

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK: Rebecca Whiting

Webpage: <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/parish-council>

e-mail: pc@walberswick.suffolk.gov.uk

Post: Heritage Hut, The Green, Walberswick Suffolk IP18 6TT

MINUTES OF WALBERSWICK ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2015

**Held Thursday 23rd April 2015 at 7.30pm
At the Village Hall Walberswick**

PRESENT: Cllr Esme Richardson (Chair), Rebecca Whiting (Parish Clerk), James Darkins (WCLC), Cllr Gower (County and District Councillor), John Nichols (Parish Plan Steering Committee and Blyth Estuary Group), Kay Ungless (Village Website), Robin Buncombe (RNLI Fundraising), Clive Brynley-Jones (Village Hall Management Committee), Revd Simon Pitcher (St. Andrews Church), Betsy Lemmon (Horticultural Committee), Julia Sowerbutts (WATS, Sanderlings, Pantomime) Irene Prince (Walberswick WI) and approximately 20 additional members of the public.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
None received.

Chair acknowledged errors on agenda and invite and apologized for inconvenience.

Chair noted some additional speakers and changes to running order on the agenda; Reverend Simon Pitcher from St. Andrews Church to speak after item 12 and Julia Sowerbutts speaking on behalf of 'Drama' after item 14 on the agenda.

Chair explained that this is not a Parish Council Meeting but a meeting of the parish of Walberswick.

2. Minutes of the APM on 24th April 2014 to be approved and signed

The minutes were proposed by Robin Buncombe and seconded by Brian Tibbles both of whom were present at the 2014 APM. The Cllr Richardson signed the minutes.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

Good evening everyone. I feel that I should start with a game that I play with the children at school and give you four words to put into a sentence. These four words would be: beleaguered; vexatious; volunteers; beset. As a teacher, the model sentence I would be looking for is 'There was a group of volunteers who were beleaguered and beset by vexatious correspondence.' Although my sentence is written in the past tense, sadly that is not the truth as we stand here today. The Council, at present, is still receiving numerable letters, e mail, verbal comments. Many of the issues raised in these letters are either of an historic nature, or 'nit picking' over minor errors caused, not by malicious intent, but of genuine human error. Every Councillor in the last year has had a full time job and has been trying to balance the demands of their career and the demands of certain people in the village, we now have just three people left who are prepared to be councillors. The clerks employed this year have not been working full time, but the stress caused by pressure of the nature of three correspondents has ensured that three clerks have resigned in a year. Each time I have had to recruit a clerk I have phoned around the neighboring clerks who have all categorically said that they do not wish to work for Walberswick Parish Council as they know the nature of the emails and letters we receive. However, I know from speaking to people when I am out and about that the majority of the village admire and support the tenacity of the current councillors. As far as is possible we will continue in our roles, as we want the best for this community. We want to make improvements to facilities in the village- something we can achieve if we are left to get on with it. I find it staggeringly sad that the actions of certain individuals impacts so heavily on others on a personal, practical, financial and physical level. Let me explain that more clearly- on a personal level more clerks and councillors have

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resigned this year than the three correspondents, on a practical level much of the councilors and the clerks time is taken up by reading long, and very often repetitive letters that leave little time for other jobs and tasks to be completed, on a financial level we all deserve for our council tax to be better spent rather than it being spent on a clerk having to respond to endless letters, and on a physical level other aspects of the role of the council are left unattended to due to the constant beleaguering of the council. This all may sound very harsh but it is the truth. On a positive note we have re-thatched the point of the jubilee seat, which I am very pleased with, we have introduced, amid criticism, a much needed correspondence policy, we have controlled the finances, and ensured that every child in the village had the opportunity to visit Father Christmas in his grotto, even though this happy event was criticized. We also won our court cases with the Upper Tier Tribunal which found no evidence for the allegations made against the council by certain parishioners. I am going to end with thanking everyone who has been on the council, clerked for the council or supported the council in the last year, your commitment and support has been valued highly. Thank you.

4. Presentation of Parish Council Accounts for 2014/15

Parish Clerk read through the Receipts and Payments and end balance as per Appendage 1

5. Report from Walberswick Common Lands Charity

Appendage 2.

