

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

Present: Cllrs D Howard (Chairman), Mrs E Aldred, T Alston, B Lacey, Mrs J Weir and Mrs K van Zyl
County & District Councillor A Stringer and four members of the public

1. **Apologies and Consent to absence** had been received from Cllrs S Alderton, Mrs E Cain, Mrs R Drury, Mrs R Leech and N Lingard
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda**
Item 6.4 – Cllr Mrs van Zyl

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 - Cllr Mrs Aldred stated there were no issues to report.
5. Trees – a delivery of young trees would be arriving from the Woodland Trust during November. Packs of 50 including stakes would be available. Cllr Mrs Aldred would arrange distribution to parishioners.
Cllr Mrs Aldred reported on a tree seminar held at Two Fields, Debenham, this had included information on collecting seeds to grow, she hoped to attend another on 19 October 2024.
A report of two possible dangerous oak trees on Cedars Hill and a beech tree in Church Street had been received. The condition of the oak trees would be reported to Suffolk CC, the PCC were looking at the condition of the beech tree.

6. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Agenda Item 14 - unlicensed music events in the village. The chairman stated he had been contacted by parishioners concerned at the recent music events held in the village, loud music was being played well into the night/early hours of the morning causing disturbance to residents, their pets and increased traffic travelling to and from the sites. Before discussing this at item 14 below the Chairman wished to be sure the community held the same view before the parish council agreed on any action. The meeting took these were having a detrimental impact on the village and parishioners wellbeing.

4. To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 2 September 2024

Cllr Mrs Weir proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Alston – unanimously agreed.

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

6. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/24/03453: Plot 4, Mendlesham Road, Wetheringsett – application for change of use of amenity land to site for gypsy/traveller family consisting two static caravans, a touring caravan and ancillary works (retention of access and hardstanding).
A recommendation of refusal was proposed, seconded and agreed on the grounds the site was in a recognised flood plain. Any change of use would set a precedent. The District Council was asked to take into account the whole area was prone to flooding as per October 2023.
2. DC/24/04167: 4 Church Street, Wetheringsett – application for tree works in a conservation area – reduce 1 sycamore by 3 - 4m to previous reduction points and 1 yew by approx. 1 - 1.5m all round. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and agreed.
3. DC/24/04209: Land at corner of Blue House Lane and A140, Mendlesham – application for consent to display advertisements: free standing advertisement for Bayfield Homes. A recommendation of support was proposed and seconded, 4 in favour, 2 abstentions – proposal carried.
4. DC/24/04208: Land opposite Hill House, Norwich Road, Mendlesham – application for free standing advertisement for Bayfield Homes. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and agreed.
5. DC/24/04405: Mid Suffolk Light Railway – application under s.73 for removal or variation of a condition following grant of Planning Permission 1262/17 dated 24.4.17 Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to vary condition 10 (timescale for expiry) to continue as per operational statement. Application supported.

7. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/24/03652: Bridge Cottage, Church Street – notification of tree works in Conservation Area – reduce 2 Magnolia trees by one third in height from 15ft to 10ft and spread 12ft to 8ft; fell Viburnum tree; reduce back laterals on Hazel tree by approx. 5ft. No objection from MSDC

