

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY  
19 MARCH 2018 AT 7.30 P.M. IN WOOLPIT INSTITUTE

**Present:** Mr Guyler (Chairman), Mr Wheatley, Mrs Cook, Mrs Drury, Mr Hardiman, Mr Howard and 7 members of the public. Dr Geake joined the meeting at 8.45 p.m.

**Public comment:** dog fouling around the village and along footpaths is getting worse. It was agreed to publish an item in the next Woolpit Diary once new bins have been put in situ. *Action: the Clerk*

A member of the public asked if the Parish Council is aware of a new planning application for land in Rags Lane. The Chairman replied that nothing has been received.

District Cllr Storey reported that Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils were awarded silver in the prestigious *Council of the Year* accolade in the 2018 Public Sector Transformation Awards. They also took the silver award in the *Working Together* category. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has delayed the publication of its final recommendations for the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils. As of 28<sup>th</sup> Feb they confirmed that they will be publishing a further set of proposed recommendations and that an additional period of consultation will be undertaken. Their proposals are still for a two member ward for Woolpit and Elmswell. Work to help soundproof the public interview room at the Customer Access Point in Stowmarket will start on Tuesday 3 April and last for around four days. The emergency planning team were on standby at Endeavour House during the recent bad weather. Most of the groups locally will be aware of the weather warnings that have been sent out to local emergency teams but this is not something that will be continued. It is now possible for parish councils and other members of the community to receive these directly. It was with great sadness that she had heard that Ray Melvin had died. He had been a great support and mentor to her many years. He represented Woolpit without fear or favour. A great man.

County Cllr Storey reported that the consultation on changes to school transport ran until 20 February. Officers of the council are now collating the responses and will provide a report. Full Council are meeting on 22 March. The main item of interest will be the appointment of the Chief Executive. The recruitment process last October failed to appoint but Cllr Storey is hopeful that this time there will be an announcement. SCC has had a good number of applicants and Cllr Storey has been involved with the interviews. The Staff Appointments Committee meets on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March and will provide the recommendation to the full Council meeting. There are some Annual reports that come to this meeting of the full council – the Annual Report of the Audit Committee, the Review of Scrutiny Activity and the Annual Pay Policy statement. The cabinet meeting 20 March has been cancelled as there was only one item of business and this could be included in the agenda for the April meeting. From Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February through to the following weekend we had some of the most extreme weather conditions that we have seen in this county for many years. During that time our highways gritting teams were out on the roads gritting almost non-stop. There is no doubt that it was an extremely testing period for many local authorities, businesses and individuals across the county. Suffolk Highways' staff worked relentlessly with partners to ensure the road network was kept as clear as possible.

A minutes silence was held for Ray Melvin who died recently. Mr Guyler paid tribute to him; he was a Parish Councillor for more than 35 years and a District Cllr for 28 years, service to the community which is not likely to be replicated. Mr Melvin has done a huge amount for the village and Parish Council and will be sorely missed.

Mrs Drury was welcomed to the Council.

**1 Apologies for absence** were received from Mrs Jenkins and Mr Lomax.

2. **To receive declarations of interest.** There were none.

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

The minutes were approved and signed.

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

**18/00762** Erection of front bay window extension to garage. 29 Wrights Way – object. Detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and out of keeping with the streetscene.

Mrs Drury declared a prejudicial interest in application 18/00766 as a near neighbour and left the meeting at 7.42 p.m.

**18/00766** Erection of a detached two storey dwelling with attached garage. The Drey, Borley Green – support.

Mrs Drury rejoined the meeting at 7.46 p.m.

**0998/17** Erection of a dwelling. Southlands, Old Stowmarket Road. MSDC decision – permission granted.

**18/00635** Discharge of Conditions Application for 17/06096 – Condition 4 (Archaeologic Works) and Condition 7 (materials). Site adjacent to The Rectory, Church Street. MSDC decision – conditions satisfied.

**18/00050** Erection of extension to rear of existing outbuilding, renovation of existing cartlodge/store to garage and replacement of existing cladding and roof tiles. Heathgate House, The Heath. MSDC decision – permission granted.

