

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held at
7:30pm on Tuesday, 15th March 2022 at the village hall, Withersfield.**

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman); Frank Eve, Sheila Horton, Julia Korona, Indunil Wijenayaka;
Clerk: Laura Crump; 3 x Taylor Wimpey representatives; and 3 parishioners.

1. Apologies for absence

Received from District Cllr Stevens, County Cllr Bennett, and Cllr Kinloch.

2. District Councillor's report

None received.

3. County Councillor's report

Cllr Bennett circulated her February report ahead of the meeting; a copy of which can be found on the PC website.

4. Public Forum for parishioners

Parishioners were invited to raise items of interest and/or concern

**- Representatives of Taylor Wimpey will be sharing the details of the scheme for
The Arboretum Phase 2**

The Chair welcomed the 3 representatives of Taylor Wimpey and asked them to begin their presentation.

It was explained by the Taylor Wimpey representatives that they had submitted their reserved matters planning application to West Suffolk yesterday, which the PC will be consulted about formally in due course.

They went on to outline the proposal and gave details on any changes made to the scheme. A hand out was provided with plans and details of the presentation. Information covered included:

- The number of units has decreased from 148 to 145 of 2 – 5-bedroom homes. 43 of which are affordable units.
- There have been some changes to the car parking on the northern section as there was an excess previously.
- The tree line has been maintained on the southern part.
- On the southern eastern – houses have been pulled as far away as possible from Rutherford Close and Hanchett End.
- There are no windows overlooking the nursery.
- Cohesive materials will be used on the dwellings to complement the existing arboretum homes.
- The play area was discussed with the nursery for preferences of play equipment.
- The shadow plans in the hand out show there will be no overshadowing from the new development.

- Street lighting – placed on the entrance and over parking, will be looked after by the management company.
- The pond will be retained with some enhanced aquatic planting.
- There will be hedgehog holes, wild flower meadows, bat and bird boxes in the housing structures and additional hedgerows.

The Chair highlighted that they hadn't addressed or made any changes to the Highways concerns which had been spoken about at length at the PC meeting in November 2021, which the Taylor Wimpey representatives had also attended and presented their plans.

The Taylor Wimpey representatives responded by stating that in the Section 106 agreement which accompanies the outline planning permission, they will be making a contribution towards the village traffic calming and upgraded bus stop signs on the bus stops. They also said that the outline planning identified what was needed to adhere to on Highways issues, which have been approved.

Councillors were not happy with this response as they do not feel this helps the issues raised previously concerning the largely increased volume of traffic using the one single access onto Three Counties Road off of the busy 40mph Cambridge Road.

One parishioner expressed his disappointment to the response he received to the comments he sent about issues during the course of building the development. The Taylor Wimpey representatives explained that the responses he received were the conditions that they have to legally comply with. The parishioner felt that they needed to be more flexible when making arrangements, and the PC decided they should be required to meet clear conditions regarding reasonable timings of construction vehicles and work hours.

Another parishioner said that their main concern was the overshadowing from the new buildings, but he would need to look in more detail at the presentation pack which had been handed out with such pictures included. He was also unsure about the possibility of being overlooked and loss of light due to a fence which is planned to be erected next to their property. The Taylor Wimpey representatives said that they had ensured that there would be no overlooking as they had made sure the neighbouring dwelling had no windows overlooking. They asked the parishioner to phone them directly if they wanted to discuss things further as the closest resident to the new development.

Cllr Wijenayaka raised his concerns over potential flooding problems. The Taylor Wimpey representatives explained that drainage engineers had modelled the pond and it had been assured by the consultants that the pond has capacity for the entire development.

The Chair thanked the Taylor Wimpey representatives and parishioners for attending. The PC would decide on their formal comments for submitting at the next PC meeting.

- **Milton House planning appeal:**

A parishioner asked the PC to consider submitting additional comments towards the appeal for planning application DC/21/0367/FUL for 5 dwellings at Milton House. She explained that since the previous objection submitted by the PC towards the planning application, there had been:

- a) A comprehensive survey sent to all residents in the parish which gave the conclusion that parishioners do not want further housing developments in the village;
- b) Permission granted for over 100 houses in the parish on the Arboretum estate, meaning there is even less of a case that there is any need for more housing within the parish;
- c) Work on the Neighbourhood Plan which emphasises the aversion to over-development in the parish.

The PC discussed this and agreed to make further representations to the appeal on the above basis.

Chairman closed the public section of the meeting

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

Cllr Eve declared that he is the applicant for planning application DC/22/0175/HH and also, a plot of land at the back of his garden is on a map proposing an extension to the conservation area, being considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

6. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th January 2021

Cllr Horton wanted it to be clarified that although stated in the 18.01.22 minutes that the village hall would be having a “new floor”, that this was unlikely. It was noted that there will not be a new floor but it will be cleaned/varnished after the extension works.

Other than this, the minutes were approved – proposed by Cllr Wijenayaka and seconded by Cllr Korona.

7. Chair's Report

The Chair explained to the PC that Cllr Lord had resigned due to the Coronavirus risks of attending meetings and that he had already missed over 6 months' worth of meetings. The Clerk has published the vacancy on the noticeboards. It was agreed that the data protection responsibility would be picked up by the Clerk.

The Clerk left the room so the PC could talk about the Clerk's salary. The Chair had created a report which had been circulated to the PC for consideration, which was discussed. It was agreed to implement the National Joint Council for Local Government Service pay award and backdate the payment to 1st April 2021, to progress the Clerk's salary to scp 13 backdated to June 2021, to implement the 2022 pay award once it is agreed, and subject to satisfactory performance and appraisal, that the salary increases to scp 14 as of June 2022.

