

## WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7pm.

Present (physically): Councillors Lewis (Chair), Sutherland-Rogers, Sutton, Tucker and Whiting. Only Councillors physically present can speak (except during the public forum or if standing orders are temporarily suspended) and vote.

Also in attendance (remotely via Zoom) were Cllr. Bassinette, two (2) other members of the public, Mark Knight, Parish Clerk, C Cllr. Richard Smith and D Cllr. David Beavan.

### **170/21-22 Chair's welcome.**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and those attending by Zoom.

### **171/21-22 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Richardson, apologies were also accepted from Cllr. Bassinette – but her attendance via Zoom was noted with no voting rights. Apologies were also accepted from Mr. Simon Ashton the Responsible Financial Officer.

### **172/21-22 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation.**

None.

### **173/21-22 Open Forum**

No issues were raised.

### **174/21-22 To receive a report from County Councillor Richard Smith**

Cllr. Smith reported on the recent submission of the DCO for Sizewell C. The planning inspectorate have had three months to put recommendations to government, and have asked for a 6 week extension due to the amount of additions, including a desalinisation plant. The Secretary of State then has three months to make a decision with a decision expected in June 2022.

This decision will then change the view of Cllr. Smith which will shift to securing the best deal and mitigation possible for the project over the next ten to twelve years.

Cllr. Lewis asked if there was scope for a judicial review on this matter, Cllr. Smith stated that this process is purely to ensure that the process is and has been followed and would be an expensive option in any case.

The Suffolk County Council budget proposal of a 2.99% increase has been initially agreed with 1.99 being for general expenditure and with a ring-fenced 1% for Adult

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Social Care, which represents £625 million in expenditure overall.

This has been examined by Overview and Scrutiny Committee , but recommendations have not been seen as yet, as has been complicated by social distancing. This will then have to be ratified at both Cabinet and the Full Council in the coming months.

**175/21-22 To receive a report from East Suffolk District Councillor David Beavan**

Cllr Beavan reported that Council Tax has been raised in the district by 2% or £5 after a few years of being frozen.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been examining the Housing Revenue Account which is seeing only 50 houses a year built in the area. Set against an annual sale of 30 houses this is severely under the limit for housing need in the area.

The Blythe Estuary Harbour Group has met to discuss the delayed Harbour Study which examines safety and erosion on the river upstream of Walberswick. There has also been problems with jet skis in the area adding to this problem.

A loophole has been closed regarding second home owners claiming business rates and an investigation will be forthcoming to address possible fraud in this area during Covid-19.

One planning matter in Walberswick has been before the committee at East Suffolk Council, and is detailed in item 177/21-22.1, but unfortunately this was not the strongest case which would highlight the problems with overdevelopment in the village.

Cllr. Tucker asked about a seaweed plant which was going through the planning stages at East Suffolk Council, Cllr. Beavan promised to send details when they were available.

**176/21-22 To consider the minutes of the meetings of 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

The minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 were **APPROVED** with the Chair to sign the minutes and to retain them until they can be handed to the Clerk in person.

**177/21-22 Planning**

**177/21-22.1 Verbal update from the Chair regarding Hedgeley, The Green (DC/21/4531/FUL)**

Cllr. Lewis reported on his recent attendance at the East Suffolk Council Planning Committee meeting to speak on behalf of the Council on this application. The process was frustrating and time consuming and in his opinion was weighted in favour of the decision of the planning officers due to the structure of the meeting.

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It was thought that it was a positive development that the wishes and opinions of the people of the village were being represented at this level, but that it did not instil confidence that these might be listened to in the future.

It was also extremely disappointing that District Councillor Beavan supported the application.

Cllr. Lewis was thanked for his attendance.

## **178/21-22 Finance Matters 2021/2**

### **178/21-22.1 Review Bank Receipts/Budget & Payments/Budget (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021)**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept these figures as presented. Reviewed by Cllr. Lewis. It was also reported that the costs regarding the Heritage Hut were being discuss and agreed between the Walberswick Common Lands Charity and the Responsible Financial Officer. This will be presented appropriately when agreed.

### **178/21-22.2 Approve bank reconciliation (to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021)**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve these figures. Cllr. Sutherland-Rogers signed the appropriate documents.

### **178/21-22.3 Approve items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet**

It was **AGREED** to pay all items in the sheet. Cllrs. Lewis and Sutton were authorised to carry out the electronic payments.

