

COOKLEY & WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at 7-30pm at the Pavilion, Walpole on Tuesday, November 21st 2023.

Minutes:

Present:

Cllr. R. Chase (Chair); Cllr. C. Leggett (Vice-Chair) (Arrived 9-08pm); Cllr. L. Andrews; Cllr. J. Clark; Cllr. J. Lewis; Cllr. J. Henson and Cllr. M. Porter:

Also Present:

Paul Widdowson (Clerk); District Cllr. J. Ewart (Left 8-42pm) and County Cllr. S. Burroughes (Left 8-42pm):

1) Apologies:

Cllr. Z. Mair gave her apologies which were accepted by the Councillors.

Cllr. A. Thomas and Cllr. J. Winter were not present.

2) To receive declarations of interest:

Cllr. M. Porter declared an interest in Community Energy Action (CEA) and the Walpole and Cookley Playing Fields Association.

Cllr. J. Henson declared an interest in Community Energy Action (CEA), Walpole and Cookley Playing Fields Association and Allotments.

Cllr. J. Lewis declared an interest in Suffolk County Council.

3) Requests for dispensations:

There were no requests for dispensations.

4) To receive a report from the County and District Councillors:

County Cllr. S. Burroughes reported that Suffolk County Council had signed a new contract for 20 years with a new Highways Contractor and said that he had toured Walpole with the Suffolk Highways Engineer. He said that it had been agreed to jet the drains again and there was to be a schedule to clear the drains in future.

Commenting on the recent floods, County Cllr. S. Burroughes said that Framlingham had asked for a map of their drains and said that the water courses and flows needed to be known and acted upon. He said that the Environment Agency had been contacted regarding a plan for making sure that water could flow away but he said that he had not seen any response. County Cllr. S. Burroughes said that traffic on the Chediston Road had ploughed through the water during the floods and some had got stuck. Cllr. J. Clark said that potholes had got worse over the last few weeks. County Cllr. S. Burroughes said that the County Council had received some funding from the government to repair potholes.

County Cllr. S. Burroughes said that there was the National Grid Consultation and he believed that the County was not being consulted enough. He also reported that the County Council was reviewing the Budget for next year and there was a consultation until December 18th. He said that the County Council was deciding the priorities on which the money should be spent with the demands on the County Budget growing.

County Cllr. S. Burroughes reported that there were grants of up to £5000 for those affected by the recent flooding and to protect against future flooding. Cllr. M. Porter believed that pressure washing the drains was not enough as they needed to be properly maintained with the pipework cleaned. The Councillor also asked for an update on the future of the School Buildings. County Cllr. S. Burroughes said that a structural survey was to take place and the future lay in the hands of Lord Huntingfield, Suffolk County Council and the Education Department.

County Cllr. S. Burroughes said that Suffolk Highways had been asked to mark the road approaching the sharp bend by Walpole Church with a 'Slow' sign on the road, an extra sign warning drivers of the sharp bend ahead and a 'People in the Road' warning as well. He also reported that Suffolk Highways had seen the 'Finger' sign at Threeways that had been knocked over and were asking the Parish Council if they wanted it replaced or taken away. He said that if the Parish Council would like to replace the sign, he would fund half the cost but would ask the Parish Council to fund the other half of the cost. It was noted that Cllr. M. Porter had been a strong advocate for council action on this matter for a long time.

District Cllr. J. Ewart reported that during the floods as she went around her ward, members of the public did not know who to contact as they did not know each council's responsibilities. She also hoped that each village had an emergency plan. District Cllr. J. Ewart suggested that all the drainage grates should be numbered and said that the County Council gave grants for self-help schemes. She said that many people were having a very hard time and believed that enhancing public transport would help many people.

District Cllr. J. Ewart said that East Suffolk Council were not aware of nuances in planning applications that Parish Councils were so East Suffolk Council were hoping to benefit from Parish Councils' knowledge in the future. She proposed that she could follow any contentious planning applications that the Parish Council felt needed particular attention. She said that she would be attending the Neighbourhood Meeting and Cllr. J. Clark said that he would also be attending. District Cllr. J. Ewart reported that the Sea Link Consultation was taking place and the possible light pollution from the construction of the associated buildings was discussed. It was also noted that District Cllr. J. Ewart and Cllr. J. Clark would be meeting with an East Suffolk Council Officer to discuss dilapidated buildings and District Cllr. J. Ewart said that as the Cookpole Energy Action was closing, the Parish Council may like to join the Greenprint Forum.

5) Public Session: Members of the public have fifteen minutes to ask questions on topics on the agenda.

