

# WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of Westleton Parish Council at the meeting held at 7.30 pm on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018 in Westleton Village Hall.

*Ian Haines*  
**Clerk of the Council**

## **There were Present**

Cllr Andrew Paige (Chair), Cllr Ian Alexander, Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Anthony Clough, Cllr Chris Freeman, Cllr Paul Holmes, Cllr Ian Johnson, Cllr Roy Jones, Cllr Nick Shearme  
Cllr Roy Swindell

## **In Attendance**

Ian Haines (Clerk)

## **PRE AGENDA MATTERS**

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

There were no contributions from the public.

## **AGENDA**

### **17/253 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:**

Apologies - Cllr Arlette Smith (Vice Chair), Cllr R Catchpole (SCDC) and Cllr Richard Smith (SCC)

### **17/254 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 Roy Swindell declared an interest in respect of a payment (see minute 17/263 below)**

### **17/255 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor**

Cllr Smith was not in attendance and had sent his apologies.

### **17/256 Pre Meeting Report from from SCDC Councillor**

Cllr Catchpole was not in attendance and had sent his apologies.

### **17/257 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 22 January 2018**

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 be accepted as a true record.

### **17/258 Matters Arising from the Minutes 22 January 2018**

**Planning Applications – Westleton House** - Further to minute 17/243, Cllr Swindell reported that a total of 42 objections had been submitted. Notwithstanding, the SCDC Design & Conservation Officer was apparently supporting the application and so, in the light of this, the Parish Council had made a formal request for the application to be referred to the Planning Committee for determination. At the same time, the Parish Council had submitted a

number of additional comments given that the views put forward by the Design & Conservation Officer had not been previously known during the initial public consultation period. It was reported that, at this stage the exact date when the application would be determined was not yet known, but the Clerk would continue to keep Members updated.

Cllr Swindell also commented on earlier information which had been obtained from the Land Registry in relation to the site boundary adjacent to the pond. Given the position reported it was **agreed** that a donation of £112.00 be made to John Reast to cover costs in the matter. Clerk to also send a letter to Mr Reast thanking him for all his work and research undertaken.

#### **17/259 Minutes of Annual Meeting – 22 May 2017**

The Clerk advised that he had attended a recent SALC training event and had received guidance that the Parish Council should look to sign off the Annual minutes as soon as possible after the event rather than carry over to the following 2018 meeting which had been the practice. In the circumstances, it was now **agreed** that the minutes of the Annual meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 be accepted and signed off as a true record.

In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that it was only the Annual **Parish** Meeting held every April where the minutes should be 'retained' as unapproved until they are then agreed and signed off at the following April meeting.

#### **17/260 Matters Arising from the Minutes 22 May 2017**

No matters arising.

#### **17/261 Community Field**

No updates.

#### **17/262 Common**

Feedback was given from the Common meeting held on 8/2/18 (notes attached).

Cllr Jones advised that the Community Payback Team were due to be re-engaged to carry out further works over a 5 day period from 13 – 17 August. Confirmation given that this is at no cost to the Council (other than toilet hire provision).

Use of a drone for carrying out aerial surveys – this had been raised as a suggestion as a useful way of monitoring work done on The Common. It was **agreed** that Cllr Julian Alexander should explore this further with Chris Woods.

Black Slough steps – the Group had raised concern that the condition of the steps had deteriorated due to subsidence and/or the filler having being washed away. Costings were being obtained with a view to remedying the problem.

Annual Report – it was noted that the 2017 report is currently being finalised and will shortly be available for downloading from the website. Cllr Jones reported that Juliet Bullimore had indicated that this would be the last occasion she would be involved in the preparation and it was **agreed** that a letter of thanks be sent for all her excellent work.

## 17/263 Council Finances and Accounts

- **Appointment of Auditor for 2017/18** – Further to discussion at the last meeting, the Clerk advised that John Bebbington had kindly agreed to continue to act as the Council's internal auditor.

