

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council
Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Monday 5 August 2024, 7pm at the Village Hall, Wetheringsett.

Present: Cllrs D Howard (Chairman), T Alston, Mrs E Cain, B Lacey, N Lingard and Mrs J Weir.
County and District Cllr A Stringer and three members of the public

1. **Apologies and Consent to absence** were received from Cllrs Mrs E Aldred, S Alderton, Mrs L Drury and Mrs R Leech. Cllr Stringer would arrive late due to another meeting.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **Reports**

1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.
2. County Councillor – deferred.
3. District Councillor – deferred.
4. Footpaths – no report.
5. Trees – the Chairman mentioned that trees on Manor Drive had been pollarded. These were in the conservation area and it was queried whether permission should have been received.

6. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Flooding – A member of the public enquired as to the outcome of the meeting with Suffolk CC held on 10 July 2024. Cllr Mrs Cain reported the Suffolk CC Flood Team had been diligent in their investigations, they had walked the village to look at the areas flooded. Some work had already started, ie clearing ditches and some remedial work to surface water drainage. The issues with the sewage pump were still outstanding. The Flood Team would be putting together a plan which would be incorporated within the s.19 report. The availability of a Defra grant of £5,000 was also mentioned, available to households to floodproof their properties. An inspection would need to be carried out to detail the measures required, the cost of the inspection would be refunded. The s.19 report should be available during September.

Cllr Stringer arrived at 7.15pm

Wetherup Street – two members of the public raised concerns over the excessive speed of vehicles travelling through Wetherup Street, delivery vehicles, lorries and through traffic. The road had become increasingly dangerous for pedestrians, children waiting for the school bus and dog walkers – a resident had recently almost been hit by a vehicle. Motorists were ignoring the VAS sign. A request was made to the Parish Council that it considers action to slow traffic, ie sleeping policemen or police monitoring with SID equipment. Councillors agreed action needed to be taken to protect pedestrians. It was hoped regular attendance by the Community Speed Watch scheme would remind and slow down traffic. It was also agreed local police were asked to monitor speed with the use of SID equipment, early morning as motorists were travelling to work or early evening on their return. Data from the VAS equipment would also need to be submitted to the local police speedwatch team.

Junction of Wetherup Street/Park Green – water was collecting at the junction after rain. Residents stated they would report this via the Suffolk CC reporting site.

2. County Council – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Regarding the recent flood meeting, Cllr Stringer thanked all those who attended and their contribution to the discussion. Cllr Mrs Cain raised the sewage issue in Griffin Lane, this was being dealt with by the developer. The highway flood problem in Church Street would be included for action in the s.19 report.
3. District Council – A copy of Cllr Stringer's written report had been circulated (copy attached to the Minutes) Further items raised included an update on the enforcement cases in Town Lane, this had been circulated to councillors for information. £1.5m funding for Stowmarket had been announced this would be used to try to keep the High Street vibrant.

Referring to the previous item under trees above – Cllr Stringer confirmed pruning of trees in a conservation area would normally need permission unless the work required was due to an emergency.

Cllr Lacey raised the demolished sign at the A140/Town lane junction and the Suffolk CC highways response that reinstatement was not currently on their list of works. Cllr Stringer stated he had asked Highways to use its delegated powers to reinstate the sign due to the visibility issues at the junction. Failing that Cllr Stringer stated he would make arrangements via his funding budget.

4. To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 1 July 2024

Cllr Lingard proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Cain – unanimously agreed.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes for report – none.

6. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/24/02954: Application for Listed Building Consent – Waveney Cottage, Church Street – remedial works

following flood damage as per heritage statement and schedule of works. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

2. DC/24/03167: Mount Pleasant, Norwich Road, Wetheringsett – erection of a replacement dwelling, detached cartlodge and stable block. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
3. DC/24/03175: The Hawthorns, Hockey Hill – erection of single storey side extension. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

7. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/24/01524: Wetheringsett Manor School, Church Street – re-consultation – construction of Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) – Planning Permission Granted
2. DC/24/01447: Clay Cottage, Pitman's Corner - Erection of extension to workshop with canopied roof (following removal of existing lean to extension). Planning Permission Granted

8. **Planning Correspondence** – update from MSDC re. Town Lane enforcement notices had been circulated.

9. **Neighbourhood Plan Report** – it was reported the Working Group was waiting for the date to be set by MSDC for the parish referendum.

10. **Report on flood meeting with Suffolk County Council on 10 July 2024** – see report under Meeting Open to the Public above.

11. Church Street:

1. Report on sewage complaints – awaiting report on action from Suffolk CC/MSDC/Anglian Water.
2. Update report on remedial work to highway drainage -
Cllr Mrs Cain reported the Manor School was taking action to help alleviate the drainage issues. A grid was to be installed across Manor Drive to divert surface water into adjoining ditches to prevent it running down on to Church Street.

