

# WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of **Annual Meeting** of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 20 July 2020 in in Westleton Village Hall.

*Ian Haines*

**Clerk of the Council**

## **There were Present**

Cllr Paul Holmes (Chairman), Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chairman), Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Antony Clough, Cllr C Fisher, Cllr Amanda Freeman, Cllr Chris Freeman, Cllr Nick Shearme, Cllr Andrew Turner

## **In Attendance**

Cllr Richard Smith (SCC for minutes 20/40 – 20/50 only), Ian Haines (Clerk)

## **PRE AGENDA MATTERS**

### **Contributions from members of the public.**

There was 1 member of the public present who spoke with regard to minute 20/57 below.

## **AGENDA**

### **20/40 Election of Chair**

Cllr Paul Holmes was unanimously elected as Chair and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### **20/41 Election of Vice Chair**

Cllr Ian Johnson was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

### **20/42 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:**

Apologies: Cllr Norman Brooks (ESC).

### **20/43 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.

### **20/44 Appointment of Members to Advisory Groups**

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

- (a) **Community Field** – Cllr C Freeman (Chair) & Cllrs, J. Alexander, P. Holmes, A. Freeman, N. Shearme.  
Co-opted Roy Swindell, Jonathon Alexander
- (b) **Bonfire** – Cllr N. Shearme (Chair) & Cllrs A. Clough, C.Fisher, C. Freeman, P. Holmes, J. Alexander.  
Co-opted Kevin Smith, Kevin Berry, Craig Alexander, Jonathon Alexander
- (c) **Commons** – Cllr N. Shearme (Chair) & Cllrs, J. Alexander, A.Freeman, C. Freeman, A.Turner  
Co-opted David Rouse, John Bebbington, Arlette Smith, Roy Swindell, Roy Jones.
- (d) **Planning** – Cllr A.Turner (Chair) & Cllrs J. Alexander, C.Fisher, C. Freeman, P.Holmes.
- (e) **Housing Needs** – Cllr C. Fisher (Chair) & Cllrs P. Holmes, I. Johnson, A. Turner, J.Alexander.

#### **20/45 Appointment of Representatives to Organisations/Roles**

Councillors were appointed or re-appointed as follows:

- (a) **SALC** – TBC
- (b) **Sizewell C Forum** – Cllr I. Johnson
- (c) **Tree & Footpaths Warden** - Cllr A. Clough
- (d) **Village Hall Committee** – Cllr A. Clough

#### **20/46 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor**

Cllr Smith referred to the emergency arrangements which the County Council had been operating under to cope with the Covid outbreak.

It was noted that EDF had now submitted the Development Consent Order for Sizewell C and the County Council were preparing a response on this. A related virtual engagement event was being organised on 29 July and it was confirmed that Cllr A Turner had been booked on this and would be participating.

#### **20/47 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor**

Cllr Brooks was not present but a report had been earlier emailed and circulated.

#### **20/48 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 be accepted as a true record.

#### **20/49 Matters Arising from the Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

Further to minute 20/28, Cllr J Alexander reported that he had been in touch with the stonemason and arrangements will be made to carry out a clean within the next few weeks.

#### **20/50 Annual Report**

Unfortunately the Annual **Parish** Meeting scheduled for the evening of Monday, 27 April 2020 had to be cancelled due the Covid-19 outbreak. On a practical level we will not be looking to stage or re-arrange this year but rather to carry this over to April 2021. Notwithstanding, the Parish Council did produce an Annual Report for 2019/20 and this has been widely circulated and also published on the Web site.

#### **20/51 Council Finances and Accounts**

- (a) **Signatories to Bank Account** – it was agreed the signatories should continue to be Cllrs P.Holmes, I.Johnson and A.Turner. Noted that a mandate change was made earlier this year to have Ian Haines **added** (in his joint/dual role as Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer) – this was done as he would effectively be the holder of the Business Debit card.
- (b) **Register of Members Interests** – Councillors reminded that they should log any changes on the ESC web site.
- (c) **Income 2019/20** - A report on year end income was noted.
- (d) **Expenditure 2019/20** - A report on year end expenditure was noted.
- (e) **Audit & Annual Governance Statement Year End 31st March** – see minute 20/52 below. It was noted that the year end bank reconciliation statement had been circulated showing that the Parish Council had a closing balance of

£10,316.13 in the Current Bank account and £14,124.19 in the Savings Bank account.

