

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Monday 12th May 2025 at 7pm.

Present (physically): Councillors Lewis (Chair), Bassinette, Dadswell, Richardson, Watson and Whiting. District Councillor David Beavan and County Councillor Richard Smith. Only Councillors physically present can speak (except during the public forum or if standing orders are temporarily suspended) and vote.

Also in attendance (via Zoom) were Mark Knight the Parish Clerk and Simon Ashton the Responsible Financial Officer.

001/25-26 To elect the Chair of the Council for the year 2025/6 and for that person to sign the Acceptance of Office for the role of Chair.

The Clerk invited nominations from the floor. Cllr. Bassinette nominated Cllr. Lewis for the Chair, this was seconded by Cllr. Whiting. There being no other nominations a vote was then taken with all being in favour. Cllr. Lewis was then elected Chair of the Council for the year 2025/6 and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in view of those present.

Cllr. Lewis thanked his fellow Councillors for their continued support.

002/25-26 To elect the Vice-Chair of the Council for the year 2025/6.

Cllr. Bassinette nominated Cllr. Whiting, this was seconded by Cllr. Richardson, there being no other nominations Cllr. Whiting was then elected as Vice-Chair of the Council for the year 2025/6 and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in view of those present.

003/25-26 Welcome by the Chair.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

004/25-26 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Sutton.

005/25-26 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation.

Cllr. Lewis declared an interest in the agenda item regarding continuing membership of SALC (he is on the board of SALC) and it was agreed that he would not participate in the discussion or voting on this item.

Cllr. Richardson declared an interest in item 9.1.4 pertaining to the proposal for the temporary site adjacent to the Caravan Site and it was agreed that she would not participate in the discussion or voting on this item.

Signed.....

Dated.....

Cllr. Dadswell enquired whether she should declare an interest in item 9.1.4 pertaining to the proposal for the temporary site adjacent to the Caravan Site due to her living relatively near the area, but it was agreed she had no need to declare an interest. It was also discussed that Cllr. Whiting had same interest as Cllr. Dadswell in 9.1.4 due to closeness of property, however it was also decided that as this was not adjacent to the site it would be noted in the minutes but she would be allowed to participate in both discussion and voting

Cllr. Whiting declared a non-pecuniary interest in items 9.1.1 and 9.1.2 pertaining to planning applications but it was agreed that this would not impact her involvement in the agenda item discussion or voting.

006/25-26 Open Forum

None.

007/25-26 To receive a report from Suffolk Council Councillor Richard Smith

C Cllr. Smith reported that Suffolk County Council had achieved a small underspend in the 2024/5 financial year.

He also reported on ongoing work on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation. It was thought that a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk would be elected in May 2026, but their potential powers were not yet known. However, the proposals from Central Government would likely include economic growth, fire and rescue and potentially the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Regarding Local Government Reorganisation, a preliminary case has been agreed by Suffolk County Council which stated a preference for one single unitary authority. A full business case would be sent by the 26th September 2025 with a decision from Whitehall expected in early January. It was hoped that the initial setup costs would lead to savings in the years ahead. Information evenings were being organised across the area. Cllr Smith said that a Suffolk-wide unitary authority was the preference of SCC but he was aware that district councils may want several authorities including a “greater Ipswich” which would combine city centre with smaller towns/villages as far as Woodbridge. SCC thought that this was inappropriate.

Cllr. Bassinette asked if the final proposals would be put to a vote or referendum for local people to decide. Cllr Smith clarified that this was not the case and that Parliament would make the decision and the recommendations of SCC and local people would not determine the decision.

008/25-26 To receive a report from East Suffolk District Councillor David Beavan

Cllr Beavan also reported on Local Government Reorganisation and said it was the position of East Suffolk Council that one unitary authority would be too remote from residents and instead would be putting forward a proposal for several over the area.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The Harbour Order was in the process of being ratified, which would ensure that the facility could not be sold. Without local consultation.

There would also be a consultation on Lion Link in the Autumn with a consultation on Sea Link coming very soon.

Finally, he reported that the Herons planning application on the agenda for this meeting was potentially deliberately confusing.

009/25-26 Planning

009/25-26.1 Applications for consideration

009/25-26.1.1 Herons, Church Field DC/25/1401/FUL

After discussion and input the Council **RESOLVED** to delegate authority to Cllr. Lewis and the Parish Clerk to formulate the final response based on the discussion and input and submit before the deadline of 27th.

009/25-26.1.2 Box Bush, Seven Acres Lane DC/25/1523/VOC

The Council **RESOLVED** to **OBJECT** to the application as it would fail to enhance the significance of a designated asset. It was also **AGREED** to contact Historic England for their input as it appears that the developer was destroying the fabric of this grade II listing property through “a thousand small cuts”. If this was allowed by ESC to proceed, then the Grade II designation would be eventually be voided and was another example of ESC planning disrespecting the village’s voice and its heritage assets.

009/25-26.1.3 Reydon AD Plant, Adnams Eco Distribution Centre, Southwold SCC/0118/24W

The Council **RESOLVED** not to comment on the above application.

009/25-26.1.4 Proposal for Temporary Site adjacent to the Caravan Site DC/25/1755/P4BC

The Council **RESOLVED** to object to the application and delegated authority to Cllrs. Lewis and Bassinette to formulate a response and for the Clerk to submit it as quickly as possible as it was unclear whether ESC would wait for the deadline of 23 May. The Council **AGREED** that the application was not supported by the village and there were many issues surrounding flooding, noise and light pollution, parking and traffic safety that made an overwhelming case for it to be rejected. The Council was strongly of the view that the application represented a huge overdevelopment of the site with the attendant impact on residential amenity as well as on the provision of camping already in the immediate area.

Signed.....

Dated.....

010/25-26 To consider the minutes of the meetings of 14th April 2025

The minutes of the 14th April 2025 were **APPROVED** with the Chair to sign the minutes and to retain them until they can be handed to the Clerk in person.

D Cllr. Beavan then left the meeting at 8.04pm.

011/25-26 Finance Matters 2024/25

011/25-26.1 Review bank receipts/budget & payments/budget as at (31 March 2023)

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the figures as presented.

011/25-26.2 Approve bank reconciliation (to 31 March 2022)

The paper was presented and it was **RESOLVED** to accept the figures with Cllr. Richardson being authorised to review and sign as appropriate.

011/25-26.3 To approve the Asset Register

The report was discussed with the Responsible Financial Officer giving a brief verbal report detailing the addition of the Birds Nest, Log Swing and Flagpole. The Asset Register was **APPROVED** with all commenting positively on the format and clarity. It was suggested that to shorten the register in future years, the early year items could be removed.

011/25-26.4 To confirm the Council's arrangement for insurance

It was **CONFIRMED** that the arrangements for insurance for the Parish Council were up to date and adequate and would be renewed appropriately in September.

011/25-26.5 Approval of Use of Direct Debit Payments (2025/6)

It was **AGREED** to add the direct debit to Crash Plan to back up the two Council owned laptops to the proposed schedule of payments.

011/25-26.6 Approve items on the Authorisation to Pay Sheet

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

013/25-26 Agree the 2025/6 meeting Calendar.

It was **AGREED** to stay with the second Monday of each month (excluding August) for Council meetings, but to move the June 2025 meeting from the 9th to the 11th to account for staff holidays. It was also **NOTED** that there would be a public meeting regarding Lion Link on the 27th June 2025 in the Village Hall.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The Responsible Financial Officer then left the meeting at 8.19pm.

014/25-26 To consider the use of the General Power of Competence

Cllr. Lewis gave a brief verbal report on the matter and explained how this benefits the Council when considering expenditure and resolutions in relation to powers and duties.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council is eligible as it has more than two-thirds of the Councillors elected and had a Clerk with the Certificate in Local Government Administration. It was **RESOLVED** to continue with the adoption of the General Power of Competence for the whole of this electoral term. The Council expressed their appreciation to the Clerk for holding the necessary Certificate.

015/25-26 Councillors to be appointed to outside bodies

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Councillors to the following outside bodies for 2025/26:

015/25-26.1 Suffolk Association of Local Councils: Cllr. Lewis

015/25-26.2 Village News Committee: Cllr. Whiting.

015/25-26.3 Heritage Hut Management Committee: Cllr. Watson.

015/25-26.4 B1125 Working Group (and all other Forums associated with Sizewell C): Cllr. Bassinette, with Cllr Watson as back-up.

015/25-26.5 Harbour Management Committee Advisory Group: Cllr. Bassinette.

015/25-26.6 Southwold to Walberswick Flood and Coastal Board: Cllr. Bassinette.

015/25-26.7 Village Hall Committee: Cllr. Watson.

016/25-26 Councillors to be appointed for areas:

The Council **AGREED** to appoint Councillors to take the lead on the following areas for 2025/26:

016/25-26.1 Footpaths: Cllr. Richardson.

016/25-26.2 Highways: Cllr. Bassinette.

016/25-26.3 Playing Fields and Greens: Cllrs. Richardson and Sutton

016/25-26.4 GDPR, Website and SALC: Cllr. Lewis

016/25-26.5 Sizewell C, Lion Link and other energy projects: Cllr. Bassinette. Cllr Watson agreed to act as back-up.

Signed.....

Dated.....

016/25-26.6 Village News: Cllr. Whiting.

016/25-26.7 Village Hall: Cllr. Watson.

017/25-26 To review delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference for Working Groups and Committees:

017/25-26.1 Planning Advisory Group

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference with no changes. These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

017/25-26.2 Walberswick Scroll Advisory Group

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference with no changes or changes to membership. These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

017/25-26.3 Employment Committee

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference. Cllr Bassinette suggested that a different Councillor could be added to the Committee in her place. Cllr Richardson volunteered. The Committee will be the Chair (Cllr. Lewis), the Vice-Chair (Cllr. Whiting) and one other Councillor which was confirmed and agreed as Cllr. Richardson. These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

017/25-26.4 Safety Committee

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference. The membership was confirmed with the addition of Cllr Dadswell being Cllrs. Dadswell, Lewis, Richardson and Sutton. These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

017/25-26.6 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the delegation arrangements and Terms of Reference with no changes or changes to membership (Cllrs. Bassinette, Lewis, Whiting and the Parish Clerk). Dr Paul Bradley and Mr Alan Gomm, members of PAG and with specific planning expertise are also non-Council members. These arrangements, and the membership will continue to be posted on the Parish Council Website.

Signed.....

Dated.....

018/25-26 Policy Review

As part of the annual policy review process, the following policies were reviewed and approved:

018/25-26.1 Standing Orders

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with no changes.

018/25-26.2 Financial Regulations

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with no changes. However, it was **NOTED** that a new model version of the Financial Regulations had recently been released by SALC and the SLCC which reflected the changes to Procurement Law, it was **AGREED** to place this review on a forthcoming agenda.

018/25-26.3 Complaints Procedure

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with no changes.

018/25-26.4 To review and confirm the Council's obligations under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts are being met

It was **CONFIRMED** that the Parish Council was compliant in all aspects.

018/25-26.5 To consider and approve the policy for dealing with press and media

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the document with no changes.

018/25-26.6 To consider and approve employment policies and procedures

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the documents with no changes.

018/25-26.7 Review of arrangements including legal arrangements with other local authorities and not for profit bodies

It was **AGREED** to **RECONFIRM** the arrangements in place with the Walberswick Common Lands Charity are appropriate.

018/25-26.8 To consider and approve the Code of Conduct

It was **AGREED** to **RE-ADOPT** the LGA Code of Conduct and to be immediately bound by the responsibilities and implications of this.

Signed.....

Dated.....

018/25-26.9 To consider and approve the Publication Scheme

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the documents with no changes.

018/25-26.10 To consider and approve the Holiday Leave and Absence Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to **RE-ADOPT** the documents with no changes.

018/25-26.11 To consider and approve the Policy Review Schedule

It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the document with a change to a four yearly review schedule to be in keeping with the term of a Council. However, it was **AGREED** that the document would be **AMENDED** as follows:

- (i) to note that the Allotments fees would need to be reviewed annually, as the cost of water usage in the previous year would need to be considered in the annual rent.
- (ii) That some of the items in the Annual Review could be moved to review every two years. This would include: the Complaints, Grievance and Holiday Leave policies.

The policy document would be updated to represent these amendments and republished on the website.

019/25-26 Confirm Memberships of:

019/25-26.1 Suffolk Association of Local Councils

Continued membership was **APPROVED**.

019/25-26.2 Staff Subscriptions

It was **AGREED** to continue part-funding of the SLCC Membership of the Responsible Financial Officer, noting that the cost was shared by the RFO with other Councils with whom he worked. No other subscriptions being necessary at this stage.

019/25-26.3 Information Commissioner's Office

Continued membership was **APPROVED**.

020/25-26 To consider a response to the Making of an Article 4 Direction in Walberswick

The response was considered and it was **AGREED** to thank East Suffolk Council for their engagement and listening exercises and **RESOLVED** not to object to the extension, but for the clerk to write and request an explanation of why it does not cover the whole Conservation Area.

Signed.....

Dated.....

021/25-26 Oral updates from Councillors on areas of responsibility if relevant:

021/25-26.1 Village News

Items for inclusion were discussed.

022/25-26 Oral Committee Reports if relevant

No reports were given.

023/25-26 Clerk's Report

The report already circulated was discussed and there were no questions.

024/25-26 Matters Arising

It was proposed to add the matters concerning allotments and the new model Financial Regulations to the June 2025 agenda if ready.

025/25-26 Date and Time of next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 11th June 2025 at 7pm.

The time and date of the meeting was confirmed as above noting that the regular schedule had been amended.

The meeting closed at 8.43pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....