

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 28 October 2024 in Westleton Village Hall.

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 J French, Cllr Paul Holmes, Cllr John Matthews, Cllr Nick Shearme, Cllr David Watson, Cllr Ian Webber

In Attendance

Cllr Richard Smith (SCC for minutes 24/171 – 24/178 only)
Cllr Paul Ashton (ESC for minutes 24/171 – 24/185 only)
Ian Haines (Clerk)

24/171 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:

None.

24/172 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.

None this time.

24/173 Open Public Forum – Contributions from Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

24/174 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor

The County Council are awaiting on the Chancellors Budget announcement (due 30/10/24) before drawing up their own fiscal measures for 2025/26. However, there are additional funds being set aside to deal with the extra cost of Storm Babet as a result of the Section 19 reports being published/rolled out.

Other devolution proposals are currently on hold pending anticipated further Central Government announcements.

24/175 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor

Cllr P Ashton stated that the District Council were in the same position as the County Council with regard to their budget setting & planning for next year in terms of what would be announced in the Budget.

There had been recent concern raised that contractors working on behalf of the National Grid on the Lionlink project had caused an unnecessary amount of damage to the shoreline in between Dunwich and Walberswick while attempting to undertake some coastal exploratory work.

24/176 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 30 September 2024

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2024 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

24/177 Matters Arising from the Minutes 30 September 2024

None.

24/178 Council Finances and Accounts

(a) **Income 2024/25** - Income to date was acknowledged and approved.

(b) **Expenditure 2024/25** - Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved.

(c) **Bank balances** as at 23 September noted:-

Current	£27,560.71
Savings	£25,059.22
Total Bank Balance	£52,619.93

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

Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£68) & salary (£744.03) – Oct	£812.03
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit Fees	£252.00
Guy McGregor Assoc	Production of Payslips (qtr)	£16.20
Community Action Suffolk	Annual website hosting fee	£60.00
Royal British Legion	Donation to Poppy Appeal/Wreath	£50.00
Toilets+ Ltd	Community Field 9/9-6/10	£129.60*
Collins Farming & Forestry Services Ltd	Common - Clearing gorse & vegetation from sandy cliff area	£1695.00
HJG Gardening	War Memorial Maintenance – Sept & Oct	£290.00
David Bracey	Annual H&S Inspection of Playing Field	£162.00
Westleton Village Hall	Room hire for meetings	£65.00

* Payment made by Debit Card

Under this item the Chair had proposed that, to assist with budget planning for next year, a ceiling limit covering a maximum spend of £1200.00 for 2025 be placed on the work to be undertaken/carried out by HJG Gardening to the village War Memorial. This was **agreed**.

It was also noted that the Parish Council had received a further CIL payment of £36,431 (not yet showing on the figures under (c) above). It was **agreed** that the Finance Sub Committee would need to convene to look at how this (and the other CIL funds already in receipt) can be best utilised.

Agreed that the monies (£1695.00) above used to enhance the Common cliff area to create a habitat for sand martins be met/allocated from CIL funds carried over from last year.

24/179 Feedback from Working Parties

(a) **Common** – Cllr N Shearme reported that clearance work on the bank in compartment 9 had recently been completed (this also to create a better habitat for sand martins). However, part of the footpath leading to the top of the Black Slough steps was damaged to make an access ramp for the machine and will need to be reinstated. With this, it is seen that there is the opportunity to create a new route which to provide better surrounding views and also to place a seat on

top of the ridge. The path would need to be a more structured than the previous “natural” footpath so the plan is to build something with wooden edges and a firm surface to allow safe access. Clerk to check whether CIL monies can be used for the purpose. Cllr N Shearme will approach 3 contractors to quote for the work.

Noted that volunteers from the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Group are set to attend on 29/10/24 to undertake further gorse clearance.

Agreed that a gift (to the value of £100.00) should be presented to John Bebbington as retiring Secretary to CAG to thank him for his valuable contribution over the years. Presentation to be made to the next Parish Council meeting.

(b) Community Field – Reference was made to the findings from the recent annual playground safety check. Repairs to be carried out asap. Action Cllr P Holmes. The Working Group will also need to look at the condition of some of the timber framed equipment and to plan a replacement programme ideally using recycled plastic material as an alternative which has better longevity.

The Clerk reported that he was in contact with the suppliers of the carousel. The quote originally been supplied **did not** include the cost of installation and confirmation is awaited from Kompan over the cost involved.

Cllr C Fisher advised that he is still waiting to hear back over the estimate/s for connecting a power supply to the site. We will then be able to look more closely at the overall feasibility and the viability of possibly installing electric car charging point/s at the location.

(c) Allotments – Enquires ongoing.

(d) Affordable Housing – The Westleton Housing Needs Survey showed a need for affordable housing and 93% of respondents also supported the development of a small number of affordable homes for people from or connected to the parish. Orwell Housing Association (OHA) are now revising their plans based on the needs identified by the survey and a ‘drop in’ consultation event is planned on **Monday 9th December* between 3 and 7pm** in the Village Hall Foyer to present the scheme to residents and to answer questions. East Suffolk District Council officers will also be present to register residents’ interest for the new homes and to explain the application process. OHA will submit their planning application to the District Council following the 9 December consultation.

