

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY  
16 APRIL 2018 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT CHURCH.

**Present:** Mr Guyler (Chairman), Mr Wheatley, Mrs Drury, Mrs Cook, Mr Howard, Dr Geake, Mr Lomax and 84 members of the public. Mrs Jenkins joined the meeting at 7.58 p.m.

**Public comment:** 2 residents expressed concerns regarding the proposal of an extension at 10 Cornmill Green, particularly the issues with the garage and parking. 18 Residents commented on the Rags Lane development including concerns regarding drainage, 1m pond on site, Broomhill Lane being made access only, surface water issues, loss of ancient hedgerow, traffic mitigation scheme, loss of wildlife habitat, danger to pedestrians Rags Lane and Drinkstone Road, not the type of housing needed in the village, lack of bungalows in the plans, additional traffic through the Conservation Area and centre of the village, a need to protect the village feel.

District Cllr Storey's report advises that Leaders of Barbergh and Mid Suffolk DCs are exploring new ways of working together although have decided against a merger at this time due to SCC's proposal to look at the whole system of governance in Suffolk. The Homelessness Reduction Act became law 3 April 2018. This Act requires Local Housing Authorities to carry out homelessness prevention work. Plans for the former council offices in Needham Market have been unveiled. These envisage a residential led redevelopment of the site.

County Cllr Storey's report states that SCC Highways is going to war on potholes by deploying more gangs, using different temporary material for emergency repairs, bringing in extra resources to undertake larger-scale patching works and moving internal staff to deal with customer reports. An extra £21million funding has been borrowed to resurface a quarter of all roads by 2021. SCC's bids to the Housing Infrastructure Fund have successfully got through to the next stage. The HIF aims to support the development of infrastructure which will enable the development of new homes. Suffolk Waste Partnership has been awarded £10,000.00 to tackle the blight of litter. Volunteers are needed to help Suffolk get composting. Suffolk Walking Festival will be launched in Bungay on 12 May. The OVO Energy's Women's Cycling tour will return to Suffolk 13 June.

**1 Apologies for absence** were received from Mr Hardiman.

**2. To receive declarations of interest**

Mr Guyler declared a prejudicial interest in planning application for 10 Cornmill Green as a friend of the applicant, Mr Wheatley declared a prejudicial interest in the planning application in Rags Lane as he lives in Rags Lane, Mrs Cook declared a prejudicial interest in the planning application for Rags Lane as owner of the adjacent field and Mr Howard declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 CCTV in the playing field as he lives adjacent to the site. They all signed the interest book.

**3. To approve minutes of the meeting 19 March 2018.**

The minutes were approved and signed.

**4. Planning – to consider current applications and receive MSDC decisions.**

Mr Wheatley and Mrs Cook left the meeting at 8.20 p.m.

**18/00721** Erection of 45 dwellings and creation of new vehicular access, open space and associated infrastructure (amended application to previously withdrawn 17/02767). Land on south side of Rags Lane.

Mr Guyler had drafted a response which was passed to Councillors for consideration. After additions and amendments it was unanimously agreed to object to the proposal with the following comments:

1. **Drinkstone Road / Green Road Junction and Green Road Pinch Point Improvements.** The proposed scheme is unworkable and any highway

changes in this area should be the subject of wider consultation. The statement from the applicant about the highway proposal that 'a no priority one way working scheme will be trialed and priority signs will be installed at a later date if found to be required' clearly indicates that the changes have not been properly researched. Highway mitigation works at the pinch point would lead to damage to listed buildings in Green Road. The development is thus economically unsustainable (the land is not in the right place) and environmentally unsustainable (it does not protect and enhance the built environment).