2. DC/24/03175: The Hawthorns, Hockey Hill – erection of single storey side extension. Planning Permission Granted.
8. **Planning Correspondence**
AP/23/00081: Road Haulage Depot, Old Airfield, Town Lane, Wetheringsett – appeal against enforcement notice served 10/7/23 for change of use of land for the purpose of stationing shipping containers. Notification of appeal hearing 5 November 2024. Notification noted.
9. **Neighbourhood Plan Report**
It was reported the Working Group was awaiting a date for a referendum from MSDC. Everything else was now complete.
10. **Wetheringsett Flood Investigation** – to prepare report on community resilience planning, maintenance/clearance works/future community/emergency groups for submission to Suffolk CC Flood Team
The Chair and clerk would prepare a response to the Suffolk CC Flood Investigation team on local action to date.
11. **Church Street:**
 1. Report on sewage complaints – there had been no action following the reports to Anglian Water and MSDC Environmental Health at June 2024 and nor as a result of the Flood Investigation Team meeting in Wetheringsett on 10 July 2024. It was agreed a report on action be requested in the response to the Suffolk CC Flood investigation team under item 10 above.
 2. Update report on remedial work to highway drainage – Cllr Stringer would pursue.
12. **Wetheringsett cum Brockford Emergency Plan**
 1. Report on progress of draft Emergency Plan document
Following Cllr Stringer's report on the specimen emergency plan used by Cotton Parish Council, Cllr Mrs van Zyl reported following a review of the Wetheringsett draft, the plan had now been reduced to a 5-page document. An Emergency Pack, kept in a yellow bag held at the Village Hall, would contain all the necessary items to run an Community Emergency incident pending arrival of the emergency services. Cllr Mrs van Zyl would obtain a quotation for battery operated radios for consideration at the next meeting. A draft of the revised plan would be circulated for consideration at the next meeting.
 2. To confirm members of the Community Emergency Group incorporating a flood monitoring group
Six parishioners, including three parish councillors had volunteered to join the group.
13. **Village Hall**
 1. Management Committee report
A written report from Cllr Lingard stated the MacMillan Coffee Morning had raised over £200 for the charity, many thanks were recorded to all parishioners that had supported the event. The December "Curtains Up" shows were almost sold out.
 2. Report on School Licence Agreement and Diocesan Lease – no report.
14. **Report on unlicensed music events**
The Chairman reported he had been contacted by a number of parishioners and social media groups concerned about the recent Raves held at various locations in the village – see Meeting Open to Public Above. As a result of the impact on the community the Chairman had prepared a letter setting out the concerns and complaints of the Parish Council and parishioners to be sent to Environmental Health at MSDC.
Cllr Stringer arrived at 7.50pm
Cllr Stringer was asked for his advice and whether Environmental Health could enforce action to stop the events. Cllr Stringer stated the event would need to be held in the same place repeatedly for Environmental Health to become involved. If the events moved addresses the noise nuisance would need to be reported to the police as a breach of the peace via 999. The Chairman stated he would send a letter outlining the events, dates and locations together with photographs to Cllr Stringer plus a copy to the Police & Crime Commissioner, Tim Passmore.
The meeting was opened to County and District Councillor Stringer to present his reports
County Council – copy written report attached to the Minutes – no queries were raised.
District Council – copy written report attached to the Minutes. Items raised included planning application DC/24/03453. Cllr Stringer stated this was one of seven unauthorised sites, two thirds of the site was in a flood plain.
15. **Grasscutting report**
Cllr Lacey reported the play area grass had been cut, the cemetery was in need of a further cut and trim. Cllr Mrs Aldred stated the cemetery looked well maintained whilst retaining a natural look.
16. **Play Area report**
 1. To consider the purchase of a re-cycled heavy duty plastic bench and picnic table.

Details of the proposed bench and picnic table had been circulated by Cllr Alderton. Cllr Lacey stated the council had in store a wooden picnic table with bench waiting to be installed and he proposed replacement of the bench a cost of £470.99 plus vat only at this stage, seconded Cllr Mrs van Zyl – proposal carried.

Cllr Lacey would discuss installation of the picnic table with Cllr Alderton.

Replacement of the basket swing would need to be considered in the New Year.

2. Report on application for a MSDC Capital Grant to fund play equipment improvements – deferred.

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

Cllr Mrs Weir was pleased to report the radar sign had been installed and working. Thanks were recorded to Mr Tim Reeves and Mr Weir for their help with the installation. Cllr Mrs Weir would inform Suffolk Police.

18. VAS speed equipment report and installation of permanent VAS, Hockey Hill

There was no VAS data available at present. The Chairman reported the VAS for Hockey Hill had been ordered. Suggestions were required for locating the other two offered by the School. The southern end of Brockford Street and the bottom of Dale Hill were suggested. Cllr Mrs Weir offered to contact Suffolk Police for advice on the suggested sites.