*Before that, a meeting of the Housing Needs Group has been arranged for Tuesday 19th November at 2.00pm to first consider the Orwell drawings/plans for the scheme.

24/180 Planning applications

From	Item	Details
The Coach House, Scotts Hall, Sheepwash Lane, Westleton	DC/24/3352/FUL	Alterations & single storey lean-to extensions
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 22/10/24 Response: No objection

24/181 Other Planning Matters

Further to minute 24/151 and representations made at the meeting by Mr & Mrs Sillito, Cllr P Ashton advised that he had discussed the situation with the Planning Officer dealing with the application and it was understood that the plans had now been amended/updated. The consultation deadline date had also been extended.

Cllr J Matthews again expressed concerns about ongoing issues with sewage – with the local system not having the capacity to cope with additional new build developments taking place in the area. Cllr P Ashton advised that sewage was not considered as a factor in determining planning applications and was solely a matter between the developer and Anglia Water. The Parish Council felt this was an example where better joined up working was really required and it was **agreed** that the matter be raised with the local MP.

Reference was made to the development taking place on the former Cherry Lee site. The Clerk will provide Cllr P Ashton with background correspondence with the developer and ESC over the choice of street name and the marketing which Arbora Homes were using.

24/182 Tree & Footpath Warden Report

No report this time.

24/183 Energy Projects

No report this time – although it is understood that further round/s of consultation will be carried out in the New Year.

24/184 Sizewell C B1125 Transport WP

The next meeting of the B1125 Working Group is due to take place on 31/10/24 at 1pm in the Village Hall Foyer. Focus will be placed on the Westleton plans/traffic measures.

The next Northern Transport Forum will be held on 6/11/24 at 6.30pm at Darsham Village Hall.

24/185 New Year Fireworks

Cllr N Shearme advised that he had been in touch with the supplier. The intention this time is to **not** use the large *box type* fireworks in view of some of the previous difficulties. A provisional quote of £1987.00 inc VAT had been obtained. This was **agreed**.

24/186 Parish Council Surgery - 28/10/24

Feedback was given from the drop in held earlier that day.

24/187 Possible Reinstatement of Bus Service

A survey had been undertaken in the village shop to determine interest in reinstating a bus service for Westleton and 38 signatures in support had been obtained. Cllr A Turner reported that he would now put together a submission to the SCC Passenger Transport Unit in time for the 15/11 deadline. He had approached the neighbouring villages of Theberton and Middleton to be part of a possible joint bid but this had not proved possible in the time available.

24/188 External Audit Sign Off

The Clerk reported that the external auditors KPF Littlejohn had now issued a final sign off certificate for completion of the 2023/24 Audit.

24/189 Review of Approved Contractor List

The Approved Contractor list for arboriculture & general maintenance work (as updated) was **agreed**.

24/190 Parish Council Meeting Dates 2025 and Room Use

It was **agreed** (7 voting for – 4 against) that as a trial 3 month period commencing in the New Year the Parish Council will look to stage meetings in The Foyer. In so doing, this will allow the main hall to be used for a weekly dog training booking on Monday evenings. Position to then be reviewed by all parties.

The following timetable of meetings for next year were **agreed**:-

- 27 January 2025
- 24 February 2025
- 31 March 2025
- 28 April 2025 (Annual Parish Residents Meeting)
- 19 May 2025 (Annual Meeting Elections)
- 30 June 2025
- 28 July 2025
- 29 September 2025
- 27 October 2025
- 24 November 2025

24/191 Emergency Plan Adoption for Westleton

The Clerk gave brief feedback following a recent workshop which he had attended on Emergency Planning.

24/192 Clerk Time Off In Lieu

The Chair advised that over the course of the year the Clerk had accumulated a substantial amount of time owing to him by working over and above his contracted 10 hours per week. This had come about for a variety of reasons. To reduce this sum, the Clerk had submitted a request to take time off in lieu over the period 3/12/24 – 17/12/24 and this was **agreed**.

In so doing, it was also **agreed** that a review of his working should take place before the financial year end.

24/193 Correspondence

Councillors were advised of the following:

- (a) Letter from Adnams in response to discussion last time under minute 24/169 concerning the future of the White Horse Inn. **Agreed** – that we should monitor and review the position again in January.
Under this item, Cllr J Alexander reported that because the PH had now closed he had removed all the display trophies and put these in temporary storage until the future was known. Similarly, Cllr C Fisher advised that, with permission, he had removed the outside benches into storage.
Cllr J Alexander also made reference to the fact that he currently held the original brass plate from the war memorial displaying names of those who had fallen. Cllr B Banks was asked if he could make enquiries with the Trustees over whether the historical artifact could be placed on permanent display within the Village Hall.
- (b) Letter from St Peter's Church seeking financial assistance towards their Repair appeal. The Clerk reported that it had been established that we could not use CIL monies for this purpose but there was provision under section 137 powers to make a limited donation. **Agreed** (unanimous) in the circumstances that £3,000.00 be made available in this financial year with a further £2,000.00 to be set aside and donated in 2025/26 if the Church still had any shortfall in their target to make up.

24/194 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the Council next meets at 7.30pm on Monday 25 November 2024.