

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

The Minute of the meeting of Walberswick Parish Council held in the annex of the village hall on Monday 12th November 2018 at 7.15pm. Plans for Applications DC/18/3388/FUL and DC/18/2444/VOC were available before the meeting.

Present: *Councillors Bassinette (in the chair), Lewis, Sutherland-Rogers, Sutton, Richardson and Winyard. Additionally, members of the public and the Clerk, Mary Mitson-Woods. District Councillor Gower arrived later in the meeting.*

255/18 Chairman Councillor Bassinette welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting. She presented an oral update on the Bailey Bridge. In particular, it was noted that Suffolk Highways and the County Council had confirmed that the bridge could be reopened once the broken wooden cross-beam and “Buffalo Board” over the top of the existing bridge deck were replaced. The Chairman pointed out that the WPC had worked in coordination with District Councillors Gower and Bevan, and the Councils of Reydon and Southwold, the WCLC and local businesses to convince Suffolk Highways and SCC to do the repairs and allocate the necessary funding so that the bridge could be reopened before Christmas 2018. Councillor Bassinette also expressed her gratitude to County Councillor Michael Ladd who represents Southwold and Reydon for his unstinting support and who allocated his locality budget to help subsidise the operation of the ferry in the absence of the bridge. Full details are available on the Village Website.

256/18 Apologies for absence. County Councillor Smith had sent his apologies. Councillor Mackay was not present.

257/18 Declarations of interest – Councillors Richardson and Winyard declared an interest in the Ryefield planning application and did not take part. Because his home is close to Ryefield, Councillor Lewis said he would speak, but not vote.

258/18 Public Forum: Matters raised:

On behalf of the Heritage Hut/Scroll Working Group, Bill Ungless made a statement related to the Heritage Hut agenda item. He reported that over the past months, the Working Group had been reporting its findings and recommendations to the Walberswick Parish Council. In the light of these findings and recommendations, the Working Group met to discuss the proposal set out by the WCLC for the future of the Hut. The Group unanimously supports the proposal from the WCLC and hopes that the Council will move forward with it.

259/18 It was resolved that the Chairman should sign the Minute of the meeting of 8th October 2018 as a true and accurate record.

260/18 The Safety Committee Draft Minute from the meeting of 31st October 2018 was presented and accepted by Council.

In his update, Councillor Lewis highlighted the following issues: (i) It was proposed not to include in the Budget items for next year the removal of the pavilion given its expense and uncertainty about its future. It was suggested that the village should be consulted on the way forward for the Pavillion at the Annual Parish Meeting. (ii) The Committee had submitted a request for £400 for the 2019/20 budget to cover routine health and safety expenses (iii) The Committee was proposing that in 2019/20 that some of the flat swing & cradle seats be replaced; separate quotes would be obtained for this.

The Clerk reported that the playground repairs on the green were making good progress. Action Play and Leisure had reduced their quote to £5996.25 in anticipation of funding through the Outdoor Playing Space Funding Scheme from SCDC.

261/18 Lloyds Bank account **1763 Reconciliation.** The Chairman passed the bank statement to Councillor Sutherland-Rogers who checked it and confirmed that it agreed with the Reconciliation Sheet. **It was resolved that the Reconciliation Sheet accurately reflected the bank statement.** It was noted that the second tranche of precept had been received.

262/18 HSBC Account **1870 Reconciliation.** The Chairman passed the bank statement to Councillor Sutherland-Rogers who checked it and confirmed that it agreed with the Reconciliation Sheet. **It was resolved that the Reconciliation Sheet accurately reflected the bank statement.**

263/18 Performance against budget. The document was noted by Councillors.

264/18 Authorisation to Pay. **It was resolved that cheques should be issued for the items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet.**

265/18 Draft Budget for 2019/20. The Chairman read out a statement explaining why, despite a year of a well-managed budget and building up the reserves, it was likely that the reserves could be depleted and that the precept may have to be increased next year to cover the costs of the external auditor having to respond to the objections and complaints that had been made by three villagers. *(Chairman's full statement is attached).* The cost of the audit, without objectors, was just over £200. The costs associated with handling the objections, whether or not there was any merit in them, could go as high as £5000 or more. Although individuals have a right to make objections to the accounts of local authorities, the liability was particularly high because of the excessively large number of complaints lodged by the three objectors and the high hourly rate of the external auditor, introduced nationally this year. It was agreed that the Council would provide the three objectors with a copy of the Chairman's statement and to ask them to please drop the demand for the external auditor to write to them separately given the disproportionate costs and the burden this would have on all Walberswick Council tax payers.

The Chairman explained that the agenda item on the draft budget was the first part of the budget process and that the Councillors would go through each line item and propose amendments as necessary. The draft budget would then be updated on this basis and discussed again at the WPC meeting in December. It was the intention to approve the final budget and precept at the January meeting.