19. Community Speed Watch:

1. Working Group Report – the group were still waiting to hear from Suffolk Police regarding training and assessment of sites.
2. Report on Suffolk Police speed checks – Wetherup Street/Park Green. It was reported that following an initial assessment of vehicle speeds in the area Suffolk Police had agreed to carry out monthly speed checks.

20. Report on Wetheringsett Parish Council gov.uk domain name

A written request had been received from Cllr Alderton for approval of the proposed domain name: wetheringsettcombrockford-pc.gov.uk. Proposed Cllr Mrs van Zyl, seconded Cllr Mrs Weir, 5 in favour, 1 abstention.

21. To agree Poppy Wreath/s purchase and arrangements for Remembrance Sunday 10 November 2024

Mrs Ann Arnold had offered to obtain two Parish Council Poppy Wreaths from the Royal British Legion, with the usual donation of £40.00. Cllr Mrs Aldred proposed purchase of the wreaths, seconded Cllr Alston – proposal agreed. Mrs Arnold would attend and lay the wreath at the Mendlesham service on behalf of the council and Cllr Mrs Aldred would attend the service at the Wetheringsett Memorial.

22. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

A request had been received from Marie Curie. Cllr Mrs Aldred proposed a donation of £100, seconded Cllr Mrs van Zyl – proposal carried.

2. Accounts for payment

Marie Curie	£100.00
B Reeve Garden Maintenance – Sept grasscutting	£166.66
Information Commission annual subscription	£40.00
Clerk sal-expen Sept 2024	£338.10
Cllr Mrs J Weir – battery padlock for radar sign	£10.00

Cllr Alston proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Mrs van Zyl – unanimously agreed.

3. Finance Report

A bank reconciliation as at 19.9.24 showing a bank balance of £19,568.44 had been circulated, this was verified against the bank statement at 19/9/24.

A statement of income and expenditure as at 30/9/24 had been circulated. This included the grant income and expenditure for the village hall solar panels. The statement showed expenditure at the half year was on track with a surplus of £4031.

23. To consider for adoption Financial Regulations 2024-25 – deferred pending review of NALC revised version.

24. Clerk's report/correspondence – no further report

25. Chair's Report – the Chairman stated he would speak to the Manor School regarding availability dates for the VAS equipment.

26. Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests – none.

27. Date of next meeting : Monday 4 November 2024, 7pm at Wetheringsett Village Hall

Meeting closed 9.00 pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Recycling and Waste Collection Changes

At Cabinet on Tuesday 10 September, we heard about the changes the council is preparing to make to prepare for the new recycling and waste collection requirements set out in the Environment Act 2021. This new law means that district and borough councils must additionally collect food waste, glass and cartons from residents by 2026, and also collect plastic film from 2027. It is up to each district and borough council how they choose to arrange their waste collection schedule, and they will be communicating these changes to residents soon. However, the county council also needs to make changes as it is responsible for storing and processing waste and recycling after it is collected. The council will be spending around £4.535m, allocated from its reserves, to update waste transfer stations in the county where waste is taken after it is collected. The council will also need to set up a new contract for anaerobic digestion of the food waste.

Financial Monitoring Report for 2024-25

We also heard at Cabinet on 10 September about the council's latest financial forecast for 2024-25, and so far the year seems to be going better than last year, with a projected overspend of £1 million compared to last year when the council was forecasting an overspend for 2023-24 of £29.3 million. Some services are still overspent, for example costs for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and care purchasing in adult social care services. Areas that are predicted to come in under budget have helped balance this out. However, the council's reserves, the 'savings' it holds for a rainy day, are taking another big hit this year and are due to reduce by £22.2 million. This is a rate of spending by the council which is unsustainable even for a few more years. Like other councils in the same position, we will be hoping for an improved funding settlement from the new government.

Funding to Improve Home Energy Efficiency

My group were disappointed that the council is projecting to return £5 million of funding to the government which could have been used to improve the energy efficiency of homes in Suffolk. The Warm Homes Suffolk Scheme is now closed, but the council has heard that a similar scheme may be on its way and we would encourage residents who are eligible to apply. The previous scheme enabled people to buy extra insulation and undertake other improvements to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, which will also reduce the amount they are paying to heat them. We will have more information on future schemes at a later date and will provide further information then.