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

6) To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on October 17th 2023 and the Minutes of the Parish Council Extra-Ordinary Meeting held on November 6th 2023:

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on October 17th 2023 were agreed.

Proposer: Cllr. M. Porter:

Seconder: Cllr. L. Andrews:

The Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on November 6th 2023 were agreed.

Proposer: Cllr. M. Porter:

Seconder: Cllr. L. Andrews:

7) Highways:

Cllr. M. Porter said that he believed that the lack of maintenance of the highways had been a contributing factor to the recent flooding. Cllr. R. Chase wondered if the work to clear the drains had been inspected? County Cllr. S. Burroughes believed that they had been checked and explained that every three months all problems where work had taken place were checked to be finally completed.

Cllr. J. Henson reported that there had been two accidents one of which had been serious on the Bramfield Road where the road is narrow as it climbs out the Walpole. There was some discussion regarding pertinent signage.

8) Buildings at Risk and Village School Building:

Cllr. J. Clark reported that two houses in Neave Close were empty.

It was agreed that Cllr. J. Henson would write a letter and the Clerk would email it to Housing Association on behalf of the Parish Council.

9) Training:

Cllr. J. Henson reported on her recent training and said that it had been very interesting. Cllr. R. Chase reported on the organisation of the First Aid Course as Cllr. Z. Mair was not at the meeting.

10) Criminal Behaviour Order:

Cllr. R. Chase said that there was nothing to report.

11) Email Addresses:

Councillors agreed to discuss adopting 'gov.uk' email addresses at a future meeting.

12) Planning Matters:

There were no planning applications.

13) Clerk's Report and Correspondence:

The Clerk said that Cllr. Z. Mair has spoken to Barclays Bank regarding a letter they sent to the Parish Council. He said that there were Public Consultations on Two Supplementary Planning Documents on Rural Development and Healthy Environments. The Clerk said that he and Cllr. R. Chase would be meeting a contractor to discuss laying out Walpole Cemetery on December 1st 2023 to discuss laying out the Cemetery and a Sibton Parishioner had been replied to regarding local history.

14) Financial Report:

a) Balances at the Bank on November 7th 2023:

Business Community Account	£6 902-19
Business Savings Account	£11 133-80

b) Payments and Receipts:

SO	Will Austin Contact – November 2023	£200-00
SO	Will Austin Contact – December 2023	£200-00
Internet Banking	Clerk's Expenses for Oct. until Dec. 2023	£43-75

It was agreed to pay the Clerk his salary for October to December 2023 and to pay the tax payment for October to December 2023 to the HMRC by Internet Banking at the end of December and early January respectively with the amount still to be advised.

The Financial Report was accepted.

Proposer: Cllr. M. Porter: Secondar: Cllr. J. Henson:

15) Clerk's Pay: To agree the Local Government Services Pay Scale for 2023-2024 and therefore the Pay Increase for the Clerk backdated to April 1st 2023. To also review the Clerk's Contract and Pay for 2023-2024.

Councillors agreed to the pay increase for each scale point and to set the Clerk's Pay at Point 17 on the Local Government Services Clerk's Pay Scale 2023-2024. Councillors also agreed to the backpay to April 1st 2023. It was also agreed to keep the Annual Payment for Working at Home at £175.

Proposer: Cllr. L. Andrews: Second: Cllr. J. Lewis:

16) Budget and Precept 2024-2025.

The Clerk set out the Budget for 2024-2025 and after some questions, the Councillors agreed the Budget:

Proposer: Cllr. M. Porter: Second: Cllr. J. Henson:

The Councillors agreed to set the Precept at £11 000 for the Financial Year 2024–2025:

Proposer: Cllr. R. Chase: Seconded: Cllr. C. Leggett:

17) Cil Money:

It was noted that the Parish Council had £2310-86 in Community Infrastructure Levy Money. Councillors discussed how to spend it but made no decisions.

18) To receive reports and to agree matters regarding:

Footpaths:

There was nothing to report.

Trees:

There was nothing to report.

Cemetery:

The Clerk said that there was a Burial in the Cemetery this Friday.

CEA & Allotments:

Cllr. J. Henson said that Community Energy Action was still finding out who owned the Willows.

19) To receive agenda items for the next Parish Council Meeting:

The Clerk said that the next Parish Council Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, January 16th 2024 and he would put 'Highways and Flood Management', 'Collaboration with other Parish Councils', 'Barclays Bank Signatories' and the 'Willows' on the Meeting Agenda.

The Meeting ended at 9-45pm.