

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held at
7:30pm on Tuesday, 16th January 2024 at the EpiCentre, Withersfield.**

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman), Frank Eve (Vice-Chair),
Sheila Horton, Julia Korona, Philip Stiles; Clerk: Laura Crump;
County Councillor: Bobby Bennett; and 2 parishioners.

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Cllrs Jarvis and Wijenayaka. These were approved by the PC.

2. District Councillor's report

In his absence, Cllr Wijenayaka sent the following:

Prior to Christmas, the Council voted on the Strategic Priorities, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, and also The Local Plan. Let me know if you didn't receive details.

The Milton House planning application was rejected, but I think the community must be prepared for the applicant to appeal.

3. County Councillor's report

Cllr Bennett's County Councillor reports for December 2023 and January 2024 can be found on the PC website.

Cllr Bennett informed the PC that she had finally heard from Highways regarding the 20mph zone in Withersfield today and unfortunately, rather than receiving the costs of the implementation as expected, she was sent a list of problems for implementing the zone. Cllr Bennett said she was extremely unhappy with this as the scheme had been signed off some years ago now. She is determined to push forward and get the 20mph zone implemented.

Cllr Bennett encouraged people to continue to report potholes.

The PC asked whether an arrangement could be made with Cambridgeshire with repairs along Silver Street. The border between Suffolk and Cambridgeshire being along this road means that it doesn't ever get fully repaired at any one time. Cllr Bennett explained that it is too complicated and that traffic highways authorities have to stick to their county boundaries. She said she would inform Cambridgeshire that their recent repairs along Silver Street were already breaking down.

4. Public Forum for parishioners

A parishioner spoke to the Cllrs about the bad state in which the road leading up to the village hall is in and the parking on the green. A few years ago, he had put forward a proposal to install Grasscrete blocks on the green, along the side of the road, to solve the parking issue. As this had totalled around £18,000 the PC were unable to move forward with this proposal. The parishioner explained that he has some surplus Grasscrete blocks which he would like to offer to the PC as a donation for resolving the parking problem. He told the PC that free storage of the blocks had also been arranged meaning that the PC would only

need to pay for the haulage of the blocks from Lakenheath to Withersfield and then for the implementation.

Another parishioner agreed that the parking is an issue and that it should be dealt with.

The parishioner was thanked for his generous offer and the PC would further consider this later on in the meeting.

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 14th November 2023

The minutes were approved – proposed by Cllr Stiles and seconded by Cllr Eve.

7. Matters arising - updates from previous Parish Council meetings

a) Light over defibrillator - Cllr Horton

Cllr Horton confirmed that the light is now working. No further action required.

8. Parking on the Village Green and damage to the grass verge

The Cllrs discussed the proposal which was presented to them in the public forum section of the meeting. It was agreed that the state of the road is a concern and there is a need for improving the parking.

Cllr Eve suggested that as the County Council is responsible for this road, the verge may need to be resurfaced by the Council in the first instance. He said he would be happy to press Highways about repairing the road.

The Chair reminded the Cllrs that even though the Thurlow Estate were in support of the proposed works on the green when it was first suggested in 2020, the Estate would need to re-confirm their approval.

The Chair queried whether the PC should be expected to fully fund improving the parking at the village hall when the village hall has their own funds and an income source. Cllr Horton reminded the PC that the PC are the owners of the village hall. She said the VHMC would contribute to the costs of the parking improvements.

Cllr Horton proposed for the PC to accept the donation of the Grasscrete blocks.

There was some concern over the free storage as to how long this would be available for the PC to use for the blocks. The Cllrs also had no idea how much the haulage would cost and then the installation.

It was agreed that without the costings, it would not be possible to commit at this time. The PC agreed to request for further information regarding costs for the haulage of the blocks and the installation, and further clarification regarding the free storage, from the parishioner. Once the PC has this information, they will be able to make an informed decision. The Councillors felt it would be very unfortunate to lose out on the donation but understand that the parishioner needed an answer imminently and this may mean they could miss out.

9. Parking on Burton Green

The Chair explained that he had been receiving communications from a resident informing him about people parking on Burton Green. The resident had stated that the PC should consider erecting posts and chains around the edge of the green as the only way to prevent people driving over it and causing it to become pitted and muddy. In December, the Chair sent a letter to all the residents around Burton Green to remind them that parking on the green was not permitted. On the odd occasion if a resident is having a special event, then the PC should be asked for permission to use the green for parking. The Thurlow Estate own the land and the PC lease and maintain it.

