

Minutes of Westhall's Annual Parish Meeting
Monday 13th July 2020 7.30 Westhall Village Hall (prior to AGM)

Attendees: Parish Councillors - Mr P Langford (Chairman), Mr J Lickman, Mr C Baker, Mrs L McTaggart, Mrs L Brown, Mrs S Self, Mr C Punt, Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk/RFO)

1. Parish Council Chairman's report on the year: Mr Langford delivered a report on the year's events and successes, reproduced here:

This has been a year of significant change for the village and the Parish Council has, once again, been working hard for the benefit of the community. I would like to thank all the Councillors and Clerk for your dedication and support throughout the year. It is appreciated by me and without the time and effort that you expend the Parish Council would not operate as effectively as it does.

The year has unfortunately been dominated by two events. Firstly, the death of Vincent Antony Whalling and the closure of Tony's Store and Post Office and secondly, the global Covid-19 pandemic which interrupted normal Parish Council proceedings and will have far reaching consequences for many years to come.

The Parish Council has supported the Westhall Community Pub Society and managed to obtain a grant from Councillor Tony Goldson's Locality Budget to enable the Racehorse to provide a support hub for the community during the Covid-19 lockdown. We will continue to assist the Westhall Community Pub committee with their aspirations to make the Racehorse a focus for the parish with the Stable shop and a part-time Post Office.

The Parish Council was involved in the following planning decisions / consultation:

The Parish Council provided detailed comments to the Sizewell C Stage 4 public consultation. Our main concern is the increase in traffic along the A12 and the surrounding area as a result of the construction and the retention of the Park and Ride facilities at Darsham station after the construction phase.

Various village planning applications to change or develop dwellings within the village, including Stradbroke Town Farm Barn, Hillside, Oak Tree Farm and the bungalow at Cox Common, access from Butts Road and land off Church Lane upgrading equestrian facilities.

The Parish Council scrutinised the expenditure plans for next and subsequent years and decided to request a 10% increase in the precept for 2020/21 to ensure we have sufficient funds available to meet the costs. This represents roughly an additional £2 per annum (total £23.93) for a Band D property. Our precept has traditionally been kept 'very low' (less than £20 a year for a Band D property) with no increases and we reluctantly agreed to approve the increase to cover the expenses for running the parish, including the purchase of computer equipment and ancillaries for the Clerk.

The Parish reviewed the Emergency Plan for dealing with an incident and Charles Baker used it to co-ordinator volunteers responding to the pandemic. John Lickman refurbished the various Parish Council notice boards, conducted checks on the grit bins and attended emergency preparedness training.

Finally, thanks to Bob McTaggart for his work around the village keeping it tidy.

2. Comments from members of the public: None

3. Any other business: None (Refer to draft AGM Minutes 13th May 2019)