

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall annexe at 7.30pm on Monday 5 September 2011.

PRESENT: Councillors Mr D C B Webb (Chairman), Mr A E Hunt (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Aldridge, Mr N Crocker, Mr K G Webb, Mrs R Woodcraft and Mrs J Gomm (Clerk). County Councillor Mr R Leighton and District Councillor Mr M Gower.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Cllr B Tibbles and PCSO Newson (Suffolk Police).

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 August were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Woodcraft and seconded by Cllr K Webb. It was also **agreed** that in future both the agendas and minutes, once approved by the Council should be placed on the Council's website.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Prejudicial interests: Cllr K Webb declared a prejudicial interest in items 6.b.1 and 6.b.3 on the agenda.

Cllr D Webb declared a prejudicial interest in items 6.b.1. and 6.b.3 on the agenda.

Personal interests: Cllr D Webb declared a personal interest in items 6.b.3 and 6.b.4 on the agenda. 6.b.4 related to application reference C/11/1992, to demolish a former stable/workshop on land to the rear of Bunbury Cottage, The Street.

Cllr Aldridge declared a personal interest in item 6.b.2 on the agenda.

Whilst not obliged to, the Clerk declared a personal interest in item 6.b.3 on the agenda.

Note: the items are numbered differently in the minutes from the agenda.

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

The County Councillor, Mr R Leighton explained that the County Council (SCC) were introducing a new system for lighting the street lights under the control of SCC. Starting on 26 December 2011 they would go out in Walberswick at midnight and in the winter relight at 5.30am. During the following six months the system would be monitored and the views of local residents sought. As a member of Suffolk Police Authority he reported that as from October 2011 in Suffolk and Norfolk people should dial 101 to make a non-emergency call and continue to dial 999 for emergency calls.

The District Councillor, Mr M Gower said he had nothing of urgency to report as there was such a full agenda.

The report from the police was read by the Clerk. From 1 July to 4 September there were four reported crimes. Two related to theft and two to burglary. The current priorities for the Saxmundham SNT were tackling anti social behaviour in Framlingham and speeding in Dennington.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

a. Potholes in Church Lane. The Clerk had been in contact with the highway authority and Flagship Housing Association. The highway authority had stated that Church Lane was not maintainable at the public expense and the housing association had acknowledged it was responsible for maintaining Church Lane

subject to receiving contributions from some of the owners of properties fronting Church Lane. It was **agreed** the Clerk would research the Council minutes to try to discover when the road had been maintained by the highway authority in order to try to rebut the presumption that the road was not a highway maintainable at public expense. She would also ask the housing association to give priority to its maintenance in its planned programme of works.

- b. Campervan parked on public highway near Fishers Garage. The highway authority was only able to take the complaint further if it were to be given full replies to a number of questions. As the van was no longer parked it was **agreed** to take no further action save to inform the member of public who raised the matter.
- c. Beach Clean. It was reported that it was unlikely that Dunwich Parish Meeting would be carrying out a beach clean this Autumn. **Agreed** that Walberswick's next beach clean would be held on Sunday 16 October. The Clerk would inform Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) in order to obtain gloves and bags. She would also inform Natural England and the RSPB to ask if they would provide volunteers to clean those parts of the beach in front of their ownership. Cllr D Webb would produce advertising posters.
- d. Thatch Register. Cllr D Webb had as requested previously completed and returned to the Fire Officer at SCC a list of thatched properties in the Parish.

6. PLANNING

a) Planning Notifications:

Hidden House, The Green, C/11/1347: construction of dormer with oak french doors to replace existing roof light. Doors to open onto new oak and glass balcony/deck at first floor level, permission granted.

Little Meadow, The Street, C/11/1599: retrospective planning permission to retain painted render to external walls, permission granted.

As a result of considering this application the Clerk had been requested to write to SCDC concerning retrospective applications in general. She had not received a reply. **Agreed** the Clerk would pursue the matter.

b) Planning Applications:

Cllrs D Webb and K Webb had declared prejudicial interests in the following two items. They left the room and took no further part in discussions. Cllr Hunt took over the chair for these items.

