



Wickham Skeith Parish Council

MINUTES of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held **MONDAY, 11TH MARCH 2024** at the Village Hall, Wickham Skeith

Present: Cllrs (Chair R Palmer), M Appleby, A Noller, T Rowe and J Keable
Suffolk County Cllr Andrew Stringer, Mid Suffolk District Councillor R Warboys
Clerk: L Rogers
Also present: 5 members of the public.

1. 11/3/24 Cllr Appleby was elected as Chairman.
2. 11/3/24 Apologies received from Cllr T Thorogood
3. 11/3/24 a). To receive members' Declarations of Interest on Agenda items- None received b). To consider requests for dispensations. None received.
4. 11/3/24 **The minutes of the meeting** of the Council held on 15th January 2024 were approved and signed
5. 11/3/24 **County Cllr Stringer** – report appendix 1 – was circulated to the Councillors. People should log any flooding problems on the Highways reporting tool and let Cllr Stringer know if it takes a long time for a response. The construction of Sizewell C may affect Wickham Skeith and the surrounding area with the lorry routes for the project. The traffic involved will be recorded.
6. 11/3/24 **District Cllr Warboys** – report appendix 2 – was circulated to the Councillors. Cllr Warboys agreed to organise and host a meeting for villages and landowners in the River Dove catchment area to meet with the Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council Flood Investigation Team. Wickham Skeith has problems where surface water flows off the fields flooding the roads.
7. 11/3/24 **Village Forum** – Could CIL be used to fund the speakers and projector. The refusal by Planning of the bungalow to the north of Bumbledown was raised.
8. 11/3/24 **Planning Matters** – the following planning notices have been received:
 - a. Mid Suffolk District Council have refused the following planning application. - DC/23/05694 Planning application – Erection of 1no single storey dwelling at land North of Bumbledown (forming part of previously, approved development site), Grange Road, Wickham Skeith
 - b. Mid Suffolk have informed us that formal approval is not required for DC/23/05805 Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Formation, Alteration or Maintenance of Private Ways for Agricultural or Forestry use. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 6 - Creation of farm tracks. - Creation of farm tracks. Location: Land North Of, Thwaite Road, Wickham Skeith (part In the Parishes of Thwaite and Stoke Ash), Eye
 - c. Mid Suffolk District Council does not wish to object to Application Reference: DC/24/00422 Notification of Works to Trees in Conservation Area - Pollard No1 Willow tree (T1) to 20ft and remove ivy. The Village Green, The Green, Wickham Skeith
9. 11/3/24 **Finance**
 - a. The councillors reviewed and agreed the RFO Report authorising payments made since the last meeting and to be made; noted income received since the last meeting; review the Reconciliation of Accounts against Bank Statement – appendix 3
 - b. The Councillors approved the Financial Regulations
 - c. The Councillors agreed to pay the whole invoice for the village hall PAT Testing and subsequent works costs and ask the village hall committee to pay back 50% (£366.25) of the cost. Clerk to write to the Village Hall Committee
 - d. The Councillors agreed to purchase two 'Disabled Parking' signs and posts for the village hall car park at a cost of £227.52 + VAT/ It was agreed to obtain quotes for No Fishing signs to consider at the May meeting. (No fishing from the road and No overnight fishing)
10. 11/3/24 **Management of the Grimmer** – The dry working party had a good turnout and people have given thanks for the work carried out. A second working party will take place on 16th March

to carry work to the willow tree. Mark Leggett is trying to get permission from a landowner to dispose of the waste from the wet working party. If this is not possible the Council will hire a skip to remove the waste. Clerk to find out if permission is required for skip hire in a Conservation Area. As toads are now active, the timing of the working party will have to be carefully considered.

