

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 29 July 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, Cllr David Watson, Cllr Ian Webber

In Attendance

Cllr Richard Smith (SCC for minutes 24/125 – 24/129 only)

Cllr Paul Ashton (ESC for minutes 24/125 – 24/135 only)

Ian Haines (Clerk)

24/125 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:

None.

24/126 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 J Alexander to receive cheque reimbursement from the Parish Council - see minute 24/132 below.

24/127 Open Public Forum – Contributions from Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

24/128 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor

SCC Highways are embarking on their annual resurfacing road programme having just carried out a major purge to repair potholes from the winter/rain season (works have been undertaken according to their intervention standards). In response to a question regarding drainage in the vicinity of the Reckford Road layby, Cllr Smith stated he understood these works would be completed within the next 3 months.

Storm Babet follow up action – the first of the Section 19 Flood Reports has now been published with a further ten more underway. Cllr J French raised a question about the culvert close to his property and Cllr Smith stated that he would investigate the position to check when this work would be done.

Cllr Smith also advised that the planning application (SCC/0102/23SC) for a medical waste incinerator at Hinton was due to be considered by the County Council's Planning Committee on 4 September. The Parish Council have strongly opposed this proposal.

24/129 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor

Following the General Election and changes now in place, ESC have written to local MP's

seeking a meeting. Both the County Council and District Council are awaiting on further announcements towards future Government strategy.

ESC are also carrying out a public engagement programme with a series of roadshows in town centres – the closest to one to Westleton takes place in Leiston on 7 August.

Under discretionary powers established as part of the *Levelling Up* Bill - ESC are introducing measures from next April which will see a double Council Tax imposed on all second homes.

East Suffolk will host the overall finish of the Lloyds Bank Cycle Tour of Britain Men event on 8 September with the route being staged between Lowestoft and Felixstowe. This is Britain's biggest professional cycle race and will mark the seventh edition of the men's Tour to have visited Suffolk, although the first time that the county has hosted the prestigious final stage of the event.

24/130 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 24 June 2024

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2024 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

24/131 Matters Arising from the Minutes 24 June 2024

Further to minute 24/111, the Clerk reported that Suffolk One (our website provider) had now set up arrangements so that the Parish Council had a '**.Gov**' domain. Arrangements were also being made for the Clerk to adopt a new 'gov.uk' email address in a move away from gmail. Both of these measures are in line with Audit and SALC recommendations.

With reference to minute 24/113(b), the Clerk reported that he had not yet received a response from the ESC Leisure Team over the application for grant funding for the new children's play roundabout.

It was noted that the village noticeboard for general public use had been replaced (minute reference 24/121). However, the original order was not of the correct size and so there had been an additional associated cost - see details listed under minute 24/132(d) below.

A letter had been received from the Leiston CAB office thanking the Parish Council for the donation (minute 24/122).

24/132 Council Finances and Accounts

(a) Income 2024/25 - Income to date was acknowledged and approved.

(b) Expenditure 2024/25 - Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved.

(c) Bank balances as at 24 June noted:-

Current	£36,320
Savings	£24,965.85
Total Bank Balance	£61,285.85

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

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£75.45) & salary (£744.03) – July	£819.48
HJG Gardening	War Memorial Maintenance May	£228.00
HJG Gardening	War Memorial Maintenance June	£208.00
Ian Haines	Reimbursement for Ink Cartridge order	£12.00

SALC	Annual Internal Audit Fees	£328.80
V.C.Cooke Ltd	Skip Hire – Community Field	£258.00*
Boards Direct	New Noticeboard for the village (general use)	£175.20*
Paul David Enterprises	Collection charge for return of goods – order was not the right size.	£30.00*
Boards Direct	Replacement [larger] noticeboard price difference between original order	£103.00*
Guy McGregor Assocs	Payroll services - quarter	£16.20
Community Action Suffolk	New '.Gov' website domain and email address	£66.00
HJG Gardening	War Memorial Maintenance July	£158.00
J.Alexander	Tools sharpening, paint, furniture oil	£117.95

* Payment made by Direct Debit

24/133 Feedback from Working Parties

(a) Common – Cllr N Shearme gave feedback from the CAG meeting on 22 July.

Noted that UK Power Networks are cutting back "high rise" vegetation under their powerlines. It is understood this will be carried out on 12 August.

A quote had been received from Collins Farming & Forestry Ltd for undertaking further planned specialist clearance work in the autumn. Cllr Shearme to liaise on the exact timing and programming.

