

## WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of Westleton Parish Council at the meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 25 November 2019 in the Reading Room, Dunwich.

*Ian Haines*

**Clerk of the Council**

### **There were Present**

Cllr Paul Holmes (Chairman), Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Antony Clough, Cllr Colin Fisher, Cllr Roy Jones, Cllr A Paige, Cllr Nick Shearme, Cllr Andrew Turner

### **In Attendance**

Cllr Richard Smith (SCC) (for mins 19/181 – 19/187 only), Ian Haines (Clerk)

### **Also Present By Invitation**

Mr Nick Collinson and Ms Alison Joseph – National Trust (specifically for min 19/187)

## PRE AGENDA MATTERS

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

There were no members of the public present.

## AGENDA

### **19/181 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:**

Apologies: Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chairman), Cllr Amanda Freeman, Cllr Chris Freeman & Cllr Norman Brooks (ESC).

### **19/182 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.

Cllrs Paul Holmes and Roy Jones advised that they were each receiving a cheque from the Parish Council for expenses – see minute 19/188.

### **19/183 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor**

Cllr Smith reported that all the main meetings of the County Council had been postponed until after the General Election.

By agreement, the item 'Condition of Local Roads' listed as 19/198 on the agenda was brought forward. The meeting voiced concern that there were problems with regard to a number of the main roads connecting the village – in particular flooding and safety issues in the vicinity of Rollets Farm on the Yoxford road. There are also other drainage issues which affect the main B1125 both to the north of the village heading towards Blythburgh and south along the Reckford Road towards Middleton and beyond. It was recognised that some of these sites are outside Parish boundary but nevertheless it does mean that in periods of very heavy rain Westleton becomes virtually cut off with deep surface water laying on **all approaches** and obviously this is a worry for residents. In addition, tractors were also causing damage (ruts) to the road sides representing a driving hazard.

Cllr Smith suggested in the circumstances that the Clerk contact the area Community Highway Liaison Engineer to see if a site meeting could be arranged to look at the specific sites and explore what measures can be taken.

Reference was also made to the fact that a rural footpath\* link from Darsham station to Westleton had been closed off for a considerable period of time since 2016. Cllr Smith stated that he would make enquiries to establish the reason and what was meant to be happening.

\*note: this footpath is close to the station and within Darsham parish.

#### **19/184 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor**

Cllr Brooks was not present and so no report was forthcoming.

#### **19/185 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 be accepted as a true record.

#### **19/186 Matters Arising from the Minutes 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

Westleton sewage works and interconnecting village systems (Minute 19/167) – the Clerk reported that Anglia Water had provided detailed plans showing the local network to help with identifying any future problems. Cllr C Fisher will act as custodian of the drawings for reference purposes etc.

#### **19/187 Dunwich Heath Car Park**

Earlier this year notification had been received of a proposal by the National Trust (NT) to start, from January 2020, to charge Westleton residents for parking at the Dunwich Heath cliff site. The Parish Council had made representations to the NT about the loss of this the free privilege [after being in place for over 50 years] and a petition opposing the move had been signed by 64 people.

Nick Collinson and Alison Joseph attended to outline more about the background involved in reaching the decision and to explain some of the challenges managing the site and level of costs/expenditure.

It was noted that the land had been originally owned by the Dunwich Town Trust who then sold\* it to Heinz Ltd who, in turn, had gifted it to the NT in March 1968.

\* It was explained that there was a clause within the sale which provided so that Dunwich residents could have free access in perpetuity – but this apparently did not apply to Westleton and so the arrangement which had been in place was not a binding one to the NT and they had decided to effectively now revoke. Nick Collinson acknowledged the impact of the decision but stated that they were a charity and relied on monies to help fund local conservation projects etc. He encouraged residents to take up a NT membership (with the special offer of a 20% reduction/concession for Westleton residents) which would enable people to park for free whereas other visitors (non-members) would incur the new £5.50 flat rate daily charge – there being no hourly tariff.

Despite making strong representations and urging a change of mind, the NT clearly indicated that they were not prepared to waiver. The Parish Council, in turn, stated that they were very disappointed in what was seen as a poor PR exercise which would ultimately lose the goodwill of local people in using the site. As a follow up, the Chairman, Paul Holmes will speak further to Arlette Smith on the matter and Cllr C Fisher will also contact Barbara Caines to explore other possible remedies.

## 19/188 Council Finances and Accounts

### (a) Projected Year End Figures

Statement circulated showing projected available funds as at financial year end. This included a breakdown showing internal ring fenced funds.

