

WESTERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, May 16th, 2023 in Westerfield Church Room at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors: Jason Kirk, Peter Hudson, Michael Noble, Sue Peace; CC Elaine Bryce; DC Colin Hedgley; David Gooch (Clerk); and members of the public, Graham Austin (GA) and Peter Miller (PM).

1. Governance

1.1 To elect a Chair for 2023/24, and to elect a Deputy Chair

Cllr Kirk was unanimously voted Chair*, and Peter Hudson Vice-Chair.

Proposed Cllr Noble, Seconded: Cllr Peace.

* Cllr Kirk agreed with the following responsibilities shared between councillors:

Henley Gate Community meeting; general administration; Cllr Hudson (with Clerk).

Communications (including the Neighbourhood Plan); Cllr Peace/Cllr Noble;

SALC fora; Cllr Noble

Planning Applications; Consultations & Questionnaires; Road Safety; All TBD at subsequent meeting(s).

Cllr Noble agreed to add the division of responsibilities to the PC website, and similarly any roles accepted by Cllr Barber who was unavailable, and the two vacant councillor positions.

Cllr Hudson noted that the PC also needed objectives for the year, with Cllr Peace noting her goal in joining the PC was to help ensure Westerfield is a nice place to live.

1.2 Declaration of Acceptance of Office for the Chair, Deputy Chair, Councillors

The councillors present completed their forms (retained by Clerk).

Chair Kirk recorded his thanks to retired councillors Miller, Austin, & Cade for their past service to Westerfield PC over many years.

1.3 Apologies and approvals of absence

Cllr Barber had sent his apologies - this was approved.

1.4 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

None

1.5 To approve the Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 21st March 2023.

These were approved.

1.6 Comments from members of the public on matters on the agenda

GA stated that streetlight No.8 (1st light on south side of Lower Road from the crossroads) was not LED, so perhaps this was not owned by the PC who had paid for all the streetlights to be upgraded to LED.

Clerk Gooch to query ownership of streetlight No.8

GA also noted that the defibrillator shield over the light had fallen off.

Cllr Noble agreed to repair the defibrillator shield over the light, with GA's help.

1.7 Internal & External Audits

Clerk stated that:

- the SALC Internal Audit had been booked for 26th-30th June 2023 (ref: 2869) and all the documentation had been prepared and was ready to be uploaded.

- AGAR Part 3 & supporting documentation will be sent to external auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP after today's meeting, subject to approval.

The PC agreed to appoint SALC to provide the internal audit service (being independent and competent) for 23/24. Clerk noted that since the Neighbourhood Plan was due to be completed shortly, the PC's income and expenditure would be unlikely to exceed the £25,000 thresholds triggering an external audit, hence would be able to apply for a Certificate of Exemption.

1.8 To confirm appointment of RFO

Clerk was appointed the Responsible Finance Officer. Proposer Cllr Kirk, Seconder Cllr Hudson.

1.9 LGA (Local Government Association) General Power of Competence (GPC)

It was noted that an eligible council is one which has resolved to adopt the GPC, with at least two thirds of its members being declared elected and the Clerk must hold an appropriate qualification (Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012).

WPC resolved not to adopt the General Power of Competence.

2. Village Improvement

2.1 To review progress on developing the Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Peace presented an update report she had completed with Mary Pluquet, highlighting that Ian Poole, Places4People, proposes:

- To present the draft of the NP to the working group on June 22nd;
- To provide the NP to the Parish Council for signing off before consultation on July 11th;

- Consultation to begin a minimum of 4 weeks after sign-off, date T.B.C. This will include a pop-in event to present to the village and summary leaflets to be delivered to the village.

(Previously the End of Grant Report NPG-13087, had been completed by end March 2023, for Groundworks UK who manage the grant applications.)

Cllr Kirk said he intended to provide an update at tomorrow's Annual Parish Meeting (APM) including Community Aspirations.

2.2 To receive an update on traffic and safety measures for the village

Cllr Kirk said he needed to follow-up with Josh White, Suffolk Highways, since there'd been very little recent progress, noting that the PC had significant funds (e.g. CIL money) reserved for village traffic and safety measures.

(CC Elaine Bryce had been reminded of her action to chase the PC's participation in the ANPR trial.)

3. To receive reports

3.1 County Councillor

CC Bryce's [2023 Annual Parish Report](#) had been circulated to the PC prior to the meeting. CC Bryce opened by thanking the PC for its support and patience while she had been recovering from illness, then reviewed some of the highlights:

- £350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022;
- Suffolk County Council has planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years.
- Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership rolls out ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) devices to target speeding motorists

(CC Bryce's action to chase-up Westerfield's participation in the APNR pilot was ongoing.)

CC Bryce reminded the PC that she had a locality funding budget in place.

3.2 District Councillor

DC Colin Hedgley's [District Councillor's May 2023 report](#) had been circulated to the PC prior to the meeting. DC Hedgley said that he'd been re-elected as our district councillor along with Dan Clery (replacing Tony Fryatt who had retired). Colin said he would soon be meeting with Dan to agree sharing of responsibilities across the various PCs they need to cover.

Highlights from DC Hedgley's report were:

- Since the cost-of-living crises they have received over 500 referrals for financial assistance;
- ESC have raised Council Tax by 2.8% for 2023/24, well below the 5% limit set by HMG, however this may affect availability of funding next year.

DC Hedgley asked if there had been any issues with the new requirement to produce photoID at the recent elections – the PC said they weren't aware of any problems.

Cllr Kirk recorded his thanks for the locality budget funding for Westerfield's fledgeling Explorers group.

3.3 Parish Councillors on meetings/forums attended

i) Henley Gate Community meeting

Cllr Hudson hadn't attended a meeting since the last PC meeting, noting that the Community Liaison meeting doesn't address the big issues, and Ipswich Borough Council don't seem interested in pursuing these concerns. However, Country Park continues to cause flooding to the gardens of residences in Lower Road. The Fonnereau Way footpath is also blocked by fencing at the weekends, and construction traffic has been using Lower Road despite their denial, although this is now being resolved as they have access through the site from Westerfield Road.

It was noted that a replacement new dog waste bin had appeared at the Westerfield Road entrance to Country Park.

(The action to raise a formal complaint to Ipswich Borough Council's Planning Department as the Henley Gate development was not adhering to the agreed planning application is ongoing. Cllr Hudson agreed to document the complaints (with input from ex-Cllr Austin's list of issues) and Clerk Gooch would submit this on behalf of the PC.)

ii) East Suffolk Road Safety Forum.

The next forum has been arranged for 12 June 2023, 10:00 – 12:00 (Microsoft Teams) although no PC councillor was currently available to attend.

4. To note and discuss current planning applications

Status updates on planning applications in progress:

4.1 DC/23/0349/FUL, Conversion of detached leisure annexe building to residential annexe. - Palmside Lower Road Westerfield Ipswich Suffolk IP6 9AR. **Application Permitted** (WPC had no objection).

4.2 DC/23/0794/VOC, Variation of Condition No.5 of DC/21/4131/FUL - Construction of 2no. new detached dwellings with double garages and new shared vehicular access - Approval of a revised method statement detailing the actual works that have taken place and mitigation measures to ensure the future protection of the tree and allow it time to recover. **Application Permitted** (WPC had no objection).

4.3 DC/22/2567/ARM, Approval of Reserved Matters of DC/20/1712/VOC - Submission of Reserved Matters (access, layout, appearance, scale, landscaping) pursuant to Phase I of outline planning permission - Land At Old Station Works Westerfield Road Suffolk Westerfield IP6 9AB. **Pending Decision** (WPC had no objection).

4.4 IP/22/00013/OUTFL: Land To The East Of Westerfield Road And South Of The Railway Line, Red House Farm, Westerfield Road Ipswich Suffolk

Network Rail consider that the transport assessment submitted supporting the scheme did not sufficiently consider the impact of the development on Westerfield Level Crossing and Westerfield Rail Station. Specifically, the Network Rail Level Crossing team have concerns about the impact on the crossing from the potential increase of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, hence the current crossing will not be fit for purpose, especially considering the section of land nearest to the station will be the new school.

