

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held at
7:30pm on Tuesday, 14th September 2021 at the village hall, Withersfield.**

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman); Ian Kinloch (Vice-Chair);
Sheila Horton, Julia Korona, Indunil Wijenayaka; Clerk: Laura Crump;
County Cllr: Bobby Bennett; District Cllr: Peter Stevens.

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Cllrs Eve and Lord.

2. District Councillor's report

Cllr Stevens began with discussing the land adjacent to Barsey Close, which has no ownership. He assured he would follow up with the officer who wanted to discuss the matter with the PC, as the officer hadn't responded to the Clerk's communications. Cllr Stevens stated that the land is not within the District Council's ownership, nor can the District afford to take on extra land to maintain. They would be willing to negotiate a price with the PC for the maintenance of the land.

The Chair shared that he had asked the PC's current maintenance contractor to provide a quote for the upkeep of the piece of land, however upon inspection of the land, it was discovered that their equipment would not be able to carry out the necessary work. The Chair explored another possibility for maintenance which also did not have the specialised equipment to be able to maintain this area. The question was asked to whom by default the responsibility of the land would fall to, to which the Chair suggested would be the District Council.

Cllr Stevens said that he noted the planning applications and decisions as stated on the agenda.

It was also noted by Cllr Stevens, the PC's comments on the Local Plan, to which he declared he would be able to make representations for the PC as the Plan moves forward. He suggested that the PC consider boundaries.

Parking levels have been going back up and it is believed that the market towns are reviving therefore, hopefully, will economically recover from the pandemic.

3. County Councillor's report

Cllr Bennett circulated her report for the PC to read. The full report can be found on the PC website.

Cllr Bennett highlighted two points from the report being:

1. Afghan Refugee Support – SCC are currently putting together a support package however are not ready to receive donations just yet. Those wishing to donate please visit the following webpage in the first instance: suffolk.gov.uk/howyoucanhelp

2. Recycling centres –the pre-booked appointments system is going to continue and staff can now help once again with lifting items etc, as restrictions have eased.

4. Public Forum for parishioners

There were no parishioners.

The Chairman closed the public section of the meeting

5. Declaration of members' interests for any agenda item at this meeting

None.

6. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th July 2021

These were approved. Proposed by Cllr Kinloch and seconded by Cllr Wijenayaka.

7. Matters arising - updates from previous Parish Council meetings

- a) Land adjacent to Barsey Close

This was discussed earlier at item 2.

The Chair reiterated that the PC would consider a figure proposed by the District Council for maintaining the land. Cllr Stevens will pursue this.

The Chair put forward the idea of contacting the Environment Agency about the maintenance of this land.

- b) Chestnut tree on Burton Green – Cllr Wijenayaka

Cllr Wijenayaka explained he had inspected the trees on Burton Green and believes there is a chestnut tree which needs to be removed. He would like to speak with the Parish tree warden to confirm this is the same tree he had recommended the PC looked at and subject to this confirmation, it was agreed that the PC would give the go ahead for Alexander to apply for planning permission for said tree's removal. Proposed by Cllr Korona and seconded by Cllr Horton.

- c) Permissive footpaths – Cllr Wijenayaka

Cllr Wijenayaka had attempted to push Thurlow Estate for a resolve on this matter, though has received no communications about progress here. He will continue to pursue this further.

8. Update from the Traffic Working Group

Cllr Eve sent the following report in advance of the meeting for the TWG update:

1. We are still awaiting the implementation of the ANPR Camera approved in May 2021. Jonathan Shaw at Suffolk Highways has been chased by email and phone but is

unfortunately off work at present due to injury which may be slowing progress on the ANPR Programme.

