

# **WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL**

The minutes of a meeting of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 25 November 2024 in Westleton Village Hall.

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

## **There were Present**

Cllr Andrew Turner (Chairman), Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chair), Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Barry Banks, Cllr Colin Fisher, Cllr J French, Cllr Paul Holmes, Cllr John Matthews, Cllr Nick Shearme,

## **In Attendance**

Cllr Richard Smith (SCC for minutes 24/195 – 24/198 only)  
Cllr Paul Ashton (ESC for minutes 24/202 – 24/214 only)  
Ian Haines (Clerk)

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## **24/195 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:**

Apologies were received from Cllr I Webber and Cllr David Watson.

At this point a presentation was made to John Bebbington as a mark of thanks for all his work as outgoing/retiring Secretary to the Common Advisory Group.

## **24/196 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 N Shearme & J French to both receive cheque reimbursement from the Parish Council - see minute 24/201.

## **24/197 Open Public Forum – Contributions from Members of the Public**

There was one member of the public present.

## **24/198 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor**

The main item of news was a press report detailing the Government's anticipated review of the existing two-tier system replacing it with new unitary councils – effectively abolishing districts and boroughs. The timescale for the changes have not yet been set, but the Government is understood to be keen to bring in the reforms during the current parliamentary term – possibly by 2028 or even 2027. The aim of the changes and reorganisation is to cut bureaucracy and costs. Discussions are ongoing and it is expected that an announcement will be given once the Government's Devolution White Paper has been published

## **24/199 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 28 October 2024**

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2024 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 24/200 Matters Arising from the Minutes 28 October 2024

Further to minute 24/187, it was noted that a bid had now been submitted for the possible reinstatement of a bus route to serve Westleton.

An announcement from Adams is currently awaited regarding the White Horse PH (minute 24/193 refers).

### 24/201 Council Finances and Accounts

- (a) **Projected year-end figures** - The Clerk had reissued a paper previously submitted to the September Parish meeting. Amended details noted & **agreed**.
- (b) **Budget 2025/26** – The budget for next year had been discussed by the Finance Sub Committee. Based on the information provided by the ESC Finance Team and following enactment of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 covering second home ownership, we are in a position to be able **to request a 2025/26 Precept of £15,783.21** (up from £13,000) which will reflect/show as a zero increase. This was formally **agreed**. (Unanimous).
- (c) **Agreed** – that priority be accorded towards utilising CIL expenditure. Finance Sub Committee to look to produce a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan to add more structure to the whole process and best use of funds.
- (d) Finance Sub Committee Membership – it was **agreed** that Cllr Ian Webber be co-opted onto the group. Cllr Webber has also kindly offered to assist with providing a better breakdown of Council finances with improved spreadsheet reporting. At the moment this is work in progress but it is hoped this can be set up by the time of the January PC meeting.
- (e) **Agreed** – that the Clerk be given authority to speak to the Barclays Business Team with a view to obtaining online access in order to have the ability to view only the up-to-date statement of accounts showing transactions. At the same time, enquires will be made about the possibility of transferring money from the Business 'Premium' Account so that it earns an improved return rate of interest. Clerk to report back to the C & V/C before taking any action.
- (f) **Income 2024/25** - Income to date was acknowledged and approved.
- (g) **Expenditure 2024/25** - Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved.
- (h) **Bank balances** as at 21 October noted:-

Current	£30,870.17
Savings	£25,059.22
<b>Total Bank Balance</b>	<b>£55,929.39*</b>
<b>*excludes latest CIL Payment not yet showing on most recent bank statement</b>	

**Invoices and Payments** – The following invoices were **agreed** for payment:-

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£71.55) & salary (£958.99) – Nov & backdated national award to 1/4/24	£1030.54
Community Action Suffolk	Website – Accessibility Audit & Fix Service	£108.00
Toilets+ Ltd	Community Field 7/10-4/11	£134.23*
Toilets+ Ltd	Common 28/10-30/10	£157.20*
Westleton Village Hall	Room Hire	£100.00
The Crown Hotel	Gift voucher to John Bebbington as 'thank you' for Common Secretary work	£100.00*
St Peter's Church	Donation towards Appeal Fund as agreed under minute 24/193b (section 137 provision)	£3000.00