12. Wetheringsett cum Brockford Emergency Plan

1. Report on progress of draft Emergency Plan document
No further progress to report. Members discussed whether the current draft could be simplified to specify actions and measures in place until the emergency services were able to attend any emergency. It was important schools had a policy and in the case of Wetheringsett if dealing with a flood it was believed safer for children to stay at the school ensuring there were crash mats and sufficient food available. Cllr Stringer offered to provide a sample plan for consideration and/or incorporation into the Wetheringsett plan.
2. To confirm members of the Community Emergency Group incorporating a flood monitoring group
There were currently five volunteers making up the emergency working group.

13. Update report on proposed expansion project at Wetheringsett Manor School and provision of VAS sign at Hockey Hill

The Chair reported he had contacted the Head Teacher to provide details of the VAS supplier for purchase of the VAS at Hockey Hill and stated the Key Stage II Centre would be going ahead with effect from September 2024.

14. Village Hall

1. Management Committee report
Cllr Lingard reported various maintenance items were in hand: electrical work in the kitchen, replacement winders for the window blinds and replace outdoor light for the car park with master switch. The Performing licence had been updated.
2. Report on School Licence Agreement and Diocesan Lease
The committee chair was in conversation with the Diocese and School. The school had offered a small reduction in use of their hours in order to free-up some of the daily hours for other users. An increase in the hourly rate had been suggested to the School.
With regard to the Diocesan Lease, Clarke & Simpson had been appointed to carry out a survey of the hall.
With effect from 12 July 2024 electricity had been exported from the solar panels.

15. **Grasscutting report** - Cllr Lacey reported the play area had been strimmed and further work was required in the cemetery. The cemetery strim would take place in the autumn.

16. Play Area report

1. Report on application for a MSDC Capital Grant to fund play equipment improvements – deferred.
2. Items arising from annual inspection report – deferred.

17. Report on installation of Radar Speed Sign for Brockford Street

Cllr Mrs Weir reported Suffolk CC Highways had confirmed a timescale of 14 weeks to complete the work to install the post for the radar equipment so should be complete by 14 September 2024.

18. VAS speed equipment report

The equipment was currently at Park Green. Cllr Lacey would re-locate it to Wetherup Street. A data report

would be requested from Mr C Harvey.

Notification had been received from Suffolk CC Highways that the ANPR equipment could no longer be located in Brockford Street due to personal safety when siting the equipment and accessing the post which was situated on a high bank. The post would need to be relocated. This decision could be re-considered should a safer site be identified.

- 19. Community Speed Watch Scheme** – progress report and to consider Parish Council funding occasional hire of Village Hall for group meetings
Cllr Mrs Weir reported the working group was ready for site assessments and training. It was hoped this would happen late August/early September.
- 20. Report on siting further Kill Your Speed Signs**
An additional sign had been located in Brockford Street. There were four signs remaining.
- 21. Report on Wetheringsett Parish Council gov.uk domain name** – deferred to next meeting.
- 22. Finance**
1. To consider s.137 donation requests – none received.
 2. Accounts for payment

SALC – annual internal audit fee	£279.60
Ben Reeve Grasscutting	£166.66
Clerk – sal/expen July 2024	£340.70

Cllr Alston proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Mrs Cain – proposal carried.
 3. Finance Report including consideration of Internal Audit report 2023-24 – deferred to next meeting.
- 23. Clerk's report/correspondence**
Town Lane/A140 sign – reported to Suffolk CC Highways with response the demolished sign did not currently meeting intervention policy. Referred to Cllr Stringer see above.
Eye Town Council – invitation to Town Mayor's Parade – 15 September 2024. The Chair stated he would attend and would notify the Eye Town Clerk.
- 24. Chair's Report**
The Chair stated he had filmed water running down Manor Drive after a heavy downpour of rain providing visual evidence of the water flow. It was hoped the proposed diversion would reduce the amount of water flow onto to Church Street.
- 25. Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests**
Cllr Mrs Cain reported on children from the Mendlesham Road site walking in the river under the bridge into Brockford Street. There had been some damage to pots in a residents garden. It was suggested this was reported to the police.
- 26. Date of next meeting : Monday 2 September 2024, 7pm at Wetheringsett Village Hall**

Meeting closed 8.50pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Cllr Stringer County Council Report: August 2024

Extra Investment agreed for Special Education Needs

At Cabinet on Tuesday 25 July, the proposal to invest a further £9.1 million in Suffolk's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) service was agreed. This is to fund extra staff and capacity to make sure the council can achieve its targets for assessing children and production of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The investment will be funded through the council's reserves, and will be £2.6 million extra for the rest of this financial year, £3 million in 2025/26, and £3.5 million in 2026/27, although the extra money in the coming two years will be subject to ongoing review. This comes at a time when the outcome of the 2023-24 budget was also presented, showing a nearly £15 million drop in the council's useable reserves – their 'savings' for a rainy day. My group also expressed concern that the council's target for EHCPs was to complete 50% within the legal 20 week timeframe, rather than the required 100%.