**(b) Budget 2020/21** – The budget was discussed. The proposal was to keep to the same precept requirement as 2019/20 (i.e. £12,000). For the record this would result in a charge of £38.90 per annum for a Band D property. The meeting then moved to formally accept the budget and keep the precept at £12,000 and this was this proposed and seconded. **Agreed.** (Unanimous).

### (c) Income

No further updates since the last meeting.

### (d) Expenditure

Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved.

### (e) Invoices and Payments

The following invoices and donations were **agreed** for payment:-

From	Item	Amount
Chairs & Tables Ltd	Banana teak bench for Community Field	£350.00
Ian Haines	Clerks expenses (£72.50) & salary (£414.00)	£486.50
David Bracey	Annual inspection of Playing Field Equipment)	£108.00
Paul Holmes	Out-of-pocket expenses x4 coffees following site mtg with rep from East Suffolk Council	£10.00
Paul Holmes	New lock for Community Field	£20.22
Roy Jones	Materials for repairing Common noticeboard	£11.11
One Suffolk	Website hosting annual subscription	£60.00
East Suffolk Council	Parish Council Election Costs May 2019	£647.38
Leiston CAB	Annual donation (see min 19/202 below)	£50.00
Warrior Fire & Rescue Service	Donation for attendance at New Years Day fireworks event (see min 19/199 below)	£100.00

## 19/189 Community Field

It was noted that a number of actions had been taken following the Annual safety inspection of the play equipment – this included cleaning/removing algae and replacing rotten wood on the raised planks. One of the black swing seats has also cracked and it was **agreed** that a price for a replacement should be obtained. Request also granted to obtain a price for some beech whips to infill gaps in the hedging as well as approval for additional keys to be cut for the main entrance gate.

One of the goal posts had also been taken out of use as a side section needs to be welded. Cllr J Alexander commented that the goal posts were frequently being moved and it may be that they need securing/bolting down long term.

Noted that work is required to repair/replace the main gatepost and it was **agreed** that this should be carried out asap.

It was confirmed that Cllr Freeman had taken delivery of the teak banana bench and oiled it.

It is hoped that work can start on the boules court refurbishment in the near future. All the materials for the base have been delivered and these need to be moved across to the site from the main car park.

The boundary hedging still needs to be cut and volunteers to help are being sought.

In response to a question about dog walkers, it was confirmed that there is a notice on site making it clear that exercising dogs on the field is forbidden.

### **19/190 Common**

Cllr R Jones gave a report update.

A request has now been made for the Community Payback Team to undertake further on site works in February.

An upgrade has been carried out of the notice board in the car park.

Activities for 2020 (such as further nature walks) are being planned – details will be published on the website.

Noted that an enquiry has been received from a production company interested in carrying out filming. David Rous (as resident expert on wildlife) is liaising.

### **19/191 Planning applications**

From	Item	Details
Pit Cottage, Bakers Lane, Westleton	DC/19/3976/FUL	Demolition of existing building and replacement with one single 4 bed dwelling with double garage

#### **Deadline for comments extended to 27/11/19:**

**No objections** raised to the actual proposal. However, there is a related issue with regard to the track which serves the property as this crosses over land owned by the Parish Council as part of The Common. In the light of this the agent has now served us with a Certificate B. It was agreed that the Clerk should therefore conduct further correspondence with the agent – if necessary through a Solicitor drawing up a Deed of Grant.

From	Item	Details
17 Grange View Westleton	DC/19/4456/FUL	Loft conversion and side extension.

#### **Deadline for comments 9/12/19:**

Notification of this application has only just been received. Planning Sub Committee will be convened to formulate a response.

### **19/192 Tree Warden Report**

Cllr Clough reported that East Suffolk Council had also recently consulted over a proposal to carry out a 25% reduction to 2 lime trees in the front garden of The Barn, The Hill, Westleton and he had raised no objections to this.

It was noted that Norse had recently completed removal of the overhanging dead branches above the garages in The Alley plus the complete removal of the large dead elm and the removal of the vegetation on the other side of the pond where the seats are located. No cost to us involved.

Cllr A Clough also reported that a dead tree is currently blocking FP32. Details have been reported to Suffolk CC Rights of Way and they are contacting the landowner.

Cllr J Alexander reported that the opportunity was being afforded to shortly cutback the overgrown hedge on the Vicarage boundary. Improvements have already been carried out to the church entrance and area around Lavender cottage.

### **19/193 Village Bottle Bank**

Further to minute 19/173, the Clerk reported that he had been in touch with Norse and they had now agreed to provide a second container on the current site which is being used to the rear of the White Horse. Publicity will be given over so that residents are made aware this is for general glass recycling.