**17/06031** Retrospective change of use of former car sales and MOT station (sui generis) to petrol filling station with retail shop (sui generis) with 2 no. refrigeration and air conditioning units. (Retention) | Woolpit Service Station (Costcutter Supermarket) Church Street. MSDC decision – permission granted.

**18/00002** Erection of 1.5 storey 3 bedroom dwelling and attached garage. Land adj Jumbana, Masons Lane. Notification of planning appeal.

5. **To consider additional responses for the Planning Inquiry appeal for development land East of Green Road and written representations appeal land adjacent to Jumbana, Masons Lane and take any necessary action.**

Mr Guyler produced a draft document for consideration. With additional information it was agreed to respond as follows:-

Erection of 49 dwellings (including 17 affordable dwellings), and construction of new access. Land on East side of Green Road, Woolpit. Planning Application 2112/16 Woolpit Parish Council Comments to Planning Inquiry (Ref: APP/W3520/W/18/3194926), March 2018,

Woolpit Parish is against the appeal proposals and agrees with the Mid Suffolk District Council refusal of permission for Green Road.

In addition to the views already made by Woolpit Parish Council in its responses to MSDC dated 20 December 2016 and 22 August 2017, we have the following comments on the application and this appeal:

1. Off-Site Highways Mitigation.

In their comments of 30 June 2016 regarding the Green Road application, Suffolk CC Highways said:

*“North of the application site, between Drinkstone Road and just beyond Mill Lane, Green Road narrows significantly to 4.3 metres. On the western side there is no footway as the buildings and fences are hard against the edge of the road. On the eastern side there is a narrow footway measuring less than a metre and only 0.85m in parts. This road width is insufficient for two vehicles to pass with pedestrians on the footway being vulnerable to being hit by vehicles. The footway at this width is insufficient to allow pedestrians to pass each other without stepping into the road. It is also too narrow for wheelchair users and pram use so the only alternative for many is to walk along the road. The “Inclusive Mobility” document recommends a minimum obstacle free footway width of 1.5 metres. This allows a wheelchair user and a*

*pedestrian to pass each other. A pushchair and an accompanied child require 1.25m. The footway here is also vulnerable to being driven over by vehicles as the kerbed separation is too low to offer sufficient protection. The kerb upstand is between 20mm and 60mm - this does not prevent or deter vehicles from driving over the kerb onto the footway. The increase in vehicular traffic and pedestrians from the new development having to negotiate this pinch point will exacerbate highway dangers unless appropriate safety improvements can be made. With the main pedestrian route into the village being hazardous, residents will be more inclined to make use of private vehicles if alternative sustainable means of transport are not considered attractive or safe options”.*

Until making this appeal, Landex did not dispute the Highways comments and the need for a highways mitigation scheme at the pinch point in Green Road. Landex produced a scheme which was presented as part of the application, but they now say such mitigation is unnecessary.

Their only argument for this change of mind relates to traffic flows in Green Road when Heath Road was closed for planned BT work from 23 August – 1 September 2017 and vehicles were diverted along Green Road through the pinch point. In para 5.10 of the Statement of Case the appellant says that during the closure ‘*Green Road took the full Heath Road traffic loading without consequence*’. That is not the case. Considerable traffic disruption occurred in Green Road and through the pinch point during the closure. We have attached photographs taken in the area during the closure which clearly show the congestion which was took place at that time. The appellant cannot use the claim to support their case that the Heath Road closure had no effect on Green Road traffic.

We agree with Highways’ opinion that a mitigation scheme is needed if the development goes ahead. Our view that unacceptable damage to the conservation area and listed buildings will result from such highways mitigation remains unchanged. As the development cannot take place without the mitigation scheme, we oppose the appeal.

## 2. Setting of the Appeal Site

A Neighbourhood Plan for the village is in course of preparation under the auspices of Woolpit Parish Council. As part of the Plan, a landscape assessment of Woolpit, a copy of which is attached, has been produced by Alison Farmer, an independent and highly regarded professional in landscape character assessment. This report was not available when the planning application was considered by MSDC.

