

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 31 March 2025 in Westleton Village Hall.

Ian Haines
Clerk of the Council

There were Present

Cllr Andrew Turner (Chairman), Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Barry Banks, Cllr Colin Fisher, Cllr Nick Shearme, Cllr I Webber.

In Attendance

Cllr Richard Smith (SCC for minutes 25/41 – 25/45 only)

Cllr Paul Ashton (ESC for minutes 25/41– 25/49 only)

Ian Haines (Clerk)

25/41 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chair), Cllr J French, Cllr Paul Holmes, Cllr John Matthews & Cllr David Watson.

25/42 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.

2543 Open Public Forum – Contributions from Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

25/44 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor

Local Government Reform – Cllr Smith provided a latest update from the County Council's perspective.

He also confirmed the decision to bring the Suffolk Libraries contract 'in-house'. This will take place on 1/6/25.

25/45 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor

Cllr Paul Ashton also spoke about the options being considered under the Devolution proposals.

In response to a question, he confirmed that the District Council are the authority responsible for roadside litter collection. Relating to this - Members raised particular concerns that the Sizewell contractors carrying out local tree and hedge removal work had not, in turn, cleared away litter from these areas and the result was an eyesore and a mess. Issue to also be raised at the next Northern Transport Forum.

25/46 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 24 February 2025

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2025 be accepted as a

true record and signed by the Chair.

25/47 Matters Arising from the Minutes 24 February 2025

None this time.

25/48 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 23/3/2025 noted:-

Current	£47,019.89
Savings	£25,241.90
Total Bank Balance	£72,261.79

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

From	Item	Amount
M P Stephenson & Sons	Fire Clearance work on The Common	£240.00
Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£79.40) & salary (£770.90) – Mar & 40hrs overtime worked over period 24/25 (£770.90)	£1621.20
Toilets+Ltd	Community Field 14/2-13/3	£189.60*
David Bracey	Post inspection of new carousel	£120.00
Steel Sculptures Ltd	Edging for War Memorial	£246.42
Guy McGregor & Assocs	Payroll Services	£16.20
Sue Townsend Garden Design Ltd	War Memorial Planting	£559.44

*Paid by debit card

(d) **Audit of Accounts 24/25** – the terms under which SALC will be undertaking the internal audit (as set out in their Letter of Engagement) were **agreed**.

(e) **Finance Sub Committee** – Cllr I Webber provided feedback from the meeting held on 17 March 2025. Going forward, the Parish Council will *continue* to prioritise the use of CIL funds and the previous Common donation principally for “one-off” projects. Position to be reviewed again fully in October/November when the budget setting process including setting the level of the Precept for 2026/27 takes place.

(f) **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Statement for 2024/25 Agreed** – that the report prepared by the Clerk should be submitted to East Suffolk Council and that details be published on the website.

25/49 Feedback from Working Parties

(a) **Common** – additional fire break work has recently been undertaken. To this end, **agreed** that Bob Stephenson (M P Stephenson & Sons) of Woodside Farm, Lodge Road, Holton IP19 8NE be added to the Approved Contractors List.

NJB Contractors have completed work to create a new walking route from Black Slough to the nearby ridge/viewing point. It is intended that 2 benches will be installed at the top.

Future projects – Cllr Webber is in contact with Natural England about re-opening of a footpath on the south side of the Common. There are also separate plans to carry out maintenance to the pond and for rotational heather clearance on the northern part of the site and work on the wet area on the south side.

(b) Community Field – Members felt that signage from the roadway needed to be improved. The possibility was also raised of creating a wildflower meadow. Both suggestions to be discussed at the next meeting with Cllr P Holmes present.

(c) Allotments – the number of residents who are still interested has been verified and, as such, negotiations will now proceed with Cllr Watson over establishing a specific site.

(d) Affordable Housing – Cllr C Fisher had circulated notes from the meeting held on 4/3/25. It is envisaged that a formal planning application will be submitted in the next 3 months.

25/50 Planning applications

None this time.

25/51 Other Planning Matters

None this time.

25/52 Tree & Footpath Warden Report

None this time.

25/53 Energy Projects (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects)

Sealink – noted that National Grid have submitted an application for development consent.

The Parish Council will register as an *interested party* if the Planning Inspectorate accepts the application for examination.

Lionlink - Scottish Power have held recent 'drop ins' consultation events in Saxmundham and Walberswick.

25/54 Sizewell C B1125 Transport WP Northern Transport Forum Sizewell C Community Forum – 27/3/25

A Community Forum meeting had been held on 27/3/25.

The next B1125 Transport WP will be held on 4/4/25 (online).

Cllr A Turner highlighted a recent incident where a speeding driver working for Sizewell C had acted in an inappropriate manner towards members of the local Speedwatch Team. This has been reported to Sizewell C who have taken action.

25/55 Westleton Emergency Plan

Feedback has been received from the Village Hall.

There was separate discussion with regard to the possibility of installing a second defibrillator in the village. It was noted that a recent Village Hall applications had been rejected for a number of reasons. A suggestion was made that perhaps a unit could be established within the grounds at The Crown Hotel or, alternatively sited in the Bus Shelter.

Additional first aider training for residents also to be looked into.

25/56 Village Pond

Item deferred. Cllr J Matthews to update at the next meeting.

25/57 Volunteers within the Village

Cllr B Banks put forward the idea of holding a Village Open Evening to promote the different voluntary groups which operate in the village and the ways in which people can become more involved. Event to be staged in the Village Hall. Action – Cllr B Banks.

25/58 Parish Council Surgery - 31/3/2025

Cllr A Turner advised that for the second month in a row, no-one had attended. He will therefore review the position after April to decide whether to continue with these sessions.

25/59 Future of the White Horse Inn

An email had been circulated from Nick Attfield, Director of Property, Hospitality & Retail at Adnams giving a latest update. The planning application for a kitchen extraction system and cellar cooler had been approved by ESC. However, unfortunately, the prospective new operators had recently pulled out.

25/60 Correspondence

Councillors were advised of the following:

- (a) A meeting has been set up with the local Suffolk Coastal MP Jenny Riddell-Carpenter.
- (b) Email from East Suffolk Council re Governance Review. **Agreed** that no change be made to the Parish Council membership numbers.

25/61 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the Council next meets on the evening of Monday 28 April 2025 which is also the Annual Residents Meeting.