Some Cllrs had recently inspected the green and after discussions it was agreed that at this time no further action is warranted but the PC need to keep this under review.

10. Pigeon property developers

Pigeon property developers are promoting a site within Withersfield parish and had been in touch requesting to meet with the PC, preferably outside of the normal full council meeting.

The Councillors discussed the request and agreed that the meeting should be public and therefore would be happy for representatives of Pigeon to attend the next Parish Council meeting. The Clerk will invite Pigeon to the PC meeting in March where they would be given a designated slot to present and answer any questions if they were to accept.

11. Update from the Muck-Off campaign - Cllr Wijenayaka

Cllr Horton reported that there had been no meetings recently but that the news about the extended deadline to the application - the 22nd March - will be shared. Information about the viability of anaerobic digesters had been received and would also be shared. Cllr Stiles informed the PC that he would circulate some information he had found regarding anaerobic digesters not having green credentials.

12. Update on the Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Korona

Cllr Korona said the local authority had requested a meeting with her regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Stiles offered to step in and help with this, and therefore Cllr Korona will arrange the meeting for Cllr Stiles to attend. Cllr Horton also offered to help in any way she could.

13. Update from the Traffic Working Group – Cllr Eve

Cllr Eve had been waiting upon the news regarding the 20mph zone, which Cllr Bennett shared this evening. With this information, he said he would now call a meeting with the TWG.

It was agreed for Cllr Eve to email Cllr Bennett regarding previous discussions around the options appraisal suggested by the PC. The PC believe this should be carried out for the Arboretum junction due to the new housing development which will result in the number of traffic using this junction doubling.

14. Update from the Village Hall Committee – Cllr Horton

Cllr Horton explained that the extension was coming along well. They have had some dehumidifiers in recently due to the recent heavy rainfall and the inside of the extension is due to be decorated in the next few weeks. She has put in a bid for the works on the roof. The committee room will be available for hire again soon.

A new committee member has joined and the warden has set up a Facebook page for the village hall.

The requested annual donation to the PC towards the upkeep of the green, used for parking by those using the village hall, had been discussed at the VHMC meeting. They decided that if the PC go ahead with improving the parking with the Grasscrete blocks, the VHMC would contribute to the implementation of blocks rather than the maintenance of the green.

15. Village Greens maintenance contract - annual review of performance

The PC reviewed the work commenced in 2023 and confirmed they were happy.

16. To consider a date for the 2024 Annual Spring Clean

It was agreed for the spring clean to take place 10am-12pm on Saturday 6th April, meeting on the village green. The Clerk will organise the equipment and rubbish collection.

17. Finance

- a) Presentation of monthly accounts – Income and Expenditure and Bank Reconciliation
- b) To note payments made since last meeting
- c) Quarterly report of expenditure and comparison to budget – quarter 3, 2023/24

These were all considered and approved - proposed by Cllr Stiles and seconded by Cllr Eve.

- d) To note the precept form has been submitted

Noted.

18. Correspondence

- a) Email – Headway Suffolk

Noted - no further action.

19. Planning

- a) **Development Control Committee on 6th December 2023.**

Application No: DC/23/0493/FUL PROPOSAL: Planning Application - five dwellings (following demolition of existing house) LOCATION: Milton House, Thurlow Road, Withersfield, Suffolk, CB9 7SA

Thanks was given to Cllr Eve for attending and representing the PC. The application has been refused.

- b) **CCC/23/110/FUL:** Farm-based anaerobic digestion renewable energy facility, construction of vehicular access/road to A1307, associated infrastructure and landscaping | Land at Streetly Hall Farm Webbs Road West Wickham Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB21 4RP

Thanks was given to Cllr Stiles for objecting to the application on behalf of the PC. The application has not yet been determined.

- c) **Borough notifications since last meeting**

Noted.

- d) **Applications received since last meeting for consideration**

All were considered and noted.

It was proposed and agreed by the PC to submit comments in support of:
DC/23/2023/FUL | Planning application - one dwelling (following demolition of existing dwelling) | Brewers Cottage Rose Hill Withersfield Suffolk CB9 7SE

The decision to support the application is due to the PC believing that it is an appropriate re-development, it would be an enhancement to the village, and it is sympathetic to the Withersfield Neighbourhood Plan.

20. Agenda items for 12th March 2024

- Pigeon property developers – to be invited to attend
- Parish projects and use of reserved funds – Cllr Wijenayaka to enquire with the West Suffolk advisor in regards to the implementation of a playground and report back.

The meeting closed at 20:52.