Rosemary Cottage, The Street, C/11/1787: demolition of a single storey side and rear extension, the removal of a front dormer window, the erection of two side extensions, the erection of two front dormer windows and the insertion of two rear roof lights.

The Council had received a copy of a letter from the Suffolk Preservation Society. Three of the Councillors said that they broadly agreed with the views expressed in the letter of the Suffolk Preservation Society.

It was **agreed** to object to this application because it would detrimentally affect the pleasing symmetry of the house and one of the side extensions would narrow the access to the proposed development to the rear of the Rosemary Cottage.

Tows Cabin, Ferry Road, C11/1772 and C/11/1773: erection of two storey dwelling (existing dwelling and wc building to be demolished).

There appeared to be some confusion within the offices of SCDC as the Clerk had received letters from SCDC relating to the two applications, but not making clear the difference between them. She had also received along with the plans and associated documents a copy of an application for conservation area consent for demolition in the conservation area, but had not received a copy of

a planning application. Two members of the public had reported conversations with SCDC where it appeared to be said that the planning application existed, but not the application for conservation area consent. The Clerk had been unable to speak to SCDC herself before the meeting.

The Council also had before them two written objections from local residents including photographs approximately annotated to show the position and scale of the proposals.

In view of the possibility that the apparent confusions might be cleared up and SCDC might make a determination without a further consultation with the Parish Council it was considered that the Parish Council should make its views known now.

It was **agreed** to object to the applications on the following grounds:

- The proposed replacement dwelling represents poor design in a conservation area as the design fails to respect the style and architectural characteristics of the area. It is therefore contrary to policies AP19 and AP21 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.
- The proposals fail to respect the style and architectural characteristics of the original building. The proposed new building would create an unacceptable discordant feature in the Conservation Area, in what is the heart of the village of Walberswick.

The development would also be contrary to:

- Policy AP27 which provides that residential proposals in the village will be considered in relation to the scale and character of the village and that such development should be well related to its surroundings.
- Policy AP21 states that in the AONB (area of outstanding natural beauty) the form of buildings and their layout should be sympathetic to the character of the area.
- Policy AP19 which provides that proposals which comprise poor design and layout and otherwise detract from the character of their area will not be permitted.

It was also **agreed** to ask SCDC to provide the correct paperwork relating to the applications and to ask the Suffolk Preservation Society to examine the proposals and make comments to SCDC on them.

Cllrs D Webb and K Webb returned to the meeting and Cllr D Webb resumed the chair.

Sea House, 2 The Terrace, The Street, C11/1824: insertion of dormer window.

Cllr Aldridge had declared a personal interest in this item and did not speak or vote on the matter.

It was **agreed** to make the following observations to SCDC:

The Parish Council has very serious concerns over this application because

- It will have a visual impact on the conservation area due to an over fenestration of the roof increasing the number of windows or roof lights in this part of the roof to five.
- It is considered likely that the insertion of another dormer window would enable the creation of an extra bedroom in the property which is believed to be rented out as a holiday house. This could result in more cars being associated with the dwelling although there is only parking for one car at the rear of the property.

Redundant workshop, land to the rear of Bunbury Cottage, The Street, C/11/1992: Demolition of former stable/workshop.

Cllr D Webb had declared a personal interest in this item.

Cllr K Webb explained that the workshop was owned by the Walberswick Common Lands Charity. Recently when brambles were cleared from the area the building was discovered to be in a dangerous condition as confirmed by a SCDC building control officer.

It was **agreed** to make no objections to this application.

- c) No applications for **tree works** had been received.
- d) Cllr Crocker asked whether Councillors could be alerted when a planning application had been made. The Clerk agreed to email all Councillors once she received notification.

7. ACCOUNTS

There were no receipts or payments to be made this month.

