

Minutes of Westhall Parish Council**Monday 13th November 2023 at 7.45pm in Westhall Village Hall****Councillors Present:** Mr S Darch, Chairman, Mr C Baker, Mrs L McTaggart, Mrs M Rogers,
Mr J Lickman and Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk)**In Attendance:** Members of the public
Suffolk County Cllr Annette Dunning

- 1 **Apologies and acknowledgment of absences:** Mr P Langford and East Suffolk District Cllrs Beth Keys-Holloway and Geoff Wakeling
- 2 **Forum to receive reports from County and District Councillors and members of the public:** SC Cllr Annette Dunning presented her November Parish Report to the council. East Suffolk Council GLI Group October Parish Report was circulated to Council. **Action: Clerk to post reports to website/noticeboard.**
- Saturday Bus Service for village:** Cllr Darch had been approached by residents regarding provision of a bus service on Saturdays. **Action: Chairman to write to Cllr Dunning with more details, eg. passenger numbers and to set up a meeting for her to attend in order to make an informed decision.**
- 3 **Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests:** None
- 4 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution passed minutes of Westhall Parish Council Meeting held on 11th September 2023 are correctly recorded. Proposed by Cllr Lickman and seconded by Cllr Rogers.
- 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 9b (10/07/23) Road Signage damage:** 30 mph signage faded. No change to this since last meeting. **Action: Cllr Lickman to follow-up on this.**
- Cllr Langford (who was not in attendance) reported that he has raised questions with Suffolk Highways new Partners Milestone about signage and road repairs. **Action: Cllr Langford to update on response.**
- Item 11a (11/09/23) Fox Covert Poultry Farm:** Cllr Langford spoke to East Suffolk Environmental Health Officer on 10/11/23 for an update on the remaining outstanding issues (less planning – generator and water storage) of noise which is being dealt with by Crown during outages/restocking. Improvements to the fans have been carried out and at the next outage they will install additional fans and a misting system, which will allow the fans to operate at reduced speed when warm and the misting system will try to keep the temperature down in the sheds. Work continues to rectify the noise issue to comply with the abatement order. **Action: To go on January 8th Agenda.**
- 6 **Finance:**
- 6a **Bank reconciliation:** Bank reconciliation of accounts for Westhall Parish Council from 29/08/23 to 27/10/23 submitted and approved. Parish Council current statement balance held at 27/10/23 was **£10,994.89**. Reconciliation checked against bank statements and approved by Council.
- Approval of online payments:** Clerk Net Salary and Home Office Allowance for October and November 2023 £269.26; HMRC £58.20; Stationery Expenses to Clerk £2.75; CAS (website subscription 2023/24) £60; SALC Payroll Services to 30/09/23 £27; Village Hall Hire for 2023 £102; ICO subscription 2023/24 £40. **Action: All approved and clerk to action online payments.**
- 6c **2023/24 Budget – Half Year Status:** The budget shows all spends to 30/09/23 are well within budget limits with a total spend of £1,987 within a £5,789 budget.
- 6d **2024/25 Draft Budget and setting of Precept:** The RFO presented the draft budget for preliminary discussion prior to final approval in January. To allow for increases in the cost of living, particularly in areas such as salaries, insurance and asset replacement expenditure and to ensure that adequate funds are available to secure viability beyond the immediate future, a rise in the 2024/25 will be required. **Action: Final approval on budget and setting of precept at January meeting.**
- 6e **Donations:** Proposal for £500 to allow for ongoing maintenance of the Pleasure Grounds, Car Park and Allotments to continue to provide these amenities to the residents of Westhall; £100 to the East Anglian Air Ambulance Service who provide an essential service for rural villages such as Westhall. Both donation unanimously approved. **Action: Clerk to action online payments.**
- 7 **Planning:**
- 7a **New Planning Applications: Public Access Link - <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications> DC/23/3961/LBC – Conversion of stable to 1 bedroom holiday let at Paradise Farm, Cox Common,**

Westhall: No objections raised by Council, though they had concerns regarding the need for more holiday accommodation in the village. Comments unanimously approved by Council. **Action:** *Clerk to upload comments to the Planning Portal.*

DC/23/3966/FUL: Addition of dormer porch on existing annex at Paradise Farm, Cox Common,

Westhall: No objections raised by Council.

DC23/23/4048/CON – 8 Old Mill Cottages, Mill Common – Consultation Cabinet location approval. For information only.

7b Update on previous applications:

DC23/3703/P3Q – Barn conversion at Becks End Farm, School Lane, Westhall: The applicant attended the meeting to provide further information on this planning application. The Parish Council had no objections to the application, assuming that the applicant can demonstrate that the barn meets the criteria of agricultural use and we request retention of the oak tree to help screen the residential dwelling from neighbours.

8 Memorial to the late Bob McTaggart: A public meeting will be held in The Racehorse Community Pub at 7pm on Thursday 23rd November to discuss thoughts and ideas to help the village remember and thank Bob for all his hard work. **Actions:** *Cllr Darch/Racehorse Pub/Westhall Community Council and the Parish Church Council.*

9 Matters Arising since last meeting:

Flooding around village: Longstanding problems with flooding and in particular following Storm Babet with exit roads being impassable by foot or in vehicles. Areas affected have been posted on the Suffolk Highways Reporting Tool and responses awaited.

Water Grips: It has been noted that many of the water grips around the village roads, which are supposed to divert water from the roads, require clearing. **Action:** *Clerk to report this issue to Suffolk Highways.*

SCC Cllr Dunning supplied information on Community Self Help Training to clear gullies. Equipment, clothing and training available from the County Council.

9b Parking on Passing Place at Locks Road: Cllr Darch has spoken to residents adjacent to this area and we shall continue to monitor the issue. The missing signage has already been reported to Suffolk Highways.

10 Correspondence received: All correspondence distributed to Council and no comments submitted. Items of public information posted on our website and noticeboards.

11 Any items of information/Reports from Parish Councillors: Suffolk in Bloom: The clerk collected 500 bulbs from East Suffolk Council which Cllr Darch will disperse between volunteers for planting.

11a Getting to grips with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP's): Cllr Langford attended a webinar run by SALC on this subject. He is not aware of any NSIP's projects encroaching on Westhall (the nearest is Southwold/Walberswich and Blythburgh which is a landfall option for LIONLINK – electrical grid connection to Holland). Parish Council is not a statutory consultee and therefore any comments/objections will need to be raised via East Suffolk or Suffolk County Councils.

12 News items for local media: None.

13 Meetings for 2024 at 7.30pm on 2nd Monday of every other month in the Village Hall:

8th January

11th March

13th May – Annual Parish Meeting followed by Annual General Meeting

8th July,

9th September

11th November – Annual Allotments Meeting followed by Parish Meeting

14 Adoption of general update in National Pay Rates for Local Authority employees: The Council noted the NJC scales applicable to the Council had been uplifted by national agreement and agreed to adopt the scales as amended. The Clerk's salary will be amended and backdated to 1st April 2023 along with an increase in working hours from 3 hours per week to 4 hours to reflect an increase in workload.

Meeting closed at 9.35 pm.