The expected uplift in train users at the station due to the development causes several impacts. Therefore, the developer should consider:

- Formal pick up and drop off facilities (none in place)
- Arrangements for accessible parking (none in place)
- Signage and lighting enable walking to and from the station.
- Additional ticketing facilities so each platform has ticket purchasing machines. (Reducing level crossing risk if train users purchase tickets on the platform's correct side).

i) Disruption of access to operational railway:

There is a Network Rail maintenance yard with access immediately adjacent to the level crossing on Westerfield Road. During the construction phase it is the contractor's responsibility to maintain 24/7 unobstructed access to the railway for maintenance purposes.

ii) Proximity of the proposed development to the Network Rail boundary and operational equipment:

The developer/ designer must ensure that they allow sufficient space from the Network Rail boundary fence so as not to import risk to the operation of the railway or impose risk to the occupants of the buildings or maintenance staff.

iii) Trespasses and unauthorised access onto Network Rail land.

iv) Road vehicle incursion onto the railway hence an effective barrier or structure designed for vehicular impact to prevent vehicles accidentally driving or rolling onto the railway or boundary fence.

v) Impact on Network Rail Structures which support the railway (FEL 1081 @ 72m 770yds RED HOUSE PARK LANE; FEL 1082 @ 72m 1716yds TUDDENHAM ROAD (IPSWICH)).

vi) Safety issues re increase passengers and road traffic using of the Level Crossings. It is NR's goal to close level crossings wherever reasonably practicable. Level crossings should be replaced with bridges if access over the railway is required.

New planning applications received:

4.5 DC/21/5773/FUL Change of use of site from agricultural to ecological enhancement. Land to the South of Church Lane Westerfield. (Comments were due 24/4/2023). Amendments have been made to the above planning application. updated red line boundary (email 30/3/2023).

Previously the PC did not object to the change of use for ecological enhancement but requested further consideration on the following matters:

- a) Possible relocation of the enhancement area to the west.
- b) Consider the possibility of a public footpath from the Red House Neighbourhood to this enhancement area and the countryside to the North.
- c) Managing access to avoid illegal use by travellers and fly-tipping.
- d) Providing evidence of how protection of existing trees and hedgerows will be ensured on the site.

Items received after the agenda was published, and other planning matters

4.6 Planning – joint statement from SALC and East Suffolk Council

Following circulation of the SALC planning survey summary report on behalf of town and parish councils, East Suffolk and SALC have recently met and have agreed that opportunities exist to potentially work more closely together to enable ESC to develop solutions to further improve processes which will address some of the key findings of the survey.

SALC provided a subsequent update saying they have a meeting scheduled with Chris Bally, new CEO at ESC on 25th May, before a meeting with the ESC planning to discuss training and development on 31st May.

[Read more here on the SALC website.](#)

4.7 East Suffolk Planning Policy Team have issued a planning policy update on the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

This sets out the amount of money certain kinds of developments are required to pay to fund new and improved infrastructure. A draft Charging Schedule was published in December 2021 which proposes new rates (a single East Suffolk CIL Charging Schedule to replace the two in place for the former Suffolk Coastal and former Waveney areas). An independent Examiner has now issued his Report and Recommendations, which concludes that, subject to three modifications, the Charging Schedule is recommended to be approved.

4.8 East Suffolk Planning Alliance (ESPA)

Formed (initially by the Grundisburgh Action Group and Parish Council) Feb 2023 as it was perceived that the relationship between council the communities that they are supposed to represent had broken down. ESPA aim to submit consolidated, unified and direct responses around contentious planning issues to ESC.

- to support the Development of Locally Led Planning Policy driven by Neighbourhood Planning Partnerships
- to Help Deliver The Right Homes In The Right Places With The Right Infrastructure

The PC agreed to nominate the Clerk as a point person for ESPA comms.

4.9 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (BMSDC)

Following the consultation on proposed Main Modifications, BMSDC are holding further Examination Hearing Sessions for the Local Plan, see: <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/jointlocalplan> This was noted by the PC.

5. Consultations

5.1 Community benefits for electricity transmission network infrastructure consultation - deadline 25 May 2023

The British Energy Security Strategy intends to have a fully decarbonised electricity system by 2035, and net zero by 2050. In the nearer term, the government has an ambition for up to 50GW of offshore wind and to progress up to eight new nuclear reactors by 2030, and an expectation for a fivefold increase in solar deployment, up to 70GW, by 2035.

