

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of Westhall Parish Council**

Monday 22nd May 2023 at 7.45 pm The Racehorse, Westhall

Councillors Present: Mr C Baker, Mr P Langford, Mr S Darch, Mrs M Rogers, Mr J Lickman and Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk)

In Attendance: Suffolk County Councillor: Annette Dunning
East Suffolk District Councillors: Beth Keys-Holloway and Geoff Wakeling
Members of the Public.

Newly elected District Councillors Beth Keys-Holloway and Geoff Wakeling attended the meeting to introduce themselves to the Parish Council and those attending our meeting. Annette Dunning our Suffolk County Councillor reported that she is working in partnership with the District Council on the goals they hope to achieve by 2030. She gave a brief run down on issues of interest such as Bus Service 522 - a revised timetable with minor alterations starting Mon 5 June to improve connections at Beccles with the 580 service to James Paget Hospital & Gt Yarmouth, and the 146 service to Norwich. Anyone who has a question is welcome to can contact her direct as she does not hold surgeries.

All attending Councillors signed their declaration of acceptance of office, reminder to ensure their Register of Interests is up to date and to submit the Election Expenses Return by 1st June 2023.

Appointment of Chairman for 2023/24: Cllr Darch declared his interest, this was seconded by Cllr Langford and approved by Council. Chair then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2 **Apologies and acknowledgment of absences:** None received.

3 **Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests:** Cllr Darch to Item 7a.

4 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution passed minutes of Westhall Parish Council Meeting held on 13th March 2023 are correct record.

5 **Chairman and Clerk's report on progress of actions from previous meeting(s):** All actions completed /designated to other Agenda items below, but following noted:

Item 7 (14/03/22) Fencing between Pleasure Ground & Car Park: To erect a post and rail fence and entrance gate onto the Recreation Ground from the Village Car Park. Ongoing. *Action: Cllr Darch will order materials and commence these works when weather/ground conditions permit.*

Item 13 (09/05/22) First Aid/Defibrillator Training: Ongoing.

Cllr Langford informed meeting that the battery for the defibrillator required replacement, costing approx. £280 after VAT. Purchase approved from defibrillator reserve fund with purchase of replacement pads at a later date - cost awaited. *Action: Cllr Langford.*

Item 4 (09/01/23) Memorial to the late Bob McTaggart : Pending. *Actions: Cllr Darch/Racehorse Pub/ Westhall Community Council and the Parish Church Council.*

Item 9b (09/01/23) Grit Bin Operatives: Advert for 2 operatives to join our current team. No applicants so far. *Action: Clerk to continue to advertise and to update our current operator list with Suffolk County Council for insurance purposes.*

Item 8b (13/03/23) Removal of Grit Bin at Cox Common: Suffolk Highways have confirmed the responsibility for removal of the grit and grit bin lies with the Parish Council. Agreed to use this bin to replace the broken bin near Meadow Close. *Action: Cllr Lickman agreed to organise works.*

Item 12b (13/03/23) Signage to properties at Meadow Close: Cllr Langford reports he has received confirmation from East Suffolk Council that they will erect signage on the footpath leading to numbers 14 & 15 Meadow Close.

6 **Finance:**

6a-e RFO/Clerk submitted the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year 2022-2023 and other prescribed documents prior to submission for internal audit. All documents were reviewed and approved by Council. The council will again apply for Exemption from a Limited Assurance Review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015. *Action: Clerk to forward year end accounts and associated documentation to internal auditor.*

6f Bank reconciliation to year end 31/03/23 approved. Balance on current account was £9,059.04.

6g Bank reconciliation to 28/04/23 approved. Balance on current account was £13,068.99 increase due to receipt of Precept payment of £4,009.95.