2. **Conservation Area.** This development will bring a substantial increase in traffic to the historic core of Woolpit and bring harm to the setting of its conservation area and many listed buildings. The Street is already frequently blocked by commercial vehicles, buses, through traffic and shoppers' cars and is unable to accept the additional vehicles this proposal will create. The distinctive centre of Woolpit is a jewel in the crown of Mid Suffolk and is admired and enjoyed by all who live here and visit. The increased traffic that this development will bring to the centre of Woolpit must not be allowed to inflict irreparable damage to our heritage. The development is thus economically unsustainable (the land is not in the right place) and environmentally unsustainable (it does not protect and enhance the built and historic environment).
3. **Precedents from the Green Road application.** Many of the traffic problems that would result from this application are the same as those produced by application 2112/16 (Land on East Side of Green Road Woolpit). This application was recently refused on the grounds that harm would be done to Woolpit's Conservation Area because of off-site works on Green Road, deemed necessary by SCC Highways in order to make the route from the site safe for pedestrians and vehicles. The harm was not outweighed by the public benefits from the site. This Rags Lane development, with a similar number of homes to Green Road, suffers from the identical problem in that traffic from the site must be routed through the same bottleneck on Green Road. The development is thus economically unsustainable (the land is not in the right place) and environmentally unsustainable (it does not protect and enhance the built and historic environment).
4. **Public Open Space.** The provision of a public open space, containing a large drainage pond, is wholly unsuitable and inadequate. It is not possible to imagine the area being used for its 'open space' purpose and in fact it is probable that parents will consider it a dangerous location which their children should avoid. The development is thus socially unsustainable (it does not support strong, vibrant and healthy communities) and economically unsustainable (local infrastructure needs have not been addressed).
5. **Children' Play Area.** No children's play area is provided. A saved policy of the Mid Suffolk 1998 Local Plan requires new facilities to be provided as part of new development unless adequate facilities already exist nearby. No such facilities exist nearby. The development is thus socially unsustainable (it does not support strong, vibrant and healthy communities) and economically unsustainable (local infrastructure needs have not been addressed).
6. **Alternative Traffic Route.** The suggestion that 'To avoid the village centre, Green Road south, Heath Road and Steeles Road could be used as an alternative to get into and out of the area, which is only a slightly longer route' (3.1.20 of applicant's Transport Statement) is unacceptable. This would take additional traffic through the residential area of Steeles Road with its many parked cars, children and pedestrians and then past the school and Health Centre where there are already serious traffic problems. Heath Road is also an HGV route. The development is thus economically unsustainable (the land is not in the right place) and socially unsustainable (it does not support strong, vibrant and healthy communities).

7. **Broomhill Lane Traffic.** The proposal for Broomhill Lane to be accessible to only the vehicles of residents is unacceptable. Such a move would result in the existing Broomhill Lane traffic using Rags Lane, Drinkstone Road and the main village street and add to the present serious congestion in the conservation area. This proposal should be the subject of separate consultation outside of the application. A survey should be carried out of the vehicles using Broomhill Lane, together with their origins and destinations, to determine the impact on the village centre and other roads. The development is thus environmentally unsustainable (it does not protect and enhance the built or historic environment).
8. **Contribution to the Community.** Policy CS5 of the MSDC Core Strategy Development Plan encourages development to make a positive contribution to settlements and the historic environment. This proposal contributes nothing to either and makes no attempt to do so. The applicant refers to public consultation but has not met or attempted to meet with the Parish Council or liaised with the Parish Council in any way to determine how this proposal might be integrated within the village. The development is thus socially unsustainable (it does not support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, or create a high quality built environment)
9. **Housing and Layout Design.** The style of housing proposed is out of keeping with the open rural setting of the surrounding area. The design in no way meets the requirement of Saved Policy GP1, 'to principally maintain and enhance the character of the surrounding area'. Policy H13 identifies that design and layout should respect the character of the site and its surroundings. Existing buildings in Rags Lane include Grade 2 listed houses, some traditional style houses and 1960s to contemporary bungalows which are well spaced and mainly set back from the road. This is not compatible with the proposed development of off the peg house types with 40% of houses 4/5 bed. It is disappointing that there are no bungalows and few smaller houses as these have been identified in the village questionnaire for the oncoming Neighbourhood Plan as being wanted in the village. The development is thus socially unsustainable (it does not supply the housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations) and environmentally unsustainable (it does not enhance the built and historic environment). Specifically, the development is contrary to the principles expressed in paragraph 50 of the NPPF.
10. **Loss of Habitat and Destruction of Ancient Hedgerow.** The proposal will result in the unacceptable destruction of nearly 100m of the 200m of ancient hedgerow in Drinkstone Road which contains 10 plant species. The hedgerow is approximately 30 feet high and very wide as it has been uncut on the inside for many years. It provides an excellent wildlife habitat. Wildlife identified on site include jays, green woodpeckers, spotted woodpeckers, sparrowhawks, kestrel, warblers and yellowhammers (a red listed endangered species), frogs, grass snakes, muntjac and roe deer. The development is thus environmentally unsustainable (it does not contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; nor does it help to improve biodiversity). Specifically, the development is contrary to the principles expressed in paragraphs 109 and 118 of the NPPF.
11. **Construction Traffic.** The route for Construction Traffic is unsuitable. The proposed route will cause considerable pollution and congestion on Heath Road, with the school and Health Centre, and Green Road which has on-street parking in the built-up area. Green Road, which is barred to HGVs, already has significant traffic problems which will increase further if the Green Road application (2112/16) is approved. The development is thus economically unsustainable (the land is not in the right place).

12. **Surface Water Drainage.** Surface water drainage in Rags Lane is already inadequate and there is frequent flooding, particularly near the Broomhill Lane junction and where Rags Lane joins The Street. It is therefore of concern that the surface water strategy/flood risk assessment submitted with the planning application is unacceptable to Anglian Water. Any decision on the application should be deferred until a surface water plan has been agreed with Anglian Water. The development is thus environmentally unsustainable (the land is not in the right place).
13. **Rags Lane and Drinkstone Road Safety.** As it is without footpaths, the narrow Rags Lane is already unsafe for pedestrians and will be dangerous for residents of the new development who will have to use the route to walk or cycle to the village centre. Rags Lane is also part of National Cycle Route 51. As access to the A14 from the site will lead through the heavily congested pinchpoint in Green Road, many vehicles from the development will turn right and right again to access Rags Lane from the Broomhill Lane end making Rags Lane even more dangerous. Access to The Street from Rags Lane is already very difficult. There will be considerable danger to pedestrians in Drinkstone Road which is narrow and has no pavements. Although there is no proposed formal pedestrian exit from the site into Drinkstone Road, it will still be used by pedestrians, particularly parents and children going to the village school who will take this shorter route. Drinkstone Road is much used at present by recreational walkers and for them and pedestrians from the site the traffic from the development will be hazardous. The development is thus economically unsustainable (the land is not in the right place) and socially unsustainable (it does not support strong, vibrant and healthy communities).
14. **Previous Applications for Development of this Site.** A previous application for 12 dwellings on this site was refused on the grounds that a) the junctions of Rags Lane with both The Street and Broomhill Lane have substandard visibility and the junction of Drinkstone Road (formerly Plough Lane) with Green Road is similarly substandard. Dangers would be created by a material increase in the slowing and turning movements b) that foul sewerage in the area is inadequate to cope with the proposed 12 dwelling development which if approved would cause sewerage problems downstream c) the development would extend the village into open countryside to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area and the amenities of the residents of adjoining properties. Nothing has changed since this refusal. The development is thus economically unsustainable (the land is not in the right place) and socially unsustainable (it does not support strong, vibrant and healthy communities).
15. **Unsuitability of the Site Location.** Whatever modifications are made to the design of the Rags Lane site it will remain unsuitable for development because most of the traffic it creates will go through the already congested historic core of Woolpit. The development is thus economically unsustainable (the land is not in the right place) and environmentally unsustainable (it does not contribute to protecting and enhancing our built and historic environment).

Mr Wheatley and Mrs Cook rejoined the meeting at 8.44 p.m.

Mr Guyler left the meeting at 8.45 p.m.

**18/01103** Erection of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension. 10 Cornmill Green – object. Overdevelopment of site, detrimental effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties, development will visually impede ingress and egress to neighbouring properties, garage not big enough for vehicle will cause on road parking, weatherboarding out of keeping with the streetscene.

Mr Guyler rejoined the meeting at 8.50 p.m.

**18/01027** Erection of a detached summerhouse. 17 Abbots Meadow – support.

**18/00397** Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved). Erection of two detached dwellings. Land south of Grassy Lane. Warren Lane. MSDC decision – permission granted.

**18/00449** Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved). Erection of two detached dwellings. Land north of Grassy Lane. Warren Lane. MSDC decision – permission granted.

**18/00570** Erection of 1.5 storey 2 bedroom dwelling. Land adjacent to Jumbana, Masons Lane. MSDC decision – permission granted.

Concerns were expressed that this was granted without being taken to committee having asked our Ward Member to call this in and that a previous application two months ago was turned down by MSDC and is now subject to an appeal. Our Ward member will be asked to explain the decision. *Action: the Clerk*

**18/00762** Erection of front bay window extension to garage. 29 Wrights Way. MSDC decision – permission granted.

## 5. Clerk's Report

**Theft of plants and bulbs** – the Clerk has been advised today of thefts of plants and bulbs at the allotments.

**Community Orchard** - the Clerk has contacted Mr Peart of his offer to help and lead this project.

**Youth shelter** – it is hoped to have the new shelter in situ by the end of April. We are still awaiting funds from the insurance claim. The Clerk will chase our insurers.

*Action: the Clerk*

**Litter Pick 21 April** – MSDC will provide Hi-Vis vest and litter picks

**CIL Payment** – MSDC has advised we are to receive £1,073.76 from application 17/03901 conversion of existing outbuilding to single dwelling, Grassy Lane Bungalow, Warren Lane.

