

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Market Weston Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 20th March 2025 at 7.00pm in Market Weston Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: M Martin, P Barham, P Freeman, D. Fulcher West Suffolk District Council (WSDC) Cllr Bull.

As Cllr D Fulcher arrived after the start of the meeting Cllr Martin chaired the meeting.

1. Co-option of new Parish Councillor

N/A

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved by the Council from Cllr Hall and Suffolk County Council (SCC) Cllr Spicer.

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 16th January 2025 Parish Council meeting were agreed and approved as a correct record.

5. Meeting open to the public

No members of the public in attendance.

6. Report from County Councillor: J Spicer

To receive any update on the drainage issues on The Street.

Mike McLean, SCC Asset Support Technician (Drainage) has now carried out the preliminary site visit: On site he was accompanied by the manager of the sub-contractor SCC use for such works, and by the assistant of the construction manager. They had a good look around and have got a plan in principle now. They don't yet have a date for the attendance, but they are definitely moving in that direction now. Mr Mclean asked for some assistance in identifying adjacent landowners, This information has been supplied

Cllr Spicer wanted to pass on her congratulations to all involved in Market Weston on a brilliant exhibition and social event on Saturday. This sentiment was echoed by the Parish Council.

The Clerk will provide an update on the 73 and 73A revised bus route and timetable.

Cllr Spicer reported that Hopton School now in a formal partnership with Elveden School

The A1088 at Stowlangtoft re-opened 6th March

The formal Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government MCLG consultation is underway about devolution (Norfolk and Suffolk combined authority with a directly elected Mayor from next May. More information on this was provided by WSDC Bull under item 7. The Clerk will confirm with Cllr Spicer the amount of funding she is able to make towards the cost of a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) for the village.

Action Clerk

7. Report from B. Councillor: C Bull

To discuss issue with West Suffolk Council determining planning application ahead of extraordinary meeting. The Clerk was disappointed at having to cancel an extraordinary meeting that had been organised to discuss a planning application in the village. A request for an extension of time was sought and, as the officer said that they would be determining the application on the 18th March, the extraordinary meeting was scheduled for the 17th March. Just prior to the meeting the Clerk was made aware that this application had already been determined.

The Clerk contacted the officer in question, to raise their concerns about the application being determined ahead of the agreed time, but at the time of the meeting had not received a reply. Cllr Bull has made some enquiries, and it would appear the officer in question is currently away on annual leave. Cllr Bull and the Clerk will continue to pursue this matter as the Parish Council feel it is important that all planning applications, receive the same opportunity for full discussion, in a public forum. Cllr Bull confirmed that she would be able to make a contribution of up to £1000 towards the purchase of a VAS for the village. Cllr Bull should be able to make a further contribution towards the replacement matting under the basket swing. Any grants agreed would not be made until after April. Cllr Bull has been involved in recent discussions regarding the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Cllr Bull reported that the Suffolk Libraries service is coming back in-house. Suffolk County Council have a statutory duty to run a library service. The contract, with the charity that was running the service, came to an end and they were not able to provide a robust enough bid to retain the contract. They have done an excellent job during the period they were running the service and Suffolk County Council will continue to offer all the services that the charity provided.

As discussed at the January meeting with Cllr Spicer, the government has announced that Suffolk's county, district and borough councils will be replaced with a single-tier system. Cllr Bull gave a brief update on SCC's position regarding the local government "reform" and the proposed new combined authority. Suffolk County Council believe one council for Suffolk would make delivering public services simpler, cheaper and quicker, and better meet the needs of residents and businesses. Suffolk County Council argues that consolidating all services under one unitary authority is the only effective way to deliver against the government's criteria for local government reform. The move would see all council services, such as waste collection and disposal, housing, social care, planning, highways maintenance, leisure, school placements and travel and street cleaning, all provided by one authority - rather than the six that currently exist in Suffolk. Bringing together district, borough and county council functions is expected to reduce duplication, lower administrative costs and ensure a more coordinated and cost-effective approach to delivering essential services. Suffolk County Council will submit its initial proposal to the government by 21st March, with a more detailed business case to follow later in the year.

Cllr Bull reported that West Suffolk District Council is still discussing its preferred approach to the local government reorganisation. Several models are being considered, including a single authority for the whole of Suffolk, two authorities covering Suffolk, or three authorities, with Ipswich as a separate authority within Suffolk. The Council will submit its response by the March 21st deadline, with further information available after this date. The potential impact on parish councils remains unclear, but we will no longer be represented by two councillors as is the case at the moment, and will instead be represented by one Councillor. Concerns were expressed that a single authority could distance decision-making from local communities. In addition, the government's plans will also see the election of a mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk in May 2026, who would take control over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, economic development, health improvement and blue light services – along with devolved government funding to deliver positive change. The whole situation is moving very quickly. The Great British Spring Clean will take place from 21 March to 6 April, and West Suffolk Council will again be supporting the event with the loan of litter picking equipment.

8. Progress reports. For information, from:

8. Chairman

The Chairman had no additional report to make.

9. Clerk:

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

There appears to be some timing issues with the current timetable. The next meeting, of the taskforce, is being held on 10th April at Barningham Village Hall. The Barningham Parish Council

Chairman and Clerk are trying to raise the issues with the current timetable so that they can be addressed.

10. The Green/Play area report

10.1 to receive an update on the continuing maintenance of The Green, to include disposal of scythe mower.

Following the recent clearance of the shed, the scythe mower has been sold for £300. This money has been paid in to the Parish Council account. We have been informed that work has begun on the old mower, with its engine now being taken out to be worked on. The Green has received some cuts, and it is looking really good. Thanks again are extended to the dedicated team of volunteers who do the work there.