Jayne Tibbles, retiring Clerk for WCLC was presented with a vase and flowers with thanks for all her hard work and commitment.

6. Report from County Councillor Michael Gower

Clr Gower referred to submitted written report which can be read (Appendage 3). Have got 20mph speed limit for part of village agreed in principle and is just going through statutory consultation.

7. Report from District Councillor Michael Gower

Clr Gower stated that he was not standing as District Councillor.

8. Report from Parish Plan Steering Committee

John Nichols read report – Appendage 4.

9. Report from Blyth Estuary Group

John Nichols read Report – Appendage 5.

10. Report from Village Website

Kay Ungless reported – Appendage 6.

11. Report from Walberswick fundraising branch of RNLI

Report read by Robin Buncombe – Appendage 7.

Robin also wished to thank all those who helped with bonfire night and the fireworks display.

12. Report from the Village Hall Management Committee

Report read by Clive Brynley-Jones – Appendage 8.

A. Additional to original agenda – Reverend Simon Pitcher reported that the use of St

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Andrews Church has increased both as a social venue for meetings and events as well as for religious ceremonies. A written church report was submitted – Appendage 9.

13. Report from Walberswick Local History Group

Report read by Chair. Apologies given by Philip Kett – Appendage 10.

14. Report for the Horticultural Committee

Report read by Betsy Lemmon – Appendage 11.

B. Additional to original agenda – Julia Sowerbutts read report that covering 'Drama' in the village which includes WATS, Sanderlings and the Pantomime. Appendage 12.

15. Report from Carpet Bowls Club

Report read by Chair. Apologies given by Philip Kett – Appendage 13.

16. Report from Walberswick Allotments

Report read by Chair. Apologies given by Philip Kett – Appendage 14.

17. Report from Walberswick WI

Report read by Irene Prince. Appendage 15.

18. Public Forum

Started at 20.38. Chair stated that the forum would be kept to 15 minutes maximum.

A member of the public asked James Darkins of WCLC how Church Lane, after its imminent resurfacing, would be maintained in the future. James Darkins answered that WCLC had managed to establish the ownership of the land was with Flagship Housing Trust who had volunteered – as a gesture of goodwill for bringing the issue to their attention – to resurface the part belonging to WCLC.

A member of the public said that they were saddened that Parish Council was still having problems with vexatious complaints as it wastes time and reflects badly on the village. Having some years legal experience, he suggested that these regular complainants be declared 'vexatious litigants' and as such the Parish Council could legally take no more notice of them as they had abused their rights. The member of the public asked Cllr Gower if he could make enquiries into pursuing this course of action as many in the village would back this. Cllr Gower answered that he would raise this with the Hilary Slater, Monitoring Officer at SCDC, to see if this would be a viable course of action.

A member of the public asked the Chair if it was true that there was an exclusion order against one of them. The chair confirmed that this as untrue.

A member of the public wished to express their gratitude to those members of the Council who have continued to stand for a further term despite everything and continue to represent the community.

Meeting closed at 20.45

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Appendage 1: Agenda item 4 – Parish Council Receipts & Payments and End Balance

Appendage 2: Agenda item 5 - Report from Walberswick Common Lands Charity

Appendage 3: Agenda item 6 - Report from County Councillor Michael Gower

Appendage 4: Agenda item 8 - Report from Parish Plan Steering Committee

Appendage 5: Agenda item 9 - Report from Blyth Estuary Group

Appendage 6: Agenda item 10 – Report from Village Website

Appendage 7: Agenda item 11 – Report from Walberswick fundraising branch of RNLI

Appendage 8: Agenda item 12 - Report from the Village Hall Management Committee

Appendage 9: Agenda item A – Report from Walberswick Parish Church

Appendage 10: Agenda item 13 - Report from Walberswick Local History Group

Appendage 11: Agenda item 14 - Report for the Horticultural Committee

Appendage 12: Agenda item B – 'Drama' report

Appendage 13: Agenda item 15 - Report from Carpet Bowls Club

Appendage 14: Agenda item 16 - Report from Walberswick Allotments

Appendage 15: Agenda item 17 - Report from Walberswick WI