

WESTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

On behalf of westhorpeparishclerk@gmail.com

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Tuesday 17 September 2024 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs David Barker (Chairman), Steve Christian, Ian Cotgrove, Diane Gladders, Richard Brown

IN ATTENDANCE: County and District Cllr Andy Mellen, two members of the public and Mark Eggleton (clerk),

1. APOLOGIES and approval of absences. Apologies received from Cllr Caley and Cllr Lambert.
2. DECLARATIONS of interest and dispensation. No declarations received relating to agenda items.
3. MINUTES of Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 previously circulated and taken as read – unanimously approved and signed by the Chairman.
4. MATTERS Arising from Council Meeting held on 21 May 2024.
 - 4.1 Update on the tree surgery contractor's progress. UK Power Networks have completed the work required and the Chairman noted that it had been carried out to a high standard.
 - 4.2 Flooding Update. Work is ongoing, a section of the ditch has been cleared, and when the hedge is coppiced in winter the ditch will be cleared all the way down to the entrance of Westhorpe Hall.
 - 4.3 Gigaclear Update. No response to the Chairman's letter has been received from this company but to the best of the Parish Council's knowledge no further approaches to residents have been made by Gigaclear.
5. SPEED Indicator Device (SID) update – Cllr Brown advised that the new solar panels had been installed and were working well. The panels have increased the battery life to five days. An issue has been identified where the SID is displaying kilometers per hour rather than miles per hour. Cllr Brown will conduct a reset to correct this issue.
6. COUNTY Councillor report – Cllr Mellen presented his report. Cllr Mellen advised members that from April 2026 there would be significant changes to the weekly bin collections that would involve recycling being placed into two different bins and food waste being collected separately to go into digester. Please find a copy attached
7. DISTRICT Councillor report - Cllr Mellen presented his report. Please find a copy attached.
8. PLANNING UPDATE
 - 8.1 DC/23/05193 and DC/23/05077 Bacton Middle School. The developer wishes to vary their application. The Parish Council's objections to the variation were submitted on 7 December 2023. The application is currently awaiting a decision.

A member of the public noted that Bacton was one of the fastest growing villages in the country. He asked Cllr Mellen if this growth was the result of a deliberate council policy. Cllr Mellen advised that it was not, and one of the issues was that Bacton did not have a Neighbourhood Plan which meant that it was difficult to refuse some planning applications.

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The same resident went on to ask if the overarching principles of the National Planning Policy Framework remained the same. Cllr Mellen confirmed they remained the same.

The resident then asked what the present position was with the Joint Local Plan. Cllr Mellen advised that bids will be reviewed in early 2025.

9. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION. The Chairman will review the policy alongside the SALC guidance and draft feedback for the Parish Council to review. The deadline for submitting the feedback is 24 September 2024.
10. PLANNING PERMISSION FOR SOLAR FARMS. Cllr Mellen advised that Mid Suffolk District Council review planning applications for solar farms up to 50 megawatts. Applications for larger solar farms are reviewed by the Secretary of State. Currently larger solar farms are being approved even on grade 1 agricultural land.
11. JOINT LOCAL PLAN PART 2. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation and Proposed Approach to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. At the 21 May 2024 Parish Council meeting it was agreed that Cllr Caley would lead any discussions regarding the Joint Local Plan. The Chairman suggested that, on his return, Cllr Caley reviewed the documentation and reconvened the Parish Council if required. The deadline for submitting any feedback is 30 September 2024.
12. RENEWAL OF ANNUAL INSURANCE POLICY. It was unanimously agreed to renew the current Zurich insurance policy at a cost of £214.00 including tax.
13. PRIDE IN YOUR PLACE GRANT. It was unanimously agreed that the remaining balance of £87.66 would be used to purchase materials to repair/improve the bus shelter. Cllr Gladders to supply a list of materials that need to be purchased.
14. NORWICH TO TILBURY PYLONS. The Clerk submitted the Parish Council's latest objections to the plans on 24 June 2024. To date only an automated acknowledgment has been received. No further updates.
15. FINANCE UPDATE
 - 15.1 Review financial reconciliation as at 31 August 2024.
 - 15.2 The following payments have been made since the 21 May 2024 meeting.
 - a) 3.7.24 Cheque number 100474 - £486.33 Mark Eggleton (Clerk's salary for the quarter ending June 2024).
 - b) 3.7.24 Cheque number 100475 - £209.38 MSDC (emptying the dog waste bins).
 - c) 19.8.24 Cheque number 100476 - £143.88 Sue Hull (reimbursement of cost of defibrillator pads).
16. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN AND AOB.

A member of the public said that it was the landowner's duty to ensure waterways on their premises were well maintained. The Chairman advised the ditch in question would be cleared during the winter.
17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday 21 January 2025 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall.

Mark Eggleton
Clerk to Westhorpe Parish Council