In the assessment of the appeal site the report states:

*‘This area is highly sensitive due to its visual prominence located on open elevated land which forms a distinct ridge. It is also sensitive because of its role in reinforcing the gap between Woolpit, Woolpit Green, and Woolpit Heath and in reinforcing the individual identity of these settlements. Development in this area would extend built form to the south elongating the village and blurring the distinction between the village and hamlet of Woolpit Green. As a result, this landscape is not considered suitable for residential or commercial development. Whilst development close to the existing edge along Green Road could arguably be mitigated through boundary*

*planting, it would nonetheless diminish the gap between the settlements and be highly visible in views from the west as well as affect the gateway into the settlement along Green Road’.*

Woolpit Parish Council fully supports the opinion of the report that the appeal site is unsuitable for development and that any building on the site would reduce the essential undeveloped space between the main village and the settlement of Woolpit Green.

### 3. Access into Green Road

In para 3.3 of the Statement of Case, when referring to the field in which the proposed development would be located, the appellant says: *‘The site has an extensive road frontage to Green Road and to Steeles Close to the north. Vehicular access to the existing agricultural field is currently gained from Green Road although there is another gated access leading to Steeles Close’.* The wording of this paragraph suggests that the new access will replace an existing access. This is not the case. The new access to the development would be at a point where there is no current entry to the field and some 300m closer to the village than the existing access which is only usable via the rear entrance road into Grange Farm itself.

After discussion it was agreed that there is nothing further to add to our comments already sent regarding land adj Jumbana, Masons Lane.

Cllr Storey joined the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8.09 p.m. She reported that the post of SCC Chief Executive has been offered to one candidate today and will be brought up at the full council meeting 22 March. Cllr Storey was asked regarding access problems on the MSDC Planning Portal which she will look into. Nothing has been heard regarding the application for a petrol station on the A14.

The meeting reconvened at 8.14 p.m.

### **6. Clerk’s Report**

**Roman Fields blocked drain** – SCC has responded to a resident that work to rectify the matter will be carried out within 20 days.

**Youth shelter insurance claim** – The Loss Adjuster has confirmed that we are covered and the claim has been agreed up to the insurance amount of £2500.00.

**Annual Parish Meeting speaker** – Helen Fairweather will speak on the work of Headway Suffolk.

**11 November 2018 commemoration** – Stowmarket Concert Band have a bugler available and Norton Salvation Army has now also replied to say that a cornet player is available. The Clerk was asked to contact Quality Equipment to check the condition of the village beacon.

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

A resident has asked for yellow lines in Steeles Road but SCC has advised parking issues here can be dealt with by the Police SNT. The Clerk will ask the resident to provide photographic evidence which can be passed to the Police and request they patrol the area and talk to offenders in the first instance. A resident with concerns of lorries using Broomhill Lane. This will be passed to County Cllr Storey as our previous requests have resulted in SCC advising that signage is as it should be. **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs : SALC** consultation: crime and poor performance in the waste sector, Mid Suffolk South area meeting 1 March papers and postponement, weekly information bulletin 23 February, 5 & 12 March, The GDPR Toolkit for Local Councils. **Rural Services Network** news digest 26 February, 5, 12, 19 March, Rural Vulnerability Service – fuel poverty February, Opportunities Bulletin, rural economy spotlight. **MSDC** Community Infrastructure Levy workshop presentation slides, planning service disruption to search pages 8, 15, 21 and 22

March. **LCPAS** new review of Ethical Standards in Local Government. **Community Action Suffolk** newsletter 20 February, news 21 February, 7 March. **SCC** Suffolk onboard RIDE newsletter (working with connecting communities), information on weather ahead, free event on guidance to completing funding applications, weather warnings, severe weather update, Suffolk emergency planning – how is your community doing?, copy letter to MSDC planning regarding developer contributions land North of Old Stowmarket Road, **suffolkremembers** war graves event 8/11/18. **LGBCE** have your say on new draft recommendation Ward boundaries for Mid Suffolk. 1 comment regarding land off Bury Road. 12 comments Green Road appeal, 8 copies correspondence regarding development Grassy Lane Farm, Warren Lane.

