

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Market Weston Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 16th November 2023 7.00pm
in Market Weston Village Hall

Carmel Snelling has decided to step down from the Parish Council. Her input will be greatly missed.

Present: Cllrs: D Fulcher, P Barham, P Freeman, A Hall, M Martin & C. Cllr J Spicer

1. Co-option of new Parish Councillor

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from W.S Cllr 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. None.

8. Minutes - The minutes of the Thursday 21st September 2023 meeting agreed and approved as a correct record.

5. Meeting open to the public None present.

6. Report from County Councillor: J Spicer

Cllr Spicer apologised for missing the last meeting, she was still recovering from surgery and was unable to drive. There should be an 'unsuitable for HGVs' sign going up at the B1111 end of Ponds End Lane soon, this will go on an existing post. Cllr Spicer reported that she has offered a grant of £750 to the village hall towards the resurfacing of the car park. The developer at the new Hopton housing development has resurfaced the Olives Throat footpath. A discussion was held on possible options for traffic calming in the village. Concerns had been raised about vehicles, traveling at speed, mounting the pavement to pass each other. All the properties in the Street have off road parking and as such cars do not tend to park on the highway, which tends to slow traffic down. It was difficult to know what funding would be available to support any traffic calming measures as we would need to evidence a need. It was agreed that we would discuss the option of a VAS (speed sign). If this was an option the Parish Council wished to pursue, Cllr Spicer said she could probably offer up to £1000 towards its cost. The footpath sign previously reported still has not been repaired. The Clerk will forward the details to Cllr Spicer for investigation.

Action Clerk

7. Report from B. Councillor: C Bull

Cllr Bull was unable to attend the meeting but asked if we knew of any Market Weston properties that were flooded (must be house not just land) as there will be, subject to criteria, some government compensation, but they will need to be registered. Cllr Bull can advised on this. As far as the Councillors were aware no properties in the village have been effected by flooding. Cllr Bull had also noted that we have a few planning applications in. She asked that we let her know if we have any concerns or if we want her to follow up with officers.

8. Chairman

8.1 To confirm laying of the Remembrance Day Wreath.

Cllr Martin was thanked for laying the Remembrance Day Wreath, on behalf of the Parish Council at the Remembrance Day service.

9. Clerk:

9.1 The following Councillors roles and responsibilities were confirmed.

Chair, Darryl Fulcher, responsible for Defibrillator, charity, Phone box, The Green.

Vice Chair, Mrs Miranda Martin, responsible for Village Hall, charity & PCC.

Mr Andy Hall, responsible for Defibrillator, trees, and flooding.

Mr Paul Freeman responsible for potholes- highways, footpath, public transport & VAS (if purchased)

Phil Barham responsible for Website, notice board, footpath bins & VAS (if purchased).

All responsible for Play area/The Green, Finance, policies, employment, planning & Emergency plan

9.2 Emergency Plan update.

Cllr Martin has done some work on the plan. She passed this on to the Clerk to update the plan.

Action Clerk

9.3 To receive report on new policing model The Clerk attended this recent briefing and submitted the following report.

Redesigning the Local Policing Operating Model To Keep Suffolk Safe

Aims: Officers to be where needed; Public safety; Criminals brought to justice

With the Suffolk Police, the new Chief Constable, Rachel Kearton, Crime Commissioner -Tim Passmore at new Police and Fire Station HQ in Stowmarket. Changes come into effect December 2023. Councillors from parish, local and county council present.

New Model -Three parts

Community Policing Teams 50 new areas/80 Community Officers in specific areas

Response Investigation Teams set up with more officers for both emergency and non-emergency calls as well as high-volume crime.

County Partnership and Prevention Hub -co-ordinating frontline policing across Suffolk -Anti-social/ hate crime/ children and young people and Neighbourhood Policing

Tim Passmore - the arguments for ensuring the Suffolk Constabulary has sufficient resources are well rehearsed. Very concerned the county does not receive an equitable financial settlement from the Home Office. Committed to achieve fairer funding for Suffolk. Council tax precept for policing went up this year - gave an extra £3.9 million to help cope with increased demands. Will be monitored quarterly c.f. his website. Total policing budget this year £168.4 million.

