

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Market Weston Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 21st November 2024 at 7.00pm in Market Weston Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs: M Martin, P Barham, P Freeman, WSDC C Bull & SCC J Spicer.

1. Co-option of new Parish Councillor

N/A

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted by the Councillors from Cllrs D Fulcher and A Hall.

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 26th September 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 reported that the works, to the bridge at Stowlangtoft, have been delayed. This is because SCC has identified some issues with the concrete piles which have been installed. They are currently investigating and discussing these issues with the company who supplied the concrete, as well as other key stakeholders, to assess the impact of these issues and determine the best course of action to resolve them. Works have been temporarily paused for a brief period whilst this happens. This is consequently likely to have an impact on the duration of their programme of works and this work is now looking likely not to be completed until the New Year. Cllr Spicer further reported that Kiln Lane, Stowlangtoft has now become one way.

Cllr Spicer reported that progress has been made with the buses with two bids for funding being made. There is a further update on this under the Clerks report. The flooding issue, in Ponds End Lane, is still in hand with Suffolk County Council Engineers. Cllr Spicer asked that we reported any issues with flooding to her.

7. Report from west Suffolk District Council Councillor (WSDC): C Bull

WSDC are required to do annual reports on air quality. All sites tested are showing as being significantly below the national average, which is good for our region. WSDC has worked hard to try and reduce emissions, and the anti-idling campaign has undoubtedly helped. Cllr Bull reported that there is going to be a review of the sites monitored as they have remained the same for a number of years now. Cllr Bull reported that the Communities Capital Grant fund is taking applications. The examination of the Local Plan is being held at the moment; they are currently looking at the site allocations. They will be looking at policies next. Cllr Bull reported that West Suffolk Council approved the New Housing, Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy last week. Cllr Bull has said she would make a grant towards the cost of the VAS if we decided to go ahead with the purchase of a device for the village.

8. Progress reports. For information, from:

8. Chairman

The Chairman had no additional report to make.

9. Clerk:

9.1 To receive feedback on Streetlight briefing WSC Parish forum, Streetlight Briefing, SCC flooding and drainage forum, SCC winter maintenance forum and SALC Sole Trustee training. The Clerk attended the West Suffolk forum at Haverhill. There was a session on the Suffolk County Council Transport Strategy, led by Lewis Boudville – Principal Strategic Transport Planner. They are launching the public consultation on the Local Transport Plans and Area Plans for West Suffolk in October. The timing of this was not felt to be great, bearing in mind the issues we are having with our local bus service. The plan was focused on the towns, and a few rural areas. Our area was not even on their map. There was mention of multimodal transport, which was something that was included in the bus bid to SCC, as mentioned under item 6 and 9.2 below. There was also a discussion about Community Land Trusts. Sue Downs, Rural Housing Officer - Community Action Suffolk and representatives of Lavenham Community Land Trust provided an insight into what can be achieved and the opportunities that these schemes can bring to their communities. This was very interesting.

The SCC Streetlight briefing was interesting and informative. It was reported that the change to part night lighting offered savings of over £750K (over 4m at current energy prices) SCC is recognised internationally for their streetlighting programmes.

The SCC Flooding and Drainage forum included an interesting 'map' that shows the route of funding for drainage works.

SCC winter maintenance forum. It was noted that SCC highways look at road temperatures, not air temperatures to decide when to grit. Roads can often be a lower temperature than the air and this is why you sometimes see the gritters out, but the weather forecast is not predicting freezing weather. It was further noted that SCC grit all A and B roads and in addition roads that support a 5 day a week bus services where practicable.

SALC Sole Trustee training.

This was a very helpful and informative training. It may prove useful if we ever find ourselves in the position of having to have to take over from a charity, i.e. the Village Hall.

9.2 Buses. To receive update on reduction to local bus services and actions being taken, including submission of bid for funding.

The Clerk, working with the Chairman at Barningham and Cllr Spicer was unexpectedly tasked with putting together and submitting the bid for the education/training bus. A lot of work was required to produce the application at such short notice. The application went in last Friday and we are waiting to hear if we have been successful. Currently the service is due to be withdrawn in January. At the most recent Task Force Meeting, at Bardwell, the group discovered that they were expected to produce two separate bids for funding. One for the 'shoppers' bus and one for the 'education/training' bus. The Chairman, Cllr Spicer and the Clerk were tasked with completing the bid for the 'education/training' bus. This came as a bit of a surprise and there is a considerable amount of work that will need to be undertaken in order to meet the November 15th deadline. We have been told that we should get a quick answer regarding the grant. The Task Force have concerns over what will happen, following the cut off of the temporary service, at the end of December, if our bid is unsuccessful.

10. The Green/Play area report

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

The grass cutting is winding down as winter approaches. The Green is looking good at the moment, thanks to the work of the volunteers.