11. 11/3/24 **Standing Orders** – It was agreed to remove the statutory July meeting from the Standing Orders. In the event that the Parish Council continues to be unable to recruit a Chairperson, it was agreed to require the new Chair at each meeting to sign an acceptance and for the previous Chair to resign. This is to cover the running of the council in between meetings.
12. 11/3/24 **CIL Working Group** – The village hall is waiting for a third quote to renew the roof. Clerk to begin exploring funding. While Councillor Warboys had agreed to fund towards the speakers and projector, he warned that some changes were being made to his District Locality Budget and therefore could not be sure that the application would still be compliant so it was agreed to also consider applying for the County Locality Budget. It was agreed to discuss the funding requirements at the May meeting when full quotes will be available. It was agreed to purchase two covered litter bins with base fixings to be delivered to Cllr Appleby at a cost of £265 + VAT each. The noticeboard is fine but needs some new felt added to weather proof it. The next CIL meeting is on 7th May
13. 11/3/24 **Litter Pick** – Went well with much litter and rubbish collected. It was agreed to hold a further litter pick on 7th April at 9.30am starting at the crushing pad beyond the river bridge on the Thornham end of the village. Litter and more rubbish to be collected between Clay Street and the Four Horseshoes- about 900 yards. It was agreed that six people could each clear 300 yards for an hour to tidy it. Will use a vehicle for safety to protect people from traffic. Thanks to Cllr Stringer for the litter collecting kit and bags. Cllr Appleby to advertise in the newsletter.
14. 11/3/24 **Flooding in the Village** – Cllr Stringer urged people to report any flooding problems on the Reporting Tools page and let him know if the work is not getting done so he can escalate it.
15. 11/3/24 **Emergency Plan** –Clerk to follow up with Suffolk County Council. Add to May agenda
16. 11/3/24 **Dates for Meetings** – 13th May, 9th September and 11th November
17. 11/3/24 **Councillor's Reports** –Specific email addresses for Cllrs to be added to the May agenda. Cllr Appleby will join the Biodiversity Course in April. The defibrillator will need new pads later this year – add to May agenda. Cllr Palmer to complete the survey for the Joint Local Plan sent recently. All agreed to thank Cllr Appleby for her hard work for the parish council.
18. 11/3/24 **Next Parish Council meeting:** Monday 13th May 2024 at 7.30pm and Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm

Meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Signed: Date:

Appendix 1 County Councillor Andrew Stringer's Report

Council Budget for 2024-25 At Council on 15 February, Suffolk councillors met to discuss and vote on the administration's budget proposals. The council is borrowing heavily from its reserves to meet the growing demand for social care for adults and children, and council tax is due to rise by £74 annually for Band D properties from April this year. There will also be cuts to Family Hubs (children's centres) and Housing Related Support, which supports vulnerable people like care leavers to find accommodation. Funding for arts and museums will be maintained for 2024-25 but not from SCC core funding, and subject to a bidding process for grants from April 2025. The Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft local archives will be moved to The Hold in Ipswich, which like the arts funding changes has been controversial. My group were concerned about the lack of core funding from Suffolk County Council to arts and museums, as this is how they can secure funding from other sources, and we proposed an amendment to this effect. We also suggested that some of the council's remaining Covid funding from the government be used to support young people not in education, employment

or training, as this cohort had suffered a lot of upheaval in their final years of schooling and exams. Support for young people not in education, employment and training is one of the services that is due to be cut in the administration's budget plans. Our amendment was declined by the Conservatives, as was the Labour amendment which also proposed to reverse some of the planned cuts.

Autism Strategy for Suffolk At the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board on 18 January, the first draft of a Suffolk autism strategy was discussed, which will increase awareness and support for autistic people and make sure local services are accessible and meeting their needs. The plans include supporting autistic people to look for work and those who are considering self-employment, tackling health and care inequalities, improving access to education and transition into higher education. The strategy was commissioned by Suffolk County Council and local NHS providers and has been developed in co-production with Suffolk people with autism to reflect their views and experiences.

Sizewell C Construction Begins Construction begins this month of the controversial new power station at Sizewell, a project that is forecast to take 17 years to complete. This will have a massive impact on local communities, the coastal environment and transport routes in the county. Suffolk County Council has secured £250m in mitigation monies for Suffolk communities, but this will still create a lot of upheaval in the county and the council has a role to play in making sure Sizewell C make every effort to minimise its impact and listens to the concerns of residents and local businesses.