8. UPDATES

- a) **Sea Defences** – Cllr D Webb reported that the work was due to start next month to Southwold Harbour.
- b) **Village Sign** – the Highway Authority (SCC) had agreed in principal to the siting of the sign opposite the church or on Stocks Green, both pieces of land being in the ownership of the Highway Authority. SCC preferred the site opposite the church as there would not be visibility issues and it had provided a draft licence to be completed by the Parish Council. The draft licence would need to be amended as the height restriction would have to be raised. **Agreed** to erect the sign opposite the church once the licence had been circulated and agreed with the Highway Authority. It was also **agreed** that Cllr K Webb should take all steps necessary towards refurbishing and erecting the sign.
- c) **Traffic Management** – The highway authority confirmed that the request for a 20mph zone was with its Speed Limit Assessment Panel. If funding becomes available consultation would be carried out to determine the extent of the zone. A solar powered vehicle activated sign near Adams Lane could be funded by the village at a cost of approximately £6000 and if purchased from one of SCC's approved suppliers would then be incorporated into the SCC maintenance and replacement schedule. Byford and Sotherton Parish Council had not responded to the Council's request for information on how it had funded the sign at Blyford. **Agreed** the Clerk would remind Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council to respond and the Clerk would pursue the 20mph speed limit and vehicle activated sign with SCC and copy the minutes of the meeting to the Parish Plan Traffic Management focus group. It was also **agreed** to consider the funding of the vehicle activated sign at a later date.
- d) **Visitor Centre** – In view of the fact that the £500 grant that had been obtained needed to be spent and claimed by 31 March 2012 it was **agreed** to set up a working group to progress matters comprising two members of the Council and to invite two members from the Local History Group and two members from the Walberswick Common Lands Charity. It was also **agreed** that the representatives from the Council would be Cllr K Webb and Cllr Tibbles or if he was unwilling to act, Cllr D Webb.
- e) **Broadband** - Cllr Crocker reported that much work had been carried out by the Broadband Focus Group of the Parish Plan. It was intended that there would be a public meeting to discuss the issue sometime in September or October.
- f) **Wind pump** - Natural England planned to convene a committee to discuss and agree the future of the building and invited a representative of the Council to sit on the committee. It was **agreed** that Cllr K Webb would represent the Council.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) SCDC was in the process of reviewing its polling districts, places and stations. It was not proposing any changes to Walberswick. **Agreed** not to request any changes to Walberswick.
- b) SALC had circulated a letter from the Suffolk Preservation Society to all Suffolk Councillors concerning the government's consultation draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). **Agreed** to circulate this and consider it at the next meeting.
- c) SALC had circulated a list of courses they were running. It was **agreed** to book two places for the Clerk and either Cllr D Webb or Cllr Hunt on the course "Dealing with Difficult People".
- d) SCDC had written to the Council concerning outdoor playing space contributions. **Agreed** to circulate the document and place it on next month's agenda. Cllr K Webb reported that adjustments to the slide were needed as were repairs to the swings on the Green. **Agreed** to have the work done whether or not the Council would be able to claim the costs from the outdoor playing space fund held by SCDC.
- e) Details had been received of the Poppy Run. **Agreed** not to take any action.
- f) Details had been received of an inter village rounders tournament. **Agreed** not to take any action.
- g) SCDC had completed their review of waste collection. They said that those affected would be notified. It was not known whether Walberswick would be affected. **Agreed** the Clerk would make enquiries and act accordingly.
- h) There was to be a Suffolk ACRE Community Led Planning Day. **Agreed** to inform the Parish Plan Steering Group.
- i) SCDC had commenced consultation on their updated Sustainability Appraisal and Assessment Documents which were part of their draft Local Development Framework. **Agreed** to circulate the documents and consider them at the next meeting.
- j) Notification had been received from RoSPA (the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) that it would carry out its inspection of Walberswick's play equipment and areas during September. It had asked whether there were to be any changes to equipment or areas from last year. **Agreed** that there were no changes.
- k) At the last meeting a member of the public had raised the question of alleged retail operations from a garden near the western end of the village. The Clerk had written to SCDC planning and environmental health departments and to the highway authority. She had not received a reply from the planning department. Environmental Health had replied that food safety legislation and street trading restrictions did not apply in the circumstances. The highway authority had replied that it was not controlled by traffic regulations. The Clerk would pursue the planning department for a reply.
- l) The Field Change Advisor at the Post Office had advised that once the new post mistress at Yoxford had settled into providing an outreach post office at Wangford she might be interested in doing so at Walberswick as well. **Agreed** that the Clerk should keep pressing the Post Office to make arrangements for a post office service in Walberswick.
- m) Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB had obtained funding for information boards. Two of their high priority areas for boards were in Walberswick. They needed match funding and requested the Council for at least £500. **Agreed** not to contribute.
- n) The Environment Agency had notified the Council it intended to remove the bridge over the creek closest to East Point. It was their belief that there was no

