

WETHERDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2024

- Present: Cllr Duncan Perry, Cllr Andy Lewis, Cllr Stephanie Hensley
District Cllr Rachel Eburne, County Cllr Andrew Stringer and four members of the public
- 2024/87 **Apologies for absence**
Cllr Stacey Lascelles, Cllr Richard Thurman, District Cllr Janet Pearson, Christine Mason (Clerk)
- 2024/88 **Declarations of Interest**
None declared.
- 2024/89 **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting**
The minutes of the meeting of Monday 27th November 2023 were approved and will be signed by the Chairman as a true record at a later date.
- 2024/90 **District Councillor Rachel Eburne's report**
To incentivise bringing more homes back into use, MSDC will be increasing the amount of Council Tax payable on long-term empty homes from April 2024; flood payments of £500 for residents and £25 for businesses are currently being processed by Mid Suffolk on the basis of information from the SCC Highways reporting tool and information submitted to MSDC; Haughley and Elmswell Parish Councils have raised their concerns over potential overdevelopment on the site off Junction 47a relating to planning application DC/24/00117. As this will have a direct impact on Wetherden, Cllr Lewis questioned why the Parish Council had not been copied in. In response, Cllr Eburne will inform planning to send all applications this side of the A14 to Wetherden Parish Council.
- 2024/91 **County Councillor Andrew Stringer's report**
Owing to the settlement from Central Government, a series of budget cuts are to be carried out i.e adult social care, less for those not in education training, closing two records offices in Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds, withdrawal of £500,000 from The Arts; communications have been received from residents concerning lack of consultation on the temporary road closures and diversions relating to a new roundabout at Woolpit, J47 off the A14; opportunity for tighter planning conditions to be set in new planning applications from Lawn Farm Quarry, Cllr Stringer agreed to assist the Parish Council in submitting their responses.
- 2024/92 **Public Participation**
Matters brought to the attention of the parish council included the necessity for hard core to the surface of the village hall car park, to expediate matters Cllr Perry to speak with the football club and the VHM; flooding due to a blocked ditch at the bottom of Rectory Hill could easily be diverted into the ditch behind the hedge; new website requires attention; repairs required to the Pavilion down pipe and gutter, bad management of timing of the traffic lights in Elmswell; a vote of thanks to be minuted to Andrew Thrall for the work he did on the Village Plan etc.
- 2024/93 **Clerk's report**
No report available.

- 2024/94 **To receive finance reports and authorise payments**
 The finance report was agreed and payments as per the schedule were approved. Bank balance as of 3rd January 2024 stands at £24,673.79.
- Expenditure**
- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| PWLB | 475.37 |
| Litter picker | 52.10 |
| Clerk's salary Oct/Nov | 788.80 |
| HMRC | 52.80 |
| Hall hire | 105.00 |
| Clerk's salary Dec + back pay | 759.50 |
| HMRC | 261.52 |
| Anglian Water | 24.44 |
| Litter picker | 88.47 |
| Hartley's Garden Services | 500.00 |
- Income**
- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Stowmarket pitch hire | 400.00 |
|-----------------------|--------|
- 2024/95 **Website upgrade**
 Further work required to be carried out on content, links to groups including planning, social media. When fully proofed, access information to the website to be posted on the notice board.
- 2024/96 **Townlands Trust car park**
 Although National Highways did suggest at one point they would be willing to support local projects e.g. resurfacing the Townlands car park, requests for an update have been made but with no response. Cllr Stringer to provide alternative contact details.
- 2024/97 **Flooding under the bridge on Ashfield Road/Warning signage**
 Again this has had an impact on residents. Unfortunately, flood warning signage advising of deep water had been moved, but later put back by Cllr Hensley. Although the County Council take flooding reports seriously, Cllr Stringer said in this instance a long-term solution for the flooding lies with the landowners of the fields on either side of the bridge and not SCC. A warning notice to be put on the notice boards and in the parish magazine.
- 2024/98 **Blocked ditches**
 Cllr Lewis has cleared the ditch of rubbish, garden garbage, tree debris, scrap metal etc that runs down from the football pitch to the footpath. The local contractor who is to carry out work to the bridge at the top end, will be using the digger to dredge the whole length out. Cllr Perry to speak with James Rand regarding ditch blockages/drainage on his land. It was agreed ditch maintenance should be carried out on a regular basis.
- 2024/99 **Planned road closures at Woolpit**
 Dealt with earlier in the meeting.
- 2024/100 **Joint meeting with Haughley Parish Council**
 An augural meeting between neighbouring parishes has been arranged by Haughley Parish Council. Discussion will focus on traffic, road works, access and any other issues that have an adverse effect on local communities.

- 2024/101 **Zero Carbon by 2050**
To be kept as a standing item on the agenda. Owing to the lack of a suitable surface, there is no further update on the installation of electric charging points at the Townlands Trust car park.
- 2024/102 **To consider common/playing field/projects and concerns**
Other than litter mainly from the Seniors Football Club, no further matters were raised.
- 2024/103 **Urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the council**
Date for the British Spring Litter Pick agreed as the weekend of 23rd and 24th March. Hi-Viz vests, litter pickers, bin bags will be provided. Date to be advertised on Next Door and social media sites.
- 2024/104 **Date of next meeting**
To be confirmed as either 19th or 26th February 2024.

With no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm.