

WALBERSWICK ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
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Minute of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall at 7.15pm on Thursday 13th April 2017

Present: Esme Richardson (in the chair), Hannah Sutton, SC Councillor Michael Gower, Lee Sutton, James Darkins, John Nichols, Tom Ashley, Matthew Whetmore, Margaret Walpole, Nigel Walpole, Philip Kett, Mark Waller, Jean Waller, Tony Kohn, Ian Fair, Bronwyn Fair, Maggie Cochrane, David Godsmark, Marian Beard, Rita Woodcraft, Frank Woodcraft, Sue English, John English, Kay Ungless, Bill Ungless, DC Councillor Raymond Catchpole, John Simpson, Sarah Lawrence, Luke Jeans, Peter Byrne, Irene Prince, Jane Hamilton, Alvin Hunt, George Atkinson, Vanessa Tucker, Shirley-Ann Humphries and Richard Scott.

2017/01 Chairman's welcome

2017/02 Apologies for Absence. Received from Robin Buncombe, Pat Lancaster, Judy Moreton, Josie Bassinette

2017/03 The Chairman explained that the notes of the Meeting of 16th May 2016 were not Minutes as it was not properly called and therefore they would not be signed.

2017/04 Chairman's Report

2017/05 Report from the Clerk/RFO. Mary Mitson-Woods told villagers that she was grateful for the warmth of the welcome she had received and for the information and support that has been so generously given. Walberswick PC, now quorate with the co-option of Councillor Josie Bassinette, is continuing its progress and building on the good work that Karen Forster began and progressed. The remaining 4 vacancies have now been declared and it is absolutely critical that villagers put themselves forward to fill them not. She said she could emphasise this enough. Full training will be given to all Councillors once they are in office.

The last year had a very difficult start but Karen Forster's arrival in August set the Council on the path to recovery with its financial administration, the reinstatement of its Financial Standing Orders and compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations. A Public Interest Report was issued by BDO, the Council's external auditor; this was the catalyst to putting controls and systems in place to return the Council to compliance. BDO issued a further Issues Arising Report for the year 2015-16 which has been dealt with via a Report that was discussed by the Council at its meeting in March. Councillors accepted this report and resolved that it addressed the issues raised.

This properly called Annual Parish Meeting, which is a statutory requirement for every village, is further evidence of that recovery. Many of the issues in the Issues Arising Report had already been dealt with in the autumn of 2016 as BDO had chosen to readdress some of the problems that had already been raised in the Public Interest Report.

The village website is crucial to WPC's compliance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. This requires that certain matters must be published on the site including Notices, Minutes, Agendae, financial expenditure and reports. Mary Mitson-Woods expressed her gratitude to Kay Ungless for all her help with putting items on the PC web page.

The accounts for the year 2016/7 are not complete but will be by the end of next week. These will then go to SALC, WPC internal auditor, and be brought back to the Annual PC meeting on 15th May for the Council to sign the Annual Return ready to be submitted to BDO.

At the end of the 2016/17 year Council reserves will be very low with an expected balance of around £5000.00. The Council has set the Precept for 2017/18 at £12,000 with funding applications for repairs to play equipment and other projects planned. In the next few years the Council will need to rebuild reserves to a more acceptable level in order to maintain services.

She also thanked Philip Kett for collecting the Allotment rents and for preparing a very comprehensive list of village assets in order that the Council can study this and ensure that everything is included in it's Asset Register and insured as necessary.

2017/06 Report from the Walberswick Common Lands Charity

James Darkins presented a very comprehensive report in a presentation, this addressed the demands of the new Charity Commission regulations and the problems that have had to be addressed following changes in it's regulations. He carefully outlined how the Charity is governed and the policies that set out how grant recipients are decided upon according to the constitution. A full financial report was included. (For the full report see Walberswick website or contact James for a copy)

2017/07 Blyth Estuary Group

John Nichols reported on the flood dangers and the proposal to extend the board walk to the top of the dunes to enable those with disabilities to get a lovely view of the sea and beach.

2017/08 Report from District Councillor Raymond Catchpole. Councillor Catchpole reported on the plans for devolution which brought a promise of extra funding; however it is now not going to happen. Councillor Catchpole felt that extra costs of taking on the additional responsibilities outweighed any extra funding.

East Suffolk District Council, a merger of SCDC and Waveney District Council, is now a 'shadow' East Suffolk District Council, the largest in England, until appropriate legislation is put into place. Councillor Catchpole believes that the merger will be good for Walberswick as it will no longer be at the end of a district but in the middle of the new authority.

