

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the meeting of Westleton Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 31 July 2023 in Westleton Village Hall.

Ian Haines
Clerk of the Council

There were Present

Cllr Andrew Turner (Chairman), Cllr Ian Johnson (Vice Chairman), Cllr Julian Alexander, Cllr Barry Banks, Cllr Colin Fisher, Cllr John Matthews, Cllr Nick Shearme, Cllr David Watson, Cllr Ian Webber

In Attendance

Cllr Richard Smith (SCC for minutes 23/137 – 23/140 only)
Ian Haines (Clerk)

23/137 Introductory remarks and apologies for absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr John French, Cllr Paul Holmes & Cllr Paul Ashton (ESC).

23/138 Declaration of interests

Council members to declare possible interests they may have in any items on the agenda, either pecuniary or non-pecuniary and to consider requests of dispensation.

Cllrs J Alexander & N Shearme to receive a cheque reimbursement from the Parish Council - see minute 23/144 below.

23/139 Open Public Forum – Contributions from Members of the Public

There were 3 members of the public present.

23/140 Pre Agenda Report from SCC Councillor

Devolution proposals – latest update given. The CC will be holding a public consultation later this year.

Highways and resurfacing of minor roads – Cllr Smith advised he had put forward Grange View to be included in a programme for future works. It was noted that the maintenance contract with Kier is due to expire at the end of September and Milestone Infrastructure will be taking over from 1/10/23. Cllr Alexander referred to ongoing flooding problems at the B1125/B1122 junction and concern that recent works carried out had failed to resolve the longstanding issue.

Cllr I Webber also referred to 2 logs made on the SCC Highways portal to report overgrown hedges which were seen to be causing an obstruction (minute 23/120 from the previous meeting refers). It was unclear whether or not the CC intended to take any action to contact the owners and Cllr Smith asked if the Clerk could forward further details to him.

23/141 Pre Meeting Report from ESC Councillor

No report this time.

23/142 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 26 June 2023

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2023 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair, subject to Cllr D Watson being added as a member of the Parking group (minute 23/115 refers).

23/143 Matters Arising from the Minutes 26 June 2023

Affordable Housing - minute 23/130 - Cllr Fisher advised that he had been in contact with Greg Dodds at Orwell HA but unfortunately there was little progress to report. He hoped to set up a meeting between various parties to see if things could be kick started.

23/144 Council Finances and Accounts

(a) Income 2023/24 - Income to date was acknowledged and approved.

(b) Expenditure 2023/24 - Expenditures to date were acknowledged and approved.

(c) Invoices and Payments – The following invoices were **agreed** for payment

From	Item	Amount
Ian Haines	Clerk expenses (£56.10) & salary (£484.80) – July	£540.90
SALC	Annual Internal Audit	£313.20
Gold Fencing & Gates Ltd	Posts for Fire Warning Signs on Common	£46.15*
Leiston Press	Fire Signs for Common	£157.20*
Julian Alexander	Plaque/engraving for R.Jones memorial seat	£45.00
Clarkes of Walsham	X30 paddock rails for Com Field	£254.59*
Nick Shearme	Bolts/screws for Fire Signs	£3.35
East Suffolk Council	Uncontested Election Expenses	£89.76*
Chris Freeman	Materials for Play Equip repairs	£87.55

* Payment made by Debit Card

23/145 Common

The additional fire warning signs will now be erected on site.

Noted that the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Volunteer Group are due to visit again on 19/9 to undertake further clearance work.

Reference was made to the proposal to install drop down posts to provide an emergency access route from the Mill Street car park entrance – as per previous consultations which have been carried out. CAG to work with Chris Freeman on drawing up costings. It is hoped that this work can be put in place before the New Year Day Fireworks event.

A request was made to provide an additional dog bin from the track leading off the main Minsmere Road.

23/146 Cleeves Studio, Mill Street, Westleton

Cllr I Johnson referred to a site meeting which he & some CAG Members had recently attended. The new owners of the property are seeking to connect water & sewage services from the annex studio to the main Cleeves house via a conduit which will pass under [Common] land in the Parish Council's ownership.

At this stage request **agreed** to “in principle” - Mr & Mrs Sury to submit detailed drawings/plans for further consideration.

23/147 Community Field

It is intended that a site meeting be convened on Thursday 3 August between 4-6pm to begin maintenance/repair work in the play area. A general tidy up of the sheds & surround is also planned and a skip will then be ordered. Some table tennis bats & balls have recently been donated.

23/148 Planning applications

From	Item	Details
Land south of Darsham Station	DC/21/4006/OUT	Erection of up to 110 residential dwellings, public open space & associated infrastructure
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 26/7/23 Response: The Parish Council have reinforced previous objections/strong opposition to this proposal [which is outside our boundary].