(f) **Income** - Income to date was acknowledged and approved.-

(g) **Expenditure** - Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved.

(h) **Standing Orders/Direct Debit** – approval/endorsement given to the continuation of the following:-

- WAVE Utilities – water charge/bill for Community Field x2 payments
- Information Commissioners Office – Data Protection annual renewal

(i) **Invoices and Payments** – During the ‘lockdown’ the Clerk had issued via email to Members a monthly schedule of invoices requiring payment. The full list is annexed to these minutes. The individual cheques were, in turn, signed by the Chairman & V/C. Confirmation of this temporary arrangement was **agreed**. The following invoices due for payment in July were **agreed** for payment:-

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerks expenses (£39.30) & salary (£414.00) - July	£453.30
McGregor Assocs	Production of payslips months 1-3	£16.20

### **20/52 Audit 2019/20 & Annual Governance & Accountability Return**

A report on the 2019/20 Internal Audit had been submitted from John Bebbington which showed general compliance throughout and there were no significant issues to highlight.

On behalf of the Council, the Chair again thanked John Bebbington for all his time and hard work in formulating the report and recommendations.

It was **agreed**:-

- (1) That the 2019/20 Audit should accordingly be received and noted and
- (2) That the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (Part 2) for 31/3/20 be signed off and submitted to PKF Littlejohn.

### **20/53 Community Field**

The monthly bulletins had provided regular updates on progress but the following areas were highlighted:-

Boules Court – refurbishment work all completed. Cllr C Freeman stated that it was now the intention to construct a storage box next to the site (rather than to purchase as an item).

Planting – the trees had suffered in the dry spell but were still alive. However, some of the new hedging will require replacing,

Other Planned works – a new gatepost is required (as previously identified) and repair of the cricket nets. Rabbit damage is also a continuing problem and Cllr C Freeman will explore the best options to deal with this.

Play Area – this has now reopened in line with Government guidelines and notices have been posted around site to provide advice to users.

It was **agreed** whenever the Group plan to meet to carry out future works/maintenance on site that Cllr C Freeman will let the Clerk know the date so that everyone can be notified with a view to sharing the load and providing as much help as possible.

### **20/54 Common**

Again, the monthly bulletins which had gone out had provided a regular update on progress. Cllr N Shearme had taken over as Chair of the group with effect from 17/5/20 and he highlighted the following:-

Fly Tipping – there had been two recent incidents. Warning posters have been produced asking people in the village to be vigilant to any suspicious activity. The tipped soil still remained blocking the Black Slough track. The District Council/Norse had indicated that it was not within their jurisdiction to clear this and so volunteers to dispose would be sort.

Safety Audit – Cllr N Shearme and John Bebbington had conducted a walkabout around the whole site on 19/5/20 to identify any potential problems. The report/findings from this had been circulated. Fire risk warning signs are in place.

Beehives – notices have been posted up around the immediate area to forewarn people.

Fallen Oak Tree – this had been cut up and removed in order to make safe.

Overgrown gorse - Cllr N Shearme reported that some clearance work had been undertaken around the entrance from the car park and the Black Slough steps. There were other areas which needed attention and hopefully the Community Payback Scheme can assist with this once the Covid working situation eases.

Work Schedule – it was confirmed that David Rouse normally co-ordinates the overall programme for the year but obviously certain things had slipped due to the lockdown restrictions. Whenever there are plans for the group to undertake future works/maintenance on site it was **agreed** that Cllr N Shearme will advise the Clerk so that everyone can be notified in similar fashion to the set up now in place for the Community Field.

Common Publicity – John Bebbington & Roy Jones are putting together material which will eventually go on display in the village Hall to help promote the work of the group and hopefully encourage more volunteers to come forward. Leiston Press are undertaking the artwork/design. Cost in the region of £350.

