

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Monday 2 December 2024, 7pm at the Village Hall, Wetheringsett.

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

1. **Apologies and Consent to absence** were received from Cllrs S Alderton and Mrs K van Zyl.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** - Item 7.2 – Cllr T Alston declared an interest.
3. **Reports**
 1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.
 2. County Councillor - Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Stringer added the flood investigation report (s.19) had identified works to be carried out, these would be progressed by the various authorities. Suffolk CC had allocated £1.5m from reserves to deal with recommendations from the reports published so far as a result of Storm Babet – 10 of the 48 commissioned had been published.
 3. District Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his District report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Stringer added he had received email notification the enforcement action relating to the haulage yard containers at Town Lane had been quashed.
 4. Footpaths - Cllr Mrs Aldred reported some encroachment on the footpath between Pitman's Corner and Broad Green following ditch clearance – this would be monitored.
A new footbridge had been installed on the footpath opposite the Middy at Brockford Green.
Cllr Mrs Cain reported the sewage problem at the Griffin Lane footpath at the rear of the new development was being dealt with by MSDC Building Control.
 5. Trees – Cllr Mrs Aldred was pleased to report some 100 saplings had been distributed in the village.
6. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Thermal Imaging – Mr G Godart-Brown recorded thanks to Cllr Mrs Leech for her help with thermal imaging of his property.

Proposed Solar Farm, Mendlesham – a query was raised as to how many acres of farmland would be involved. It was reported some 600 acres had been identified.
4. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 4 November 2024**

Cllr Mrs Leech proposed acceptance of the Minutes subject to inclusion of apologies from Cllr Alston, seconded Cllr Mrs Cain and unanimously agreed.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report** – none.
6. **To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC**
 1. DC/24/04840: The Old Forge, Mendlesham Road, Brockford – application for Listed Building Consent – construction of flood prevention barrier system. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
 2. DC/24/04876: The Old Forge, Mendlesham Road, Brockford – application for Listed Building Consent – removal of concrete render from fireplace as detailed within the Design and Access Statement and Schedule of Works. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
 3. DC/24/04973: Hill House, Norwich Road – application for Lawful Development Certificate for existing use or operation or activity including those in breach of a planning condition. Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) – use of land as garden to Hill House. Councillors understood the land had been used as garden land for 10 years or more. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
7. **Planning Decisions received from MSDC**
 1. DC/24/03453: Plot 4 Mendlesham Road - 4 Church Street - Full Planning Application - Change of use of amenity land to a site for a Gypsy / Traveller family consisting of two static caravans, a touring caravan and ancillary works (retention of Access and Hardstanding). Planning Permission Refused.
 2. DC/24/04405: Mid Suffolk Light Railway, Hall Lane - application under S73A for continued use and operation of heritage railway museum as per Operational Statement. Planning Permission without compliance with condition/s has been granted with Conditions
8. **Planning Correspondence** – none.
9. **Neighbourhood Plan Report**

Notification had been received that MSDC formally adopted the Wetheringsett cum Brockford NP on 27 November 2024, the Plan was now part of the MSDC Development Plan. Councillors commended the Working

Group for their achievement and work on the plan over the last 5 years. Some disappointment was expressed at the poor turnout for the referendum on 21 November 2024, a 17% turnout. It was agreed this item could now be removed from the agenda.

10. Wetheringsett Flood Investigation report – to consider s.19 report

The s.19 Flood Investigation for Wetheringsett cum Brockford was complete and had been published on the Suffolk County Council's website on 11 November 2024 available via the following link:

- <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/flood-management-in-suffolk/flood-investigation-reports>

The investigations into the flooding which occurred in Wetheringsett cum Brockford following Storm Babet in October 2023 had analysed the cause of events and recommended what could be done to alleviate flooding in the future. The report stated the community was impacted by flooding due to the intensity of rainfall that had overwhelmed the natural flow routes and the capacity of watercourses and drainage infrastructure.