Dynamic Fireworks	New Years Day Fireworks Event	£1849.60
Warrior Fire & Rescue Service	Donation – attendance at New Year Day Bonfire Event	£150.00
Jims Mowing	Village Xmas Tree	£160.00
Mr J French	Mulled wine supplies for NY Bonfire event	£37.25
Woolnough Contractors Ltd	Supply of granite for repairs to Common car park (Phase 2 works)	£418.97

\* Payment made by Direct Debit

## 24/202 Feedback from Working Parties

- (a) **Common** – Cllr N Shearme reported that work had been undertaken the previous week to complete the phase 2 car park repairs in the area off Mill Street adjacent to the green container. Thanks recorded to Chris Freeman for his help.

Coast & Heaths volunteer team are due to visit the site again on 3/12/24 to undertake further clearance work.

As previously reported, plans are in place to reinstate part of the footpath in the vicinity of Black Slough and create a new route to the top of the nearby ridge. We are awaiting final approval from Natural England on the latter but it is hoped all these works can be carried out at the same time. It was **agreed** in this respect that the quotation received from NJB Contractors should be accepted as follows:-  
Footpath works £727.00 plus VAT  
Bench base £580.00 plus VAT

Contact has been made with Nat Bacon and he will be undertaking a hedge cut around part of the perimeter. Also noted that repairs had recently been carried out to one of the drop down entry posts which had been damaged.

- (b) **Community Field** – Cllr P Holmes reported that following the recent H&S inspection report he had obtained an estimate of £922.00 from Jonathan Alexander for undertaking various required repairs to the equipment. It was **agreed** that in the circumstances arrangements be put in place to carry out the work asap. Where possible composite material will be used as a replacement instead of timber.

Cllr Holmes had met with a representative from Kompan to discuss the proposed installation of the new carousel. Revised costings had accordingly been obtained and the full price now quoted would come out at £7,213.72. [It may be that we can ask our H&S Inspector David Lacy to undertake an inspection once constructed and this would potentially save £330.00 on the sum above].

Cllr C Fisher reported that Greenfutureenergy had advised that we would need to make a formal site connection application to UK Power Networks for a surveyor to attend on site and so he would set up arrangements.

- (c) **Allotments** – in the circumstances reported the Parish Council are now to pursue lines of enquiry direct with David Watson. The Allotments Sub Committee will need to convene to take forward and to look at lease or purchase options.

- (d) **Affordable Housing** – Cllr C Fisher gave feedback from a meeting held on 19/11/24 – the notes from which had been circulated. The consultation event is set for Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December between 3-7pm in the Village Hall. It is intended

that Orwell HA will then submit a formal planning application for the scheme.

## 24/203 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor

It is understood that the Medical Waste Incinerator application at Hinton is now due to be considered at the SCC Planning Committee in February.

Reference was also made to the increasing number of planning applications being submitted for solar farms in the countryside. Cllr Turner asked Cllr Ashton if it was possible to ensure that the Parish Council were notified/alerted about any such proposals in nearby close proximity to our Parish boundary.

Members expressed concern at what appeared to be an increase in the number of HGV's/trucks driving through the village in the early hours. It was felt these were most likely attributed to the Sizewell C construction but livestock transport could be a factor. Cllr Turner stated that he would monitor the situation.

Cllr B Banks raised a refuse collection issue in Love Lane and Cllr P Ashton stated he would investigate. It was also felt that clearer guidance [particularly aimed at second home owners/visitor]s should be provided by the District Council over the use/what can be placed in the bins to avoid misuse etc.

## 24/204 Planning applications

From	Item	Details
Bankside, Mill Street, Westleton	DC/24/3223/FUL	Single storey extension, upgrade to windows & doors, minor amendments to existing roof & demolition of outhouse
	<b>Status:</b>	<b>Deadline for observations: 19/11/24</b> <b>Response: No objections</b>

From	Item	Details
Lucarnes, Mill Street, Westleton IP17 3BD	DC/24/3636/FUL	<b>Change to exterior materials: horizontal larch or red grandis cladding instead of hanging tiles; render instead of brick above brick plinth on extension; render over existing brickwork above damp proof course on main house; larch or red grandis clad barges and facias. Change in window design to include extra vertical bars; the head height of the windows in dormers to be raised by 75mm. Side porch to be made wider by 374mm (still smaller than existing)</b>
	<b>Status:</b>	<b>Deadline for observations: 20/11/24</b> <b>Response: No objections</b>

