

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Market Weston Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 16th January 2025 at 7.00pm in Market Weston Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: D Fulcher, M Martin, P Barham, P Freeman & SCC J Spicer. As the Clerk was unwell at the meeting, it was agreed that Cllr Freeman should leave the meeting, to protect his own health.

1. Co-option of new Parish Councillor

N/A

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr A Hall did not attend the meeting, apologies for absence were received from WSDC C Bull.

3. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

3.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None.

3.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None.

3.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. N/A

4. Minutes - The minutes of the Thursday 21st November 2024 Parish Council meeting were agreed and approved as a correct record.

5. Meeting open to the public

None present.

6. Report from Suffolk County Councillor: J Spicer

Cllr Spicer thanked the Clerk for her continued work regarding securing the bus service for the villages in our area. The bid, submitted at the end of last year was successful. However, the bus needs to be used if it is to continue to be viable. Coney Weston is under threat of losing the service as, sitting on a 'dogleg' it may not be viable to keep the service going unless it is used. The Clerk and the Chairman from Barningham are doing some work on trying to retain the 73a, school bus for Coney Weston. They are going to be driving the routes to look at timings. The next meeting of the Support Our local Buses Group is being held on Friday 7th February, at Barningham Village Hall. There have been no further reports of flooding in the village recently, which was good to hear. Cllr Spicer attended a Suffolk County Council meeting where it was agreed to submit a bid for inclusion in the government's Devolution Priority Programme (DPP). This decision followed a debate and vote involving all county councillors. As part of the government's English Devolution White Paper, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet recommended Suffolk for the DPP, which could lead to the creation of a directly elected Mayor (potentially covering both Suffolk and Norfolk) and a reorganisation of local government. This would replace the current district, borough, and county councils with a streamlined unitary council structure. The government's proposals aim to restructure councils in two-tier areas like Suffolk, claiming that unitary councils deliver better outcomes for residents and allow cost savings to be reinvested in public services. Additionally, the government is proposing the establishment of new Mayoral Authorities. These would have a single directly elected Mayor overseeing larger regions, such as Norfolk and Suffolk, with strategic powers in areas like transport infrastructure, health improvement, and emergency services. If this is to go ahead there will not be County Council elections in May this year. Cllr Spicer asked that, once we know if we are able to have a Vehicle Activated sign (VAS) in the village, we send details of costings for her to consider making a grant towards the device.

Action Clerk

7. Report from B. Councillor: C Bull

To discuss request for funding, to include replacement matting for the basket swing. Cllr Bull was unable to attend the meeting, but she has indicated that she has some grant money that is potentially available for the Parish Council. Dependant of how much funding is available - the Clerk will check this with WSDC Bull- the Clerk will poll the Councillors, ahead of the next meeting, to see where they would like to see the money spent. Either on new matting for the basket swing, to be fitted by Cllr Fulcher or as a contribution towards a new VAS for the village.

Action Clerk

8. Progress reports. For information, from:

8. Chairman

The Chairman reported that this year would mark the 20th anniversary for The Village Green. It was agreed that it would be good to do something to mark this. Cllr Martin will speak to the Village Hall Committee to see if they would like to help host an event on The Green. A date for this event was proposed as the 6th September. Cllr Barham will see if the local band is available to be booked for this date.

Action Cllr Martin/Barham

9. Clerk:

9.1 Buses. To receive update on changes to local bus services.

The bid to save the buses for Market Weston, and the other local villages on the route, in to Bury St Edmunds, was successful. There is still work to be done to retain all the stops and to ensure that the service is sustainable. The Clerk and Chairman from Barningham are doing some work on looking at the route to see if they can secure all the stops on the route, in particular the Coney Weston stop, which is under threat. The Clerk will continue to work with the group, now called 'Support our Buses' to make sure the service is viable moving forward. As parishes we need to do all we can to encourage residents to use the service. If it is not used it may well be lost. (see also under Cllr Spicers report)

Action Clerk

9.2 To discuss possible change of meeting night.

Following discussion it was agreed to stick to the current meeting night, which is the third Thursday of alternative months.