Suffolk Devolution Deal Withdrawn

Following the change in government, the devolution deal which had been tabled for Suffolk has now been withdrawn, as has the deal for Norfolk which was along similar lines. Devolution would have provided the county with extra funding and power to make more decisions locally, for example transport and adult education. Although this is being reported as a snub for the county, my group feels that devolution deals offered by the new government are likely to be more ambitious, and will avoid the possible decision deadlock caused by a directly elected leader being from a different political party to the majority of councillors.

Arts and Culture Project Funding

The council has launched its new £500,000 Culture Project Fund to support local arts and museum projects across the county. This is the bidding system for arts funding for the financial year 2024-25 which was announced by the council's administration as part of the budget process in early 2024, and will see a larger amount of smaller grants for projects and organizations compared to previous years. The fund offers three tiers of grants:

Small grants up to £1,500

Medium grants up to £15,000

Large grants up to £50,000

Eligible applicants include arts organizations and museums, skilled freelancers, registered charities, community interest companies, non-profits, and social enterprises based in Suffolk. For more information on deadlines and award dates, or to find out how to apply, please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/cultureprojectfund or contact the Arts & Museums Team at cultureprojectfund@suffolk.gov.uk.

Apply for Primary and Secondary School Places

Parents and carers can now apply for a place in the normal year of entry at a primary (including infant and junior) school and secondary school for September 2025. The deadline for applications to secure a place at a secondary school is Thursday 31 October 2024 and for primary school places, including infant and junior schools, the deadline is Wednesday 15 January 2025. All applications received by the closing dates are processed at the same time using the schools' oversubscription criteria to prioritise applications when necessary. Late applications are processed after all of those received on time.

SCC advise that parents and carers think about how their child will travel to school before they apply for a school place. They can check which is their child's nearest suitable school on our Nearest School Checker because it might not be their catchment area school: <http://nearestschool.suffolk.gov.uk/>

Advice and guidance about the school application process is available here: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

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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 Councillor Report:

October 2024

Council meeting	The monthly council meeting took place on the 26 th September. This included discussions over the simpler recycling scheme (more details discussed below), the appointment of a Biodiversity Working Group, and a motion passed pushing for government action to end the council housing funding crisis. The next meeting will take place on the 31 st October.
"Simpler" Recycling	In accordance with government legislation dating from 2021, Mid Suffolk District Council is changing the waste collection services to meet that legislations march 2026 deadline. This change is nationwide and includes a weekly kerbside food waste collection, whilst recycling is split in two, one bin for paper and card, and another collection for plastic, cartons, and glass. The black bin, is proposed then to be collected once every 3 weeks.

Shaping our Economic Strategy	BMSDC officers are hosting a series of economic development workshops across the district. They are seeking the expertise and insights of key local stakeholders including business leaders, council partners, voluntary services, policymakers, academics and beyond to help develop our forward-thinking economic strategy. Anyone wishing to participate should register online for the following sessions: Monday 7th October, The Mix, Stowmarket
CIL Updates	Several new footpaths and cycle paths across the district have been approved in the latest cabinet meeting, as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Programme (CIL). These agreed footpath upgrades are in Stowupland, Elmswell, Old Newton, Walsham Le Willows and Botesdale.
Suffolk Devolution Deal	The original plans for the Suffolk Devolution (including the directly elected leader of Suffolk County Council) has been abandoned by national government. Further talks are ongoing about a potential alternative deal.
Planning	DC 24/02467 oak farm lane has been refused by the District Council, We also have a new application on “plot 4” in Brockford road, and the application for a lawful development certificate for use by non Gypsies for 21 caravans at “dunroamin” is still to be determined, with April 2025 temporary permission dates for the remaining sites in Brockford road without permanent planning permissions, coupled with there being no sites that came forward in the joint local plan call for sites for gypsy and traveller sites. Mid Suffolk will have a difficult task to formulate a policy that satisfies the inspectors clear wish to have an allocations lead approach.