New Funding to Combat Serious Violence Suffolk's Safer Stronger Communities Board has announced a fund of £150,000 from the Home Office to support Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy. Organisations can bid for funding for specific projects which support the work of Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy, with allocation of funding managed through Suffolk Community Foundation. The Serious Violence Strategy focuses on young people and communities at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, and the funding for projects is available to charities, voluntary sector organizations, social enterprises, parish councils, educational settings and other public bodies from April 2024. Applications are invited for grants between £4,000 and £15,000 and organisations can apply by visiting: <https://www.suffolkcf.org.uk/grants/seriousviolencedutyfund/>

Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection Report As you may have read in the local press, Ofsted and CQC published their joint report into SEND services in Suffolk at the beginning of the month. The report was scathing about the county's SEND provision and detailed the failures of the council to communicate and work with parents and carers, improve the EHCP and annual review processes and waiting times, improve outcomes and reduce exclusions. My group was disappointed and concerned that the services are yet to get to grips with improving a service that has now received a third poor inspection result in a row and we offered our assistance to the Local Area Partnership (Suffolk County Council and NHS teams) in preparing the Priority Action Plan they now need to submit to Ofsted and CQC by 7 March. The poor report led to the resignation of the Cabinet members for SEND, Education and Children's Services and prompted a reshuffle of the political leadership at the council. This report will be devastating for parents of children with special needs in Suffolk, and the council will need to work hard to make improvements quickly and build back trust.

'Good Journey' Scheme for Visitor Attractions Visitor attractions in Suffolk are invited to sign up for a new scheme promoting car-free days out in the county. Suffolk Growth Partnership and Suffolk County Council have teamed up with national organisation 'Good Journey' to create the scheme, which launches in March. Around 25 local tourism and visitor attractions are invited to join the Suffolk Good Journey scheme offering residents and visitors discounts and incentives to leave the car at home and explore more of the county on foot, by bike or using public transport. Participating attractions will be supported and will feature on goodjourney.org.uk which provides travel information and discounts to domestic and international visitors and there will a marketing campaign to promote it. Visitor attractions and venues interested in joining Suffolk Good Journey can find out more details by contacting Loretta Jones at Good Journey on loretta@goodjourney.org.uk or info@suffolkgrowth.co.uk

Blue Badge Team - Change of Telephone Number As a direct result of customer feedback, the Blue Badge phone

number will be changing, and there will now be a dedicated phone line for Blue Badge customers. From **31 January** the Blue Badge team will be answering enquires on **03456 066 077**, this number will be visible online across the SCC Website, InfoLink and any future published materials. This is a change from the current telephone number, which is 0808 800 4005. For more information about how you can apply for a blue badge or assist someone to make an application, please visit <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/blue-badge-scheme>

Flood Resilience
Those whose homes or businesses were flooded by Storm Babet and have not yet applied for the initial £500 flood recovery grant payment should do so as soon as possible as this is the first step in applying for the further £5,000 for flood protection from the government’s Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Grant. The application process for the latter will begin in early 2024 and after initial eligibility checks by SCC, property owners will be responsible for sourcing an independent surveyor and PFR contractor. Payment of up to £5,000 including VAT will be paid retrospectively to the property owner once the Council receives proof of the completed installation and invoicing for the approved measures. Further information about the grant eligibility, conditions and the forthcoming application process can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/property-flood-resilience-grant> For more information about the flood investigations which are due to take place in the wake of Storm Babet, please see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/storm-babet>

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Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Appendix 2 Report from District Councillor Warboys

<p>Council Budget agreed</p>	<p>The first Green Administration budget was agreed by Council in February. There will be a 2% increase in Council Tax (lower than most authorities). The cost of services to residents and communities is expected to rise by £1.8M, and Core Government funding is not matching the inflationary pressures, so the modest council tax increase should help protect services and build on the new priorities of the Council. The Green Administration is putting environmental sustainability and social justice at the heart of all its activities.</p>
<p>Housing Revenue Budget</p>	<p>The housing revenue budget will have financial challenges ahead, most notably an increase of £1.1M in the cost to run the housing service. The housing revenue account and council general fund account are completely separate so there is no way to cross subsidise from one account to the other. There will be a 7.7% increase in housing rents this year just to keep pace with rising costs. There will also be increases in both service and utility charges for sheltered housing tenants. Advice and help for those struggling with finances is available from the Council.</p>

