



Wickham Skeith Parish Council

MINUTES of PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held **MONDAY, 13 JANUARY 2020** at **WICKHAM SKEITH VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllrs T Thorogood (Chair), H Bowes (Vice-Chair), M Freeman, R Palmer, M Blair, H Roberts (Clerk), Cllr Warboys (MSDC) and 5 members of the public.

Apologies: Accepted from Cllr Knights. Cllr Stringer (SCC) arrived late due to other council business over-running.

1. Chair's Welcome: The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming those in attendance, including the new Clerk.

2. Declarations of Interest and dispensations: none received.

3. Minutes of Meeting

- Minutes of Meeting held 11 November 2019 were **approved** by all Councillors and signed by the Chair.

4. Village Forum: no matters raised.

5. Reports

5.1. Cllr Stringer (SCC):

The Chair summarised the main points of Cllr Stringer's report. The full report is available on the Wickham Skeith Parish Council website. Topics covered:

- County Council budget proposals for 2020/1:
 - Overview: Forecast Budget Requirement: £545.4m. Expected Funding: £550.8m. The remaining funding will be divided into contributions to reserves, investment into Highways and the Suffolk 2020 Fund.
 - Council Tax for 2020/21. Council Tax is due to increase by 4% in 2020-21. 2% of this will be for general council tax, whilst another 2% will be the final increase for the Social Care Precept.
 - Suffolk 2020 Fund. £3m of the Council's funding will be available through the "Suffolk 2020 Fund". The purpose of this fund is to enable investment in projects focused on carbon reduction/offset, road safety, natural environment, built environment, innovation and use of technology.
 - Citizen's Advice funding. A phased reduction in funding is planned. After three years, the council expects Citizens Advice to become financially independent.
 - Planned Savings. There are no major cuts to services proposed in the 2020-21 budget. However, the budget does rely on the council achieving £7.2m of savings from its transformation programmes, and a further £12.3m from mitigations and savings.
- Future Bus Projects. Suffolk County Council is planning to launch a pilot project in early 2020 to provide bus services for rural communities during off-peak hours. The scheme will run as a pre-book service via a series of villages from Stowmarket to Cockfield, before connecting with Sudbury services. If the pilot is successful, this system may be implemented in other parts of the county. SCC is also planning to bid for some money from the Dept of Transport for an electric bus pilot scheme.
- First new SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) units announced. The first 10 specialist units, providing 168 spaces, are due to open in September 2020. The list of locations is in Cllr Stringer's full report.
- Flooding on the highway. Unusual weather events in recent weeks have resulted in several waterways/ ditches being challenged. WSPC and the public are encouraged to report instances of highways being flooded on the highways reporting tool <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>. It was agreed the Clerk would submit a report regarding flooding on Thwaite Road.

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Vice Chair:	Harriet Bowes	01449 766708		Michael Blair	01449 766640
				Margarita Freeman	01449 767009
Parish Clerk:	Huw Roberts	0777 180 8677		Richard Palmer	07376 142447

5.2. Cllr Warboys (MSDC):

Cllr Warboys' report is available on the Wickham Skeith Parish Council website. Topics covered:

- General Election, 12th December. You can [find the full results on the MSDC website](#).
- District Council Budget and Council Tax. The draft budget is expected to be approved at full Council meeting on 27 Feb. Government have agreed that Districts may increase council tax by £5 or 2% whichever is the greater. There are no new proposals for Central Government grants to District Councils. Government propose to phase out or replace New Homes Bonus. Any new grant is likely to be based upon achieving higher house building targets.
- Housing Revenue Account. After four years of government-enforced reductions, the council is also proposing putting up council house rents by 2.7% - 1% above Consumer Prices Index.
- Stowupland High School CIL Bid. MSDC Cabinet will consider an application for CIL funding for the new Sixth Form Centre at Stowupland High School.
- Council Tax Payments. MSDC are to discuss an initiative to introduce new fines for Council Tax fraud.
- Next phase in development of Needham Lake visitor centre and café agreed.
- 1000 Endangered Animals. Suffolk Waste Partnership's celebration of recycling took on a theme of endangered animals with artwork created by schools across Suffolk. This will be on display at The Apex, Bury St Edmunds until March 2020.
- Communities across Babergh and Mid Suffolk received a funding boost totalling £791,000, for local projects including a new car park and bus shelter.
- Suffolk Recycling launched a new guide with tips on how to reduce waste and improve recycling habits over Christmas, all in one place - including information on what to do with old fairy lights, wrapping paper, baubles, trees, food, metals and more. You can find the full guide on the MSDC website. They also offer free 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle - not a Waste of time!' sessions.
- Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice AGM report.
- Tree Planting/Tree Wardens update.
- Useful websites:
 - <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/pre-application-advice/free-online-planning-guidance/interactive-mapping-service/> An interactive map showing what planning applications are associated with properties and indicates planning constraints.
 - <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/> Map-based reporting site, where any member of the parish may report highways issues.

5.3. Suffolk Police (via Parish Clerk):

- One theft on or near Thwaite Road during November reported on Suffolk police website.
- Suffolk Constabulary 'Street Meet' on Saturday 25 January 2020 from 9am in the usual place on Wilkes Way in Stowmarket. See: <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/stowmarket>

5.4. Parish Clerk:

- Request to move Council meeting start times from Yoga class leader: the previous Clerk has responded saying the Council need to keep the 8pm start time.
- Notifications of the new Clerk: the following have been notified of the change of Clerk: SALC, MSDC, CAS, SuffolkLink, BT Connect, Suffolk on Board.
- Confirmation received from MSDC of the Parish Council's response to the JLP Preferred Options Document of July 2019 in respect of Policy LP28 - Designated Open Spaces.

