

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Market Weston Annual Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 19th May 2022 at 7.30pm in Market Weston Village Hall

Present: Cllrs D Fulcher, M Martin, A Hall, C Snelling, P Freeman, C.Cllr J Spicer & W.S Cllr C Bull.

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Freeman proposed Cllr Fulcher for the position of Chairman. Seconded by Cllr Martin. Fulcher accepted the position.

2. Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Fulcher signed the acceptance of office.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Fulcher nominated Cllr Martin for the position of Vice Chairman. Seconded by Cllr Hall. Martin accepted the position.

Sadly Cllr Loden has resigned as a Councillor on the Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to write to express our appreciation for the work he did, both for the Parish Council and on The Green cutting group. His input will be greatly missed.

Action Clerk

4. Apologies for absence

None received.

5. To elect Council Officers and Representatives to outside bodies

Cllr Martin was nominated as a trustee to the Market Weston United Charity.

Cllr Martin was nominated as the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall committee.

6. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

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

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

6.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. None.

7. Co-option of new Parish Councillor.

8. Minutes -The minutes of the Thursday 17th March 2022 meeting were agreed and signed as a correct record.

9. Meeting open to the public

1 member present.

A resident asked why there was such a large percentage increase the Parish Councils element of this this years Council Tax. It was explained that as a percentage it did appear a large amount but in monetary terms it only amounted to an increase of £16.42 over the entire year. Although it was recognised that any increase, especially in the current climate, was of importance, it was necessary to make the increase in order to cover ever increasing costs and to continue to maintain the Green to a standard that the residents of Market Weston have had the benefit of over the years. The fencing has been replaced, in parts, to continue to offer a safe and secure area for those using the area.

10. Report from County Councillor:

Cllr Spicer was unable to attend the meeting.

11. Report from West Suffolk Councillor: C Bull

Cllr Bull was asked to give a bit of background on current the Local Plan consultation. Cllr Bull explained that the document was not just about allocating sites looking at the best sites for development but it also contains policies for affordable housing, new play areas and public open space, supported by infrastructure such as improvements to health and educational facilities, as well as roads. There is no proposal for development in Market Weston included in the current plan which runs until 2040. The Document will be reviewed again before then but it is unlikely that any large developments would come forward for Market Weston due to the nature of the village.

Once again like every other organisation West Suffolk Council have all had an incredibly challenging year not least of all having to constantly react to ever changing Covid scenarios often with reduced staffing levels and the added burden of extra workloads with for example having to administrate and pay all the various grants which the government have introduced to support businesses. This has been a major piece of work which still goes on and to manage it staff have been seconded from other areas in the council to do it. The flexibility and willingness of staff to move around and the way staff have adapted to working from home has been a revelation and although we are now moving towards being back in the office it is clear that ways of working will not return to being exactly as they were before.

One thing to come out of Covid is that we have seen that technology offers us alternative and sometimes more efficient ways of doing things and a new hybrid way of working is developing. We will have to ensure that where staff need to come together to work collaboratively, we have the facilities available. Equally when staff work from home we have to ensure they can do so in a safe and appropriate environment and we have to understand the needs of staff in relation to training, development, and support in this different environment. Some working from home with a reduction in travel mileage clearly brings with it some advantages to the environment but there is always the need to ensure that we continue to offer accessibility and the best possible service to our residents.

We will always need some meetings to be in person, for example the regulatory ones: Council, Development Control and Licensing Hearings but many briefings and training sessions lend themselves to be carried out virtually.

In these difficult times with very heavy workloads staff wellbeing, mental as well as physical, is and has been an important consideration and is not neglected and we carry out regular wellbeing surveys and work with staff on ways to address stress for example.

Normal business still goes on though. We took our budget for 2022-2023 to Council in February and I am pleased to say that despite all the pressures it has been created to be balanced and sustainable and to allow investment in the priorities of our residents and businesses and is designed to make our communities greener, healthier and more prosperous.

Just to mention a few things:

We are proposing to invest £9 million in a range of green initiatives to help us reach carbon neutrality by 2030;

Barley Homes, the council's housing company, is going from strength to strength and to date has built over 60 homes with more in the pipeline;

We are progressing the Western Way Development which will integrate council and government services, the NHS, leisure facilities (including a new swimming pool), an advice centre, third sector organisations and both community and education services as well as delivering new employment space;

We are working to provide over 40,000sq ft of start up/incubation space for companies in the manufacturing and engineering sector on the Suffolk Business Park to provide more employment opportunities;

We are as you are aware well along the path to creating a new Local Plan. The consultation document was approved at Council this week and goes out very shortly. I would urge anyone with concerns to take part in the consultation. The Local Plan is a huge bit of work but is absolutely essential to ensure that we are able to meet the housing targets imposed on us by government and ultimately avoid speculative often inappropriate development.

We continue to help fund local organisations through our Community Chest which this year allocated over £466,000 to charities and organisations all over West Suffolk.