public right of way over the bridge. **Agreed** to object strongly to the removal of the bridge because if in the future the south wall of the harbour were to be repaired it would be necessary to use the bridge; the bridge was unstable on the beach side, but it would not be expensive to repair it; the bridge was a very important public amenity for its visual amenity, use as a crabbing bridge, the importance placed on it by artists, and its use as part of a footpath for which public rights of way could probably now be claimed.

- o) Mrs P Murray had written on behalf of the Parish Plan Youth Focus Group asking the Council for permission to use the cricket pavilion for the proposed youth club after effecting necessary repairs and redecorations. **Agreed** this was a good idea and that Mrs Murray be requested to contact Cllr D Webb to arrange practicalities.
- p) There were a number of circulars. These would be circulated to all Councillors.

10. **REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

The Clerk reported that since the August meeting she had worked for 83 hours, of which she had spent 45 hours in dealing with requests for information or related matters. She had received approximately 65 emails and sent 49 emails on these matters and also a number of letters had been received and sent. She had intended, but not had the time to set out the approximate number of requests for information she had received and the number of ongoing complaints to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) that she was dealing with. She would produce this information on an ongoing basis. She explained that after research and telephone conversations with the ICO she had concluded that it would be easier and less time consuming to deal with outstanding requests rather than justify to the ICO why a request had not been acceded to. After discussion the following was **agreed**:

The standing orders adopted by the Council on 7 March 2011 state that the Council's Proper Officer is the Clerk for processing all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998.

- The Council **agrees** that the Clerk should also be the Proper Officer for requests made under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and any further legislation which gives people the opportunity to request information from the Council.
- The Council **agrees** to ask people who wish to make requests under any legislation to do so by letter addressed to the Clerk.
- For the avoidance of doubt, the Council **agrees** that the term "processing" within the standing orders includes providing information requested, declining to provide information when appropriate, corresponding with those requesting information, corresponding with the Information Commissioner's Office and when the Clerk deems it necessary to seek advice.
- The Council **agrees** that the Clerk also has the power to do anything else conducive or relating to dealing with requests for information.

Cllr Hunt asked that it be minuted that the Council thanked the Clerk for her work in relation to this matter.

11. **NOTIFICATION OF A COMPLAINT AGAINST A PARISH COUNCILLOR TO SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Clerk reported she had received notification from SCDC of a complaint made by a member of the public against a parish councillor.

12. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

- a) Cllr K Webb reported that some of the fencing near the beach had been ripped up. Agreed the Clerk would inform the Environment Agency.
- b) Cllr Crocker raised various problems that occurred in Walberswick during the summer. He wondered if the Council could sponsor a community stewardship programme or something of that kind. **Agreed** that this matter be put on the agenda for the next meeting. He also reminded the Council that it had previously agreed to have a special meeting to discuss its communication style. **Agreed** the Clerk would arrange a meeting.

13. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr MacCarthy asked whether the public could have copies of the minutes of meetings. Cllr D Webb replied that minutes were available after they had been approved by the Council. He asked the Clerk whether she could say how far back chronologically were there outstanding requests for information. The Clerk was unable to say.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Monday 3 October at 7.30 pm and the meeting closed at 8.46 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....