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- Signs for Dove Lane: reported to MSDC who have agreed to re-position them. It was reported to the meeting that this has been done.
- Finningham Road: damaged sign. Reported to Suffolk Highways, who say this will be fixed within 14 weeks (from 7th Nov 19).
- Defibrillator: code cannot be the changed as it will invalidate the guarantee of the lock.
- CIL funds enquiry. CIL monies for Wickham Skeith can be found by using the MSDC PFM online database. The link and guidance notes can be found at: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-and-section-106/developer-contributions-database/> MSDC have run a report (as of 21st Nov) on developments in Wickham Skeith. It appears that many are still awaiting a commencement date plus self-build exemptions have also been applied which would mean the CIL charge would be zero. MSDC report that currently no unused funds earmarked specifically for Wickham Skeith.
- All other items raised within Agenda

5.5. Parish Councillors: No matters raised.

5.5.1. Community Speed Watch: No update to report. The meeting discussed what should be done with the data being gathered. **It was agreed** to review the data every 6 months in a Council meeting, and to upload a summary to the highways website <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

5.5.2. GDPR: No update to report. **It was agreed** that Cllr Palmer would attend a course run by SALC on GDPR, to held on 17th February or 11th March at a cost of £45 + VAT.

5.5.3. Community Emergency Plan: Cllr Palmer provided the Clerk with some suggested amendments to the Emergency Plan. The Clerk will incorporate these into a new draft to be sent out to Cllrs for review and for approval at the next meeting. Amendments include:

- Process for gaining consent for use of individuals named in the plan.
- Review Council insurance policy with respect to emergencies – especially where the plan is unilaterally triggered by the Council rather than an external body.

5.5.4. Defibrillator: No update to report. The Chair asked if the Village Hall Committee might take over responsibility of managing the defibrillator. **It was agreed** Cllr Bowes will ask the committee.

5.5.5. Allocation of Councillor Topics. **It was agreed** to defer consideration of this until recent and likely upcoming casual vacancies are filled. **It was agreed** that the Clerk would draft an advert asking for possible candidate councillors for inclusion in the next village newsletter. The deadline for inclusion in the next issue is 25th Jan. The Chair also asked Councillors to consider candidates who might be approached.

6. Correspondence Received

- Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Council website user survey received. The results will feed into their site redesign. **It was agreed** the Clerk would respond to the survey.
- SALC charges 2020/21. Details of SALC charges for 2020/21 received.
- SALC Planning feedback survey. **It was agreed** Cllr Blair would respond to the survey. Deadline for survey: 31st January.
- SALC seeking nominations for Buckingham Palace Garden Party May 27th 2020. **It was agreed** the Chair would first speak to the previous Chair and then a nomination form submitted for himself or the previous Chair. Deadline for nominations: 28th January.
- SALC Area Forum is restarting after some inactivity. **It was agreed** Cllr Palmer would attend the next Area Forum on Feb 5th.
- Affinity Trust UK (<https://www.affinitytrust.org/>) have requested leaflets be posted locally to support their recruitment of carers. **It was agreed** the leaflet would be posted on the noticeboard. Cllr Freeman volunteered to put remaining leaflets in the surgery.

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- Spring Clean Suffolk, a new MSDC initiative on litter picking. **It was agreed** the Clerk would send details to the village litter picking group.
- Suffolk on Board Bus timetable update. **It was agreed** the Clerk would send details for consideration for inclusion in the village newsletter.
- All other correspondence which has not been circulated via email included within Agenda or in Circulation File.

7. Finance

- 7.1. Accounts as at 31.12.19 presented by the RFO (the Clerk) showing balance of £6,067.76. The statement of accounts was signed by the Chair and the RFO.
- 7.2. 2020/21 Budget: The RFO presented the draft budget, which the Council had discussed at the last meeting. The budget was unanimously **approved** without amendment.
- 7.3. Parish Precept: In view of new role of Parish Clerk/RFO, the proposed 2020/21 Parish Precept of £3,500, an increase of £500 (16%) was unanimously **agreed**. The Precept form was signed by the Chair, the Clerk and two Councillors. The Clerk will send this to MSDC by 31st Jan.

8. Planning Matters

No planning applications were considered. The following planning decisions and notifications by MSDC were noted:

- 8.1. DC/19/05471 – Elm Farm, Thwaite Road. Application under Section 73 (a) for removal or variation of a condition following grant of 1518/02 dated 05/02/2003 (Conversion of redundant farm buildings to B1(a) office use, and small extension) - Removal of Condition 1. Application withdrawn.
- 8.2. DC/19/05344 – The Old Post Office, The Green. Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - T1 Conifer - Remove to Ground. MSDC raised no objection.

9. Standing Orders

It was agreed to defer consideration of amendments to Standing Orders to the next meeting, as the Clerk is to attend SALC training on the topic on 16th Jan.

10. Village Green

- 10.1. Working Parties: No update to report. It was reported by a member of the public that there was still some cleaning up to do following the cutting down of the willow.
- 10.2. Grimmer Fishing: Cllr Palmer reported that the Council's options depended on what rights the Council have over the land, which in turn depends on who owns it. Cllr Palmer further reported that it was not easy to check. **It was agreed** the Council would pay the £6 fee for a search of the common land register. **It was also agreed** that the Clerk would write to Cllrs Stringers and Warboys to ask who is the owner of the Wickham Skeith village green under the 2006 common lands act.

11. Matters for next Agenda

- Internal Accounts and Audit Control Review.
- Other items are to be raised with the Clerk before 21st Feb.

12. Next Meeting: 9 March 2020

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Signed: Date:
Chair

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