Recommendations included short, medium and long term proposals aimed at individual homeowners, community groups, landowners and Risk Management Authorities, all with the potential to help mitigate future local flood risk.

Any questions relating to the report should be compiled into one response and returned to floodinvestigations@suffolk.gov.uk. The report would be updated by Suffolk CC on a 6 monthly basis from the date of publishing.

The report had requested a revised Parish Emergency Plan. The Parish Council had been working on a revised Plan which was in its final stages and would be available for parishioners very shortly.

Item to remain on the agenda to enable the Parish Council to monitor actions as yet to be completed by the above mentioned parties.

11. Church Street flood and sewage report

It was reported Suffolk CC Highways was looking into the Church Street drainage system but there were unfortunately no answers as yet for remedial action by the responsible authorities. The Parish Council would monitor via chasing Suffolk CC/Anglian Water.

12. Wetheringsett cum Brockford Emergency Plan

1. Draft Emergency Plan progress report

The Yellow Bag containing emergency equipment was complete and would be stored at the Village Hall. Councillors agreed adoption of the draft plan as circulated. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Mrs van Zyl for her work on the Plan. To ensure each household received a copy of the plan it was suggested an A5 size loose leaf copy be included in the parish magazine.

A note would need to be included in the parish magazine regarding a Vulnerable People list asking residents/relatives whether they wished to be included on the list together with contact details. Cllr Mrs van Zyl would be asked to provide a note for the magazine.

2. To approve Emergency Plan (Yellow Bag and equipment) expenses – the expenses totalled £268.61 to include the two-way radio set totalling £186.00. Approval proposed by Cllr Mrs Leech, seconded Cllr Mrs Weir – unanimously agreed.

3. To consider for adoption Emergency Plan Privacy Policy – the Parish Council had in place a Privacy Policy, this formed part of the Council's current GDPR adopted policies.

13. Wetheringsett Village Hall

1. Management Committee report – Cllr Lingard reported although the Village Hall finances were in a stable position it did not have a strong reserve. The Committee were awaiting delivery of a sensor outside light for the front of the building and it was proposed a further filing cabinet was obtained for storage of paper files.

2. Report on School Licence Agreement and Diocesan Lease

The School Licence agreement was progressing. No progress report was available for the Lease agreement with the Diocesan Board.

13. Grasscutting report

Cllr Lacey suggested the contractor was asked to carry out a further one-off cut in the Play Area.

15. Play Area

1. Report on installation of re-cycled heavy duty plastic bench and picnic table update – the bench was in place at the play area but would need to be concreted into the ground. Action pending.

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

16. VAS speed equipment report

Cllr Mrs Weir reported the Brockford Street data from the new solar equipment was sent direct to Suffolk Police.

Cllr Mrs Cain would obtain a battery for the mobile VAS. Cllr Mrs Drury would help to move the equipment.

- 17 Report on installation of permanent VAS equipment at Hockey Hill, Dale Hill and southern Brockford Street**
New 4m posts would be required for Hockey Hill and Dale Hill. The Chair would pursue this item with the Manor School in the New Year. Deferred to next meeting.

18. Wetherup Street – Suffolk Police speed checks

Checks were still being carried out fortnightly but no speed reports had as yet been received from Suffolk Police.

19. Wetheringsett Parish Council gov.uk domain name and email addresses report

Deferred to the next meeting.

It was agreed the meeting was opened to the public

Mr M Pease, the website editor, stated the current website was a village website incorporating a parish council page for information. To set up a separate parish council website would involve paying someone to set it up and keep it updated. Mr Pease believed the current arrangement was used by many parishes, and worked well, ie incorporating parish council information within a village website.

The Chair thanked Mr Pease for his comments, these were useful. Item deferred to next meeting.

Meeting closed to the public

20. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

A donation request had been received from Headway Suffolk. The Council had in the past supported the organization. Cllr Mrs Leech proposed a donation of £100, seconded Cllr Lingard – unanimously agreed.

