25/2414/LBC	Demolition of later elements of the dwelling, new rear extension and minor alterations
		<p>Deadline for observations: 11/7/25</p> <p>Response: No objections</p>

25/118 Other Planning Matters

It has been announced that the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Support program is not being renewed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. This is disappointing news and means that Town & Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums can no longer secure grant funds or free technical support packages for Neighbourhood Plan projects.

High Lodge site – accommodation for Sizewell C workers. Cllr A Turner referred to a recent communication from the Chair of Darsham Parish Council which had been circulated. There were a number of issues of strong local concern, and it was **agreed** that we will take up the offer to attend the Darsham Parish Council meeting on 8 July to help formulate opposition or ensure that SCZ residents have to take buses to site rather than drive through the village.

25/119 Tree & Footpath Warden Report

None this time.

25/120 National Code of Conduct

Formal sign up to this was completed by the remaining 4 Councillors who had not been Members at the time when the Local Government Association Councillor Code of Conduct was formally adopted by the Parish Council back in June 2022.

25/121 Appointment of Clerk

It was noted that Louise Rayment has been appointed and will formally take up her duties in September with a handover period being set up.

25/122 Energy Projects (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects)

Sea Link – the Parish Council has registered details with the Planning inspectorate (PINS) as an interested party and made a submission (as put together by Cllr A Turner).

25/123 Sizewell C B1125 Transport WP

Northern Transport Forum & Sizewell C Community Forum

Average speed cameras have been installed at both ends of the village along the B1125 to enforce the 30mph speed limit and are due to go 'live' by mid-July.

25/124 Westleton Village Fete - Cancellation

It had been decided in the end not to go ahead, and various ideas were shared round the table over staging a different themed event for next year.

Noted separately that the Village Hall are holding an Open Day on Sunday, 21 September for local clubs and organisations to promote themselves and it was agreed that the Parish Council should be represented at this – further arrangements to be discussed.

25/125 Parish Council Surgery

Brief feedback was provided from the session held on 30/6/25. There was a concern raised about the lack of maintenance of some road signs within the village and Cllr Turner advised that he was taking up the matter with Steve Merry.

The next surgery is due to take place on Monday, 29 September between 10.30-11.30.

25/126 Future of the White Horse Inn

There were no new updates to give at this stage.

25/127 Installation of Possible Second Defibrillator in the Village

Cllr A Turner stated that he had previously made an approach to The Crown about providing an electric link/supply to the bus shelter and a response was still awaited.

A question was raised about the existing defibrillator located in the telephone box off the village green and the Clerk reported that he had been advised by the Ambulance Service that we needed to update details so that information is held/logged on the British Heart Foundation website called 'The Circuit'. Action – Clerk.

Cllr B Banks also advised that the Westleton WI had signed up to take part in an online CPR course and then, in turn, they intended to be able to roll out/offer training to residents.

25/128 Village Maintenance Issues

- (a) Memorial Garden bench – Cllr J Alexander offered to undertake repairs.
- (b) Bus stop – quote of £150.00 accepted from Jonathan Alexander for undertaking repair/s and repointing work.

25/129 Correspondence

Following the meeting held on 11 April with MP Jenny Riddell-Carpenter, Cllr A Turner had sent in a follow up email, but it was noted that, so far, no response had been forthcoming.

25/130 Date of Next Meeting

The Council next meets at 7.30pm on Monday 28 July 2025.