

# WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the Annual General meeting of the Parish Council held in the annex of the Village Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors: Mr D C B Webb, Mr A E Hunt, Mr K G Webb, Mr B Tibbles, Mrs A Aldridge, Mrs R Woodcraft, Mr NJ D Crocker and, Miss M Verneti (Clerk)

The above Councillors had been returned unopposed to serve another 4 years in an uncontested election dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

County Councillor Mr Leighton, previous District Councillor Mr P Austin and newly elected District Councillor Mr M Gower.

1. After the Public Forum the Clerk began by welcoming the members of the public present and asked for one of the Councillors to propose a new Chairman. Cllr K Webb stated that the current Chairman and Vice Chairman had done an extremely good job under difficult circumstances and that if they were both willing to serve another term, they should continue in the roles for what he hoped would be an easier year ahead. He therefore proposed that Cllr D Webb be reconfirmed as Chairman and Mr A Hunt as Vice Chairman for the following year. This was seconded by Cllr B Tibbles, and the remaining Councillors voted unanimously to accept this.

Cllr Mr D C B Webb signed the Acceptance of Office form as Chairman for the next year, and the Clerk handed the meeting over to him.

2. Cllr A E Hunt signed the Acceptance of Office form as Vice Chairman for the next year.
3. All remaining Councillors signed new Acceptance of Office forms which were duly witnessed by the Clerk and received new Declaration of Interest Forms and Election Expenses forms to complete and return.
4. Cllr Mrs A Aldridge was confirmed as SALC and SPLG representative and Cllr Mr A E Hunt was confirmed as representative to the Village Hall Management Committee.
5. There were no apologies for absence.
6. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April were proposed by Cllr Mrs R Woodcraft and seconded by Cllr Mr B Tibbles and agreed by all those who had been present, and the Chairman signed them as a true record.
7. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**  
Cllr Mr D Webb declared a personal interest in item 9a.
8. **REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND THE POLICE**

County Councillor Mr R Leighton stated that he fully endorsed what Mr Buncombe stated during the public forum, whereby Mr Buncombe had asked for his personal comments to be recorded thanking the Councillors for all agreeing to stand again and being re-elected unopposed. He stated that all the Councillors had his personal gratitude for the work they carried out and believed he spoke for many others in the Parish that the fact that they were all returned unopposed showed that they all acted with integrity and for the benefit of the village.

Cllr Leighton also added his personal congratulations and stated that it had been a clear case of “put up or shut up” and that he hoped that the next four years was a more pleasant time for all concerned. He also stated that there had been a lot in the paper and that people shouldn’t believe all they read, it was true that the controlling group had changed its leader, and that changes were being planned to the way the “New Strategic Direction” was being handled. The fact that most people did not want their council tax raised meant that the £42 million that needed to be saved would have to come from within the County Council itself. The CEO had come in for a great deal of criticism and an internal enquiry was being carried out which he would report on at a later date.

Cllr Crocker asked about any progress or support for the broadband issue, and the County Councillor reported that whilst slow progress was being made with the help of MP’s, he was unaware of any practical help that could be given,

The previous District Councillor Mr P Austin thanked the Council for always being polite and kind to him during his term, and stated that as well as agreeing with Mr Buncombe’s statement he also wished to add that he found the current Parish Council amongst the better and most hard working in his district. He then went on to state that the new LDF gives little or no protection against development, but he highlighted the difference in approach to objections between Rosemary Cottage and the proposed “garden grabbing” at Primrose Cottage which no one except the Parish Council had objected to. He felt that if the village was to be taken seriously and present a united coherent message to the Planners then they need to speak with a more cohesive voice.

He then introduced the new District Councillor Mr Michael Gower, and stated that he had been very much “first past the post”

Mr Gower stood and introduced himself and stated that he had been delighted by the 60.3% turn out for the election. He stated that at this stage he had nothing much to report but there was a meeting with Ray Herring and SCDC the following week that should make him better informed for the next meeting.

The Chairman thanked Mr Austin for all his hard work as District Councillor and congratulated Mr Gower on his election result and on behalf of the Councillors wished him success and stated that the Parish Council looked forward to having his input at their meetings.

The Clerk had received a very short report from PCSO Newson stating that there were no reported crimes for the month from April to May. The Clerk stated that she had asked PCSO Newson if he might attend a meeting in the near future.

## 9. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a. The Clerk stated that she had spoken to Suffolk Coastal Services regarding the rubbish at the village hall. She had been informed that the bin was not intended as a public bin, but the actual bin for the village hall itself, but appreciated the problem. They agreed to have the bin cleared and the matter of a second bin had been passed to a Mr Mike Porter who would hopefully be in touch.
- b. The Chairman confirmed that Mr and Mrs Walpole had offered to represent the Parish Council on the group for the Southwold Library and the Clerk had informed the Clerk at STC of this. The next meeting was due to be held at the end of the month.
- c. The Clerk had spoken to the Clerk at STC regarding the increase of foreign packaging on the beach, and whether or not it may have come from the tankers. The STC Clerk had stated that as Southwold had recently won a tidy beach award, it wasn't really a problem for them. No response had been received from Natural England or Dunwich Town Trust as yet on the matter and that of them holding their own beach cleans.
- d. The Chairman wished to formally thank all those involved in the Royal Wedding Celebrations, which had been a great success. Special thanks to Cllr Mrs R Woodcraft and Cllr Mrs A Aldridge for all they had done. Cllr Mrs R Woodcraft added that she also wanted to thank the villages who, as always turned out to set everything up and make it the day it was.