2. Accounts for payment

Suffolk Accident Rescue – donation	£100.00
Mid Suffolk CAB – donation	£100.00
Mrs K van Zyl – Emergency Plan expenses	£268.61
Clerk – salary/expen Nov 2024	£441.30

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

3. Finance Report including proposals for Parish Budget/Precept 2025-26

Draft budget proposals 2025-26 had been circulated prior to the meeting, this showed a total budget of £13,108. Suggestions included increasing the donation allowance from £400 to £500 and contingency from £500 to £1000. A revised draft would be prepared for approval at the January 2025 meeting.

21. To consider for adoption the following Policy documents 2024/25:

1. Financial Regulations – the revised NALC model Regulations had been circulated. Cllr Mrs Leech proposed adoption of the Financial Regulations, seconded Cllr Lingard – unanimously agreed.

2. Asset Register – four additional items had been added to the asset register: Radar Speed Sign and post, Play Area Bench and the Emergency Yellow Bag and contents. Councillors had agreed to gift the Village Hall sound equipment and Stage Lighting purchased with the aid of grant funding to the Village Hall. Subject to the above amendments Cllr Mrs Cain proposed adoption of the Asset Register, seconded Cllr Mrs Aldred – unanimously agreed.

3. Risk Assessment - the reviewed Risk Assessment document had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Mrs Weir proposed adoption of the document, seconded Cllr Mrs Drury – unanimously agreed.

22. Clerk's report/correspondence – none.

23. Chair's Report – the Chair reported a letter regarding the noise/rave issues had been sent to the Police & Crime Commissioner T Passmore. Mr Passmore had been asked to share the concerns raised in the letter with Suffolk Police.

24. Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests

Taxi Bus Service - Cllr Alston reported on a conversation with the taxi company involved with the service and the very little use of the facility so far. This was a MSDC grant funded scheme and there would appear to be very little promotion of the service to residents in rural areas. If it was not used the service could be lost. Cllr Alston offered to speak to District Cllr Stringer in an attempt to improve publicity of the service to rural residents.

Apologies – the chair gave his apologies for the January 2025 meeting. The Vice-Chair, Cllr Lingard would chair the meeting.

25. Date of next meeting : Monday 6 January 2025, 7pm at Wetheringsett Village Hall

Meeting closed 8.15pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Flooding Investigations and Prevention

At Cabinet on Tuesday 5 November, a decision was made by the council that it would allocate £1.5m from its reserves to deal with the recommendations which have come out of the flood investigation (Section 19) reports following Storm Babet last October. The money will mostly be used for highways flood mitigation and drainage work but some will be put aside to develop longer-term schemes and accessing funding for further flood protection for the county. The money will not fix all problems with flooding in the county and the £1.5m relates only to the recommendations from the reports published so far (10 reports out of the 48 commissioned). The works funded via this decision will be carried out between now and March 2026, and additional funding is required because the council would ordinarily only carry out three or four investigations a year – Storm Babet means that nearly 50 will be needed. Flood investigations are prioritised in locations where five or more properties have been flooded, or flooding to major infrastructure for 10 hours or more.

This page on the SCC website gives information on the locations that will be subject to flood investigations as a result of Storm Babet: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/storm-babet>

This page contains links to all of the flood investigation reports published so far by the council (not just for Storm Babet reports from 2024, reports from previous years are also included): <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/flood-management-in-suffolk/flood-investigation-reports>

Please see links at the bottom of this report on how to protect your property from flooding and advice on how to deal with the aftermath of flooding.

Loft Insulation Offer for Suffolk Residents

For the second year running, Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders are providing funding to help Suffolk residents make their homes warmer and save money on their energy bills by providing discounted loft insulation - an uninsulated home can lose up to a quarter of its heat through its roof. The Suffolk Loft Insulation Offer enables homeowners in Suffolk to receive a 50% discount (up to £200) and free delivery on orders of 200mm or 370mm wide eco-friendly thermal insulation rolls from High Loft, the UK's leading eco loft insulation brand. Last year, the project enabled the insulation of over 5,000m² of roofs in Suffolk, and this year the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership wants to double that figure. The offer is open to anyone in Suffolk and will only close once the allocated funding has been spent. Visit <https://highloft.co.uk/pages/suffolk-council-200-loft-insulation-contribution> and fill in the form to receive your discount code.