From	Item	Details
Stranton, Darsham Road, Westleton IP17 3AH	DC/24/2307/FUL	<b>To build a terrace of three new dwellings - two 3-bed and one 4-bed. Also alterations and extension to Stranton to create a one and a half storey dwelling with attached 1-bed annex</b>
	<b>Status:</b>	<b>Deadline for observations: 26/11/24</b> <b>Response:</b> We wish to restate that we have no objection in principle to the overall redevelopment of Stranton. However, we CONTINUE TO have concerns about the proposed new access* and architectural impact. The proposed access is on a sharp corner in the Village, immediately opposite The White Horse public house where people sit outside at pre-positioned tables in the summer and spill over to stand on the road on busy nights such as Thursday to Sunday (inclusive) during warm weather. Traffic from the proposed new entrance would compound the risk of an accident at the junction which will increase because of traffic from the new 15 house estate on Darsham Road and which is already increased in the summer months due to large tractors and trailers at harvest time, and tourist traffic. We share the concerns expressed in the Design & Heritage Consultation Response dated 6 August about the impact of the proposed terrace of three houses on this sensitive area of the Village.  *we feel that the existing access should be used and the scheme redesigned accordingly.

From	Item	Details
St Helena House, St Helena, Westleton, IP17 3ED	DC/24/3841/FUL	Conversion of barn to dwelling.
	<b>Status:</b>	<b>Deadline for observations: 5/12/24</b> <b>Response: No objections</b>

From	Item	Details
7 Gorse View, Westleton, IP17 3BW	DC/24/4033/FUL	Single-storey rear extension
	<b>Status:</b>	<b>Deadline for observations: 10/12/24</b> <b>Response: No objections</b>

#### 24/205 Other Planning Matters

None.

#### 24/206 Tree & Footpath Warden Report

No report this time.

## **24/207 Energy Projects**

The Parish Council welcomed the recent announcement by National Grid over the decision to route the Nautilus Interconnector project to landfall on the Isle of Grain in Essex – rather than the Suffolk heritage coast. This at least offers some local comfort, although the Scottish Power, Sealink and Lionlink projects remain a threat and blight to the area.

It was noted that the action lobby group SEAS are planning to hold a meeting in Westleton Village Hall on the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> December. The aim of this is to make residents fully aware of the full scope of the various planned works. A follow up meeting in Saxmundham is then planned for early in the New Year.

With all the various projects taking place/planned in the area there is concern at the lack of joined up working between the respective utility and private companies. Better co-ordination, particularly over the phasing and programming of road works, is needed.

The meeting had also heard earlier report/s from Cllrs Smith & Ashton following their arranged visit of the Sizewell C construction site. Members expressed various concerns about the overall scale of destruction taking place to the landscape/woodlands and as well there had been a noticeable increase in light pollution emanating from the site.

## **24/208 Sizewell C B1125 Transport WP**

Cllr A Turner had provided feedback/an update from the 31/10/24 meeting.

A note summary had also been circulated from the Northern Transport Forum on 6/11/24.

## **24/209 New Year Fireworks**

Cllr N Shearme reported that the organizing group had recently met and arrangements for the event were outlined. A Risk Assessment had also been updated.

## **24/210 Parish Council Surgery - 25/11/24**

Feedback was given from the drop in held earlier that day.

## **24/211 War Memorial – Planting**

Sue Townsend has obtained prices for replacing the diseased hedging and also fresh planting of the lavender bushes. It was **agreed** that we would accept the Palmstead order for the plant supply and then ask Haydn Glenn (HJG Gardening) to do the groundwork. As part of this, Cllr P Holmes also advised that he had spoken to Haydn about putting down some additional shingle in order to improve appearance of the area.

## **24/212 Community Emergency Plan - Adoption for Westleton**

The Plan was **agreed** for adoption subject to the Clerk making some minor amendments. We will now look to consult with representatives from the Village Hall to make sure they are fully on board with the content.

## **24/213 Correspondence**

No items covered this time.

## **24/214 Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the Council next meets at 7.30pm on Monday 27 January 2025.