

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the meeting of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 27 November 2023 in Westleton Village Hall.

Ian Haines
Clerk of the Council

There were Present

Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chair), Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Barry Banks, Cllr Colin Fisher, Cllr John French, Cllr Paul Holmes, Cllr John Matthews, Cllr Nick Shearme, Cllr David Watson, Cllr Ian Webber

In Attendance

Cllr Richard Smith (SCC for minutes 23/203 – 23/208 only)

Cllr Paul Ashton (ESC for minutes 23/203 – 23/208 only)

Ian Haines (Clerk excluding minute 23/219)

23/203 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Andrew Turner.

23/204 Chair for the Meeting

Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting in the absence of the Cllr Turner.

23/205 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 J Alexander & N Shearme to receive a cheque reimbursement from the Parish Council - see minute 23/211 below.

23/206 Open Public Forum – Contributions from Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

23/207 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor

Further to the various concerns and issues raised last time under minute 23/184, Cllr Smith gave an update on how the situation was being handled by the County Council with priority being afforded in order of worst cases. In total across the county over 800 properties had been flooded (600 residential and 200 businesses) as a result of Storm Babet. A concerted effort was underway and the authority had earmarked £1m from Reserves to augment and assist the Floods Team (led by the Head of Environment) to deal with the aftermath. Over 100 separate investigations of specific sites will be conducted in the coming months.

With regard to Westleton itself and the questions raised about the number/location of road culverts and when these were last cleared – Cllr Smith stated that unfortunately he did not yet have this information. However, he was able to comment on actions and proposed work which the Highways Team will undertake specifically with regard to the situation in and around St Peters Barn on the Darsham Road.

Members also highlighted some other locations where there was concern about lack of

ditch maintenance and Cllr Smith suggested that contact be made with Wayne Saunders from the Highways Team to see if he could assist. Again though, any work identified would have to be then prioritised based on the wider picture.

On a separate matter, the Clerk flagged up that the Parish Council had taken the decision to carry out a survey of residents to gauge support for the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit through the village. Cllr Smith noted this and stated that it would also need to be backed up by supporting evidence/data showing vehicle speeds etc.

A general comment was made about the state of many road signs in the wider area. Cllr Smith stated that he did have a small Localities budget available to cover replacement but Parishes needed to supply details/examples to him within their immediate boundary only.

23/208 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor

Cllr Paul Ashton also spoke about the fallout from the flooding and advised that the District Council were acting on behalf of the Government in offering financial support to anyone who was flooded as a result of Storm Babet. An email providing further advice on this subject had been circulated.

Cllr Ashton also spoke with regard to his latest monthly update which had just been issued – this covered (1) free Christmas parking (2) review of Polling Stations and (3) new District Council strategic direction document.

23/209 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 30 October 2023

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2023 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair, subject to the word ‘meeting’ being inserted after the word ‘site’ on minute 23/190 (e).

23/210 Matters Arising from the Minutes 30 October 2023

National Grid – Sea Link Project – minute 23/197. Noted that Cllr A Turner is preparing a draft a draft response/representations to go back and will circulate details for comment. Cllr C Fisher also gave feedback following his attendance at a recent consultation event held in Saxmundham.

Yoxmere Fisherman – minute 23/200(b) – Cllr A Turner will be producing a regular feature to go in the magazine giving an update on the work of the Parish Council.

Second Defibrillator – minute 23/201 – Cllr B Banks advised that the Village Hall were very open to the idea of establishing/locating a second unit on site and it was hoped this could be progressed.

23/211 Council Finances and Accounts

(a) Projected Year End Figures

Clerk submitted revised projected year end funds. Details **agreed**.

(b) Budget 2024/25 – The budget for next year was discussed. The proposal was to keep to the same precept requirement as 2023/24 (i.e. £13,000). The meeting then moved to formally accept the budget and keep the precept at £13,000 and this was proposed and seconded. **Agreed.** (Unanimous)

(c) Income 2023/24 - Income to date was acknowledged and approved.

(d) Expenditure 2023/24 - Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved.