Tools used by the Working Group - Cllr J Alexander confirmed that he had previously offered to undertake sharpening of the saw blades and shears rather than the need to purchase new.

### **20/55 Planning applications**

In the intervening period since the Parish Council had last met, the Planning Sub Committee had responded to x4 sets of consultations carried out by East Suffolk – these had all been listed in the May & June Bulletins.

The Parish Council also noted that the following response had recently been sent back given the impending deadline:-

From	Item	Details
7 Woodlands, Dunwich Road, Westleton	DC/20/2312/FUL	Construction of a summer house in rear garden

**Deadline for comments 20/7/20:  
No objections**

### **20/56 Suffolk Coastal Draft Local Plan Examination**

In May East Suffolk Council published the conclusions and findings from the Independent Planning Inspector following the public hearings which were held last year.

The Parish Council submitted a response (as prepared by Cllr A Turner as Chairman of the Planning Committee) in time for the 10 July deadline. The submission noted our continued opposition regarding inclusion of the site to the west of the B1125 being inappropriate for development, particularly in light of the pedestrian safety concerns and inspector's view that the site is an *allocation which contains a specific requirement to include housing to meet the needs of older people*. The submission also noted concerns that the Inspector recommended [across the board] that *Designated Areas to be Protected from Development*, (which currently include the paddock behind the Crown pub) should be removed without apparent due process.

### **20/57 Village Green**

Further enquiries had been made with the District Council Planners over the 'status' situation in respect Westleton House planning application (erection of new dwelling to replace former garage and outbuildings on land to the rear) given that the owner had commenced clearance of the site.

The views of a qualified Surveyor had also been sought with regard to the map interpretation of the boundary line and what is designated as Common land.

**At this point in the meeting the Chairman moved the discussion into Part II confidential business given the subject matter.**

Discussion then followed.

**The meeting then returned to Part I business.**

In the circumstances it was **agreed:-**

- (1) That parallel letters be sent to both the County Council and District Council setting out concerns that the building work will encroach onto public open space.
- (2) That a similar communication be sent to the owner to highlight the position.

### **20/58 Tree Warden Report**

Following reports of a dangerous dead bough hanging from an oak tree at the bottom of Wash Lane, the Clerk had alerted County Highways and a report had been received back confirming that this was being investigated. There was uncertainty as to ownership/who the tree belonged to. Cllr A Clough offered to be available for a site meeting if necessary.

A complaint had been received of a blocked footpath leading from Heath View across the nearby maize field.

## **20/59 Local Housing Scheme**

Cllr C Fisher referred to the fact that the special meeting which had been set up back in March with the land owner and Hastoe Homes had unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the lockdown. He was in contact with the parties again hopefully to arrange a new date.

## **20/60 VAS**

It was recognised that the continual data download of material was extremely useful in terms of gathering evidence of speeding vehicles as this was widely seen as a growing blight on the village and community safety concern. Authority given to spend maximum £300 in order to undertake upgrade. Clerk to give feedback to Roy Swindell.

The possibility of eventually investing/purchasing new more modern equipment will be looked at i.e. signs with smiley faces. At least two units were suggested in order to be more effective.

## **20/61 Bottle Bank Site**

The Parish Council have previously earmarked a site for the new location but there are some reservations particularly on what the final cost may be to accommodate the required changes/alterations to the out building (which the brewery own). Cllr C Freeman stated that he would look at other options in the vicinity and report back.

## **20/62 Highways Update**

The Clerk advised that he had made a recent report to Mark Nichols at County Highways regarding (a) the requirement to undertake temporary roadside repairs opposite Rolletts Farm and (b) the conifer hedge on the boundary with The Grange. Hopefully an update would be provided in time for the next meeting following further inspections which were due to be carried out.

Cllr J Alexander also stated that he had concerns about the number of Askew haulage lorries which were now coming through Westleton to gain access to the gravel extraction site off the Blythburgh Road. The Parish Council felt that the more obvious route would be for vehicles to come off the A12 via the Water Tower and the Clerk was asked to take this up with the company and also flag up to the Forestry Commission.