11. Highway matters

11.1 To discuss any highways issues.

11.2 To receive any update on potential VAS project.

The application, for a new post in Church Road, has been submitted. We are waiting to hear if we have been successful. Cllr Freeman will provide the Clerk with the grid references of the other locations we have identified, and the Clerk will submit these to SCC for consideration. It was agreed to go ahead with the purchase if our requests for sites are successful. Both Cllrs Spicer and Bull will be approached regarding funding as they have both indicated previously that they would be amenable to a request for grant funding.

Action Cllr Freeman/Clerk

11.3 To receive any update on footpath signage.

The footpath signs have been repaired/replaced. Claire Dickson, SCC Operations Manager Rights of Way and Access chased the West Team who in turn chased the contractor. Apologies were sent for the delay in the posts being installed, it appears they had been missed.

11.4 To confirm date for Highways Community Help training.

It was confirmed that Cllr P Barham has been booked on to the Highways Community Help training for Wednesday 8th January 2024.

11.5 To receive information regarding concerns raised over overgrown hedges in Hollow Lane.

A resident from hollow lane has been in contact with the Clerk about the condition of the overgrown hedges in Hollow Lane. They made a report, at the suggestion of the Clerk, on the SCC reporting portal. This report seems to have disappeared. The Clerk has re-reported the issue.

12. Finance

12.1 To agree the following payments and note any receipts.

Date	Description	Supplier / customer	Total
09/10/2024	New S/H mower	Stephen Hatten	-£1,200.00
21/11/2024	Mower seat cushion	Darryl Fulcher	-£16.27
21/11/2024	Administration	Various	£723.19
21/11/2024	domain name and .gov email	Community Action Suffolk	-£42.00
21/11/2024	Administration	Various	-£182.39
21/11/2024	donation / wreath	Royal British Legion	-£50.00

Additional checks carried out by Cllr Freeman.

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 Budget to consider items to be included in the 2025/26 budget and precept request, to include correspondence from WSC Council Tax reduction scheme and requests for grants from Citizens, Advice and Suffolk Headway.

West Suffolk Council is currently reviewing its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and has written to us to formally consult us on the proposed changes. As part of their collective work to support communities that are the hardest hit by the current pressures on the cost of living, West Suffolk Council is seeking views on extending, for a further year, the decreased contribution rate (maximum discount of 100 per cent) for working-age residents, which proposed support for low-income households and those facing financial hardship, in light of the current pressures on the cost of living. The Parish Council supported this initiative.

Following discussion, it was proposed to precept for a 9% increase. A 9% increase would represent an increase of approximately £1,000. The exact amount will be shared once the Clerk has access to the information and the precept amount will be ratified at the January meeting. This amount was agreed to take in to account the fact that, as the maintenance of The Green is down to the good will of volunteers, that 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.

Action Clerk

12.4 To receive update on switch to Unity Bank.

The Clerk is still waiting for some documentation from some of the Councillors to facilitate the switch to Unity Trust Bank.

Action Cllrs Fulcher/Martin/Freeman/Hall/ Clerk

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

13.1 DC/24/1427/TPO | TPO 316 (1973) tree preservation order - one Beech (T1 on plan, within group G1 on order) fell to 6m above ground level to create retained stump for habitat monolith. The Old Rectory The Street Market Weston. The Parrish Council raised **No objection** to this application.

13.2 DC/24/1039/LB Application for listed building consent - a. replacement door to rear elevation b. brickwork to replace flint on rear elevation. Chapel Cottage Church Road Market Weston. West Suffolk Council has **Granted** permission for this application.

14. Councillors reports and items for future agenda

A request to add Arthur Driver to the War Memorial is being revisited. The Clerk will look back at the work previously done around this request and see if there is any funding available.

Action Clerk

It was agreed we will look at the day of the week that we meet. This is to try and see if there is a different evening of the week that would better suit more of the Councillors.

Action Clerk

15. Correspondence for information/action

15.1 WSC, Capital funding grant. Circulated. Although potentially too late for this round of funding the Clerk will see if there is any funding available to replace the matting under the basket swing.

Action Clerk

15.2 Suffolk care directory, requirements for 2025. The Clerk will source ten copies of the new directory for those in the village who might like one.

15.3 WSC Air quality update. Circulated. 15.4 SCC Transport plan consultation. Circulated.

15.5 SCC, Warm Homes Suffolk Loans. Circulated. 15.6 WSC Winter Support Toolkit. Circulated.

15.7 Connecting Communities, Rural Transport Survey. Circulated.

16. Aide memoire

16.1 Tree planting project, Cllr Hall. 16.2 Flooding issues, Cllr Hall.

17. Date of next meeting: 16th January 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.