I have also been able to allocate around £3,500 from my Locality Budget to projects in my ward, providing funding for such things as defibrillators, materials for fencing, creation of a Jubilee corner and the cost of bands for Jubilee village events and there are more projects in the pipeline.

Finally you may have read in the press about the newly announced County Deal offer for Suffolk which we as the District Council welcome. It hopefully will give us across the whole county and particularly in West Suffolk the opportunity to gain more funding and drive decision making more locally rather than from central government. This is something we have always advocated and the offer is in recognition of the "Suffolk System" that is already in place. There is no suggestion that it comes with a need for a mayor or change of existing governance arrangements.

Finally, finally I would like to say that I have enjoyed working with all the Parish Councillors this year who work so hard for this village and its residents and are to be applauded for it.

12.1 Chairman's Report

12.1 To confirm bench installation.

The Chairman has purchased a memorial bench, arranged a plaque, with an inscription dedicating the bench to the late Guy Hatten and laid the cement pad for the bench. He has the brackets and will ensure the bench will be in place for unveiling at the Jubilee event. He asked if anyone may be able to help with the final installation. The Councillors thanked Cllr Fulcher for all the work he has put into this project.

13.2 Clerks Report

13.1 Emergency Plan, update on progress.

This matter is ongoing

13.2 Update on Parish Council questionnaire.

The Clerk has done some further work on the document and it is now ready for printing and delivery. Cllr Fulcher said he should be able to print the document off and deliver it when he delivers the flyers for the Jubilee event. The Clerk has found a company that would print the document at a good price, if Cllr Fulcher is unable to do so.

Action Cllr Fulcher/Clerk

14 Finance.

14.1 The following accounts were noted/approved for payment

Receipt	West Suffolk	Precept	£8,000.00
Payment	Trevor Brown	Audit	£120.00
Payment	SALC	subscription	£144.68
Payment	Mijan	Software	£50.00
Payment	MWVH	Hall Hire	£140.00
Payment	West Suffolk	Dog waste bins	£166.40
Payment	Darryl Fulcher	Bench instal	£139.40
Payment	Various	Admin	£618.87
Payment	Pat Murray	The Green	£1,608.00
Payment	Darryl Fulcher	Bench purchase	£475.00

14.2 Bank reconciliation and budget report.

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

14.3 End of Year Accounts.

14.3.1 To discuss the Report by the Internal Auditor.

The internal audit report was discussed. The recommendations were noted and are in hand. See below.

Action Clerk

14.3.2 To approve and sign section two of the AGAR, Certificate of exemption.
The Internal Audit report, Certificate of Exemption, section 1 – Annual Governance Statement and Section 2 Accounting Statements were agreed and signed. We had to tick No against Box 5 due to the risk assessments/internal control documentation not being formally reviewed in the year 2021/22. The Clerk will make the relevant submission to the external auditors and ensure we are compliant with the publication requirements. **Action Clerk**

15. New Code of Conduct

To agree and adopt new Councillor Code of conduct

The New Code of Councillor Conduct was agreed and adopted. **Action Clerk**

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

16.1 DC/22/0687/FUL | Planning application - conversion of existing agricultural building to form single storey dwelling | Hopton End Farm Church Road Market Weston.

The Parish Council support this application.

17. The Green/Play area report

17.1 Continuing maintenance of The Green

The team are cutting the grass regularly now and we are very grateful to them for this. Cllr Fulcher reported that there is a tree that is leaning over on the Green. The Clerk will arrange for a tree specialist to come out and have a look and offer some advice. **Action Clerk**

17.2 New fencing and repairs to kissing gate, The Green, update.

This work now complete.

17.3 Play Area Inspections – Service Level Agreement

The current free inspection, by West Suffolk council, will continue for this financial year. This arrangement will be reviewed towards the end of 2022.

17.4 Play area rota

The Clerk will provide an up to date play area inspection rota for the Councillors. **Action Clerk**

18. VAS project.

This was a project being overseen by Cllr Loden. It was agreed to see if there is an appetite for a VAS in the village before deciding if the project will be taken forward. **Action Clerk**

19. Queens Jubilee Event

To receive any update for plans to celebrate the Queens Jubilee event.

It was agreed that the memorial bench, for the late Guy Hatten would be unveiled at the jubilee event. Ideally this would be around the time that there is going to be a toast to the Queen with Pimms and cake. This is programmed for 3pm. There is going to be a number of fun games with prizes. Everyone is invited to bring their own picnic and join in the fun. The Clerk will see if she can arrange a tree for planting, to commemorate the Queens Jubilee. There were a number of people who could be asked to plant the tree. **Action Clerk**

20. Tree Warden report.

To receive an update from the Tree Warden

There was no report this month.

21. Councillors reports and items for future agenda To include

Cllr Snelling asked for an up to date map showing the village Settlement boundary. The Clerk will source one and send it to the Councillors.

22 Correspondence for information

None received.

23. Aide memoire

23.1 Tree planting project, Cllr Hall.

23.2 Flooding issues, Cllr Hall.

24. Date of next meeting: 21st July 2022

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

25.1 Personnel Issues. None.

25.2 Legal Issues. None.