8. Matters arising - updates from previous Parish Council meetings

- a) Village Spring Clean

The Spring Clean has been organised for Saturday 2nd April, meeting at the war memorial at 10am. The committee room in the village hall will be available for hot drinks, but the

village hall is being used for a christening celebration, so volunteers will need to be mindful when going into the village hall. The Clerk has arranged the equipment.

b) Land adjacent to Barsey Close

There has been no further progress. The Clerk will contact Cllr Stevens and the officer involved.

c) Permissive footpaths – Cllr Wijenayaka

Cllr Wijenayaka told the PC that most of the QR codes had been put up on the footpaths. There has been no further action made with relation to an edited proposal to the Thurlow Estate about the permissive footpaths. Cllr Wijenayaka is to pursue this with the help of Cllr Horton.

9. Update from the Traffic Working Group

Cllr Eve reported to the PC that there has been some progress with the Quiet Lanes scheme being that the posts for the signs had been installed. It appears it is down to the PC to attach the signs to the posts but the Parish Councillor at Great Wrattling who has been working on making Withersfield Road a Quiet Lane with Cllr Eve, has agreed to put up the signs. The PC has been asked to make a donation towards the scheme but Cllr Eve believes that as the parish is in wave 2 of the scheme, which requires no payment, he suggested it is not necessary to donate. The PC were in agreement with Cllr Eve's view.

The 40mph buffer zones have been implemented, and it seems there will not be 2 signs on some of the roads, although this will be raised with Highways again.

Cllr Eve is still attempting to get a meeting secured with Cllr Bennett and Highways to discuss further; the yellow lines on Queen Street, traffic calming measures for the 20mph zone, the 40mph signs, and any other issues. Cllr Bennett informed the PC she had chased Highways for a date for a meeting.

The Chair told the PC that the white fence on Silver Street has fallen over and needs repairing. Last year the white fence on Withersfield Road was repaired so the PC agreed that if the cost would be similar to then, to have the Silver Street fence repaired too. The Chair will contact the same company used previously for this.

10. Update from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and discuss questions submitted by Cllr Eve – Cllr Kinloch

In Cllr Kinloch's absence, the Chair reiterated to the PC that Cllr Kinloch was requesting some clarification from the PC about the direction for the working party move in for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Eve had prepared some questions which he felt needed to be considered. According to the survey which had been sent out to all residents, parishioners do not want building outside of the settlement boundary therefore, it was questioned why it would be mentioned

in the Neighbourhood Plan. This was discussed further and the PC confirmed there is no appetite for identifying additional sites for housing developments, including first time schemes and rural exceptions, and consequently, do not expect to see it in the Neighbourhood Plan.

There was also discussion over the change of boundaries mentioned in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal document in the advice note, and that there didn't seem to be an explanation to any changes. It was agreed that the PC have no desire for any changes of boundaries unless there is a clear and compelling reason.

The buffer zone between Haverhill and the village didn't appear to continue all the way across past Queen Street and Cllr Eve thought this should be amended.

The PC deliberated over the idea of identifying buildings which are designated to be of historical interest (but which are not listed), as part of enhancing the conservation area. It was agreed that the working party should give thought to how the proposed buildings for this have been selected and how they would seek homeowners' opinions around it.

The working party members at the meeting were happy with the guidance received from the PC and will feed the information back to the others members at the next Neighbourhood Plan working party meeting.

11. Update from the Village Hall Committee – Cllr Horton

Cllr Horton told the PC that the kitchen refurbish shall be finished in 2 weeks' time. The internal painting has been completed and the external painting will be carried out when the weather is warmer. The planning application has gone in for the village hall extension. Many events have been planned including: quiz night on 26th March, jazz event on 21st May, Jubilee event on 5th June, and a race night to be organised for the autumn.

It was explained by Cllr Horton that a website has been set up for the village hall which contains policies and information: <http://withersfieldvillagehall.onesuffolk.net/>

The PC asked Cllr Horton about the possibility of the village hall getting Wi-Fi, to which Cllr Horton said she would bring the subject up at the VHMC meeting tomorrow night.

12. Jubilee events – Cllr Horton

There will be a communal picnic as the village event for the Queen's Jubilee on Sunday 5th June. Cllr Horton is organising for the marquee to be set up with tables and decorations.

13. Graveyard control – Cllr Kinloch

The Clerk had obtained some example graveyard rules from other parishes in order for the PC to have some ideas for suitable rules to put together for the graveyard.

It was agreed to roll this item onto the next PC meeting as Cllr Kinloch was not able to attend the meeting, and is the Councillor responsible for the graveyard.

14. Website

Cllr Korona explained that she had had a conversation with former Parish councillor Peter Lord about the website. The Clerk explained that there are many documents which she has to upload onto the website in order to comply with transparency requirements which is checked during the annual audit. Cllr Korona's offer to update the website was welcomed. The Chair proposed for no further action.

15. Finance

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

These were approved – proposed by Cllr Eve and seconded by Cllr Wijenayaka.

- c) To consider appointing SALC to carry out the annual internal audit

It was agreed to appoint SALC for the PC's internal audit. Proposed by Cllr Eve and seconded by Cllr Wijenayaka.

16. Correspondence

- a) SARS letter of thanks

Noted.

- b) Email – Fresh Start new beginnings

Considered and noted.

- c) Letter - Intention to consult - West Suffolk Taxi Policy

Discussed and noted.

17. Planning

- a) Borough notifications since last meeting
- b) Applications received since last meeting

These were discussed and noted.

18. Agenda items for meeting to be held 10th May 2022

None raised.

The meeting closed at 21:09.