Cllr Fulcher will look at the matting under the swing to see if it can be dug out and reused. If not, Cllr Fulcher will provide size information to the Clerk so that she can price the job.

Action Cllr Fulcher/Clerk

11. Village matters

11.1 To discuss any highways issues.

The edge of road defect in New Common Road is a cause for concern again. The Clerk will report this to SCC.

Action Clerk

11.2 To receive any update on potential VAS project.

Once confirmation that Cllr Spicer is willing to pay the balance of the purchase price (Cllr Bull has offered a £1,000 contribution) Once the funding has been confirmed and also once the logistics of moving a device with a solar panel energy supply have been further explored, the Clerk will place an order for the device and contact SCC about the new posts,. Cllr Fulcher asked that it be recorded that, although he respected the Parish Councils decision to purchase a device, he did not support the project as he felt it was unneeded. The other Councillors present felt there was an issue with speeding in the village and therefore believe it will be of a positive benefit for the village. Cllrs Freeman and Barham will manage the device once it has been received.

Action Cllr Freeman/Barham/Clerk

11.3 To confirm new meeting date to discuss option regarding adding an additional name to the Cllrs Freeman and Martin have done a lot of work on finding additional information regarding the proposal to add Arthur Driver to the War Memorial. The Clerk will put together an application for submission to the War Memorial Trust, both for permission and funding.

Action Clerk

11.4 To discuss arrangements for the emptying of dog poo bins moving forward.

West Suffolk Council (WSC) are trying to make efficiencies where possible and they can currently offer some of the smaller villages, with only a few bins a cost-free option to remove those existing bins and replace them with one or two lockdowns. The new cost from April will make the yearly cost of emptying a bin (regardless of size) £200.20 so for Market Weston with 3 bins they would be looking at an annual cost of £800.80. WSC are looking at where they can make the best efficiencies on current rounds. In the area around Coney Weston, Barningham and Hopton they currently have no bins, so making the Market Weston collections more efficient makes sense. Keeping any bins would work if we had someone locally to empty them, which would be fine if they were emptied into the lock down bin if there was capacity (Which there should be as it will be a 240-litre bin). It was agreed that we would leave the existing bins in situ with some of the Councillors decanting the smaller bins content into the lockdown bins. WSC would not charge for emptying the lockdown bins. We would ideally like three lockdown bins. In order of preference these would be at the entrance to The Green on New Common Road, near the Church, off Church Road and at the entrance to the Green, off church Road. They Clerk will discuss the options with WSC and potentially arrange a site meeting to confirm sites.

Action Clerk

12. Finance.

12.1 The following accounts were approved for payment/receipts noted.

Administration	Various	-£873.80
Sale of scythe mower	Receipt D Fulcher via eBay	£300.00

Cllr Martin carried out the additional accounts check at the meeting.

12.2 Bank reconciliation, budget report and accounts update.

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

12.3 To receive confirmation on switch to Unity Bank.

The switch to Unity Trust Bank has been successful. The funds will be available from 24th March 2025

12.4 To confirm arrangements for internal audit review and external audit.

Cllr Martin carried out the internal audit review.

It was agreed to appoint SALC as the internal Auditor for the period 1st April 2024-31st March 2025
The cost of this will be £183

13. Planning Matters to include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted.

13.1 DC/25/0098/HH Householder planning application - ramped access to front of dwelling 5 Homepiece Market Weston. As discussed under item 7, this application was granted permission, by West Suffolk Council, before the Parish Council had an opportunity to discuss it formally. The Parish Council did not raise any objections to the application.

14. Councillors reports and items for future agenda

There were some concerns raised about the date proposed for The Village Greens 20th Anniversary Celebration. A number of the Councillors will not be available on the 6th September, which was the date suggested at the last meeting. It was suggested that the event could be held on another date, perhaps to coincide with the BBQ that is likely to be held again this year. The Parish Council are keen to support a celebration, Cllr Martin will take this information to the next Village Hall meeting for further discussion and consideration, and we will include it as an agenda item for the Parish Council meeting.

Action Cllr Martin/Clerk

To aid communication between the Councillors it was suggested that we set up a WhatsApp group. It was also suggested that when sending out the agenda the Clerk should use outlook invite as this affords the councillors the opportunity to confirm if they will be in attendance at the meeting.

Action Clerk

15. Correspondence for information/action

15.1 WSDC Building Resilience and Nutrition (BRAN) fund.

The Building Resilience and Nutrition (BRAN) fund is open to applications from community groups, charities, voluntary organisations, faith groups and social enterprises. It has been created from £90,000 given by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders and is being delivered by West Suffolk Council in partnership with Community Action Suffolk and Suffolk County Council. Information circulated.

15.2 SCC Medequip return request

The Clerk will put the poster, from Medequip, asking for old medical equipment to be returned, on the noticeboard.

Action Clerk

15.3 Onesuffolk, to note increase in website hosting price.

It was noted that the website hosting price is set to increase by £6, from £6 to £66 per year.

15.4 Request for information on local charities, Ixworth Surgery.

The Social Prescriber at Ixworth Surgery has been in contact to say they are trying to make a list of local charities, in the Ixworth surgeries' catchment area. They are aware that there are charities that they may be able to secure small grants through, for a few patients, so that they are able to buy essential items. The Clerk will put them in touch with the Market Weston United Charity.

Action Clerk

15.5 Easter Holiday activities

WSC Easter activities information was circulated for information.

16. Aide memoire

16.1 Tree planting project, Cllr Hall.

16.2 Flooding issues, Cllr Hall.

17. Date of next meeting: Annual Parish Meeting 15th May 2025 7pm in the Village Hall, to be followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

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