10. The Green/Play area report

10.1 to receive an update on the continuing maintenance of The Green.

The Old mower has been moved into position for work to be undertaken by Stephen Hatten. The racking and some big sheets of plywood, in the mower storage, will need to be removed to enable storage of both mowers, once our old mower has been repaired and returned. Cllr Fulcher will make the arrangements for the shed to be cleared.

Action Cllr Fulcher

11. Village matters

11.1 To discuss any highways issues.

No issues currently reported.

11.2 To receive any update on potential Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) project.

The Clerk has submitted our request for sites, for the posts to hold the VAS, to the team at Suffolk County Council for consideration. A decision to purchase the device will made once further information is obtained from Cllr Bull. See under item 7.

Action Clerk

11.3 To explore option to add an additional name to the War Memorial.

The Clerk is meeting with Cllr Martin and Cllr Freeman on 20th January, to discuss work previously undertaken and further action that could be taken to add an additional name to the War Memorial. The Parish Council support the addition of the name if it is possible.

Action Cllrs Martin/Freeman/Clerk

11.4 To receive feedback from Cllr Barham on SCC Highways Community Help training. Cllr Barham attended the recent SCC Highways Community Help training session. This means he can carry out and supervise works undertaken on the highway. This does not cover works on the carriageway but relates to works on the public highways, including footpaths, verges etc. We are very grateful to Cllr Barham for undertaking this training.

12. Finance.

12.1 To consider payments and note any receipts.

The following accounts were approved for payment:

Administration	Various	£799.18
Annual support	Community Heartbeat Trust	£162.00
Administration	Various	£67.74
Data protection	ICO	£35.00
Administration	Various	£162.79

12.2 Bank reconciliation, budget report and accounts update.

The Clerk provided a Bank reconciliation, schedule of payments and budget report for the Councillors' information.

12.3 Precept. To confirm precept request to be submitted to West Suffolk Council.

The precept amount was ratified as £10,097. This represents the 9% increase agreed at the November meeting. As minuted previously, this amount was agreed to take into account the fact that, as the maintenance of The Green is currently down to the goodwill of volunteers, we need to be building back up The Green funds for any potential future costs. We may well have to employ a contractor in the future or replace, with a new machine, the current mower. In addition, the increase in the Clerks hours, agreed at the September meeting, recognising the growing workload—due to both gradual increases over the years and heightened legal and governance requirements—making it impossible to meet the expected standards within the current time allocation, will also have an impact on the budget The Clerk will submit our request to West Suffolk District Council.

Action Clerk

12.4 To receive update on switch to Unity Bank.

The Clerk has completed the application for the switch to Unity Bank. This was signed by the Parish Councillors authorised to access the account. These are Cllrs D Fulcher, M Martin, P Freeman and P Barham. The Clerk will submit the application, with the required documents, to Unity Bank to facilitate the agreed change from Barclays bank.

Action Clerk

12.5 Accounts check for audit.

It was agreed that either Cllrs Freeman or Barham will carry out the internal audit review.

Action Cllrs Freeman or Barham/Clerk

13. Planning Matters to include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted. No applications/notices received.

14. Councillors reports and items for future agenda

No additional reports items raised.

15. Correspondence for information/action

15.1 WSDC project to install fully funded electric vehicle (EV) chargers at public and community sites. Information has been shared with the Village Hall. Due to a change in the management committee* the Clerk will share this information again with Cllr Martin. *The Parish Council website will need to be updated to reflect these changes

Action Cllr Martin/Clerk

16. Aide memoire

16.1 Tree planting project, Cllr Hall.

16.2 Flooding issues, Cllr Hall.

17. Date of next meeting: 20th March 2025 7pm in the Village Hall

18. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items:

18.1 Personnel Issues. None.

18.2 Legal Issues. None.