### **178/21-22.4 To consider the effectiveness or the Internal Control Checklist**

The Chair explained the item and the purpose of the Internal Controls which ensured transparency and best practice across all Council business and finance. Cllr. Sutherland-Rogers had kindly worked with the Responsible Financial Officer over the past few years as a scrutineer and it was thought that it was time for another Councillor to take on this responsibility.

It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Whiting would work with the Responsible Financial Officer to address all points on the checklist and report back to the Council.

### **178/21-22.5 Confirmation of request of 22/23 precept**

The Responsible Financial Officer

## **179/21-22 To receive an update regarding the Sizewell C development**

Cllr. Bassinette reported on several proposed energy developments along the

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Suffolk coastline which, unfortunately, did not appear to take the impact of each other into account, nor the cumulative impact. This would include impacts on transport, economy, local population and public services. This includes Sizewell C which would be the world's largest nuclear power station upon completion.

Also included were a desalinisation plant, large windfarm and a dozen substations for the National Grid.

The above projects would impact on the local transport infrastructure, particularly the A12, and also operate in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty having a lasting effect on local wildlife.

The current development process is in review with EDF asking for an additional 6 weeks to address change concerns which will then ultimately be considered and approved by the Secretary of State.

Other recent developments have included a proposed tax on energy bills to fund the construction of Sizewell C, which is concerning considering the failure of similar schemes elsewhere.

There will be more updates in the spring of 2022 when the Secretary of State makes the final decision and Cllr. Bassinette will be representing the village on these matters and reporting back as appropriate.

**180/21-22 To note the response to the consultation on the Draft East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and Draft East Suffolk CIL Instalment Policy**

The Chair introduced the item which had been dealt with under delegated authority.

**181/21-22 Oral Updates from Councillors on areas of responsibility if relevant.**

**181/21-22.1 Footpath and Highways**

Cllr. Sutherland-Rogers reported on the 12 Cycling Discs which had been received and she volunteered to place these in the appropriate places.

**181/21-22.2 GDPR, SALC and Website**

It was reported that the public sector pay rise for April 2021 had not been agreed as yet and that strike action was possible.

**181/21-22.3 Playing Fields and the Green play area**

It was reported that the Pavilion was now removed as well as the two pirate ships and that work would now begin to replace. It was also noted that there was some underspend with only £8,127 of the £9,000 being spent. The

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Walberswick Common Lands Charity has also requested that the base also be removed, although this may prove to be problematic. The Chair would liaise with Mr. James Darkin to inspect and report back to the next meeting of the Council.

A recent request for photos to be taken on the Village Green by an outside company was discussed and it was **RESOLVED** to grant permission. Councillors were encouraged to attend and participate.

Cllr. Sutton also reported on the gate to the common which was broken, the contractor would be chased to resolve as soon as possible.

#### **181/21-22.4 Safe Spaces and Car Parks**

Nothing for this meeting.

#### **181/21-22.5 Heritage Hut**

It was **CONFIRMED** that this item would be dropped as a standing item from the agenda from February 2022.

#### **181/21-22.6 Sizewell and other power related developments**

Already covered in a previous agenda item.

#### **181/21-22.7 Neighbourhood Plan**

It was reported that no further work had been completed due to the wait for approval of the £10,000 grant funding which was now in the hands of East Suffolk Council.

#### **181/21-22.8 Village News**

It was agreed that an item on Sizewell C would be submitted for the next edition.

#### **182/21-22 Walberswick Common Lands Charity Trustees**

A verbal report was given on the retirement of one trustee before the end of their four-year term, and the status an existing trustee vacancy which was still being advertised.

#### **183/21-22 Oral Committee reports if relevant**

None for meeting.

#### **184/21-22 Clerk's report**

The Clerk reported on the resolution of a recent boundary dispute and a

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request from a neighbouring Parish to help with a change to the speed limit.

A request from legal officers at Sizewell C to engage with them on the signing of

**185/21-22 Matters arising**

There were no new matters.

**186/21-22 To consider a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the press and public for the duration for the following items in view of the confidential and personal nature of the business to be transacted. If resolved, such items to be dealt with after the item that confirms details of the next meeting.**

This was so **RESOLVED**. One member of the public left the meeting at 8.32pm.

**188/21-22 Date of next meeting was confirmed as being Monday, 14 February 2022 at 7pm.**

**187/21-22 To consider appointment of Trustees**

Candidates for the WCLC Trustee opening were discussed and clarification was given on the agreed process.

**The meeting closed at 8.48pm.**

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