

WESTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

On behalf of westhorpeparishclerk@gmail.com

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 in the Village Hall at 8.05pm.

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

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

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR of the Parish Council for the year 2024/2025. Cllr David Barker was nominated and seconded for the role of Chairman.
2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR of the Parish Council for the year 2023/2024. Cllr Steve Caley was nominated and seconded for the role of Vice Chairman
3. APOLOGIES and approval of absences. No apologies received.
4. DECLARATIONS of interest and dispensation. No declarations received relating to agenda items.
5. MINUTES of Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 19 March 2024 previously circulated and taken as read – unanimously approved and signed by the Chairman.
6. MATTERS Arising from Council Meeting held on 19 March 2024.
 - 6.1 Update on the tree surgery contractor's progress. Two properties in the village have recently suffered an electricity outage. The Chairman has chased UK Power Networks again but, as yet, has not received a response. It was agreed that the Chairman would copy the UK Power Networks CEO in on his next correspondence.
7. SPEED Indicator Device (SID) update – The solar panels that have been ordered to replace the batteries have arrived. Cllr Brown is in the process of installing the panels and expects to be able to share the data at the next meeting.
8. PLANNING UPDATE
 - 8.1 DC/23/00549 Shrubbery Farm, Walsham Road, Westhorpe, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 4SZ The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application. Planning application approved on 26 April 2024.
 - 8.2 DC/22/2190 HYB Shepherds Grove Bury Road Stanton Suffolk
The Parish Council submitted their observations on 18 February 2023. West Suffolk District Council refused this planning application on 4 April 2024.
 - 8.3 DC/23/05193 and DC/23/05077 Bacton Middle School. The developer wishes to vary their application. The Parish Council agreed to comment stating their concerns that the variation would lead to less space for sporting facilities and a new primary school. The Parish Council's objections to the variation were submitted on 7 December 2023. The application is currently awaiting a decision.
9. FLOODING UPDATE. Some photographic evidence of the flooding has been shared with Andrew Moore at the Highways division. Work to counter the flooding will be ongoing. A member of the public highlighted that there was a potentially blocked pipe that may be impacting drainage. The Chairman agreed to take this matter up with John Offord.

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10. NORWICH TO TILBURY PYLONS. The Parish Council submitted their objections to the National Grid on 12 August 2023. It was agreed that the Clerk should resubmit the objections in the current consultation period.
11. GIGACLEAR DISCUSSION. It has come to the attention of the council that Gigaclear (an internet service provider) have approached some residents in the village with requests to dig up areas of their land to install cable. The village already enjoys fibre internet. The Chairman has written to the company and to Trading Standards to express concerns over this activity.
12. DISTRICT CIL FUNDING. No projects were identified that would benefit from this funding.
13. REVIEW OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE and Accountability Return Form including Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statement and Certificate of Exemption. All documents were reviewed and unanimously approved. A discussion took place on what levels of financial reserves should be held. The general view was that the reserves were sufficient, but the Clerk took an action to identify the costs associated with the election process, to ensure that sufficient funds were in place for this purpose.
14. FINANCE UPDATE
 - 14.1 The bank reconciliation as at 30 April 2024 was presented by the Clerk.
 - 14.2 The following payments have been made since the 19 March 2024 meeting.
 - a) 19.3.24 Cheque number 100469 - £900.00 Traffic Technology Ltd (SID solar panels).
 - b) 26.3.24 Cheque number 100470 - £441.48 Mark Eggleton (clerk's salary for the quarter ending March 2024).
 - c) 6.4.24 Cheque number 100471 - £22.80 SALC (payroll services).
 - d) 6.4.24 Cheque number 100472 - £8.00 Village Hall for hire of the hall.
 - e) 6.4.24 Cheque Number 100472 - £138.79 SALC subscription
 - 14.3 The following income has been received since the 19 March 2024 meeting.
 - a) 8.4.24 £1890 received from Mid Suffolk District Council (first half of precept)
 - 14.4 Sue Hull has emailed the Chairman to ask if the Parish Council would fund new defibrillator pads as the current ones expire on 1 September. This request was unanimously agreed.
15. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN AND AOB.

A member of the public had received some correspondence which suggested that there were some amendments to the Joint Local Plan. They asked Cllr Mellen about the process for amending the plan. Cllr Mellen stated that whilst new bids have been submitted that did not necessarily mean they would be approved, and that any bids would go through a rigorous review process. Cllr Caley expressed a concern that the Parish Council would not have opportunity to comment on these matters until early 2025. Cllr Mellen agreed to obtain more information on the process.

It was agreed Cllr Caley would chair any future discussions on this point as some of the land under discussion is owned by the Chairman's family.
16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday 17 September at 7.30pm at the village hall.

Mark Eggleton
Clerk to Westhorpe Parish Council