2. We have been approved for Phase 2 of the quiet lanes project but this phase still awaits final approval and start date.
3. The 40MPH Buffer Zones have been signed off and a contractor has been appointed. The implementation will now take place within the next few weeks.
4. I have spoken to David Cheney to restart the process of agreeing the traffic calming measures that would be appropriate for Withersfield's 20MPH Zone. This requires the agreement of our new County Councillor Bobby Bennett. I have emailed her to see if we can arrange an appropriate date to meet. Once we have the traffic calming measures agreed these can again be costed which will then give us an amount that will need to be funded.
5. I have spoken again to David Cheney with regard to the double yellow lines in Queens Street. Although we currently do not have the funding to get the lines extended, we will add this to the agenda for our meeting with our County Councillor. We believe the best way to fund this may be as part of a wider traffic scheme agreed through the Villages Traffic Working Group.
6. We are keen to restart the Villages Working Group with our County Councillor and representatives of villages effected by rising traffic volumes as a result of housing developments in Haverhill and the scheduled work on the A1307. Mary Evans started the group and our new County Councillor has committed to restarting it. I am awaiting a response to my email to her on a suitable date.
7. A resident of Hanchet End Withersfield has complained on a number of occasions about the overgrown bushes and trees which restrict parking outside her house. I have reported the issues on the Suffolk County Council website but I have received an automated reply which states that "Our Staff have visited the location of your request and assessed the issue you reported. We believe that at this time it does not warrant remedial action." I have taken pictures of the area for the Parish Council to discuss. The allocated parking for residents is not overgrown but the space to the left is overgrown.

We hope to have the next Traffic Working Group meeting after the Parish Council meeting to review our action plan going forward.

It was mentioned by the Chair that the PC would soon need to write to those who had pledged to donate towards the implementation of the 40mph buffer zones for their donations.

9. Update from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

It was explained by Cllr Kinloch that a questionnaire had been sent out to every household within the parish in order to gauge views on the Neighbourhood Plan. The NPWG have set up 3 drop-in meetings for parishioners to attend, if they so wish, to discuss the questionnaire, ask any questions, and hand in completed forms.

After these drop-in sessions have been carried out, the working group will meet again to collate the information received from the questionnaires. From this information a proposal will be put together for a way forward which will be presented to the PC for approval.

The Chair recommended that the NPWG set a date for their meeting to gather the views of the community and draft a proposal for the PC in October so that it could be presented to at the next PC meeting in November.

10. Perusal of the Village Hall Annual report and AGM minutes

The secretary of the Village Hall Management Committee had emailed the annual reports and AGM minutes to the Clerk, which had been circulated to the PC prior to the meeting. The secretary had prepared the reports and all required policies have been updated and put into place.

Cllr Horton informed the PC that the VHMC were currently:

- a) Working on applying for planning permission for the village hall extension
- b) Looking into re-decorating the village hall
- c) Advertising for a warden and a cleaner for the village hall

Cllr Horton had been successful in obtaining the bid she had applied for with which she has purchased a steam cleaner to be used on fabric (chairs, curtains, etc) if a deep clean of the building becomes necessary.

Upcoming events include a craft fair on Saturday 18th September, a quiz night in October, and possibly an event to be held at the EpiCentre.

Funds raised from the craft fair will go to Withersfield church. Cllr Horton is looking into a grant in order to repair the church tower and install a toilet in the church.

Cllr Horton will be attending the next VHMC meeting on 29th September.

The PC welcome the rejuvenated VHMC and were pleased with the reports received and the updates provided. The PC look forward to seeing the VHMC's proposal for the extension planning application.

11. Order of wreath and arrangements for Remembrance Sunday

The different options were discussed and it was agreed for the PC to donate £20 to The Royal British Legion for wreath type F. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Kinloch. It is noted that this will be an S137 payment of £20.

The Remembrance Sunday service will take place on Sunday 14th November starting at 10:30am at the war memorial.

12. Finance

- a) Presentation of monthly accounts – Income and Expenditure and Bank Reconciliation
- b) To note payments made since last meeting

These were agreed – proposed by Cllr Wijenayaka and seconded by Cllr Horton.

- c) To note the effectiveness of the internal audit and Clerk's action plan for the partly met items

Noted and accepted.

13. Correspondence

- a) Email - West Suffolk Gambling Act Policy Consultation 2021

Noted.

14. Planning

- a) Borough notifications since last meeting.

These were discussed and noted.

- b) Applications received since last meeting.

All discussed and noted.

As the expiry date of application DC/21/1372/TCA was before the PC meeting, it was discussed and agreed at the previous meeting on 13th July 2021 that the PC would comment in support of the application on grounds that it would:

- a) Improve pedestrian movements which were obstructed by the hedge
b) Enhance the visual amenity of the village and of the conservation area.

15. Agenda items for meeting to be held on 16th November 2021

- Broadband update – Cllr Wijenayaka
- Neighbourhood Plan proposal draft
- Graveyard control – Cllr Kinloch

The meeting closed at 21:00