The pot hole filling in both car parks is now an urgent task which needs to be completed and a quote for the supply of granite chipping materials had been received. Cllr Shearme to liaise with Chris Freeman on how best to proceed.

In a separate matter, it was noted that contractors for SCC Highways had recently completed tarmac resurfacing of Mill Street. In so doing, there was concern that they had stored their equipment/plant without permission in the car park area and some associated minimal temporary damage had occurred which they had subsequently *back bladed*.

(b) Community Field – Cllr P Holmes reported that he had made enquiries from the Approved Contractors List about a cut back being undertaken of the inside of the playing field boundary hedge. In the circumstances, it was **agreed** that the quote of £1,400 provided by Chris Spall should be accepted.

Donations – noted that £49.90 had recently been banked. As per previous discussion/s it was felt that a new sign on the exit from the play area may be beneficial to encourage people. It was also noted that [in the pre season build up] use of the on-site cricket nets was being made by several clubs (from Woodbridge, Halesworth and Wickham Market) as apparently there were not many facilities available in the wider area. Given this position, it was felt that a second donation box could be located next to the nets. Action: Cllr P Holmes.

(c) Car Parking – The Working Group had met on 16 July to consider the latest response received from East Suffolk Council and to further explore the different option/s available.

In going forward, we had attempted to find a solution to address the parking problems but, on balance, it was now **agreed** (7 voting for, 3 against, 1

abstention) that the proposal specifically being looked at for the Village Green should **not be** pursued and therefore, as a result, there was no need to go ahead with holding a planned public consultation event. The decision was based on the fact that although there were various very good reasons why this measure had been explored, the cost of carrying out the whole process was complex and ultimately seen as being too prohibitively expensive to justify.

A notice/statement is appended to these minutes explaining the decision in full.

(d) Allotments – In view of the circumstances reported, a new approach for the possible acquisition of land will now be made. Action Cllr C Fisher.

(e) Affordable Housing – Cllr C Fisher gave feedback from a recent meeting held with Sue Downs from CAS to discuss results from the Housing Needs Survey. The details have now been shared with Orwell HA and a follow up joint meeting is scheduled for September with the aim of taking the proposed housing scheme forward.

24/134 Planning applications

From	Item	Details
Groveley, Blythburgh Rd, Westleton IP17 3AS	DC/24/2228/FUL	Construction of two storey extension (single room above another) to create third bedroom with study above.
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 16/7/24 Response: No objections

From	Item	Details
Lucarnes, Mill Street, Westleton IP17 3BD	DC/24/1882/FUL	RECONSULTATION – CHANGE OF DESCRIPTION Two-storey & part single-storey extension to the rear, increase the size of the front porch, build a detached garden store, <u>increase the hard standing for parking</u> and replace all windows and <u>replace the existing side conservatory extension with a porch.</u>
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 5/8/24 Response: We continue to generally have no objection in principle, but have concerns around the 3rd parking space and the risks around this in reversing out on to a single lane road, which could be heightened, for example, by a) new visitors to Westleton, and b) commercial/large vehicle parking in the construction phase, and beyond. We have no objection to the extending of the single car bay to two spaces, also in the drawing.

From	Item	Details
Stranton, Darsham Road, Westleton IP17 3AH	DC/24/2307/FUL	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
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 13/8/24 Response: Objection to be raised (8 voting for, 1 against, 2 abstentions) on grounds of over-development plus there are significant concerns from a safety and aesthetic view over the proposed new access point on the corner opposite the White Horse

24/135 Other Planning Matters

None.

24/136 Tree & Footpath Warden Report

Further to minute 24/116, Cllr I Webber reported that East Suffolk Services (the District Council's contractor) would be making arrangements to remove the large dead branch from the lime tree on the south side of the pond. A check by them had also been made of the other trees nearby and all were found to be healthy (i.e. no sign of the disease/decay which blighted a couple of species in the area where the car had been damaged earlier this year).

Approval had also been given allowing the Parish Council to undertake some minor works to the canopy of the large tree in the centre of the green by lifting/cutting back some branches. This will in turn improve access to the seat and provide better visibility.

Reference was made to a couple of places in the village where hedge encroachment was once again an issue and contact will be made with the owners of the individual properties.

24/137 Westleton Summer Picnic

Take up [and volunteers coming forward] had not gone as hoped and so it was unanimously **agreed** that the planned event in August should be cancelled this time round. Earlier planning will be undertaken around staging things for next year.