#### **8. To approve accounts for payment.**

Mr K Harknett £75.40 litter picking February, Laura Bayly £40.00 Millennium Garden February, Suffolk County Council £2273.58 street lighting 1/4/17-31/3/18, Mrs P Fuller £233.70 expenses and Neighbourhood Plan work October-December 2017, Mrs P Branham £90.00 edit Woolpit Diary April/May, Woolpit Institute £416.00 office rent February-April 2018, Woolpit Institute £120.00 room hire for meetings July-December 2017, Parkers Pitches grass cutting 2<sup>nd</sup> half 2017/18, Anglian Water Business Ltd £48.08 allotments water 8/12/17-6/3/18, Suffolk County Council £240.66 pension payment. All accounts were approved and cheques issued. Payments by standing order V Mayhew £151.53 February salary, P Fuller £730.36 February salary, E-on £34.25 pump light 14/11/17-14/02/18.

#### **9. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan**

Good progress is being made. Policies are to be agreed by the Steering Group at the next meeting. The Environmental policies need extra details. The final draft of the Landscape Appraisal has been received and the final definitive report will be available the beginning of April. This information can be used in the NP as required. Projects have been set and need to be approved by the Steering Group. A group has been formed to write the plan and are meeting this week to decide the structure. This will then move on to checks with MSDC and it is hoped to have the pre-submission consultation in the summer.

#### **10. To consider quotes received for tree work at the allotment site and Lady's Well and take any necessary action.**

The requirement for this work comes from the Tree Survey we commissioned. It was unanimously agreed to take the advice of Urban Forestry over the advice of the survey and have the work done to the 8 elms but not to the veteran beech. The quote of £440.00 for the elms was accepted. 3 quotes were obtained for the work to 2 oaks at the allotment site. After consideration it was unanimously agreed to accept the quote from Gadd Brothers for £250.00. *Action: the Clerk*

#### **11. 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.**

This was deferred to the next meeting to allow Cllrs time to consider the content of the Data Protection code for the use of CCTV.

#### **12. To consider grant requests from Sir Robert Gardiner's Almshouse Trust, Suffolk Age UK, Suffolk Accident Rescue Service and Mid Suffolk CAB and take any necessary action.**

It was agreed that the Clerk would ask the Sir Robert Gardiner's Almshouse Trust for a set of their last audited accounts before making a decision on a grant. It was decided that no grant would be made to Suffolk Age UK on this occasion. It was proposed, seconded and carried to make grants of £500.00 each to SARS and Mid Suffolk CAB. *Action: the Clerk*

**13. To discuss a request from Suffolk County Council for No Entry sign for the Mill Lane One Way scheme to be sited 1m in on the Village Hall car park and take any necessary action.**

The Village Hall Committee suggested the No Entry sign be the other side of the car park. However, the Order has been signed and therefore will happen as per the drawings. It was proposed, seconded and carried that the sign can be sited 1m into the Village Hall car park.

**14. To discuss the maintenance of Village Hall, Tennis Club and Old Stowmarket Road car parks and take any necessary action.**

This had been brought up at the Village Hall and Playing Field Committees meeting as the Village Hall car park is breaking up, MSDC is not doing anything to keep the car park opposite the church in good order and the tennis club car park has potholes. It was agreed that if the Playing Field Committee wishes to have repairs done to the car parks, they need to get quotes and send to WPC for consideration to pay for the work. Mr Hardiman will convey this to the Playing Field Committee.

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

Carried forward to the next meeting.

**16. To consider a response to the new Draft Recommendations Ward Boundaries for Mid Suffolk and take any necessary action.**

No further comment will be made.

**17. To receive a report on the allotments including making a decision on the Community Orchard area and take any necessary action.**

Mr Peart has offered to lead the orchard project which was unanimously accepted. A meeting will be arranged to discuss detail. An advert will be published in the next Woolpit Diary for quarter and half plots in the hope that some people will go on a waiting list for renewal time.

*Action: the Clerk*

Nothing has been heard from the primary school regarding the saved plot. Dr Geake will contact the Head.

*Action: Dr Geake*

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

Nothing to report. A village litter pick has been arranged for 21 April. The Clerk will contact MSDC for some equipment and arrange for litter to be collected from the bottle bank area.

*Action: the Clerk*

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

There have been costly problems with the heating system. The wine tasting evening was successful and the Committee are planning a film night and a Sale Trail. The AGM will be on 18 April.

**20. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – Monday 16 April 2018 at 7.30 p.m. in Woolpit Institute.** Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....