

Minutes of Westhall Parish Council
Monday 8th January 2024 at 7.30pm in Westhall Village Hall

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

In Attendance: Members of the public 0
East Suffolk County Cllr Geoff Wakeling
Jemma Gooch-Boags from Crown Farms Ltd.

1 **Apologies and acknowledgment of absences:** Cllr P Langford and Cllr L McTaggart

2 **Forum to receive reports from County and District Councillors and members of the public:**

2a **Fox Covert Poultry Farm:** Representatives from Cranswick, the operators of this poultry site attended the meeting to provide an update on the works being carried out to address noise issues arising on the site. Misting systems and variable speed drives installed will reduce noise levels. Timescales for installation and assessment programme will take place throughout January 2024. Jemma has proposed that she attend our next Parish Council Meeting on 11th March and provide an update on progress.

2b **East Suffolk Councillor Update:** Cllr Wakeling presented the January Parish Report which included information on Halesworth Community Larder for school uniforms, the Warm Rooms Scheme, East Suffolk through the lens photo competition, emergency protocol for rough sleepers. **Action: Clerk to post reports to website/noticeboard.** The Parish Council brought the following to Cllr Wakeling – slowness of responses from the Planning Department, siting of mirrors to improve safety for vehicles emerging from Bacons Green Road onto the Halesworth Road. The problem with hedges obscuring road signage and who is responsible for this.

3 **Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests:** None

4 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution passed minutes of Westhall Parish Council Meeting held on 13th November 2023 are correctly recorded. Proposed by Cllr Lickman and seconded by Cllr Rogers.

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 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.**

Item 11 (13/11/23) Suffolk in Bloom: All bulbs now planted around the village and Recreation ground.

6 **Finance:**

6a **Bank reconciliation:** Bank reconciliation of accounts for Westhall Parish Council from 28/10/23 to 29/12/23 submitted and approved. Parish Council current statement balance held at 29/12/23 was **£9,927.88**. Main spending was £500 grant to the Recreation Ground Charity to cover maintenance of the pleasure grounds, car park and allotments and a donation to the East Anglian Air ambulance Service of £100. Reconciliation checked against bank statements and approved by Council.

Approval of online payments: Clerk Net Salary, with backdated salary from April 2023 and Home Office Allowance for December 2023 and January 2024 £457.68; HMRC £105.60; Defibrillator Pads £80.34.

Action: All approved and clerk to action online payments.

6c **2024/25 Draft Budget and setting of Precept:** Due to the rise in the cost of living, particularly, in areas such as salaries, insurance and asset expenditure, the total expenditure budget will increase from -£5789 in 2023/24 to -£6,133 in 2024/25. Approval of the budget was proposed by Cllr Lickman and seconded by Cllr Rogers.

2024/25 Precept: In order to ensure we have sufficient funds available to meet future costs it was agreed unanimously by the Parish Council to request a precept of £4,100 which would reflect a 2.27% increase or £0.68p change on the 2024/25 Council Tax bills against the Parish element and equating to a charge of £30.67 for a Band D property. Setting of Precept was unanimously approved. Cllr Darch proposed acceptance which was seconded by Cllr Baker. **Action: Clerk to publish 2024/25 budget and present Precept Request to the District Council.**

6d **Clerk Contract:** The Clerk's contract was updated and signed following amendments agreed at November meeting.

- 7 **Planning:**
- 7a **New Planning Applications: Public Access Link - <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications>**
- DC/23/4712/SCO – Westhall Farm: A scoping opinion re demolition of existing 5 poultry houses and erection of 2 new poultry houses and gate house was received. The Parish Council had no comments to submit.
- DC/23/4004/LBC (replaces DC/23/4003/FUL) – Conversion Cart Lodge to 3 holiday lets at Paradise Farm, Cox Common, Westhall: The Parish Council voted to reject this application on the grounds that this development puts increased pressure on the water supply, sewage into ditches and traffic. **Action: Clerk to upload Consultee Comments to the East Suffolk Planning Portal.**
- 7b **Update on previous applications:** Decision still pending for DC/23/1913/FUL Locks Road development. SCC Section 106 CIL document revised extending the time limit from 3rd January to 3rd July 2024.
- 8 **Memorial to the late Bob McTaggart:** A public meeting was held in The Racehorse Community Pub on Thursday 23rd November to discuss a fitting memorial. Suggestions were to hold a special walking event with a litter pick each year and the placing of a framed photograph of Bob in the Village Hall. The Church Warden is also seeking permission to place a brass plaque at St Andrews Church.
- 9 **Matters Arising since last meeting:**
- 9a **Flooding around village:** Ongoing. Areas affected have been posted on the Suffolk Highways Reporting Tool and responses awaited. **Action: Clerk**
Water Grips: Grips around the village roads require clearing. Suffolk Highways informed Clerk that we require to mark the position of all affected water grips on a map and upload each onto the Suffolk Highways Reporting Tool. **Action: Cllr Darch**
- 9b **Signage Damage:** No change. Ongoing.
- 9c **Community Emergency Plan:** Request received from the Emergency Planning Officer (EPO) to make amendments to our Community Emergency Plan. **Action: Clerk to carry out amendments and submit to EPO.**
- 9d **Footpath between Chapel and Shop at Mill Common:** The Parish Council wished to thank Mr David Kent who kindly volunteered to carry out repairs to this footpath. Agreed unanimously to cover cost of materials in the sum of £20. **Action: Clerk to action payment.**
- 10 **Correspondence received:** All correspondence distributed to Council and no comments submitted. Items of public information posted on our website and noticeboards. Cllr Lickman will be attending the East Suffolk Planning Forum on 24th January on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 11 **Any items of information/Reports from Parish Councillors:** None
- 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:**
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

Meeting closed at 9.00 to be followed by a meeting of the Trustees for the Recreation Ground Charity.