### **19/194 East Suffolk Community Workshops – Community Partnership Working**

The Chairman, Cllr P Holmes provided feedback from an event organised by East Suffolk Council on 20/11/19 which both he and the Vice Chairman, Cllr Ian Johnson had attended.

### **19/195 Shaping Suffolk – working together to make a better place to live**

Cllr A Turner reported back following his attendance at a seminar on 18/11/19 organised by SALC. The main theme had been around Planning Policy and promoting greater engagement in the pre-application planning process to get better community “buy in”.

Some related discussion took place specifically covering the operation of the *Community Infrastructure Levy* and the advantages towards accessing a greater proportion of available funds if a Local Neighbourhood Plan is in place. Cllr Turner stated that he would look into this aspect further. There was also a question raised about a previous land sale back in 2006 of a site in the village owned by Suffolk CC and whether any community sum set aside from this might still be available?

### **19/196 Energy Projects Information Sharing Event**

Cllr A Turner provided feedback from a Town & Parish Councils Networking & Information evening held at Snape Maltings on 11/11/19. In Total, 22 Parish and Town councils had been represented. The event had focused on the impact locally of all the major Energy projects being proposed for Suffolk and related environmental concerns.

It was being proposed that a joint letter\* should be sent to the Secretary of State (to go out in the name of the Anglian Energy Planning Alliance on behalf of the local Parish and Town Councils). \*The wording of this draft letter had been circulated and it was **agreed** that Westleton should give broad support and put our name as a signatory.

### **19/197 Asset & Insurance Register**

This item was withdrawn. The Clerk will update the schedule for the May 2020 meeting.

### **19/198 Vehicle Activated Sign**

The latest activity figures and data results for the period had been circulated. It was **agreed** that, given the continuing high level of speeding, details should be forwarded to the Police

with a request that the matter be passed to the safety camera enforcement team.

It was also noted that David Blencoe will shortly be stepping down as Speedwatch Co-ordinator and the meeting recorded their appreciation for all his work. A notice about the vacancy had been posted in 'The Fisherman'.

### **19/199 Fireworks - 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020**

Cllr Nick Shearme gave a brief update/report following a recent meeting of the Bonfire Working Group. It was confirmed that the Warrior Fire & Rescue voluntary service from Aldeburgh would be in attendance and it was **agreed** that a donation of £100.00 should again be provided for their services

The Parish Council noted that the Risk Assessment form for the New Year event had been updated and it was **agreed** this should formally be signed off and adopted. Clerk to forward to Insurers.

### **19/200 War Memorial**

Cllr J Alexander reported that he had managed to locate the original brass plaque. It was **agreed** in the circumstances that this matter be deferred to the next meeting so that further thought can be given as to the most appropriate place to site the role of honour.

The Clerk also referred to correspondence received from Historic England with regard to their interest in 'listing' the memorial. Noted that they are intending to carry out a preliminary assessment and so it was felt appropriate to await the findings from this.

### **19/201 Parish Council Meeting Dates 2020**

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

27 January 2020  
24 February 2020  
23 March 2020  
27 April 2020  
18 May 2020 (date b/f due to Bank Holiday)  
29 June 2020  
27 July 2020  
28 September 2020  
26 October 2020  
30 November 2020

### **19/202 Correspondence**

Councillors were advised of the following:

- (a) Leiston CAB – request for donation. **Agreed** £100.00.
- (b) Historic England – see minute 19/200 above.
- (c) Westleton car parking – further to minute 19/179 from the last meeting, Councillors were advised that a follow up email on this subject had been received. At the request of the resident the Clerk read out the content in full. Whilst it was appreciated that the comments were meant to be helpful and constructive, the

Parish Council did not feel that it would be financially viable to pursue the suggestion.

(d) Love Lane – a resident had sent in an email about a pot hole at the junction Bakers Lane junction. Issue to be referred/taken up with County Highways.

(e) Rat poison – Cllr Turner referred to an email received from a concerned resident. Cllr P Holmes to investigate and if necessary contact be made with the landowner.

### **19/203 Clerk – Annual Appraisal**

Cllr P Holmes reported that he and Cllr I Johnson had recently conducted an appraisal with the Clerk.

The proposal to pay the monthly mobile phone tariff of the Clerk was endorsed and **agreed**. This equated to £17.00 per month and would be claimed each time via expenses. The move reflects the fact that the Clerk's personal telephone is used on a regular basis both for receiving/making calls as well as emails and some data storage.

### **19/204 – Date of Next Meeting**

To note that Council next meets on Monday 27 January 2020 at 7.30pm. Venue to be confirmed – but likely to be Westleton Village Hall (subject to completion of refurb works).