- 6h Approval by Council for online payments of: £287.06 to clerk for salary, home office allowance for April and May 2023, expenses; £58.20 HMRC PAYE and £203.47 to SALC for 2023/24 subscription.
Action: All approved and Clerk to action online payments.
- 16i Pleasure Grounds & Car Park Recreation Ground Account: The Annual Accounts for year ending 31/03/23 were presented, approved by the Trustees. Balance brought forward from 01/04/22 was £668.59. Annual total receipts were £163.52, total expenditure was £216.98 and balance as at 31/03/23 was £632.11.
Action: Clerk to submit end of year accounts to Charities Commission.
- 6j Consider annual funding requests: None received.
- 7 Planning: Public Access Link - <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications>
- 7a New Applications: Cllr Darch left the meeting at this point.
DC/23/1446/FUL – Application for a rural worker dwelling that is intended to replace an existing caravan on the site at Belle Grove Farm, Westhall: After considering the planning documents and supporting letter from the applicant, the Parish Council did not believe that the application meets the requirements for a rural worker dwelling based on the Waveney Local Plan. There is no-one who is primarily employed in the rural sector (agricultural or forestry practices) which may require a worker to attend at short notice or to be available during night and day. However, there is a viable holiday-let business that contributes to the local economy and might benefit from on-site maintenance and housekeeping. *Action: Comments to be uploaded to the planning portal.*
- 7b Update on Previous Applications:
DC/22/0651/FUL Fox Covert Poultry Farm – Retrospective planning application: Awaiting Decision.
- 8 Governance Documentation. The following updated documents were reviewed and adopted by Council:
- Standing Orders 2023/24 for organisation and transaction of business.
- Financial Regulations 2023/24 pertaining to the Parish Council’s financial affairs and accounting procedures.
- Internal Statement and Report 2023/24 to manage to a reasonable level the risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. *Action: Clerk to post documents on Parish Council website.*
- 9 Assets:
- 9a Gardening equipment (held by Cllr McTaggart: Arrangements for collection of equipment will be made with Cllr McTaggart who was not present at the meeting. *Action: Cllr Darch.*
- 9b Annual Asset Inspection Report: Ongoing by Cllr Lickman who reported that several signs are missing around the village. County Councillor Annette Dunning has offered to meet with Cllr Lickman and look at the sites referred to. *Action: Cllr Lickman to liaise with SCC Dunning. Agenda item for July meeting.*
- 10 Fox Covert Poultry Farm – ongoing problems reported by neighbouring properties: Noise: The Parish Council continues to liaise with Ben Hunter, Environmental Health and Planning Officer at East Suffolk District Council. He is awaiting the results of a noise survey report from the site operators. Once received he will review the results and findings. As far as the Parish Council are aware there are no restrictions that limit the commercial poultry farm’s operating hours.
- 11 Allotments: Vacancies at our Locks Road site continue but with a reduction now to 1 full and 1 half plot.
Action: Clerk to continue to advertise vacancies. Allotment inspections due before our next meeting in July.
Action: Cllr Rogers will carry out inspections.
- 12 Correspondence Received:
- 12a Licensing Service for the Revd Mark Bee as priest in charge of the Hundred River and Wainford Benefice: Cllr Rogers has offered to attend this service on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 12b New Waste Management and Street Scene Services in East Suffolk from 01/07/23: East Suffolk Services Limited (ESSL) which is wholly owned by East Suffolk Council will be providing waste services. Information and contact details will be published on Parish Council website and noticeboard. *Action: Clerk.*
- 13 Any items of information:
- 13a Village Car Park: Cllr Darch reported that agreement, subject to final estimates, has been reached with Westhall Community Council, The Racehorse Community Pub and the Parish Council regarding funding for repairs to the car park surface with a local contractor kindly providing the free use of heavy equipment. Work estimated to take place end June/early July. *Action: Cllr Darch to continue to liaise with all parties and keep Council updated.*

- 13b Footpath by Fox Covert Poultry Farm, Cox Common:** A local resident attended the meeting regarding access to an unofficial footpath adjacent to this area. Discussion on whether an application for an amendment to a nearby definitive footpath could be an option. Cllr Langford has offered to speak to the Definitive Map Officer at Suffolk County Council in the first instance. *Action: Cllr Langford.*
- 17 News Items for HCN and other media:**
- 18 Meetings for 2023/24– 7.30 pm on 2nd Monday of every other month:**
2023: 10th July; 11th September and 13th November (+Annual Allotments Meeting)
2024: 8th January; 11th March; 13th May (Annual Parish Meeting & AGM)

Meeting closed at 9.30 pm