(e) Invoices and Payments – The following invoices were **agreed** for payment

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£62.34) & salary (£484.80) – Nov	£547.14
Dynamic Fireworks	New Years Day Fireworks Event	£1966.40
East Suffolk Services	Supply & installation of additional Fido bin for Minsmere Rd site	£327.92
East Suffolk Services	Dog Bin Emptying charge 19/9/23 – 31/3/24	£54.60
David Bracey	Annual Playground Safety Check	£156.00
Westleton Village Hall	Room Hire of Building (inc CAG mtgs)	£65.00
HJG Gardening	War Memorial Grass cut/feed - Oct	£50.00
Leiston Press	Dog Bin Stickers	£70.80*
Warrior Fire & Rescue Service	Donation – attendance at New Year Day Bonfire Event	£150.00
Leiston Press	X350 copies of 20mph survey + envelopes	£75.60*
Julian Alexander	Compost for Flower Barrels	£30.00
Chris Simpson	Xmas Tree Lights	£52.98
Jim's Mowing	Xmas Tree	£150.00

* Payment made by Debit Card

23/212 Feedback from Working Parties

(a) Common – Cllr N Shearme reported the circumstances where the Parish Council had been gifted a personal donation of £10,000 towards the future upkeep and maintenance of the Common in memory of Hilary Potter, a wife and mother who has many happy walks on the Common. It was **agreed** that the Clerk write back to Mr Potter (and his family) expressing their deep gratitude for this incredibly generous act. Mr Potter had requested that the money should be used solely by the Parish Council to further ensure the implementation of the Common 10 year 2023/33 Management Plan which encompasses various different aspects of programmed work and so this money will allow us to proceed on projects with clear certainty over future funding.

Arrangements regarding the New Year Fireworks event were also confirmed.

(b) Community Field – Cllr P Holmes reported on the findings from the recent annual playground safety check. There are some ongoing repairs taking place but concern was recorded that the large swing had been out of use for a considerable period of time and it was suggested that perhaps a better approach in this instance may be to engage specialist contractors to complete the work. Further update to be provided at next meeting. Action Cllr P Holmes.

(c) Car Parking – the Parish Council are seeking a legal opinion in respect of the response to go back to the District Council.

(d) Allotments – no new developments to report.

(e) Affordable Housing – following the discussion last time Cllr C Fisher advised that he had written to the landowner with a view to hopefully setting up a meeting in the near future with vested parties.

23/213 Planning applications

From	Item	Details
The Haskers, Old Hall Lane, Westleton,	DC/23/4400/FUL	Alterations and extensions including a first floor bedroom/bathroom above existing sitting room.
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 12/12/23 Response: No objections

23/214 Other Planning Matters

Cherry Lee Development – some initial groundwork on site has been undertaken but it is understood that an overall start on the building work had been delayed by the recent wet weather.

Neighbourhood Plans – the Clerk had attended a recent presentation held by the District Council at High Lodge and the slides from the event have been circulated for information.

23/215 B1125 Working Group

Cllr C Fisher gave feedback from the meeting which had been held on 15/11. The main piece of progress is that SCC are looking again at coloured road markings for the crossings across The Street and the Green to the houses on the right hand side. SCC have agreed to put pressure on the ESDC conservation officers who are the block. Also flagged up was concern about the loss of car parking space by the Village Hall. SCC agreed that there may be scope for a couple more spaces and this will now be considered. It was clear that no immediate decision would be taken about the verge of the Green so this discussion will be taken up for another time in order to allow the plans to be finalised so that we can present them asap to the village.

With regard to the survey to gauge the support of residents for the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit through the village (referenced earlier under minute 23/207), it was noted that, so far, 168 responses had come back with 160 (95% in favour). Deadline for the return of forms is 11/12.

23/216 Tree & Footpath Warden Report

Cllr I Webber reported that both of the hedge problems where an obstruction was causing a problem had recently been cut back and so this had been a positive outcome.

The Parish Council had also received consultation on some proposed tree work at the Old Vicarage, Darsham Road which involved the removal of a dead sycamore and the reduction of the crown of a London Plane. Cllr Webber had spoken to the owner and there were no objections. This was **agreed**.

Cllr P Holmes referred to more instances of dog fouling in the vicinity of The Green and Blythburgh Road. It was suggested that the next Fisherman article could encourage owners to act more responsibly.

23/217 Litter & Fido Waste Policy Review by East Suffolk Council

An email dated 6/11/23 had previously been circulated which gave notification about a proposed change in policy by East Suffolk Council. Noted.

23/218 Correspondence

There were no new communications to report this time other than to note that the Clerk had received 9 emails in relation to the 20 mph speed limit survey. 8 were in support and 1 did not feel that it was worthwhile.

23/219 Clerk – Local Government National Pay Award and Time Recording

The Local Government National Pay Award for 2023/24 had recently been announced and this will result in the Clerk receiving a new paid hourly rate (increase of £1.00) to £17.17 based on SCP 24. The award is to be backdated to 1/4/23.

It was also **agreed** that with immediate effect the weekly hours of the Clerk should be increased to 10 hours based on levels of working. Clerk to continue to monitor and record details on time sheets for a further period of 6 months so that the situation can be reviewed as appropriate.

23/220 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the Council next meets at 7.30pm on Monday 29 January 2024.