It was **resolved that the alterations discussed (summarized below) be integrated into the next draft for consideration at the December Council meeting.**

- a) **It was noted that the second line item (costs associated with the Clerk, RFO, associated expenses) be broken down in order to set the correct amount. For example, this item in 2018/19 included the costs of new computing equipment which would not be necessary again next year.**
- b) **The cost of the external audit, per the Chairman's statement, will be considerably higher because of the need for the auditor to reply to three objectors. An estimate would be made in January on the basis of the auditor's likely costs.**
- c) **It was noted that the cost of the Financial Assistant should be dropped as was no longer employed.**
- d) **The £400 for the safety committee was supported.**

- e) The rates were expected to be lower, assuming that the plans for HH to be discussed later in the agenda, were accepted.
- f) Hiring of the hall would similarly be adjusted in relation to decisions on the Heritage Hut.
- g) It was agreed that the Safety Committee should seek quotes for the recommended replacement of swing seats.
- h) The cost of insurance and the port-a-loo for the summer camp could be removed because of plans to hold the camp at the Village Hall next summer. The costs for the annual cricket match would be retained.
- i) Confirmation of the subscriptions should be provided.
- j) The Clerk was asked to confirm the grass cutting costs and whether there was the possibility of alternative vendors at lower cost.
- k) The cost of replacing the large notice board at Stock's Lane was too expensive and with help from Cllrs Lewis and Winyard, a retrofit of the current board would be undertaken. In addition, confirmation with the Village Hall on the costs of adding to the current WPC notice board would be arranged. It was hoped that the cost could, therefore, be kept to within the £1000 range.
- l) Because next year was an election year, the Clerk will research the cost of elections (both contested and non-contested) and provide information at the December meeting.

266/18 Allotments

Resolved that the Allotment Allocation and new Rent Policy is adopted by Council. To help inform current and future allotment holders, it was suggested that an article should go into the Village News to publicise the new policy. It was also suggested that a meeting be arranged with allotment holders to explain the new policy and process for rent collection. The Clerk was instructed to email all holders and to invite them to a meeting to be arranged.

Resolved that the Draft tenancy agreement be adopted and each existing allotment holder to sign the updated agreement. In future the annual rent will be calculated from April to March to align with the Council's fiscal year and it was resolved that the new rates be charged for next year per the new rent policy. It was agreed that Councillor Lewis would examine the options for how charging by fiscal year would be introduced and that this was to be agreed by the Council at the December meeting.

Councillors expressed their deep appreciation to Philip Kett who had voluntarily collected rents, issued rental agreements and managed the allotments on behalf of the Council. This process was now being handled by the Clerk, but Philip's assistance in the hand-over had been invaluable. **It was resolved that the Council should send a letter of thanks and appreciation to Philip Kett for his many years of service.**

267/18 District Councillor Michael Gower arrived later in the meeting because he had to attend another Parish Council Meeting. The Chairman suspended Standing Orders for his report. Cllr Gower reported on actions being taken by the SCDC to enforce orders on buildings that are contravening planning regulations. SCDC is setting aside money for Superfast broadband in areas of poor coverage. The Council thanked Cllr Gower for this strong support in helping to get the Bailey Bridge reopened. The Council also asked that Cllr Gower provide feedback from Walberswick to the Planning Committee with regard to dissatisfaction with the planning process. In particular, many people felt that Planning Application approval was not taking into account local views. There were many cases where despite the Council recommending against approval, including providing solid rationale that had been drawn up by the high quality analysis of the Planning Application Group, permission was still granted. It was also felt that SCDC needed to more vigorously enforce planning approval conditions and should deny any additional permissions to applicants that violated previous

conditions. Failure of SCDC to enforce planning refusals and conditions undermined the faith that people had in the planning process.

268/18 Policy Review

Draft Policy for press and other media. Resolved that the policy be approved with the addition of a clause that press releases would be circulated ahead of publication to all councillors for their information, to make it consistent with Correspondence Policy.

Reporting of Meetings Protocol – Resolved that the policy be adopted.

269/18 Natural England Statutory Access Team Consultation for exclusion of new coastal access rights on Saltmarsh between Dunwich and Walberswick. **It was resolved that the Clerk should respond that the proposal was acceptable as long as all existing Rights of Ways were maintained and kept open. If any Right of Way had to be closed because of changes in the landscape or a failure of maintenance, they must be replaced with an acceptable alternative even if this meant going into the areas where access was to be closed under the proposal.**

270/18 Heritage Hut – proposal from Walberswick Common Lands Charity.

It was resolved to accept the proposal of WCLC and for the WPC Chairman to contact legal counsel to draw up a draft agreement for the lease. This draft would be considered with the WCLC and subsequently would be brought to the full Council for review and approval. It was agreed that advice from SALC/NALC would be sought in terms of lease templates and recommendations on legal assistance in order to best contain costs. It was also agreed that the terms of the lease, or the conditions that would be an addendum to it, should include a mechanism to ensure that the governance arrangements would be suitable to the WPC's role as owner of the Hut in case changes to the agreed uses were to be proposed.

271/18 Oral reports

Appointment of Tree Warden – At present PAG does not comment on requests for pruning/removing trees. It is acknowledged that trees are vital in the village but also recognised that there was not a Councillor with expertise to take on this role. Councillor Sutherland-Rogers was asked to place an article in an upcoming Village News to see if a villager who has a particular interest in trees and would be prepared to take on the role.

There were no other oral reports.

272/18 Planning Application ref DC/18/3388/ FUL Alterations and Extension to Ryefield, The Street, Walberswick IP18 6UX. Resolved that the Council accepted the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group **that the proposed changes are not sufficient to overcome the objections set out in items 4, 5 and 6 of the PAG report of 31.08.2018.** The Council recommended that the application go to the SCDC Planning Committee and that consent be refused. Councillors Richardson, Winyard and Lewis did not vote in line with 257/18 above. Councillor Sutton wished to be recorded as disagreeing with the decision.

DC/18/2444/VOC Salix – Resolved that as this is a contentious application, including that earlier planning permission conditions had been violated, and that the application should be referred to SCDC Planning Committee members. In particular, the Council wished the Planning Committee to take into account the history of the planning process including actions that were necessary when planning conditions are breached. This was also raised with Cllr Gower as reported in 267/18 above.

272/18 After agreeing that Councillor Lewis will take the Minute at the December Meeting given the Clerk's planned absence, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm.