

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall annexe at 7.30pm on Monday 7 November 2011.

PRESENT: Councillors Mr D C B Webb (Chairman), Mr A Hunt, (Vice-Chairman), Mr B Tibbles, Mrs R Woodcraft, Mr K Webb and Mrs J Gomm (Clerk).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October were **approved** and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Tibbles and seconded by Cllr K Webb.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Prejudicial interests: None

Personal interests: Cllrs D Webb and K Webb declared a personal interest in item 6.b) on the agenda (planning application reference C/11/2239).

4. REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND THE POLICE

County Councillor Leighton reported that Suffolk County Council (SCC) was preparing its draft budget which would be decided in February. It had to save £50,000,000 over two years. The Suffolk Police Authority was reducing its number of sergeants.

District Councillor Gower reported that due to budgetary constraints Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) was continuing to combine services with Waveney District Council.

There was no separate police report.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Mobile Library Consultation: SCC had replied to the Council thanking it for the point raised about library users' parking problems in the summer if the number of stops were limited to one.

b) Aldeburgh and District Community Hospital: A reply had been received from the Department of Health. In view of the Council's concerns departmental officials had contacted NHS East of England for information.

6. PLANNING

a) Planning Notifications:

Redundant workshop to rear of Bunbury Cottage, The Street, C/11/1992:

conservation area consent had been granted for demolition.

Plot 1, Land North of Alexandra Cottage, The Street, C/11 1420: application to vary condition 11 of C/11/0679 to allow permitted development rights for extensions, alterations and outbuildings: planning permission had been refused.

b) Planning Applications:

The Stables, The Street, C/11/2424 and C/11/2425: retention of boiler flue to barn.

Agreed to raise no objections to the planning application and application for conservation area consent.

Cllrs D Webb and K Webb had declared a personal interest in this item.

Little Meadow, The Street, C/11/2239: erection of extensions and alterations. **Agreed** to raise no objections to the planning application.

c) **Tows Cabin, Ferry Road, C11/1772 and C/11/1773:** erection of two storey dwelling (existing dwelling and wc building to be demolished). A SCDC site meeting had been held on 31 October which Cllr Hunt attended. The SCDC officers were recommending approval of the applications to the SCDC meeting to be held on 9 November. **Agreed** Cllr Hunt be authorised to attend and speak for the Council.

d) **Marshway, Leveretts Lane:** The owner had informed the Council he intended to have the driveway entrance widened and this had been approved by the highways authority and was permitted development. So noted.

e) **Tree Works:**

Taystone House: It was noted that a dying and dangerous poplar was to be removed.

Saltlick, Leveretts Lane, C/11/00117/TCA: T1 Sycamore, reduce height and spread by 5 metres approx. **Agreed** to raise no objections.

7. ACCOUNTS

a) **Receipts:**

Second half year precept - £3,871

Bursary towards Clerk's CiCLA costs - £100

b) **Payments:**

SALC, Clerk's CiLCA course (£420 inc vat) and Clerk's finance course (£30 inc vat) - £450

Village Hall Management Committee, hire of hall and annexe, June to Dec 2011 - £87.50

Suffolk ACRE, insurance 01.10.11 to 30.09.11, - £689.39

Playsafety, inspection of play equipment, sports field, Village Green - £93.60 inc vat

BDO, external audit for year ending 31.03.2011 - £162 inc vat

Cllr Hunt proposed and Cllr Tibbles seconded that the payments be made and this was **agreed**.

c) **External hard drive:** The Clerk sought authority to purchase one for approximately £50 to £80 in order to assist with good data management. So **agreed**.

Items d), e) and f) on the agenda were deferred to a meeting to be held on 14 November 2011 so that sufficient time could be devoted to them.

g) **Allotment rents:** It was **agreed** the rents should remain the same as last year.

h) **External Audit:** It was **agreed** to approve and accept the Annual Return for the year ending 31.03.11. Having considered the issues report produced by the external auditor the Council **agreed** that in future it would review all statutory powers available to it before relying on s137 Local Government Act 1972 to authorise a payment.

8. VACANCIES FOR COUNCILLORS

Councillors Crocker and Aldridge had resigned as they were now both out of the village during the week and found it hard to make what they believed to be the necessary commitment to the Council. Having read the resignation letters it was **agreed** to write to thank them for their work. The Clerk reported that the cost of a contested election was approximately £500 and uncontested £100. The quorum for the Council remained at 3.

9. UPDATES

- a) **Sea Defences** – Cllr D Webb reported that the river bank repairs behind Tinkers Marsh were going well. The footpath would probably be closed for approximately 18 months to allow the defences to settle. The work on Southwold Harbour was approximately two months behind schedule, it was anticipated it would finish in May 2012.
- b) **Village Sign** – Cllr Tibbles reported on his site visit with a representative of SCC. SCC would undertake an underground survey and would inform the Clerk of the outcome before the sign was erected.
- c) **Visitor Centre** – The Clerk reported the working group members as Mr A Walpole and Mr P Kett (Local History Group), Mr C Brynley-Jones and Cllr D Webb (Walberswick Common Lands Charity), and Cllr Tibbles and Cllr K Webb (Parish Council). As

landowners of the land on which the visitor centre stood it was **agreed** that the lease could be assigned from SCC to the Walberswick Common Lands Charity (WCLC).

- d) **Post office** – The Post Office sought ideas from the Council on ways in which it could restore a post office service in Walberswick. **Agreed** to ask in the village news whether there was any business in the village which would be prepared to consider providing a “post office essentials” service.
- e) **Possible 20 mph speed limit and vehicle activated sign** – The Clerk reported that if the Council could contribute something towards the costs of one or both of these traffic management measures it may be possible to attract funding from others such as the WCLC, SCC and Cllr Leighton’s budgets. Cllr Leighton said it was unlikely he could fully fund either scheme, but that he could perhaps contribute, say, £1000 to each. It was **agreed** to consider Council contributions at the meeting on 14 November.
- f) **Potholes, Church Lane** – A previous Clerk had thought that a Mr Tetlass from SCC had supervised work on the potholes in the past, SCC thought this was a Mr Ketlass who worked for Suffolk Heritage Housing. As the Council had been unable to show that the highway authority had carried out maintenance on Church Lane in the past it was accepted that the potholes would need to be repaired by or on behalf of the owners of properties adjoining Church Lane and the Clerk **agreed** she would press the current housing association to prioritise it in its planned maintenance programme.

10. THE COUNCIL’S COMMUNICATION STYLES AND METHODS

This matter had been deferred from the last meeting as three Councillors were absent. It was proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Tibbles and **agreed** to adopt the proposals (annexed to this meeting’s minutes) put forward by Cllr Crocker at the last meeting. The statement would also be posted on the website and notice boards.

11. PLAY AREA SAFETY INSPECTION REPORT

The Clerk reported that there was work to be done as a result of the report. None of it appeared to be extremely urgent. **Agreed** the item be deferred to the meeting of 14 November to allow the Chairman to go through the report to try to assess possible costs and then action be considered in the light of the Council’s financial situation.

12. FOOTPATHS

Bridge over creek near East Point: The Clerk outlined three possible options, the Council taking over the bridge from the Environment Agency under s30 Highways Act 1980, the WCLC taking over the bridge or someone claiming the bridge should be included on the definitive footpath map leading to SCC becoming responsible for the bridge. The final option was discounted as it would take too long. It was noted that Southwold Town Council supported the view that the bridge should remain. **Agreed** that the most viable option would be WCLC taking over the bridge and the Clerk was asked to write to WCLC to that effect.

Footpath 16 crossing the sea defence wall adjacent to the allotments: At a meeting between the Chairman and Mr Dawson, a representative of SCC, rights of way section, SCC agreed to create a slope and /or steps over the sea defence wall. **Agreed** the Clerk would write to SCC thanking it for taking responsibility for this part of the footpath.

Footpath and bridleway 9, Sandy Lane: At the same meeting surfacing to improve the bridleway was agreed between Mr Dawson and the Chairman.

13. CORRECTING SAT NAVS

A website existed where information could be uploaded to correct sat navs to stop them directing HGVs from using unsuitable routes. Cllr Hunt had highlighted Short Lane as such a route. **Agreed** residents would be asked in the Village News whether there were any other unsuitable roads in the village to which HGVs were being directed. The information would then be collated and uploaded.

14. SUFFOLK COAST AND HEATHS AONB WALBERSWICK CAR PARK INFORMATION BOARDS

The Council had previously informed Suffolk Coast and Heaths that it could not financially support the provision of boards. Suffolk Coast and Heaths now wished to have the Council's view on the merits of their proposal and views on siting of the boards. **Agreed** to inform Suffolk Coast and Heaths that as a board already existed, although the information on it was no longer readable, at the end of Ferry Road it was unnecessary to erect a further board on the Ferry Road car park. There was no board on the Cliff Field car park and so a board might be acceptable there.

15. REPRESENTATIVE FOR SAXMUNDHAM AND FRAMLINGHAM SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

The Council did not have a representative on the local Safer Neighbourhood Team Tasking meeting which took place every two months. **Agreed** to ask for a volunteer representative from the village in the Village News.

16. APPOINTMENT OF PARISH TREE WARDEN

Agreed to ask Mr T Lancaster if he would be prepared to take up the voluntary post as he had previously conducted a tree and hedgerow survey for the village. To ask Mr A Pearson if he would be prepared to take on the job if Mr Lancaster was unable.

17. LOCAL FOODS INITIATIVE

Agreed to ask the community development officer for Local Foods at Suffolk Acre to attend a Council meeting in the New Year to make a presentation and to which members of the public would be invited.

18. POSSIBLE NEW POWER STATION AT SIZEWELL

Agreed to support the Sizewell Parishes Liaison Group in their wish to see EDF meeting with the Group rather than with individual parish councils.

19. SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION

Agreed to place the link in the village news so that residents could make individual comments to SCC about its budget proposals.

20. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Halesworth Town Council had offered to send a representative to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss the Halesworth Campus Project proposed for the Halesworth Middle School site. **Agreed** to invite a representative in the New Year.
- b) As part of its LDF Waveney District Council had published a draft Built Heritage and Design Supplementary Planning Document for consultation. Because part of the harbour on the Walberswick side is within a conservation area it was **agreed** to advise residents in the Village News of the consultation so they could make comments.
- c) There were a number of circulars. These would be circulated to all Councillors. Previous circulars had not been returned to the Clerk. In one was a suggestion (which had been agreed by Leiston Town Council) that national planning guidance should be created to require, in the case of major planning applications, information to be provided directly by applicants to Parish and Town Councils. **Agreed** to support this suggestion.

21. VILLAGE BONFIRE, 5 NOVEMBER

It was reported that 373 people attended as well as those watching from near the village hall. The insurance had been arranged by the Council and the Chairman had produced the risk assessment. All those involved in the organisation were thanked.

22. CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS

It was **agreed** the Clerk would arrange the purchase of a Christmas tree of about 15 to 18 feet in height, Cllr Tibbles would arrange to erect it, Cllr Hunt would light it. Carols around the tree and coffee and mince pies in the village hall would be held on Monday 19 December 2011. The Clerk would liaise with Rev Fisher and Mr J Flack over the carols and band. Councillors would each produce 24 mince pies; coffee and other supplies would be purchased by the Chairman and Cllr K Webb would ask Mrs Webb if she would volunteer to prepare the coffee etc assisted by Cllr Woodcraft.

23. PROPOSED DATES FOR MEETINGS FOR 2012

The following dates were **agreed**: 9 January, 6 February, 5 March, 2 April, 14 May, 11 June, 2 July, 6 August, 3 September, 1 October, 12 November, 3 December, all meetings to take place in the annexe. In the main hall the Annual Parish Meeting would take place on Thursday 19 April and the coffee and mince pies after the carols would take place on Monday 17 December 2012.

24. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The Clerk reported that since the October meeting she had worked for approximately 36 hours in dealing with requests for information or related matters. She had received approximately 41 emails and sent 47 emails on these matters. She had dealt with approximately 38 individual requests for information and there were approximately 9 ongoing complaints against the Council to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) that she was dealing with.

25. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

- a) Cllr Tibbles said the caravans should be removed from the caravan site by the end of the week.
- b) Cllr Hunt said how superb the new church gates were. He asked whether Cllr Woodcraft could attend village hall management committee meetings when the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee was discussed to enable cross fertilisation of ideas.
- c) Cllr D Webb thanked the Clerk for the work she was doing.

26. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mrs Hunt pointed out that the Clerk works for an hourly salary almost as low as the minimum wage.

Mr Kohn expressed concern that the possible 20mph speed limit and possible vehicle activated sign seemed to have been combined into one project.

Mr MacCarthy expressed the view that the costs to the Council of dealing with his complaints were a function of the Council’s incompetence.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Monday 5 December at 7.30 pm and the meeting closed at 9.13 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Jane Gomm, Seaspray, Millfield Road, Walberswick, Southwold. Suffolk IP18 6UD
Tel: 01502 723294 Email: wpcclerk@btinternet.com

At the meeting held on 7 November 2011 the Parish Council adopted the following protocol for its communications with the public and agreed it should be placed on notice boards and the website.

Parish Council Communications with the Public

We should ensure that Parish Council business is conducted in accordance with our recently revised Standing Orders.

We should ensure that the agenda is posted at least three days before a meeting.

We should resume placing both the agenda and minutes on the Parish Council website.

Members of the public should be encouraged to either approach individual Councillors or write to/email the Clerk if they wish to raise an issue at a Parish Council meeting.

To avoid any misunderstanding or confusion all correspondence, including emails should be directed through the Clerk and not via individual members.

Members of the public have an opportunity to address the Council before and after meetings. In the interests of harmony, meetings should not be interrupted whilst Council is in session. The Chairman may, however, suspend meetings to ask for opinions and seek advice from the County or District Councillor or Police.

The Council will consult with other local authorities with a view to revising our "Protocol at Meetings" policy.

Repetitive and vexatious requests, which take up a disproportionate amount of Council time and resources, will be dealt with in accordance with Freedom of Information Act guidelines and other relevant legislation.

Jane Gomm
Clerk to Walberswick Parish Council
16 November 2011