## 10. PLANNING

### a) Planning Notifications:

- a. **Primrose Cottage, Lodge Road C11/0241** – Permission Granted for remodelling of existing bungalow to form one and half storey dwelling.
- b. **Marshway, Leveretts Lane C11/0359** – Permission Granted for various alterations.
- c. **Moorside Cottage, Palmers Lane C11/0402** – Permission Granted for various alterations.
- d. **Fishers Garage, The Street C10/3080** – Permission Granted for alterations from commercial to residential use.

### b) Planning Applications:

The Chairman declared a personal interest in the next item.

- a. **Plot 1 Land North of Alexandra Cottage, The Street C11/0679** – Amendments to previous design (C09/1575) – The new design included a two storey glass window, overlooking the nearest neighbours and it was felt that this was too obtrusive and an invasion of privacy for the neighbours. It was agreed to object to this part of the application.
- b. **Plot 2 Land North of Alexandra Cottage, The Street C11/0680** – amendments to previous design (C09/1575) – The Parish Council could find no planning objections to this application
- c. **Plot 2 Land North of Alexandra Cottage, The Street C11/0723** – Erection of single garage (not in previous application) - The Parish Council could find no planning objections to this application.

- c) **There were no new Tree works;** However Cllr K Webb brought up again the subject of the Beech Tree at the entrance to Alexandra Cottage. He stated that we had been told that the tree had to come down because the fungus was highly contagious and unless the tree was felled it could spread to the other trees, and it was the root that was infected, and yet the root was still in the ground with no sign of it being removed. It was agreed that the Clerk/Chairman would again put pressure on the Tree officer at SCDC, Mr Minta and the Developer.

## 11. ACCOUNTS

### a) Receipts

- a. First half or 2011/2012 Precept - £3,871.00
- b. Waveney Norse Recycling credits to 31.03.11 - £16.14

### b) Payments:

- a. Blois Farms – BIH Field Oct 10 – Apr 2011 (missed) - £75.00
- b. WCLC Annual Rent for Sports Field - £1.00
- c. Mr T Oram works to Village Green - £52.80
- d. Leiston Press – Ad for New Clerk in Organ - £36.00
- e. Southwold Press – Ad for New Clerk in Gazette - £38.70
- f. Miss M Verneti – APM Expenses (50% for Chairman’s All) £25.00
- g. VHMC – Village Hall Hire Costs March to July - £77.50

Cllr B Tibbles proposed that and Cllr R Woodcraft seconded that the accounts were passed, and this was unanimously agreed.

## 12. UPDATES:

- a) **SEA DEFENCES** – There was nothing to report this month.
- b) **EXCLUSION NOTICE REVIEW** – Cllr N Crocker stated that he had met with SALC and was nearing completion of his analysis. All that remained was for him to have a conversation with each member of the Parish Council and he hoped to be able to do that the week commencing the 23<sup>rd</sup> May. After that he would be able to consider his review and make a report back to the full council. The Chairman then proposed a resolution that once Cllr Crocker had completed his review, a meeting be held, *in camera* to discuss his report. Cllr K Webb seconded this resolution and it was passed by a unanimous show of hands.
- c) **VILLAGE SIGN** – The Chairman stated that he was still in contact with the couple that had the sign, and it was hoped to go and get the sign in early June. There was a discussion as to where to place the sign, and Cllr K Webb suggested that as the ship had been built at the bottom of Stocks Lane, then Stocks Green was the most obvious place for the sign to go. He also explained that the Crabbing Committee had pledged £600 to the re-location of the sign and it was hoped this would cover the cost of a new post. The Chairman pointed out that Stocks Green wasn’t actually owned by the Parish Council and it was possible Permission would have to be gained from Suffolk Highways.
- d) **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT UPDATE** – There was nothing else to report but the Chairman stated that there had been no feedback from the black box that had been placed at the Church earlier in the year, and it was agreed that he would draft a letter to SCC to chase it up.

- e) **HIGH SPEED BROADBAND** – Cllr N Crocker reported that 3 people had come forward with various levels of expertise and it was hoped that at the Parish Plan meeting on the following Saturday a formal group could be set up to push the project forward. Various costs were mentioned for suggestions such as a lease line under the river, or new fibre optic cable, but the idea at this stage was just to get people’s interest going. He stated that just that day he had received a document from Suffolk County Council called “Better Broadband for Suffolk” and he hoped this would have some worthwhile information in it.

At this point the Chairman suspended the meeting and Mr A Walpole asked if Cllr Crocker had any idea what BT’s plans were regarding the issue. Cllr Crocker replied that they had told him they “hoped” to get the fibre optic to the village box by 2015 but that was no guarantee of faster speeds.

