

# **WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL**

The minutes of the meeting of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 29 January 2024 in Westleton Village Hall.

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

## **There were Present**

Cllr Andrew Turner (Chair), Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chair), Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Barry Banks, 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 24/1 – 24/5 only)  
Cllr Paul Ashton (ESC for minutes 24/1 – 24/20)  
Ian Haines (Clerk)

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### **24/1 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Colin Fisher.

### **24/2 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 N Shearme to receive a cheque reimbursement from the Parish Council - see minute 24/ 8 below.

### **24/3 Open Public Forum – Contributions from Members of the Public**

There were two members of the public present.

Reference was made to a recent incident in the vicinity of the village pond where a diseased lime tree had fallen down onto a parked car during a recent storm. The fallen tree was removed by a tree surgeon contracted by East Suffolk Council (the owner of the tree). Further to an inspection of the remaining trees in the vicinity by a Contractor Team from the District Council, a second lime tree was identified as having the same disease (a decay fungus *Ustulina Deusta*) and required felling. However, the contracted tree surgeon only removed the branches, leaving 2 to 3 metres of the diseased trunk standing. A question was raised as to whether the PC should obtain a "safety certificate" for the remaining stump. As the land and therefore the tree is under ESC ownership it was decided that it was not appropriate for PC to become involved. After some discussion about whose (land owner or car owner) insurance should take the lead, Cllr P Ashton acknowledged that this was a District Council responsibility and stated that he would investigate the circumstances further – in particular in relation to ESC role in the insurance position/claim and the potential delay of several months for their assessment of the incident, so that the car can hopefully be removed from the site without further delay and regarding the diseased lime tree trunk.

### **24/4 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor**

Cllr Smith reported that EDF had now triggered the Development Consent Order for the construction phase of Sizewell C. It was noted that a substantial local Community Fund has been established - details on how to apply for grants etc will be given in due course.

A brief update given on the County Council's budget setting process for 2024/25.

A report was also given on how priority was being rolled out to villages/properties most affected by the flooding caused by Storm Babet and the criteria being applied – with the worst cases triggering a Section 19 Inquiry/Investigation. Cllr J French stated that he would follow up on discussions initially held with Wayne Saunders from Suffolk CC Highways in relation to the specific flooding which had occurred to his property and others in and around the village. The findings and recommendations from this will then be shared.

Cllr A Turner gave feedback on the results from the survey of residents to gauge support for the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit through the village. In total 249 residents had responded with 92.7% found to be in favour. Cllr Smith noted this and stated that additionally supporting evidence/data would also need to be provided showing vehicle speeds etc. [The Parish Council were also pleased to note in this regard that the Police were now carrying out more frequent speed checks in recognition that a problem exists].

Cllr A Turner also referred to a communication which had been received from a resident about the parking arrangements at Darsham railway station and asked if Cllr Smith could take this matter up with Greater Anglia/Network Rail.

Cllr P Holmes also recorded his dismay that an announcement had just been made about the closure of Barclays bank in Leiston and the effect this had particularly for elderly residents in the area as the nearest branch would either be Lowestoft or Ipswich. This also seemed extremely short sighted particularly so in relation to Sizewell C going ahead. Cllr Smith advised anyone concerned to lobby/write to the local Member of Parliament.

#### **24/5 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor**

Cllr Paul Ashton gave an update on the District Council's budget setting process for 2024/25.

On Sizewell C, it was noted that EDF had recently held a first community forum as part of the next stage of their community engagement programme. The Main Development Site forum is one of three forums that will run four times a year. The Northern Transport forum (which Westleton forms a part) is scheduled for 6 February. The overall Sizewell C forum will run annually – with the first date being held on 9 April. Cllr Ashton stated that he was concerned with regard to abnormal loads travelling from the port of Lowestoft and the possible impact this could have. Members were asked to be vigilant with regard to the movements of **all** lorries etc to ensure that vehicles followed prescribed routes and if drivers flouted to record the registration details. Cllr A Turner asked Cllr Ashton if Parish Councils could be given advance notice of the transport of abnormal loads so they can give advance warning to parishioners.