Communities that host this network infrastructure play a vital role in supporting the delivery of our energy, and given the scale and rate of change required for the transformation of the electricity network, now is the right time to [review how community benefits are delivered](#), and introduce measures to ensure communities feel they are positively benefitting from hosting electricity transmission network infrastructure.

Cllr Peace agree to review the Community benefits for electricity transmission network infrastructure consultation.

6. Communications

6.1 Newsletter

As yet, the latest newsletter was still awaiting publication. (G Austin offered to help deliver the newsletters.)

6.2 Website update

The website update was still unresolved, pending a review of the possible options.

It was believed that the PC have an account with [Parish Online](#) (which was linked to the PC's use of Ordnance Survey map data) who provide web hosting, with accessibility requirements (see below *) built-in . Cllr Peace mentioned previous difficulties trying to contact Parish Online.

Clerk to explore WPC web hosting with Parish Online.

* OneSuffolk, who currently provide the PC's web hosting, had reminded its customer PC's of the mandatory requirement that all local government organisations allow people with visual impairment to easily access their websites. Although OneSuffolk's core templates now meet the minimum of the international WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard, the PC's website may be non-compliant. One Suffolk offering a service (£108 inc VAT) to review all our webpages, fix any issues seen, and provide a short report based on their findings. The PC decided not to take up this offer, while the future hosting was still uncertain.

The PC also continued its discussion about a social media presence via a Westerfield Village Facebook group, although a policy would be required for the permitted content. The differences between Pages and Groups was noted, where the latter could allow people to publish anything, hence the concern about potential abuse. However, formal content e.g. governance documentation etc. would need to remain on the web site.

A communications email address commswpc@gmail.com has been created to support the PC's requirements.

7. Financial matters

7.1 End-of-year 2022/2023 summary

The '2022_23 Cash Book (reference workbook including bank transactions, VAT, Budget, individual meeting

finance updates), Lloyds Bank Business and Treasurer EOY account bank statements, and end-of year bank reconciliation had all been circulated prior to the meeting. These were agreed by the PC.

As at 31st March 2023 the Business Bank Account (Deposit) at Lloyds Bank was £100,916.61 and the Treasurers Account (Current) at £895.73 making a total of £101,812.34 (an increase of £10,424.38 over the previous year). Payments amounted to £26,832.17, while receipts totalled £37,256.55.

7.2 Receipts & Payments since last meeting, approve payments due

Clerk Gooch presented the following update:

Payments received since 21st March 2023:

Date	Payments		Amount (gross)	VAT
18.04.23	ESC, CIL Ref: CIL20230412		£3,245.79	
28.04.23	ESC Precept Ref: 058762		£5,008.72	
02.05.23	HMRC VAT payment for Q3Q4 2022/23		£1,362.52	
		Total:	£9,617.03	

Expenditure incurred and Payments since Council meeting on 21st March 2023 for expenditure previously authorised:

22.03.23	Places4People Ltd, Invoice No: 426, Neighbourhood Plan support as set out in Fee Proposal dated January 2022		£4,628.00	£198.00
22.03.23	P30 Employers Payslip, Q4		£219.60	£0.00
28.03.23	Westerfield Station garden contribution		£198.00	£0.00
30.03.23	2022-2023 3rd Party Asset Maintenance and Energy costs. Suffolk Highways (£340.08 + VAT) INVOICE NUMBER: 9529596		£408.09	£68.01
31.03.23	Clerk March payslip: D Gooch		£292.62	£0.00
		Subtotal:	£5,746.31	£266.01

2023/24:

06.04.23	Suffolk Coastal Norse grass cutting & collection (Mar-Sept 2022), 40IN-013612		£360.00	£60.00
13.04.23	SALC Membership Subscription for 2023/24. Inv: 26946		£252.70	£0.00
14.04.23	Y Maynard reimbursement - Village Tub plants, Katies Garden		£31.51	£5.25
23.04.23	Bob Hill reimbursement for Crown Glass invoice for Bus Shelter repair.		£43.25	£0.00
30.04.23	Clerk April payslip: D Gooch		£292.82	£0.00
20.05.23	ICO Data Protection fee ICO:00012994790, Reference: ZA366867	DD	£35.00	£0.00
31.05.23	Clerk May payslip: D Gooch		£292.62	£0.00
		Total:	£7,054.21	£331.26

The expenditure above was approved by the PC.

Payments authorised for committed expenditure but invoices not yet received:

Date	Payments		Amount (gross)	VAT
	Community Action Suffolk: Website Training for M Noble		£60.00	£12.00

The PC agreed gifts for the Events Committee, and for long serving ex Chair and retired Councillor Peter Miller. (These are covered under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 which enables the PC to incur expenses for purposes that are considered to be in the interests of the local community.)

As at 16th May 2023 the Business Bank Account (Deposit) at Lloyds Bank was £108,295.23 and the Treasurers Account (Current) at £2,277.97 making a total of £112,851.17.

7.3 2022/2023 Audit; AGAR Part 3 - Annual Governance Statement & Accounting Statements approval

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3, Explanation of Variances, and supporting information had been circulated prior to the meeting. These were agreed by the PC and then signed.

7.4 2022/23 CIL Report

The draft CIL report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The total CIL spend was £4,582.09, with total retained CIL monies at 31st March 2023 of £47,691.87. (NB. Unspent CIL monies can be reclaimed and lost if not spent within 5 years. The PC has no CIL monies expiring in 23/24 but £9,475.30 expiring in 24/25.)

7.5 VAT reclaim

A VAT claim of £1362.52 (covering the period 01 Oct 2022 to 31 Mar 2023) was submitted 23 April 2023, and received from HMRC on 02 May 2023.

7.6 Review Memberships

The PC agreed its continued membership of Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) @ £252.70 (£268.54 last year), and Community Action Suffolk (FoC).

7.7 Development pathway for councillors

SALC recommends all new and existing councillors, as a refresher, the new Councillor Basics workshop consisting of two x 2-hour sessions. Weds 17 and 24 May 2023; Thurs 18 and 25 May 2023; Thurs 1 and 8 June 2023; Mon 5 and 12 June 2023; Weds 7 and 14 June 2023; Weds 21 and 28 June 2023. £60+VAT. The PC agreed to fund the SALC Councillor Basics workshop for interested councillors.

8. Governance documentation review, updates, and adoption/approval

None, reviews of annual governance documentation will be at the next meeting.

9. Correspondence and urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

9.1 Events Committee

Cllr Kirk formally recorded the PC's thanks to Olive Miller, Linda Rolph, Anne Baker, and Val Byrne for their work over the last 15 years. The Events Committee would be re-started taking input from the questionnaire responses.

9.2 Coronation event

An event had been held in celebration of the crowning of King Charles on 6th May.

9.3 KeepBritainTidy.org: The Great British Spring Clean 2023

Westerfield's Explorer group will conduct a village litter pick this Sunday 21st May, & Clerk has arranged for the refuse (50 sacks each of clear/recycle, and black non-recycle) to be collected from the Village Hall car park on Tues 23rd May.

Cllr Peace offered to advertise the litter pick on the Facebook page.

9.4 Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley Community Partnership Meeting

Unfortunately no WPC attendee was able to volunteer to attend this meeting on 19 June 2023, 14:00 – 16:30, at Adastral Park (East Suffolk Council invite from Ben Bix).

9.5 East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership (CRP)

CRP are arranging meetings to get input on the types of schemes we'd like to see implemented at our local rail station. These sessions will be attended by CRP's Community Rail Officer.

Cllr Kirk to see if the resident who contacted the PC about the railway is interested.

9.6 Community Action Suffolk (CAS)

CAS have prepared a report on how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting the VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise) sector. They're now completing Round 3 of the Cost-of-Living Impact Survey and need a councillor to complete a 5-10 minute survey by 31st May.

Cllr Peace agreed to complete the survey on the PC's behalf.

10. To note the date of forthcoming meetings: 17th May, Annual Parish Meeting in the Village Hall, then Parish Council meetings, 11th July, 19th September, and 21st November in the Church Room.)

To be signed when approved