Mr J MacCarthy stated he had read Cllr Crocker’s position paper and expressed concern about the radiation risk with relation to any sort of wireless option. Cllr Crocker pointed out that at this stage all suggestions were purely that and all he was doing at this stage was collating the options.

- f) **PLAY SPACE BALANCES** The Clerk stated she had been in touch with SCDC regarding the play space balances. It appeared that even though developers had to pay their Section 106 money at the point of application it didn’t become “clear funds” that the village could access until work began on the development, therefore at present the available balance was not as high as the “potential balance”. However, even though ROSPA didn’t highlight the problem, it was clear that the large swings on the green were coming to the end of their life and needed replacing. The Clerk agreed to look into like of like quotes to see how much money would be needed.

The Chairman also stated that it had been mentioned to him that the goal posts on the sports field needed some repair to the actual nets and potentially moving as the ground in front of them was very cut up. It was agreed to get quotes for this too.

### 13. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- a) The Clerk had received a letter from both STC and SCC informing the Parish Council that the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Southwold would remain open until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011 whilst discussions take place between the local communities to see if a long term solution can be found.
- b) Suffolk Coasts and Heaths sent details of their Connect Conservation Fund. It was agreed to submit a request for a grant to help with the ongoing Visitor Centre Project.
- c) Further information was received regarding the Digital Switchover Scheme which the Clerk agreed to complete and send back.

### 14. **MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS**

- a) Cllr N Crocker raised the issue, that had been asked of him, of the Walberswick Car Parks seemingly losing money as had been mentioned by the Chairman of the WCLC at the Annual Parish Meeting. He posed the

question of how this could happen to The Chairman, Cllr D Webb, and the Vice Chairman, Cllr A Hunt who were involved both at the WCLC level and the Car Park Management Committee Level. Both the Chairman and Vice Chairman stated that the previous year had been very bad weather wise, but also the payment of back rates to WDC had seriously depleted the funds. They also pointed out that the Car Parks Company had been set up to manage the traffic problems in the village, not necessarily to make money, that was just a bi-product. Cllr Crocker asked what was being done to ensure that this would not happen again, and both replied that the matter was being taken seriously by both the Charity and the Car Parks Company. The meeting was suspended at this point and Mr T Kohn stated that the costs that were capable of being controlled were in fact being managed properly, and it was the uncontrolled costs (the weather and business rates) that accounted for the fluctuations. Mr Walpole asked what fail safes were in place for the Scheme not making money, and both the Chairman and Vice Chairman stated that was for the Car Parks Company to address, not the Parish Council.

- b) Cllr N Crocker asked what the definitive rule was about Camping on the beach, and how the Parish Council could enforce it. It was explained that the Environment Agency did have certain bylaws which stated “ No damage will be done to the Sea Defences” but basically it was no fires and no camping on the beach at all.
- c) Cllr R Woodcraft just thanked everyone again who had been involved in making the Royal Wedding Day such a success.
- d) The Chairman brought up the subject of the formal complaint the Clerk had made to the Parish Council about her treatment by a resident in the village. He proposed that the Councillors discuss the letter *in camera* after the main business of the meeting had been concluded. This was seconded by Cllr Tibbles and unanimously agreed by everyone present.

## 15. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

- a) Mr R Buncombe stated that he was sorry the Clerk had decided to resign, his opinion was that the Clerk had done a marvellous job under difficult circumstances and thanked her for what she had contributed. He stated that he knew that the Clerk had begun the process of obtaining the CiLCA qualification and hoped that her successor would be doing the same thing as he felt that under the new LGR there were many benefits for a council obtaining Quality Status. The chairman assured him that this would be the case.
- b) Mr Buncombe also stated that people may be aware that the Suffolk Estuary Review had pulled its website under the instructions of the Environment Agency. This was due to the fact that there was a new approach to the Alde, Ore and Deben defences, and that they will be reviewing what is happening on the Blyth.
- c) Mr W Ungless stated that he wished to thank the Parish Council for their continued support with regard to the Parish Plan, and hoped that the Chairman would be happy to lead the meeting this coming Saturday. He hoped that Cllr Crocker would lead a discussion on Broadband, and hoped for a good turnout. Cllr K Webb congratulated the group on the Plan and stated that he had been extremely impressed with its content.

- d) Mr J MacCarthy stated that in his opinion the minutes of the previous meeting showed an incorrect declaration of interests. The Chairman responded that the minutes had been signed as a true record and were correct.
- e) Mr J MacCarthy questioned Cllr Crocker about his review into the Exclusion Orders, as he was the subject of one of them, and asked if it was sensible taking advice from SALC when, in his opinion, they were incorrect. Cllr Crocker responded that he was purely ensuring that the review was carried out correctly by speaking to all parties.

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman moved onto the next item on the Agenda and the Parish Council agreed that the next meeting would be Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30 pm and he closed the formal part of the meeting at 8.55 pm. The Public were requested to leave.

**17. *IN CAMERA* DISCUSSION**

As the item under discussion concerned the Clerk's formal complaint to the Parish Council it will not be included in these minutes, but a confidential note of the discussion will be kept on file.

Signed.....

Date.....