It was also reported that because the Council operate under the prescribed £25k level of expenditure, there is no requirement to appoint an external auditor for 2017/18 and with this in mind it was **agreed** that an application should be made for a formal Certificate of Exemption.

- **Income and Expenditure 2017/18**  
Noted.
- **Invoices and Payments** – The following invoices and donations were **agreed** for payment:-

From	Item	Amount
SALC	Understanding Annual Meetings Training	£26.40
Ian Haines	Clerks fees & salary (Feb )	£539.24
John French	Provisions for Bonfire event	£29.20
Local Council Public Advisory Service	New General Data Protection Regulations Training (March)	£40.00
Information Commissioner	Annual Renewal of Data Protection Registration	£35.00
Roy Swindell	Land Registry Information	£6.00
SALC	End of Year Accounts Training	£30.00

## 17/264 Planning Applications

From	Item	Details
Mr & Mrs Pinder	DC/18/0184/FUL	New dwelling to be built in garden following demolition of existing store and stable. High March, Brussels Green, Westleton
Johnathan Clark	DC/18/0374/FUL	Installation of proposed air source heat pump to previously approved new dwelling. Pine Cottage, The Hill, Westleton

**DC/18/0184/FUL** - it was noted that observations on this application were required by 14/2/18 – in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair a response was sent back to SCDC stating that the PC had no objections given that this is a smallholding on the border with Darsham and the proposed new build is set well back from the main road.

**DC/18/0374/FUL** – no objections.

## 17/265 Housing Needs

Cllr Ian Alexander gave a brief update in respect of negotiations between the parties.

## 17/266 Tree Warden Report

No updates.

## **17/267 SALC**

No updates.

## **17/268 Sizewell**

No updates.

## **17/269 VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign)**

The latest activity figures had been circulated. The Clerk also read out a letter (previously circulated) which had been received from David Blencowe, the local Speed Watch Co-Ordinator in Westleton. The communication set out concerns volunteers had about the continuing problem with speeding vehicles and what additional measures or action could be taken.

Cllr Roy Swindell reminded the meeting that the Council in early 2017 had decided to investigate the cost of erecting 'entry gates' at the 30mph signs on the B1125 and a site meeting had been held with a SCC Highways representative. Shortly after that meeting in February Suffolk Highways posted their own speed tracking device for a week and subsequently reported that 'gates' were not appropriate for the Reckford Road site. The cost for 'gates' at Blythburgh Road, together with 'dragons teeth' and 30mph road markings at both sites would cost £5000. At the March meeting the Parish Council decided that the limited effect of the 'gates', without a reduction in road width, did not justify the £5000 cost. Cllr Swindell then wrote back informing of that decision and asking for the cost of just the road markings for painting dragons teeth and 30mph signs on the highway. At the same time a request was again made to see the results of the speed check and for an official Police Speed Check sign to be installed. However, it was very disappointing to note that no response had been forthcoming - despite making it clear in all correspondence that the Parish Council was prepared to contribute to the cost and several 'chase' letters being sent.

In addition to the above, the Clerk also read out an extract from an email from County Councillor Richard Smith (received that day) which indicated that, if the safety improvement scheme involving the painting went ahead, there may be the possibility of funds from his local Highways improvement budget being available to help with half the cost – although this could not be fully guaranteed and was dependent on demand and priorities coming forward from other towns and villages locally.

Given the position reported, it was **agreed** that the Clerk should write a letter to SCC Highways indicating that the Parish Council are still seriously concerned about the speeding situation and would like to pursue the dragons teeth and 30mph road markings idea.

Cllr Swindell also sought the views of the meeting on whether local 'Speed Watch' signs (as exhibited at the meeting) should be posted up at strategic points but the consensus was that the size of the signs were probably too small as to be effective and so this was rejected. [It was understood that larger signs were in fact available – but these were felt to be *too* big and that, anyway, there were already enough different variety of signs up around the village].

It was also noted that the Speed-gun (which is owned by the Parish Council) had recently been re-calibrated. Reference was made to the fact that the instrument itself is rather heavy and unwieldy.

## **17/270 Website**

Cllr Ian Alexander advised that an upgrade had recently been carried out by the provider to

the software and design of the One Suffolk website that the Council uses.

### **17/271 – Westleton Archives**

Further to minute 17/250, Cllr Ian Alexander, on behalf of the Village Hall Trustees, thanked the Parish Council for the letter of support which had been sent in association with the bid for Heritage Lottery funding.

### **17/272 – Request to SCC to carry out Highways Walkabout/Site Meeting**

The Council at their November meeting had agreed to reinforce the previous request made for a site meeting to be held with SCC Highways so that ongoing drainage and maintenance problems can be identified and discussed.

The Clerk had taken this up with Suffolk Highways but, as a result of a major restructure which had taken place last autumn, direct telephone line access or emails to individual officers is now no longer permitted and everything has to be done via the Suffolk Highways online reporting tool ([www.suffolk.gov.uk/highway-repair](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/highway-repair))

In order to obtain as accurate details as possible (for the purpose of recording on the website) the Clerk now invited Councillors to provide information. Discussion took place in relation to the following locations:-

1. Pot hole – Bakers Lane, Westleton. Noted that Cllr Roy Jones had already reported this online and confirmation had been received by email that the necessary repair will be carried out.
2. Flooding – Grange View, Westleton. Problems in the vicinity with blocked culvert and ditch which requires clearance.
3. Collapsed drain/pothole & flooding – Leiston Road, Middleton. Reference made to a recent incident where damage had occurred to a vehicle. Acknowledged that as the site is located outside of the Parish Boundary it would be more appropriate for the driver in question to take up as appropriate with SCC Highways.
4. Overgrown vegetation encroachment - Dunwich Road en route to Dunwich Heath. Enquiries to be made but acknowledged that land in question probably belongs to RSPB.
5. Flooding and overgrown hedge – Yoxford Road bottom of Mill Hill. Water trench and gulleys on this sharp bend require clearance.
6. Dangerous manhole - Blythburgh Road. Regular flooding also occurs along this stretch.

### **17/273 Correspondence**

#### **Police Locality meeting**

Noted that there had been a recent meeting on 22/2/18, but unfortunately on this occasion no one from the Council had been able to attend. Clerk reported that the Police were concerned about the increase in tool theft from vehicles and premises and a promotion campaign was being run by Suffolk Constabulary to try to heighten awareness on how people can better protect their property.

## **Suffolk Highways 'Community Self Help' Survey**

Communication received from Suffolk Highways (previously circulated) asking all Parish Council's to participate in a survey aimed at gauging appetite for taking on more functions and voluntary work on the back of the County Council having to make ongoing budget savings.

In the case of Westleton, we recognised that members of the Parish Council and other representatives in the local community already carry out a great deal of goodwill activity locally and are involved in various projects etc. It was therefore **agreed** that the Clerk should look to formulate a response, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, which reflects this position, but at the same time leaves some scope open to the possibility of undertaking or providing future additional assistance (subject to this not being burdensome on the Council's own limited resources).

As an aside, it was also **agreed** that the Clerk should write to Suffolk Highways to request that the salt in the gritting boxes located around the village are re-filled every November prior to the onset of winter and that during cold spell periods these are routinely kept topped up.

## **Delegation of Scheme for Regulation re The Common**

Further to minute 17/218 of the meeting on 27/11/17, the Clerk read out an email received from Richard Best, East Suffolk Communities Manager which set out the District Council's position in relation to the transfer arrangements for the Management rights of the Common.

Following a question raised by Cllr Roy Jones, it was **agreed** from the point of view of final clarity, that the Clerk should look to write to both Natural England and DEFRA to verify the arrangement and agreement in place.

## **17/274 – Any Other Business**

The Chair enquired whether there was any support towards making a donation to CURIE (Coastal Unit Recording Irradiation of the Environment) who carry out monitoring of nuclear radiation levels in the Sizewell area but this was rejected by the meeting.

## **17/275 – Date of Next Meeting**

To note that Council next meets on **Monday, 26 March 2018 at 7.30pm.**