

Little Waldingfield Parish Council

Clerk: Chris White, Walnut Lodge, Haymarket Little Waldingfield CO10 0SY.
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Approved Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10th March 2022 in the Parish Room.

Present: Cllr Tim Sheppard (Acting Chair), Cllr Matt Foster, Cllr Stewart Braybrook, Cllr Robert Wheeler.

Attending: Cllr Clive Arthey (District Councillor), Cllr Margaret Maybury (District Councillor) and Cllr Chris White (Acting Clerk). There were no members of the public.

1. Appointment of temporary Proper Officer and RFO to conduct Council business in the absence of a Clerk.

It was proposed that the Chair take over the Clerk's duties and be appointed temporary Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer to allow the Council to continue to function whilst a new Clerk is being sought. Members agreed unanimously.

2. Apologies and approval of absences.

DCC Philip Faircloth-Mutton tendered his apologies.

3. Declarations of Interests by Members and Requests for Dispensations.

None declared.

4. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 25 January 2022.

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. Reports by County Councillor and District Councillors.

Members reviewed the reports and wished to record a vote of thanks to Margaret Maybury for funding the replacement bench at Croft Lea.

The reports are attached at Annex A.

6. Public Forum.

No members of the public were present.

7. Consideration of Planning Applications and Decision Notices.

a. DC/22/01068. Replacement oil storage tank. Harvest Barn, Haymarket, Little Waldingfield, CO10 0SY.

Members agreed to support the Application

8. Neighbourhood Plan.

The Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood plan, started in July 2017, passed the final referendum with 95% of the votes in favour. It has now been formally adopted by Babergh District Council.

Signed:

Date:.....

There was a question regarding the return of unused grant funding; the Chair will confirm there are no further invoices due from the consultants and the Clerk will determine how the unused grant is returned.

9. Finance.

- a.** Members noted the receipt of Bank Account Interest of £0.06p for the period December 21 to February 22.
- b.** Members noted the Lloyds Bank Accounts balances of £24832.81p and £2524.51 as at 28 February 2022.
- c.** Members reviewed the Payments and Budget, and the Budget position as at 28 February 2022.
- d.** Members reviewed the 2020/21 Internal Audit comments and the Councils' responses.
- e.** Members confirmed the appointment of SALC as Internal Auditors for 2022/23.
- f.** As the Council's receipts and payments were not expected to exceed £25,000, the Council approved the submission of an exemption certificate to the external auditors for 2021/22.
- g.** Payments were authorised as follows:- Christine Hargan (Holiday Pay and Office expenses) £200, HMRC (Clerk income tax) £75.40, SALC Payroll Services £27.00, and Parish Room (Hire charges) £27.00.
- h.** Members agreed to the purchase of a Preparing for Audit webinar package (£15.00+VAT) to assist the Clerk in preparing the Internal Audit paperwork.

10. Governance.

- a.** Members were informed that there were no required changes to Standing Orders or Financial Regulations since the last review in 2021. It was resolved to adopt them in their current form for 2022. The Clerk will update the website documents accordingly.
- b.** Members reviewed and approved the Parish Council Risk Assessment 2021/22 which had been updated to include Data loss protection as suggested in the Internal Audit comments.
- c.** Members reviewed and approved the Council's Internal Control Statement for 2021/22.
- d.** The Clerk advised members that, following the preparation of the necessary supporting documentation, a review of the effectiveness of internal audit had been carried out by Cllr Stewart. Following a review and discussion, Members approved the internal controls checklist completed for 2021/22.
- e.** The Clerk informed Members that all arrangements were in place with Sudbury Community Wardens for the supply and collection of the litter pick equipment, and the disposal of the litter collected. Members then reviewed and approved the litter pick Risk Assessment for 19th March 2022.
- f.** Cllrs Sheppard and Foster agreed to carry out the closed churchyard safety checks on 12th March 2022 and report their findings at the next meeting.
- g.** There was discussion on the best way of maintaining a functioning Council until a new Clerk can be recruited. Accepting it was not best practice, it was resolved that the Chair would take on the roles of Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer in the short term.
- h.** Members agreed the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting and that it should be held separately from the May AGM. The date was decided under item 14.

Signed:

Date:.....

11. Platinum Jubilee.

The Clerk reported their had been an initial meeting of representatives of the village organisations where ideas for village events were discussed. It was agreed there should be a main event on the playing field, probably on Friday 3rd June 2022, and the possibility of taking part in the National Beacon lighting event on Thursday 2nd June. The idea of planting a small commemorative area of trees at the back of the Playing Field was also discussed along with possible of gifts for the children of the village.

Following lengthy discussions it was agreed that a commemorative mug would be commissioned and presented to the children of the Village by the PC and that Villagers would also be able to purchase additional mugs.

12. Highways & Footpaths

- a. Cllr Wheeler reported that another factfinding walk along footpaths 1,11 & 8 (Hole Farm area) and 9 up to Archers Farm had been carried out. 2 additional signs would help where footpaths intersect, and the landowner is being contacted in regard to improving the waterlogged area at the start of footpath 1 near the village sign.
- b. The Clerk reported that the original contractor cannot complete the hedge and verge cutting along the B1115 as agreed. An alternative contractor had been found and would carry out the work in the next week for the same cost.
- c. Members agreed to discuss the costs and funding for the long term maintenance of roadside verges and hedges at the next meeting.