Cllr C Freeman also stated that the gorse bushes/hedges on the Dunwich Road were still in need of a cutback – this having been first raised at the January site visit.

A resident had also raised an issue about a blocked drain in the vicinity of the village pond and the need for clearing to be undertaken. Clerk to take up & report.

## **20/63 Asset & Insurance Register 2020-21**

Minor changes/updates had been made to the Parish Council's Asset Register as part of a regular annual review.

**Agreed** that the Council's Asset and Insurance Register 2020-21 be approved.

## **20/64 Financial Risk Assessment 2020-21**

An update/review has recently been completed of the Parish Council's Financial Risk

Assessment in line with good practice. The Clerk highlighted that whilst fully recognizing the impact of the Covid-19 on the national economy and individual households, the Parish Council have not ourselves been directly affected financially therefore the risk score shown reflected this position.

**Agreed** that the Council's Financial Risk Assessment model for 2020-21 be approved.

### **20/65 Co-option of New Councillor**

As of the close on Friday, 3 applications had been received. Members were asked to do a secret ballot to vote for the new councillor. The vote was close, but Barry Banks won by a small margin. Clerk to write to Barry Banks and congratulate him and invite him to the next meeting. Clerk to write to let David Watson and Amy Whitelock know that they had not been successful at this time.

### **20/66 New Year fireworks**

Cllr N Shearme advised that he had been in touch with the supplier about making a provisional order for the fireworks in order to secure the usual early discount. However, Members felt that it was too early at this stage to take a decision with the current uncertainty over when large scale events would be allowed again and so discussion was deferred for now.

### **20/67 Correspondence**

Councillors were advised of the following:

- (a) National Trust Dunwich Heath Car Park – proposal to close site overnight due to anti-social behaviour problems.
- (b) Sizewell C Development Consent Order – the Parish Council will continue to respond as appropriate to further consultations and announcements.
- (c) Good Neighbourhood Scheme for Westleton – the Parish Council gave support to a suggestion which had been made about establishing a new community group in the village as a 'spin off' to the Network set up locally to offer support to residents during the Covid outbreak. Clerk to give feedback to John Shepherd.
- (d) Appeal for funds from Suffolk Coastal Friends of the Earth linked to the Sizewell C application. Clerk to respond as appropriate as we already contribute locally to the 'Stop Sizewell C' campaign.

### **20/68 – Date of Next Meeting**

It was **agreed** that an *additional* meeting should be organised given that the lockdown had led to the cancellation of 4 meetings. This will take place on **Monday 24 August 2020** at 7.30pm at Westleton Village Hall.

**Westleton Parish Council 20/7/20**  
**Annex to Minute 20/51(i)**

Invoices approved for payment during the period March - June 2020

**MARCH/APRIL**

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerks expenses (£73.80) & salary (£414.00) – March	£487.80
Premier Toilet Hire	Toilet Hire for The Common (12/2 – 17/2)	£108.00
McGregor Assocs	Production of payslips months 10-12	£16.20
SALC	Annual Membership	£259.67
Came & Company	Annual Insurance Renewal	£869.31
Ian Haines	Clerks expenses (£48.42) & salary (£414.00) – April	£462.42

**MAY**

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerks expenses (£39.30) & salary (£414.00) – May	£453.30
Westleton Garage	Supplies for Work Parties	£22.00
Suffolk County Council	Contribution towards Dragons Teeth & 30mph safety scheme	£1,200.00

**JUNE**

From	Item	Amount
Roy Swindell	Payment made for Community Field grass cut	£45.00
Ian Haines	Clerks expenses (£47.40) & salary (£414.00) - June	£461.40
Christopher Church	Supply of oak posts x5 for Green nr garage	£100.00
Julian Alexander	Locks for Playing Field & wood treatment oil	£56.82
Chris Freeman	Labour & material supplies for Boules Court Refurbishment	£929.34
Julian Alexander	Labour & material supplies for Boules Court Refurbishment	£558.00
Jonathan Alexander	Labour & material supplies for Boules Court Refurbishment	£659.66