Youth Justice Plan

At Council on Thursday 11 July, we reviewed the new Youth Justice Plan for 2024-2025 which outlined the ways the council plans to support young people who become involved in the criminal justice system. The plan outlines the ambitions of the council to reduce the number of girls, children in care and minority ethnic children currently over-represented in the Suffolk system, and support children involved in the criminal justice system or at risk of re-offending to engage with education, training or employment. My group are concerned that the Ministry of Justice funding for the Turnaround programme is due to end in March 2025, as this early intervention programme was doing good work to prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system in the first place, and suggested that the council should ask the county's new MPs should lobby for the continuance of this program in Westminster.

Developer funding and highways works

My group brought a motion to the council meeting on Thursday 11 July to propose that the council review and streamline processes to use housing developer funding for local improvement work. It was acknowledged that often, infrastructure works needed following additional housing were delayed for years, whether this was due to designing, programming or undertaking the works to a decent standard. Often these works are scheduled and provided by SCC, but sometimes the developer will be responsible for them which can also lead to delays and make local communities frustrated and ultimately resentful of new development. The motion was passed by councillors and the hope is that this will speed up the process for new junctions, footpaths, cycle paths and road improvements near new housing developments.

Scrutinising the State of Suffolk Roads

On Tuesday 23 July, the council's scrutiny committee met to discuss the state of the roads in the county, how much was spent annually and how works were prioritised. Officers from Highways explained how roads are categorised from Green to Red (poor condition), that the optimal resurfacing programme would require around £50m per year in funding, whereas the current amount available for resurfacing works was more like £17m per year. My group are pressing for a review of the county's Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) which sets out the parameters on what defects Highways respond to and the timeframe for response. We also believe the reporting systems for defects is not working correctly. All of the committee agreed that better communication with residents and timely fixes for road defects would be beneficial to the public perception of Suffolk's roads – as overall the condition of roads rated Red (in poor condition) has dropped since 2012, and the number of roads rated Green (in good condition) has risen.

Suffolk Youth Climate Conference

On 3 July, 250 local schoolchildren pledged to write to their local Member of Parliament about climate change after an inspiring address by Chris Packham, renowned UK naturalist, at this year's Suffolk Youth Climate Conference. The event was held at Suffolk One Sixth Form College and organised by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. The partnership is engaging with schools, charities, and community groups to bring about positive change for the environment and also the health and wellbeing of Suffolk residents. A range of workshops were held on topics such as electric vehicles, nature-based solutions, the global food system, coastal adaptation, plastic pollution, flood and water management, sustainable fashion and climate anxiety. Students also had the opportunity to engage with 30 charities and organisations working to improve the natural environment in Suffolk.

Flooding Reports

The First section 19 flood report has now been released for Debenham, this report highlights the areas that can be worked on to limit the amount of flooding and loss of property when the next extreme weather event occurs.

The Draft report for Wetheringsett has been discussed and the final report is due soon.

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Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkqli.wordpress.com\)](#)

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

District Councillors' Report – August 2024

Council Tax Support	The Council has agreed to give those in need up to £50.00 Council Tax relief, this basically mean that after reductions, if a council tax account has up to a £50.00 balance left the Council will reduce this to zero. This move will help those in most need as well as reduce further administration costs, as some residents are left with accounts of less than £5.00.
Planning Changes	The council is looking at the recent changes in the planning system announced by the government, The government is looking to increase the housing numbers by at least 40%, but to date we have not seen the details of the method of calculating the housing delivery number, the way this number is calculated will affect the annual number of houses MSDC will be expected to build and plan for. Over the next few weeks MSDC will seek clarity from the government as to how these new housing targets are to be calculated, so that we can let you know if this affects the housing delivery numbers in our local and made neighbourhood plans. Our made joint local plan pt 1 does have the previous overall housing number included in the policy, and the government will allow time for existing plans to come into line with these new targets.
Norwich to Tilbury	Mid Suffolk has sent our objection to the Norwich to Tilbury Pylon scheme, a copy can be found by following this link Large-scale energy projects and NSIPs - Mid Suffolk District Council - baberghmidsuffolk.com
Energy efficiency for listed buildings	Babergh and Mid Suffolk have sought a Local Development Order to allow owners of listed buildings to carry certain energy efficiency and renewable energy works without the need to apply for consent. This move has been welcomed not only by home owners but also Historic England, who are working with our council to make sure the policy will allow these changes without risking diminishing our heritage. To make sure homeowners are supported we will be offering free advice to listed building owners wanting to discuss energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities.

Enforcement/ Planning Issues	The current planning permission and ongoing enforcement case in Oak Farm Lane Mendlesham continues, A temporary stop notice was served on the 12 th of July this notice expires after 55 days, non-compliance during this time is a criminal offence which can be prosecuted at the magistrates court, penalty unlimited fine.
Locality Awards 2024/25	Applications for this year's Locality Awards grants are now open. https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/w/locality-awards

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