13. Questions to the Chair. There were no questions to the Chair.

14. Dates of next meetings.

It was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting separately from the next Parish Council meeting.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting was set for Tuesday 3rd May 2022 at 7:30 pm

The date of the Annual Parish meeting for the parishioners was set for Wednesday 13th April 2022.

Clerks note: It was subsequently discovered that date clashed with another village event so the date for the Annual Parish Meeting has now been set for Tuesday 26th April at 7:00pm in the Parish Room.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chris White
Clerk.

Signed:

Date:.....

Annex A – Reports by County and District Councillors

District Councillor Clive Arthey

LWPC, 10th March 2022

Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Last week saw BDC's formal adoption of your Neighbourhood Plan. Congratulations to all involved.

BDC 2022 Budget

At February's Council meeting the 2022 Budget was approved. BDC element of Council tax will increase by 2%, + £3.48 per annum for an average Band D household.

Sheltered housing charges and garage rents remain at 2021-22 levels, but council house rents increase by 4.1% in line with government guidance, + £3.72 per week average.

Council Tax Rebate

The Government is providing funding for occupiers of properties in Council Tax bands A-D to receive a one-off 'energy rebate' of £150.

Empty Homes

The Empty Homes Renovation Loan is available for properties that have been empty for over six months and are in need of significant repairs. Up to £20,000 interest free is available.

Funding to support rough sleepers

BDC and MSDC have been awarded £342k to provide specialised emergency accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness. The funding will provide emergency accommodation with two self-contained units in Sudbury for vulnerable adults at risk of living on the streets.

Clive Arthey

District Councillor Margaret Maybury

BDC is having a Peer Review which is when a group of officers and members from other areas audits the processes, concerns, and strategic items of the district. This will take place next week and the results will appear later in the year.

I am sure you have all received your revised council tax invoice and will note the increases. It may not be apparent to all, but legitimate reductions can be applied for including, single person household, confirmed mental health status and homes built or altered for disabled use for a named resident residing in the property. Details are available from the website. I also highlight the minor homes adaption grants which may make life better for someone struggling to stay in their own homes. Again, details can be found from the BDC website.

Jubilee celebrations are being confirmed with many parishes and towns now advertising their events. Please email me if you would like me to help celebrate with you. I also readvertise my competition for the Jubilee which all parishes within my Ward have had details of. The weather is improving day by day and I therefore encourage all to be outside looking for areas to enhance to mark HM The Queen's platinum jubilee and the chance to win a trophy and prize from my competition.

Signed:

Date:.....

None of us I am sure will not be aghast at the plight of Ukraine. I applaud all who have donated or helped in the humanitarian effort.

Around the Ward:

Many congratulations to Little Waldingfield who now have their Neighbourhood Plan in place. A huge effort by the village over the last four years has seen their plan finally agreed and approved by BDC. Well done to all.

Great Waldingfield now have a full complement of councillors. Congratulations to those who have joined the parish council.

I have been delighted to donate to worthy causes within the Ward from my locality budget. The beneficiaries this year are:

Great Waldingfield – **Branchlines** for hand tools and a first aid kit to continue their work with the community woodland and ponds.

Great Waldingfield – **Lady Belles** for help with the cost of their meeting place. Lady Belles are a group of older, vulnerable residents who meet to socialise; usually single they join together to support each other. And they can be great company!

Lavenham – The parish council received money for plaques for their jubilee trees at Spring Street.

Little Waldingfield – The parish council received money for a new chat bench at Croft Lea. Installed at the entrance to the homes of older resident it allows a comfortable outside space to talk and chat and support one another as well as a resting space for walkers and cyclists.

County Councillor Phillip Faircloth-Mutton:

I regret that I am unable to join you this evening, but wish to report the following to your meeting:

2022/23 Budget

In February, the County Council voted to increase Suffolk County Council's share of Council tax by 1.99% with regard to the base rate and an additional 1% on the Social Care Precept. This equates to 80 pence extra per average band D property. The Administration rejected an Opposition motion which would have levied an additional 1% to the Social Care Precept on top of the changes outlined above, to support households with the ongoing cost of living uncertainties.

Croft Lea Lighting Conversion

As requested by the Parish Council, I have obtained a quotation from the County Council as to the replacement of the current lighting arrangements in Croft Lea.

If supported, the cost would total £956.19.

Full details have been forwarded to the Chairman for discussion.

Vegetation Maintenance Arrangements

I am currently awaiting a response from the Highways Team in respect of a meeting with the Chairman and I to discuss the Parish Council undertaking a more active role in hedgerow maintenance. I have issued a chaser today and will inform the Chairman once an officer is available to meet.

Parish Council Clerk

Following news of Christine Hargan's departure, I have made enquiries with colleagues as to recommendations for a replacement Clerk, either on an interim or permanent basis, which have been investigated by the Chairman accordingly.

I will forward any potential avenues to support you in your ongoing search

Signed:

Date:.....