More Home Energy Efficiency Schemes

The council's new £3m fund for interest-free loans to residents wishing to undertake home energy efficiency upgrades that was mentioned in last month's parish report is now active, and applications can now be made at <https://www.lendology.org.uk/warm-home-suffolk-loan>. Energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps are possible with loans from £2,000 to £15,000 to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest.

A Suffolk Retrofit Assessment Voucher Scheme is also launching, funded by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders, whereby homeowners in Suffolk will be able to apply for a voucher that covers the cost of a professional retrofit assessment on their home property. These assessments are the first step towards making their home more energy-efficient, lowering their bills and reducing their carbon footprint. Residents who own a home with an EPC band of below C can take up the offer of a voucher to claim an assessment from a PAS 2035 Retrofit Assessor who will identify the best measures for

their home, for example insulation, draft proofing, ventilation repairs, low carbon heating or solar panels. The assessment report will also incorporate analysis of the cost vs benefit of implementing the suggested improvements. The assessment is free for those with properties smaller than 98m², with a maximum additional charge of £30 for larger properties bigger.

Homeowners can check to see if their property has an existing Energy Certificate with an EPC band and record of their property size at gov.uk/find-energy-certificate. They can apply for the vouchers by visiting suffolkenergyassessment.co.uk. Applications are open now, and vouchers will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Council Budget Consultation

Suffolk County Council has launched a public consultation prior to decisions on the budget for the next financial year, 2025-26, which are due to be made in the next few months. This is an opportunity for residents and businesses to share their views on proposed Council Tax changes and spending priorities, as well as giving information on how the council manages its finances, the cost-saving measures already in place, and how the council might generate more money to support essential services. The council can increase its budget in two main ways: by receiving more funding from the government or by increasing Council Tax. The survey asks residents which council services they use and to indicate which council services they consider most important to them. The consultation will close on Monday 16 December, and if you want to participate, visit www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/2025_26_budget. The results of the consultation will be included in a final report when the council sets its budget is set in February 2025.

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Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkqli.wordpress.com\)](https://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 to Occold Parish Council, December 2024

Council meeting	A full District Council meeting took place on the 21 st November, which included discussion of the council's treasury management. The Green administration also introduced a motion urging the government to rethink the decision to cut the Winter Fuel Allowance for most pensioners. After debate, this was agreed and a letter will be written to the chancellor.
Fees and charges updated	Updates to Fees and Charges across the district were approved in this month's cabinet meeting and will take effect on 1 st April 2025. A full list of alterations are available on the council's website – most charges are being raised by only 1.7% and some fees are coming down.
Potential new Local Government reform	There has been national press speculation over a change in local government structure across Suffolk. The White Paper has yet to be published; it is scheduled to be published in December. There has been speculation over plans to abolish district and county councils, replacing

	them with a unitary authority (with combined powers of a district and county council) covering all of Suffolk. More information will be available in the future.
Summary of Waste Recycling over Christmas & New Year	There are a few alterations to the recycling schedule over Christmas, including a scheme to recycle Christmas Trees. The information can be found on Mid Suffolk's website, using the following link: Christmas waste collections - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk
Information on grants and funding for communities	Mid Suffolk's website now has a new community funding page, which aims to make it much easier for local community groups to understand and apply for grants and funding. Groups in need of funding for a project can now go to the www.midsuffolk.gov.uk home page and clicked on the 'Access community funding' button. For advice or further information, please email the grants team at: BMSDCgrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk Among the funding available, the Pride In Your Place grant has re-opened, for capital projects up to £5,000 that enable community groups to enhance their local area and environment, explore local identity and heritage, and engage in activities such as community clean ups.

Cllr Andrew Stringer andrew.stringer@midsuffolk.gov.uk or 07774 199061

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