Rural Transport grants	<p>A new rural transport grants scheme has just been launched to help provide passenger transport options across the district. Existing community transport operators can apply for funding before 15th April. More details are available here: https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/rural-transport-grants-scheme.</p> <p>The Vertas Bus project is hoping to gain help from this fund.</p>
Joint local plan part 2	<p>All parish and town councils across both districts have all been invited to complete a questionnaire about the services and facilities present in each area. This information is needed to prepare the next phase of the Joint Local Plan.</p>
Energy efficiency grants	<p>Funding is available to help residents with the cost of installing loft insulation, in partnership with Travis Perkins. There are four product options available and residents will receive a 50% discount off their purchase (up to £200), with free delivery.</p> <p>According to The Energy Saving Trust, it is estimated that an uninsulated home loses a quarter of its heat through its roof. Correctly installed insulation should pay for itself many times over in its 40-year lifetime. More details can be found at the Green Suffolk website https://www.greensuffolk.org/at-home/grants/.</p> <p>A free event about making older properties more energy efficient is to take place at The Hold in Ipswich on 6th March. More details available here: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/safe-suffolk-renters-retrofit-solutions-conference-march-2024.</p>
Tree Cover	<p>SCC has secured over £200K from the Government's local authority Treescapes Fund for over 1500 new trees in a bid on behalf of all Suffolk councils, including MSDC. The funding will go toward planting as well as maintaining the trees.</p>
River Catchment investigations	<p>I have been in contact with SCC Flood Investigations team. . On average, the Flood and Water Management team complete 2-3 reports per year. Storm Babet alone has triggered 48 so far and we are expecting this to exceed 100. The criteria for investigations is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal flooding of one property (domestic or business) on more than one occasion • Internal flooding to five or more properties in a specific location • Major transport route closed for more than 10 hours. <p>Due to the sheer number of reports to be completed, SCC will be firm and are only able to conduct flood investigations for locations which trigger one or more of the above.</p> <p>I will be pursuing some information from the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Regarding the commissioning of hydraulic surveys, you may wish to contact Framlingham Town Council. Following Strom Babet, they appointed a consultant to undertake an assessment of the flood risk and catchment to understand what could be implemented going forward to reduce the risk. They may be able to provide you with some helpful advice.</p>

Cllr. Rowland Warboys Chair Mid Suffolk District Council 2023/24, Green Party, Gislingham Ward

Email: rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk

Appendix 3

WICKHAM SKEITH PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REPORT 11

MARCH 2024

Receipts since 15.1.24

12.2.24	Plusnet refund		138.40
			<u>138.40</u>

Expenditure (movement since 15.1.24)

Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

9.2.24	L Rogers February wages	100712	186.40
9.2.24	HMRC February tax	100713	2.60
25.2.24	Plusnet	d/d	39.36
29.2.24	BT internet	100714	32.33
	L Rogers March		
7.3.24	wages	100715	186.40
7.3.24	HMRC March tax	100716	2.60
			<u>449.69</u>

Unpresented cheques

9.2.24	L Rogers February wages	100712	186.40
9.2.24	HMRC February tax	100713	2.60
29.2.24	BT internet	100714	32.33
	L Rogers March		
1.3.24	wages	100715	186.40
7.3.24	HMRC March tax	100716	2.60
			<u>410.33</u>

Bank

Reconciliation

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Account	statement date	statement balance	actual balance	unpresented cheques
Community a/c	12.2.24	£11,669.77	£11,669.77	410.33
Business reserve	12.2.24	£16,129.91	£16,129.91	0.00
		£27,799.68	<u>£27,389.35</u>	