9.4 To give feedback on NSIPs event.

There was a lot of information discussed and it would seem not much support for local councils concerned with big infrastructure developments. Local Authorities play a different role in the NSIP process - acting more as a facilitator and enabler and not having any decision-making powers.

9.5 To discuss ideas from the time management training.

Although an enjoyable session the Clerk didn't think that she gained any really helpful information to help with her time management. A suggestion to turn of emails when working on more complex matters will be actioned when appropriate.

9.6 To discuss option to purchase new computer equipment.

The Clerks current computer equipment will be out of date within the next year and will not be able to receive any updates. In addition to this the storage is almost full so a new machine will need to be purchased in the near future. Following a consultation with a local IT specialist it was agreed to purchase a bespoke Build Machine for £440.00 + VAT / Delivered. In addition, it was agreed to take advantage of the migration service at a further £125 + VAT. These costs will be shared with the Clerks other Parish Councils. The associated costs have already been factored into this year's budget. There are still ongoing issues with the Wi-Fi and phone line at the Clerk's address, this matter is in hand.

Action Clerk

9.7 To confirm attendance at SALC conference.

The Clerk will attend the SALC Conference on 29th November.

Action Clerk

9.8 To discuss requirements for additional Suffolk Care directories.

I have asked for an up-to-date copy to be sent over once they have been re-printed so we can see if we need the updated version.

Action Clerk

10. The Green/Play area report

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

The mower is still being repaired. Cllr Fulcher will ask for the engine to be returned to him, for sending off for repair, if it has not been fixed within the next two months. Although we are very grateful to Mr Hatten for all that he does for the village, it is not an option for Cllr Fulcher to undertake all the grass cutting again next season. So, to this end we need our existing mower operational before the new grass cutting season.

10.2 To discuss matter raised in the inspection report.

Play equipment.

Several of the natural play items are regularly being flagged in the play area report. The Clerk has been in correspondence with a manager at West Suffolk Councils Parks Department to ask for guidance. In particular we have asked for advice on signage and a way forward with the equipment we have. Although some guidance was forthcoming it was considered a site visit would be beneficial. The Clerk will make the arrangements for this.

Action Clerk

10.3 To discuss options for signage.

It would appear that there has been some confusion regarding the signage discussed at the last meeting and the decision reported in the last minutes needs further clarification regarding dogs on the Green. Following further discussion, it was confirmed that although well behaved dogs are welcome on The Green, they do need to be on leads, as has always been the case. Cllr Fulcher will purchase some signage that makes this clear. We want those using The Green to feel welcomed and some additional signage, to this end, will be explored by the Clerk.

Action Cllr Fulcher/Clerk

11. Highway matters

11.1 To discuss options for traffic management in the village, including potential purchase of VAS.

See also under item 6 above.

Due to recent issues with flooding the highways engineer has been unable to come to have a look at the issues of speeding in the village. He did say however that a traffic count/speed monitoring would need to be undertaken before any decisions are made regarding new measures, there is a cost implication with this action. The Councillors agreed that, although not entirely convinced about this as an option for the village, that we should look at the logistics of having a VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) in the village. As mentioned under Cllr Spicers report, the funding of the device itself, which is in the region of £2250, would most likely be covered by grants, assuming that Cllr Bull was also able to contribute. However, there would be additional costs for posts etc that we would also need to consider. The first step would be to identify if we have any suitable spots for the sign to be used. To this end the Clerk will liaise with Cllr Freeman to take this forward and they will report back to the Council their findings.