24/138 Energy Projects

Cllr A Turner advised that there are currently two 'live' consultations underway (a) SEALINK and (b) NAUTICUS. He will draft a response to both and then circulate for comment.

24/139 Sizewell C B1125 Transport WP

Feedback was given from the B1125 Working Group meeting held on 9 July.

A visualisation drawing and image/s had subsequently been circulated to illustrate (a) the proposed traffic island by the church and (b) the 'build-out' arrangement by the playing field entrance. Cllr A Turner advised however, that after further discussions with a resident he had gone back to EDF asking if the traffic island by the entrance to the church could be

redesigned so that it maintains its function of narrowing the B1125 and making the Darsham Road/B1125 junction safer, but that it **does not** incorporate the 3 parking spaces, and the parking remains on the road alongside the pavement as currently.

24/140 Parish Council Surgery - 29/7/24

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

It is understood that apparently Sizewell C will have their own GP's on site twice a week so this should mean that the workforce will not place undue pressures/burden on the local Leiston surgery. The Parish Council were pleased to note this.

A call for assistance had been received from the Village Hall for future help in putting up bunting whenever local events are staged.

24/141 Sizewell C Community Fund

Cllrs J Matthews & I Webber gave feedback following attendance at the recent 'Meet the Funder' event/s. The presentation slides had also been shared with Members.

We will need to consider what opportunities may present. The Fund itself will be operational for the next 10 years so there is plenty of time in which to put together bids.

24/142 Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

In line with standard good practice and Audit recommendations a review has been carried out of the Parish Council's Standing Orders & Financial Regulations to ensure these are fully up to date and compliant. There were no alterations proposed this time to the Council's Standing Orders.

Small changes have been made to section 11 of the Financial Regulations in line with latest NALC model.

Agreed that the changes to the Council's Financial Regulations be adopted.

24/143 Finance Sub Committee – Terms of Reference

It was **agreed** to adopt a set of Terms of Reference under which the new Finance Sub Committee will operate in future.

24/144 Asset & Insurance Register 2024/25

An update has been carried out of the Parish Council's Asset Register as part of a regular annual review. The Clerk confirmed that values placed on individual items cross checked with the Council's insurance cover.

24/145 Risk Assessment 2024/25

Agreed that the Council's Financial Risk Assessment model for 2024-25 be approved.

24/146 Internal Control Statement

Agreed that the Council's Internal Control Statement for 2024-25 be approved.

A new line has been added at the start of section 3 to reflect that the Parish Council now has in place a Finance Committee (see also minute 24/143 above).

24/147 Correspondence

Councillors were advised of the following:

- (a) Yoxmere Fisherman request by the Benefice for financial support towards the magazine publication. Action - **agreed** that a donation of £500 should be made as a contribution/help this year towards the running costs. Clerk to give feedback as far as future funding goes.
- (b) Email from Westleton Gardeners for financial support for planting carried out in the village over the 2023 & 2024 period/s. [Note: previously the group were supported from Barrel Fair funds]. **Agreed** that the group be reimbursed £357.94 as per receipts submitted. In future we request that submissions be made on an annual basis and that a maximum ceiling of £250.00 should apply.
- (c) Email from the Warden of St Peters Church - re launch of appeal to complete phase two of repairs & improvements. Details noted at this stage. We fully recognise that this historic church is an important part and asset to the community and so we will firstly monitor the position to see if they are successful with other bids (e.g. the Sizewell C Community Fund). Should any shortfall exist then it may be possible for us to make a contribution from the Parish Council's CIL Funds - Clerk to investigate and report back.

24/148 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the Council next meets at 7.30pm on Monday 30 September 2024.

Parking in the Village

The Parish Council is aware that parking can be a problem within the village, particularly on days when village events are held.

We have for many years been trying to find a solution to alleviate the problem, to date without success.

This year, we considered seriously the possibility of using a strip of the Village Green for formal, year-round parking. The plan was to lay appropriate matting under the grass at the pond-end of the Green, and to delineate the area with parking bays.

Following discussions with the East Suffolk District Council, we have decided against the idea because the costs outweighed the benefits.

- The costs would have included: de-registration of the Green; purchase of the strip of the Green; installation of the matting and bays and annual maintenance; and maintenance of the trees which would have been captured within the strip of land.
- Moreover, the area would have allowed only 12 parking spaces and, importantly, we are aware that many residents felt very strongly against using a part of the Green for year-round formal parking.

The Parish Council will continue to try to find a solution to the parking problem. All ideas from residents are also welcome.

Westleton Parish Council