#### **24/6 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 27 November 2023**

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### **24/7 Matters Arising from the Minutes 27 November 2023**

There were no matters arising.

## 24/8 Council Finances and Accounts

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

(b) **Expenditure 2023/24** - Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved. Current Bank a/c stands at £38,523 & Savings a/c £24,780. The Clerk reported the factors why these were at unprecedented high levels. It was agreed going forward that a group (membership to be determined) should be set up led by Cllr J Matthews to determine future projects and priority spend.

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

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£75.55) & salary including backdated national pay award (£1087.05) – Dec	£1162.60
Com Action Suffolk	SSL certificate for website	£39.00
Nick Shearme	Payment of straw supplied by H.Holmes for NY Day event	£25.00
Westleton Garage	Fuel supplied to Cllr C Fisher for transport of crates to the Common for NY Day event	£30.00
Westleton Village Hall	Hire of building for Meetings	£50.00
HJG Gardening	War Memorial grass cut/feed + shrub maint (Nov)	£150.00
Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£53.60) & salary (£744.03) Jan	£797.63

\* Payment made by Debit Card

## 24/9 Feedback from Working Parties

(a) **Common** – the notes from the CAG meeting held on 9/1/24 had been circulated and Cllr N Shearme gave a brief update. It was noted that Chris Freeman had now installed the drop down wooden posts at the entrance from the car park and he was thanked for carrying this out.

The Annual Common Report for 2023 had just been published and the group have identified various projects and clearance work to be completed in the next 12 months. It was **agreed** that Cllr Shearme should proceed with the quote obtained for the delivery of some gravel to fill pot holes in the main car park area – there being specific funds already set aside in the budget for this purpose.

(b) **Community Field** – Cllr P Holmes stated that he would hold discussions with Chris Freeman to determine his availability to complete on the range of identified works.

(c) **Car Parking** – Cllr B Banks confirmed that the Parish Council have engaged a firm of solicitors to provide legal opinion.

On a separate matter, it was noted that St Peter's Church are themselves looking at providing additional parking provision in the church yard.

Cllr A Turner reported that at the recent Parish Council Surgery a suggestion had been made by a parishioner about whether it might be possible to acquire part of the White Horse car park for use as public parking. An approach on this basis will therefore be made.

(d) **Allotments** – there were no new developments to report. Given the circumstances it was **agreed** that it would a positive move for the Chair & V/C to

seek to engage directly with Nat Bacon given his help & involvement in the village on a wider number of aspects.

- (e) **Affordable Housing** – the notes of a meeting held on 19/1/24 had been circulated and Cllr A Turner provided a further update. The content of the draft Housing Needs Survey Form which is to be sent out to all residents was briefly discussed. Cllr Turner asked for Members to give feedback to him by 31/1 at the latest. [Cllr Paul Ashton to also discuss the content with the District Council Planners and provide feedback].

#### 24/10 Planning applications

From	Item	Details
Potton Hall, Blythburgh Road, Westleton IP17 3EF	DC/23/4922/FUL	New tent area on bottom field for visitors to visit the spa and stay over in own tents and 10 yurts on railway sleepers laid on shingle to be erected on top field with approximate 5m radius.
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 6/2/24 Response: <b>No objections.</b>

From	Item	Details
Walk Barn Farm, Walkbarn Farm Lane, Westleton IP17 3BZ	DC/23/4838/FUL	Proposal: 1. Conversion of the bat attic of the existing outhouse into a library, to include a new external door and winding staircase, new ribbon window in the front elevation and new roof-light in the rear roof slope. 2. Conversion of the existing small garage on the ground floor of the existing outhouse into a sauna and associated bathroom 3. New garage adjacent to existing outhouse to same size /design as a matching 'twin' building but with reversed roof slope.
	Status:	<b>Deadline for observations: 14/2/24</b> <b>Response: No objections.</b>

#### 24/11 Other Planning Matters

Cllr J Matthews had attended a recent Planning Forum organised by East Suffolk Council. The presentation slides from this had been circulated to Planning Committee Members.