## 6. To receive correspondence/communications and deal with any matters.

Letters of thanks from Mid Suffolk CAB and Suffolk Accident Rescue Service for donations. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: Rural Services Network** Rural Spotlight on Heart of the Village, new digest 26 March, 3, 9, 16 April, Rural Vulnerability Service – Rural Transport March, Rural Broadband April, Rural opportunities bulletin. **Community Action Suffolk** news 21 March, 4 April. **MSDC** Community Housing Fund, Needham Market HQ drop-in events, Stowmarket Vision for Prosperity. **Suffolk Police** ATM ram raid offences. **SALC** weekly news 29 March, 16 April, Safeguarding Conference 3 May, training calendar 2018/19, GDPR learning together issue1, announcement GDPR. **Suffolk Preservation Society** Heritage training notes, Suffolk View spring edition. **NHS** Easter health advice and pharmacies. **SCC** rest centre practice training 11 April. **Cllr Storey** MSDC Five year housing land supply report. **Wetherden PC** copy letter to Highways England A14 J47a and J47 Haughley concrete repair scheme. Copies of 43 comments regarding Rags Lane development, 13 Green Road appeal, 3 land North of Old Stowmarket Road, 1 land adj Jumbana appeal.

## 7. To approve accounts for payment.

Alison Farmer Associates £3900.00 Landscape Sensitivity Study for Neighbourhood Plan and HM Revenue & Customs £346.97 Tax and N/I January-March. Both payments were unanimously ratified. Mr K Harknett £72.27 litter picking March, Laura Bayly £40.00 Millennium Garden March, SALC £740.12 2018/19 subscription, Gipping Press £278.88 April/May Diary printing, Gadd Brothers Trees and Landscapes £300.00 work to 2 oaks at the allotment site. All accounts were approved and cheques issue. Payments by standing order V Mayhew £151.53 March salary, P Fuller £730.36 March salary.

## 8. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan

Work has begun on writing the plan. The overall structure has been agreed and the first two sections are being drafted. These sections will be followed by our vision and objectives for Woolpit Neighbourhood Plan area, then policies and projects. At the

last Steering Group meeting the decision to allocate sites in the NP was confirmed. An independent consultant will undertake the technical assessment of potential sites and give them a ranking of suitability for development. A further grant from Locality has been applied for to cover this and therefore the NP is likely to be delayed by 2-3 months.

**9. To consider installing CCTV cameras in the car park and play area as an extension to the Village Hall scheme and take any necessary action.**

Mr Howard left the meeting at 8.59 p.m.

As Cllrs have not fully read the CCTV Code of Practice, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

Mr Howard rejoined the meeting at 9.00 p.m.

**10. To consider grant requests from Sir Robert Gardiner's Almshouse Trust and take any necessary action.**

Accounts to 31.12.16 have been received. A copy of the design is being sent for Cllrs to understand the scheme better. This matter will be discussed further once this information is received.

**11. To discuss the Community infrastructure Levy, writing a Parish Investment Infrastructure Plan and take any necessary action.**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

**12. To review grass cutting arrangements with Parkers Pitches, consider continuing using as contractor for 2018/19 and take any necessary action.**

It was agreed that Parkers Pitches had carried out a good job during 2017/18 and it was proposed, seconded and carried that the contract be extended for 2018/19 at the same costs as 2017/18 as advised by Parkers Pitches. *Action: the Clerk*

**13. To receive a report on the allotments and take any necessary action.**

Mrs Cook and Mrs Jenkins reviewed the site 13 April. The overall appearance is good with a few plots causing concern. Manure heaps at the side of the parking area are slowly being removed. The tree stump after recent work has been left at 6 feet to provide habitat for insects. One tenant has given up their plot today and nothing has been heard from the school. Letters will be sent to tenants regarding untidy plots and manure heaps. *Action: Mrs Cook/Mrs Jenkins/ the Clerk*

The Clerk has spoken to Mr Roper regarding the fence. Dr Geake will meet with Mr Peart and others interested in the Orchard area. Dr Geake will also talk to the Headteacher at Woolpit Primary regarding the plot reserved for the school.

*Action: Dr Geake*

**14. To receive a report from the Litter Picker.**

Nothing to report.

**15. To receive a report from the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee.**

No report received.

**16. Date and time of the Annual Parish Council meeting – Monday 21 May 2018 at 7.30 p.m. in Woolpit Institute. Noted.**

The meeting closed at 9.11 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....