Planning applications are now to be processed within a Draft plan which has now been signed off by the Planning Inspector as The Local Plan. This Plan has to be reviewed periodically and that process is now ready to begin. He appealed for people to come forward to the Parish Council and be part of the consultation process and recommendation on planning for the future of Walberswick.

2017/09 Report from Council Michael Gower, SCC

Councillor Gower referred to his Enabling Communities Budget and suggested that the village comes up with projects that could access this. There is also the Exemplar Fund to which the PC is applying for improving facilities at the Heritage Hut.

He also referred to the SCC budget and explained the pressures from cuts and the effect of the increase in the Minimum wage. Councillor Gower is not standing for election at the May elections and told the Meeting it had been a pleasure to serve the people of Walberswick. He said that democracy is very precious and it should never be undermined by vexatious activity in a world where democracy is under threat.

2017/10 Village Hall Committee Report.

Alvin Hunt reported that two new noticeboards have been provided and partially funded by Councillor Catchpole's Enabling Communities budget. Storage of equipment is always a problem and an application for planning consent has gone into SCDC to put up extra storage accommodation. There is a problem with damp ingress in a number of places and these are being assessed and monitored. Fundraising has been successful with a number of events. Members of the VHC and other helpers provide refreshments for our events and he is very grateful to everyone involved.

Vivien Hunt is taking over from Betsy Lemmon as Hon Secretary. Lavinia Penrhys-Evans, Robin Buncombe, Fiona Hosea and Michael Stannard all joined the Village Hall Committee in 2016. The old 1969 Constitution is now obsolete and Peter Byrne has led a team to update with a new agreement provided with help from Community Action Suffolk.

A sound system will replace the pre-war amplification equipment, which finally failed at last year's fete.

2017/11 Village Website

Kay Ungless reported that CAS could no longer fund the website and the WPC stepped in to bear the cost. The website provides a huge facility to put up and store a wide range of information, articles, events, WPC etc. There are announcements of weddings, (6 coming up this year), funerals and obituaries. Kay appealed for villagers to tell the web organisers of any other things they would like features on the website.

2017/12 RNLI Fundraising Committee.

Councillor Lee Sutton gave a report on the fundraising activities of the RNLI in 2016. £1,390.00 was raised from donations, a quiz night and a darts competition. The aim is to improve on this in 2017 with the mini fete on the early May Bank Holiday. Lee thanked everyone for the support that enables the RNLI to continue its lifesaving work.

2017/13 Local History Group.

Report from Philip Kett. Philip reported that the History Group holds 3 lectures each year on all sorts of subjects by all sorts of people. The 120 members pay £7.50 per year to join. As last year was the 25th Anniversary year an exhibition was held in the Heritage Hut; this attracted a huge amount of interest on the May Bank Holiday weekend. Postcards, videos, Southwold Railway Society, a silversmith who used to live in Mill Lane brought a collection of his mother's postcards from the turn of the 20th century and a father and son had

researched the life of John Doman Turner, the painter of the Scroll. The scroll was at also on display.

2017/14 Report from the Walberswick Allotment from Philip Kett

Philip reported that the allotment is 2.5 acres and divided into 35 plots of varying sizes. The rents total £228.00 annually. Water is supplied through the Caravan Site by permission of Mr Whinyard the owner. Philip advised the Parish Council that it needs to review what needs to be done in the next year.

2017/13 Walberswick WI

Report given by Marion Beard.

2017/15 Planning Advisory Group report from John Nicholls. Group includes members of the Parish Plan Working Party and other interested members.

Walberswick Beach Accessibility for Disabled. This came from the Parish Plan and the proposal is to extend the boardwalk to the top of the dunes. This will have a dual purpose of helping the health and stability of the marram grass as well as making the beach more accessible.

2017/16 Walberswick Scroll and Heritage Hut Report.

Bill outlined plans for the Heritage Hut as a venue for events and a base for the Parish Council to be administered from. It would restore the Heritage Hut to being the focal point on the Village Green. Bill asked for a show of hands to indicate if villagers support these proposals. A large percentage of the villagers present were in favour of this. It was pointed out that not everyone was present so the conversation will be continued through the website and the Village News.

2017/17 W.I. Report

The report on the activities of the Women's Institute was given by Marian Beard

2017/18 Any other issues raised

Flooding was raised as an issue by a George Atkinson whose garden had been flooded. Councillor Richardson told him that the Clerk was researching inflatable flood barriers to be held to help protect properties.

Another villager praised the introduction of the 20mph limit and asked the Parish Council to acquire a Speed Indicator Display (SID). It was agreed that this would be placed on the WPC Agenda. Councillor Gower said that money is available from SCC and SCDC for these SIDs.

There was no other business and the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm.