

WESTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

westhorpeparishclerk@gmail.com

Tel: 07980 476 140

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Tuesday 7 September 2021 in the Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs David Barker (Chairman); Steve Caley (Vice Chairman); Ian Cotgrove; Steve Christian; Mrs Diane Gladders

IN ATTENDANCE: 5 members of public; Mrs Julia Dunncliffe (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES and approval of absences – Cllrs Robin Lambert and Richard Brown.
2. DECLARATIONS of interest and Dispensation considerations – None.
3. MINUTES of Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 6 July 2021 previously circulated and taken as read – unanimously approved and signed by Chairman.
4. MATTERS Arising:-
 - 4.1 PARLIAMENTARY Boundary Changes response submitted by Chairman to the Boundary Commission Review on behalf of Parish Council followed:- *“The Boundary Commission review suggestions are a complete and utter shambles for this area. Westhorpe is at present in the Bury St Edmunds constituency which under these proposals are a complete nonsense. There is no reason to have Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds in the same constituency, the proposal for Bury St Edmunds is a constituency in a figure of 8 with no sensible boundaries, we reject 100% this suggestion. Under the proposal Westhorpe would be in a new North Suffolk area which is vast and far too big, the area spreads from Honington in the west to Bungay in the east it includes Halesworth a long way away which Westhorpe has no historic links. We believe each new constituency should have a market town and not be a vast rural area as suggested.*

Historically Westhorpe was part of the old Eye Constituency which included Framlingham and Debenham which is acceptable but not Halesworth and Bungay which is ridiculous.

Westhorpe has links with Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds and one of these market towns in our view should be part of any new parliamentary boundary.

Those making these suggested changes clearly have little understanding of Suffolk and need to think again”.
 - 4.2 SPEED Indicator Device (SID):- Chairman advised that Traffic Technology had authorised the quote for the SID on 29.7.2021 and when it was ready, the field services team would be in touch with him to provide training and installation within the quote. Once in place, the SID would provide speed, number of vehicles and relevant data for correlation to provide evidence of vehicle movements through the village as required.
5. SUFFOLK County Councillor (SCC) report:- as per attached document – note COP26.
6. DISTRICT Councillor Report (MSDC) report:- as attached - Noted in the absence of Andy Mellen at the meeting by Chairman that “£250 or more are available to local community groups and organisations. To please encourage groups in the village to contact him (Andy Mellen) for an application form or telephone for further information and help in applying.
7. JOINT Local Plan:- Cllr Steve Caley reported on the Parish Council submission regarding ‘Allocation of Sites for Housing and Other Development and Settlement Boundaries – Matter Number 9’:- *“The proposal to include site LS01 in the Joint Local Plan for Westhorpe is directly contrary to the stated policies of Mid Suffolk District Council (LPO1) and fails to meet the requirements set out in the NPPF in terms of sustainable development. We deem it to be Unsound in its proposal and would add that it also appears to be opposed to the MSDC stated view ‘ that the J.L.P should be in the public interest’, the views expressed by the public supporting objection at odds with that. We would contend that the Local Authority should not contravene its own policies or the views of its public.*

To demonstrate and support our position we say that it fails in sustainability as follows:

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- 1) *The site is some 2miles distant from schools, shops, Petrol Filling stations, doctors' surgery and nursery facilities with no direct footpath or cycle lane to any of the aforementioned. Each facility varies in distance from Westhorpe, but none is any less than stated.*
- 2) *Public transport is limited to one bus out and one bus back each day, at times that do not suit normal employment hours. Our bus route is under constant review as to its viability and its survival beyond the next review in October 2021 is by no means guaranteed. The nearest railway station is several miles distant, and access limited by the lack of any other form of public transport except for private taxi.*
- 3) *Employment in the area is limited and unless working from or at home the workforce must travel by motor vehicle.*
- 4) *Those factors alone point to an increased reliance on the motor vehicle, with multiple ownership per household almost universal. Increased Greenhouse gases, increased levels of particulate and CO2 emissions will go in conjunction with more congestion on the rural roads that we use daily and are certainly in direct opposition to any sustainability.*
- 5) *Conversion to emission free transport may well steadily increase, however reliance on over ground cables for electrical supply will be strained increasingly and the adequate provision of sufficient rapid homebased EV charging points hard to achieve. We have no mains gas in Westhorpe, and electric heating may further exploit the inadequate supply.*
- 6) *Electricity aside other utilities such as Water, sewerage and drainage are increasingly an issue and will be further stretched. Problems experienced now will worsen.*
- 7) *Broadband speeds are poor by many standards (20 to 30Mbps) and weaken the further away from the exchange you travel. Another 10 properties would worsen that without doubt, particularly at peak usage times.*

For those reasons we see the development as unsustainable.

However, we also believe that there is further to support our view and would draw your attention to the following:-

Westhorpe is a rural hamlet of an eclectic mix of housing developed slowly over many hundreds of years, there are approximately 80 to 85 houses in the Parish. A potential development of 10 new homes would massively exceed our need for provision for the future, add circa 12% to our housing stock and have a severe impact on the character of this historic village. We have over 12 listed properties in the village, most notably Westhorpe Hall, its adjacent barn and the bridge over the moat to the former Westhorpe Hall, the home of Mary Tudor, sister to Henry VIII. How any proposed development would fail to impact negatively upon that important heritage site is beyond us and certainly something that the committee should bear in mind to ensure consistent application of its own policies in relation to Heritage throughout the area.

In summary, Westhorpe Parish Council objects to the inclusion of site LS01 to the Joint Local Plan for Westhorpe. We believe the proposal to be Unsound in terms of Sustainability and Heritage as measured against Mid Suffolk District Council's own policies and would suggest it's removal from the Joint Local Plan.

Please contact Westhorpe Parish Council for further clarification should it be required".

8. FINANCE:-

8.1 Noted that hall hire fees had been waived until 2022.

8.2 The following payment was confirmed:-

(i) chq 100418 – MSDC – dog fouling signs - £18.00. Proposed S Christian; seconded S Caley – unanimously agreed.

8.3 Bank statement and cash book reconciliation (previously circulated and taken as read) as at 4.8.2021 was noted. (Attached).

8.4 Current cash book (as at 4.8.2021) current - £5683.89; Savings - £1505.08 – noted. (Attached).

9. QUESTIONS to the Chairman:-

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9.1 HEDGE outside The Old Rectory – although the hedge had been slightly trimmed in response to initial request by the Chairman, it was agreed David Barker to speak again with the owner and request more of the hedge be cut back away from the road making it safer for road users to pass. Jeff Moore reported that drivers were just not slowing down by the hedge.

9.2 DC/21/00366 Land South Of, Westhorpe Road, Finningham, Suffolk - David Hemy requested information on the situation. Agreed he to ask MSDClr Mellen direct and copy the clerk into any correspondence.

10. DATE of next meeting Tuesday 2 November 2021 at 7.30 pm, Westhorpe Village Hall

Meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Julia Dunncliffe

Westhorpe Parish Clerk