

**Minutes of Withersfield Parish Council meeting held at  
7:30pm on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at the village hall, Withersfield.**

Present: Cllrs Terry Rich (Chairman), Frank Eve (Vice-Chair),  
Julia Korona, Jaclyn Lake, Philip Stiles; Clerk: Laura Crump.

**1. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chair**

It was proposed by Cllr Eve, and seconded by Cllr Korona, for Cllr Rich to be the Chairman. All Cllrs were in agreement.

It was proposed by Cllr Stiles, and seconded by Cllr Korona, for Cllr Eve to be the Vice-Chair. All Cllrs were in agreement.

Cllr Rich indicated that he felt it important that we consider how we attract new Councillors who could potentially take on some of the work of the Parish Council. He said that the time is approaching when he will need to stand down and pass on responsibility of chairing the council.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Received from County Cllr Bennett.

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

**3. District Councillor's report**

Cllr Wijenayaka's annual report can be found on the PC website.

In his absence, Cllr Wijenayaka sent the following update ahead of the PC meeting:

I'm in contact with Simon Collin on the playground, however I've not been able to have a specific meeting to discuss the details as yet.

We've still not had any confirmation that Acorn have submitted the responses to the comments by SCC, as soon as I hear anything I'll let you all know.

**4. County Councillor's report**

Cllr Bennett's County Councillor annual report and report for May 2024 can be found on the PC website.

**5. Public Forum for parishioners**

None.

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

The Chair declared as the applicant of planning application DC/24/0470/HH he would leave the room at this point in the agenda for the rest of the PC to consider.

**7. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

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

**8. Matters arising - updates from previous Parish Council meetings**

**a) Update on playground feasibility study– Cllr Wijenayaka**

As mentioned in his report, Cllr Wijenayaka is still working on gathering information on the implementation of a playground. The Cllrs agreed that they would like Cllr Wijenayaka to find out how much a feasibility study would cost and whether he would be able to secure a grant towards this.

**9. Allocation of councillor roles and responsibilities**

The responsibilities were discussed and the Cllrs agreed to the following:

Village Hall –Cllr Jarvis  
Highways – Cllr Eve  
Speed Watch liaison & VAS Coordinator – Cllr Eve  
Graveyard – Cllr Korona  
Safeguarding – Cllr Korona  
Environment and Footpaths – Cllr Lake  
Finance – Cllr Rich  
Planning – Cllr Stiles

Defibrillator – the Clerk will confirm with Sheila Horton, VHMC secretary, that she is happy to continue to carry out these checks.

**10. Update on the Acorn application for an anaerobic digestion plant**

It was noted that the Chair had been in communications with SCC Development Manager, Andy Rutter, whom explained that the applicant requested until the end of April to provide additional information due to having to wait until the appropriate season to undertake water course surveys. He confirmed that there will then be a further consultation.

Cllr Eve told the PC that Suffolk Wildlife Trust had sent their objection to the AD plant due to a parishioner making them aware of the impact this could have on water vole in the area. The objection can be seen online on the Suffolk planning website.

Cllr Stiles said he had been in contact with the Chair of Horseheath PC enquiring about the proposed Streetly Hall Farm AD plant application but there are no further developments to report as yet.

The Muck-Off campaign will organise their next meeting when news has been received on the application.

### **11. Update on the Neighbourhood Plan and actions required – Cllr Korona**

Cllr Korona informed the PC that she managed to track down the needed paperwork and sent this off to West Suffolk who had confirmed receipt and said they would be in touch soon to schedule a meeting. Cllr Korona said she would chase this up in the next few days if she has not heard from them.

### **12. Update from the Traffic Working Group and feedback from village visit by Suffolk Highways Cabinet member and Highways engineers – Cllr Eve**

Cllr Eve's annual TWG report can be found on the PC website.

Two representatives from Suffolk Highways together with the Cabinet holder for traffic on Suffolk County Council, Richard Smith, attended a village visit with the PC Chairman Cllr Rich and lead of Speed-watch, Chris Oaks. Richard Smith made it clear that he was not in favour of 20mph zones and in his opinion Withersfield did not need one and therefore it would not be implemented. The Highways officers indicated that some virtual traffic calming measures may be agreed but did not make any specific suggestions.

Cllr Eve will follow up on this and the TWG will continue to support the '20's Plenty for Suffolk' campaign.

The prospective Conservative candidate will be attending the next Villages Traffic Group, and Cllr Eve said he would invite candidates from other parties to attend future meetings.

Cllr Eve will contact Cllr Bennett about the enquiry for the costings of an options appraisal on the access point on the Arboretum estate from Highways.

### **13. Update from the Village Hall Committee – Cllr Jarvis**

The latest VHMC report can be found on the PC website.

### **14. Finance**

#### **a) Capital reserves and projects**

The accounts report and budget were discussed. The Chair explained that any surplus will go into the unrestricted reserves. All reserves are specifically earmarked for future projects, maintenance, and a contingency fund for unforeseeable expenditure. This should satisfy future audits.

#### **b) Presentation of monthly accounts – Income and Expenditure and Bank Reconciliation**

#### **c) To note payments made since last meeting**

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

- d) Approval of the end of year accounts 2023/24 and Chairman’s Annual Accounts Report

The accounts and report were discussed and approved – proposed by Cllr Korona and seconded by Cllr Stiles. These can be found on the PC website.

- e) Confirmation that the Parish Council meets the criteria for exemption for 2023/24 and wishes to be an exempt authority

Confirmed - proposed by Cllr Eve and seconded by Cllr Korona.

- f) Consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement

- g) Consider and approve the Accounting Statements

The AGAR was considered and approved – proposed by Cllr Korona and seconded by Cllr Eve.

- h) Approval of Internal Controls 2024

- i) Approval of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct

These were all approved. Proposed by Cllr Stiles and seconded by Cllr Korona.

- j) Confirmation of receipt of 2024/25 precept

Noted.

- k) Approval of the use of BACS by the Parish Council for online payments

This was approved. It was clarified that the Clerk emails the invoices to two Cllrs who are signatories so that they can then approve the payments online. The invoices are still initialled by the Cllrs in person also.

- l) To note the Clerk continues as the PC’s Responsible Financial Officer

Noted.

## 15. Correspondence

- a) Email – SARS Letter and donation request

It was proposed by Cllr Korona for the PC to donate £100 to SARS (Suffolk Accident Rescue Service), this was seconded by Cllr Eve and all Cllrs were in favour. It was noted that this will be an S137 payment of £100.

## 16. Planning

- a) **Planning Appeal Notification -AP/24/0020/STAND**

DC/23/0493/FUL Planning Application - five dwellings (following demolition of existing house) Milton House Thurlow Road Withersfield Suffolk

It was agreed that the Parish Council would submit a representation opposing the appeal.

Cllrs Stiles and Eve to liaise to draft the objection which should be submitted before 5<sup>th</sup> June.

**b) Borough notifications since last meeting**

Noted.

**c) Applications received since last meeting for consideration:**

All were considered and noted.

**17. Agenda items for 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

- Acorn AD Plant
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Introduction to the new Estate Director of Thurlow Estate
- Discussion around surveying parishioners for their views on parish priorities going forward

*The meeting closed at 20:22.*