From	Item	Details
Christama, Reckford Road, Westleton	DC/23/2636/FUL	Construction of rear/side extension
	Status:	Deadline for observations: 8/8/23 Response: No objections.

Questions were also raised relating to two separate sets of house building works taking place at different locations in the village. Cllr J Matthews to clarify that proper process has been followed and to coordinate a response to the District Council if necessary through the Planning Sub Committee.

A question was also raised relating to landscaping conditions for the Cherry Lee development. Cllr I Johnson to look at further & co-ordinate a response to the District Council if necessary through the Planning Sub Committee.

23/149 Sizewell C - EDF Traffic Mitigation Plans for Westleton

Details of a joint letter were circulated which had been signed by Westleton and 7 other parishes to EDF and the County and District Councils. There is a follow up meeting scheduled with EDF on 19 September and Cllr Turner will attend.

It was also reported that EDF had made a separate approach to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council on 25 September as part of their community involvement strategy for Sizewell C. Publicity about this will be given over nearer the time so that residents have the opportunity to attend.

23/150 Town & Parish Council Planning Forum 7/7/23

Cllr J Matthews gave feedback following his attendance at this event. The presentation slides had been shared with Members of the Planning Sub Committee.

23/151 Tree & Footpath Warden Report

No report this time other than reference under minute 23/140 above.

23/152 Carlton Colville, Kessingland and Southwold Community Partnership

Cllr A Turner provided feedback from a meeting held on 19/7/23. Cllr B Banks stated that, if possible, he would also like to attend future meetings as there was seen as a 'crossover' with the Village Hall objectives for dealing with social isolation issues.

Details of the 'Community Gardens' initiative will be looked at as part of the remit of the Allotments Group. To this end, Cllr J Alexander advised that he had made further enquiries on the ownership of a piece land.

23/153 Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

A review has been carried of the Parish Council's Standing Orders & Financial Regulations to ensure these are fully up to date and compliant. It was noted that the Internal Auditor in her recent report had recommended that the procurement threshold should be increased from £25k to **£30k** to comply with the latest requirements. The wording in section 18 para f had also amended slightly to reflect best practice under the NALC model.

Agreed that the above changes to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be adopted.

23/154 Planning Sub Committee – Terms of Reference

These were drawn up and adopted in 2019. The Audit recommendation is that an annual review is conducted. In consultation with the Chair of Planning no changes were proposed.

23/155 Asset & Insurance Register 2032/24

An update has been carried out of the Parish Council's Asset Register as part of a regular annual review. The Clerk confirmed that values placed on individual items cross checked with the Council's insurance cover.

Some discussion took place regarding a number of former Barrel Fair items and equipment currently placed in temporary storage. These included old fridge/freezers which no longer worked and it was **agreed** that arrangements should be made to dispose.

23/156 Risk Assessment 2023/24

Agreed that the Council's Financial Risk Assessment model for 2023-24 be approved. Reference to 'Covid 19' in the text to be changed to the more generic term 'Pandemic'.

23/157 Internal Control Statement

Agreed that the Council's Internal Control Statement for 2023-24 be approved.

23/158 New Year Fireworks

Cllr N Shearme advised that he had been in touch with the supplier. It was **agreed** that a

maximum spend of £2,000.00 inc VAT (increase of £400.00 on last time) should set towards the New Year Day fireworks.

23/159 Vehicle Activated Sign

Cllr Turner reported that in order for him to be able to better download data it would be necessary to purchase a special new lead/cable at a cost of £60.00. This was **agreed**.

As previously reported, there were also still problems occurring with the batteries on one of the VAS units and it may be necessary to return the equipment to Westcotec in order to get checked out.

23/160 Correspondence

No correspondence received this time.

23/161 Enquiry made to SALC about taking Any Other Business at meetings

The Chair referred to guidelines which the Clerk had recently obtained from SALC on this subject as follows:-

A council cannot lawfully transact any business which is not included on the agenda. As such, the item 'any other business' should not appear at all, or should simply be used as a peg on which to hang the exchange of urgent information. Additionally, the item could be used to allow genuinely urgent issues to be raised but no decisions should be taken in respect of issues so raised (other than to ensure that they are dealt with properly at a forthcoming meeting, with due notice having been given) and no expenditure should be approved as a result of issues raised under 'any other business'.

We would not recommend AOB as such, but often councils do include on their agendas something like 'Matters for consideration at the next meeting'.

As such, the Chair stated that in future he would not routinely look to go around the table at the end of every meeting but rather he reminded Members that there was the opportunity each time the draft agenda is formulated to notify the Clerk if they wished to include any specific agenda item for discussion.

23/162 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the Council next meets at 7.30pm on Monday 25 September 2023.