Action Cllr Freeman/Clerk

12. Finance.

12.1 The following accounts were approved for payment:

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Website hosting | Community Action Suffolk | -£60.00 |
| Expenses | Vicki Gay expenses | -£27.03 |
| Computer support | Bailiwick IT Ltd | -£7.82 |
| Weedkiller | Darryl Fulcher | -£67.80 |
| Grant | MWVH | -£300.00 |
| Grounds maintenance | MWPCC | -£300.00 |
| RBL Wreath donation | Royal British Legion | -£50.00 |
| Administration | Various | -£632.19 |

12.2 Bank reconciliation and accounts update.

The Clerk provided the Councillors with a schedule of payments and a bank reconciliation for information.

12.3 To confirm grant requirements for Village Hall. Market Weston Village Hall would be very grateful to accept £300.00 grant money from the Parish Council. The revenue from hiring the village hall does not cover the running costs and they have had to fund raise and therefore would appreciate any support to continue to keep the hall open. The grant money would help go towards paying i.e., insurance, grass cutting etc.

12.3.1 Church grounds maintenance.

The grant when received is used towards the cutting maintenance of the churchyard. This still falls short of this expenditure and any additional costs are covered by the resident who does the work. The work takes him several hours per cut to keep the churchyard nice. Following discussion, it was agreed to increase the grant to the church to £350 going forward.

12.4 Budget 2024/25 to discuss budget and agree precept amount.

Following a discussion around financial information provided by the Clerk it was agreed that we would precept for £9,100 for 2024/25. This would represent an overall increase of £4.00 per annum on the council tax bill for a property in band D, this was an 4.81% rise. It was felt this increase was essential as the costs for goods and services have increased significantly over recent years and as such it was a necessary decision to ensure we are able to meet our financial obligations going forward. Also it is important to ensure that we have enough money to continue to maintain The Green. The reserves for The Green have decreased over the years and we are mindful to the fact that we will potentially have further expenditure going forward, particularly if we are unable to repair the current mower. As mentioned previously there are a number of items of concerns being flagged in the play area reports that could potentially have cost implications. It was noted that this increase to the Precept was not a unanimous decision with one Parish Councillor disagreeing with the amount but conceding that they were in the minority with their view.

Action Clerk

12.5 To discuss internal accounts review.

Cllr Freeman agreed to carry out the internal accounts review. The Clerk will arrange a suitable time for this.

Action Cllr Freeman/Clerk

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

13.1 Copart application. DC/22/2190/HYB DC/22/2190/HYB It is understood this application. has been withdrawn.

13.2 DC/23/1617/FUL | Planning application - change of use of barn F from offices to holiday Let. Village Farm, The Street

The Parish Council supported this application.

13.3 DC/23/1620/LB | Application for listed building consent - alterations to internal layout. Village Farm The Street

The Parish Council supported this application.

13.4 DC/23/1529/LB | Application for listed building consent - proposed installation of 23 solar panels to the rear roof elevation. Wyndham House, The Street.

The Parish Council supported this application.

13.5 DC/23/1528/HH | Householder planning application - rear roof mounted solar panel. Array. Wyndham House, The Street.

The Parish Council supported this application.

14. Councillors reports and items for future agenda

14.1 To confirm works to noticeboard.

Cllr Barham has carried out a repair and replaced the Perspex on the noticeboard. The Parish Council were grateful for this, especially as he provided the replacement Perspex as a donation. Cllr Barham is going to look at the backboard, use some sealant to fill the gaps and potentially add some lighting.

Action Cllr Barham

14.2 to discuss updates to Parish council website.

Cllr Barham and the Clerk have done some work on the website. Cllr Barham has added several photos. A link to the Suffolk Care directory will be added if possible.

Action Clerk

15. Correspondence for information

15.1 To discuss request for feedback from West Suffolk Council regarding grass cutting.

There were no concerns the Councillors wanted to raise regarding the West Suffolk Council grass cutting at this current time.

16. Aide memoire

16.1 Tree planting project, Cllr Hall.

16.2 Flooding issues, Cllr Hall.

17. Date of next meeting: Thursday 18th January 7.00pm 2024.

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

18.1 Personnel Issues. The Clerk's pay award was noted and+ the request of an increase in costs, to £1 per hour, for using her home as an office was agreed.

18.2 Legal Issues. None.