#### 24/12 B1125 Working Group

What was deemed to be a final response had now been received back from Suffolk CC Highways on the traffic calming plans which have been drawn up for Westleton ahead of the Sizewell C development. The various measures are seen as necessary as the construction of the unit will increase traffic passing through the village. It was **agreed** that details\* should now be put to residents in the form of an open invitation to attend a consultation event on the evening of **Monday, 5 February** with publicity about this given over to encourage participation/turnout. \*Cllr Turner circulated the latest drawings/plans showing the proposals.

### **24/13 Tree & Footpath Warden Report**

Cllr I Webber advised that he had had a recent cordial meeting with a local landowner to discuss footpath matters.

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The Parish Council had received consultation on a proposal at Moor House, Yoxford Road to remove a fir tree and reduce the height of a Eucalyptus. Cllr Webber had stated that he had no objections and this was **agreed**.

Notification had also been received of a separate application on a proposal to fell an ash tree within the grounds of at the Crown Hotel and Cllr Webber advised that he was intending to meet with the Manager to discuss further.

Cllr Shearme also reported that a dead oak tree on The Common will shortly be removed by UK Power Networks as part of planned work.

### **24/14 Bonfire & Fireworks – 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024**

The event had once again proved very successful with another good turnout of people despite the adverse weather. In total, £1036.34 had been raised in income via donations, raffle draw etc. Thanks were recorded to all the organising and support team/s – both at the site itself and the helpers who had assisted with refreshments at the Village Hall.

Cllr Shearme stated that he would be assessing some of the arrangements for next year and would report back further with details.

### **24/15 Guidance for Riparian Ownership in Suffolk (Responsibility for Ditches)**

With reference to the flooding issues covered under minute 24/4, Cllr A Turner reported that Suffolk CC had brought out a document in 2019 (appended to these minutes on the website for information) which set out clear areas of maintenance responsibility. He will reference in his next Chair update to go in 'The Fisherman'.

### **24/16 Parish Council Surgery**

Cllr A Turner provided feedback from the first event which he had attended with Cllr D Watson on 22/1/24 as a new means of engaging with residents in the village. It is intended that a minimum of a further three sessions will be run to determine take up and interest.

The next surgery will take place on Monday, 26 February between 10.30-11.30 at the Village Hall with Cllrs I Johnson & J Alexander in attendance.

### **24/17 Proposal to hold a Summer Village Fete**

With the loss of the Barrel Fair there is a strong desire to offer an alternative event for local residents which would be staged at the Community Playing Field site. In order to get arrangements underway it was agreed that an Organising Working Group should be set up with other outside parties/local businesses being co-opted. Cllr A Turner will promote further in the next Fisherman edition.

## **24/18 Correspondence**

Councillors were advised of the following:

- (a) Email from J Tilston re damage to car caused by fallen tree (minute 24/3 also refers).
- (b) Email from Mr & Mrs Sury re Cleeves roof. Position noted. No objection in principle but owners to be advised to seek further guidance/advice from East Suffolk Council Planning Office. On a related matter, concern was raised about proximity to the road of the scaffolding on the Cleeves. It was agreed to ask the owners to ensure the poles nearest to the road are made more visible with coloured tape.
- (c) Email from Suffolk Community Foundation re establishment of Sizewell C Community Fund. Noted.

## **24/19 Dog Bin Emptying**

Cllr P Holmes referred to the regular occurrence of a dog bin being missed from the collection round and also difficulties in then reporting to ESC and getting them to respond. The bin in question is located on the Blythburgh Road between Gorse View and Heath View at the end of a connecting footpath. Cllr Ashton offered to follow up and investigate.

## **24/20 Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the Council next meets at 7.30pm on Monday 26 February 2024.