

Little Waldingfield Parish Council

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Minutes of the Little Waldingfield Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 23 May 2023 in the Parish Room

Present: - Tim Sheppard – Chair LWPC; Chris White – Acting Clerk LWPC; SCC Cllr Philip Faircloth-Mutton; Trevor Hurrell – Chair LW Playing Field Committee; Richard Bowden – Chair LW Parish Room Committee; Terry Weston – LW Charities; Diana Langford – LW History Society; Tricia Eddington – Over 60's & Friendship Club: 6 members of the public.

1. Welcome by the Chair of Little Waldingfield Parish Council.

The meeting commenced at 7:30pm and Cllr Tim Sheppard welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Agreement of the Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 May 2022.

The minutes of the previous APM held on 23 May 2022 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising from the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 May 2022.

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

4. Report by the Chair of LW Parish Council - Cllr Tim Sheppard: -

The Parish Council operated throughout the year with 5 Councillors, 2 vacancies remained unfilled, all attempts to recruit new members were unsuccessful which is putting the future of the Council at risk. For much of the year it has also operated without a qualified Clerk, thanks were expressed to Cllr Chris White who as well as being Chair, took on the role to ensure the PC could continue to operate effectively and within the legislation. All attempts to recruit a Clerk have been unsuccessful, possibly due to the part-time low hours nature of the job.

The recent elections saw all Councillors were re-elected for another 4 years and following Cllr White's decision to step down Cllr Tim Sheppard was elected Chair and Cllr Matt Foster as Vice-Chair.

Council business has been varied through the year and included: -

- The formation of a Footpath Working Group to improve the footpath network in the parish.
- Planning applications including the proposal to restore Brookwood Manor/Holbrook Hall and convert it to a boutique hotel.
- The replacement of the streetlights with more efficient LED fittings.
- Clearing of undergrowth in the churchyard and cemetery
- Renovation of the village sign.
- Work on reducing speeding through the village.
- Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations with a focus on young people in the Parish; this included the presentation of commemorative mugs, tree planting, and, with thanks to Jennie Jordan, a commemorative board of all their names on the playing field.

Work for next year includes: -

- Further improvements to the footpath network.
- Increased measures to reduce speeding.

It was resolved there should be no increase in the Parish element of the Council Tax and the spending budget for 2023/24 was set at £11925, up from £9525 in 2022/23.

The full report is attached as Annex A.

5. Suffolk County Council Report: - Cllr Phillip Faircloth-Mutton.

Special Education:

Following last year's reports that SCC's Special Educational Needs & Disabilities services were substandard, it has embarked on an ambitious SEND capital expenditure programme. To address the issue of South Suffolk young people with SEND being schooled in Essex a new specialist satellite school will be coming on board in South Suffolk in the next 5 years.

Council Tax: SCC is in the bottom 30% nationally of authorities for providing adult social care, recognising the cost-of-living pressures SCC increased the tax by 3.99% rather than a requested 5%. Further investment has also been made in local Citizens Advice Bureaus.

Local Matters: I was pleased to have contributed £300 towards the restoration of the village sign; there has been close cooperation with the PC to address speeding matters including traffic surveys; the drainage issues on Church Road towards Humble Green have been addressed and previous substandard work has been corrected.

Clerks note: - Our local Babergh District Councillors were unable to attend this meeting due to it conflicting with BDC's Annual General Meeting.

6. Report from LW Footpath Working Group: - presented by Cllr Tim Sheppard.

The Footpath Working Group, comprising of one Councillor and 5 volunteers from the village, was set up in 2021 to assist the PC in securing the future of the Public Rights of Way and improve the network in the Parish.

Work over the last year includes: -

- Establishing contacts with surrounding Parishes and relevant District and County Council officers.
- Surveying all the local footpaths and drawing up a reference spreadsheet identifying the relevant landowners and tenant farmers, the condition of the footpaths, and where maintenance, signage and improvements were needed.
- Initial work in this respect has resulted in the replacement of 4 bridges.
- Optimising the footpath cutting schedules.
- The production of a new LW Circular Walks leaflet available to the public.
- Circulation of a village wide questionnaire to seek local views on improving the footpath network.

The full report is attached as Annex B.

7. Report from the Parish Room Committee Chair – Richard Bowden: -

Personnel: Alan Campbell has stepped down as Chair after 5 years of commendable service and I have taken over that role and Kate Beane has joined the PR.

Fund Raising Events: There have been many sell-out events over the year including Quiz Nights, Wine Tasting, and Race Nights plus celebration tea parties for the Jubilee and Coronation. All have provided valuable contributions to our funds and our thanks go to all those who voluntarily help with the catering etc. Future events will include a Sale Trail, Bingo, and further Wine Tasting, Quiz, and Race nights.

8. Participation in the Warm Spaces Initiative in cooperation with LW Charities was unsuccessful due to the offer not being taken up despite being well publicised.

Maintenance work has included the fitting of secondary double glazing and roof vents.

Looking forward we hope to promote greater use of the PR as a venue for private hire events.

A summary of the report is attached as Annex C.

9. Report from the Playing Field Committee Chair – Trevor Hurrell: -

It has been a relatively busy 12 months in which:

- The Committee was joined by 2 new members.
- The Pop-up Pub has proved very popular – thanks go to all who make it so successful.
- Formation of a WhatsApp group of volunteers that could be called on for help when needed.
- A range of outdoor adult gym equipment has been installed following a successful funding application.
- Queens Platinum Jubilee and Kings Coronation celebrations and tree planting, all of which proved very popular.
- The renovation work in the pavilion has been completed providing, a comfortable and welcoming meeting venue.

More events are planned for 2023/24 including a music night on July 8th.

Members of the public observed that the Pop-up Pub was a fantastic resource for the village enabling the community to get together and should be fully supported. The work of the PFC members involved in maintaining it should be commended.

10. Report from the Little Waldingfield Charities Chair – Terry Weston.

The LW Charities, under its constitution is able to gift assistance to those living permanently in the village, over retirement age, and not in full employment. It is able to help with certain other expenses; past examples include funding for hospital and care home visits, motorised wheelchair maintenance, educational textbooks, and also support following a house fire. All help is confidential, and applications can be made via our Secretary Mary Thorogood; contact details are in the Box River News. Our income comes from 2 sources; rental income from 3 plots of land adjacent to the village and investment returns.

During the year Sue Mitchell retired as a trustee after 18 years and two new trustees were appointed, Coleen Hamblett and Father Rob McGee. We participated, in partnership with the Parish Room, in the Warm Space Initiative which proved to be a misjudgement of the need for such a facility in the village. We have donated the original linen on paper map of land owned by the charity in 1827 to Suffolk Archives to ensure its preservation, a photocopy remains hanging in the Parish Room.

The full report, including financial details is attached as Annex D.

11. Report from the Little Waldingfield History Society Chair– given by Dianna Langford: -

Firstly, a vote of thanks to all our members, new and old, for their continued enthusiastic support and to all our speakers.

LWHS is now in its 10th season and its very successful book “Little Waldingfield – Our Village History from 1840 to 2014” is still available to buy with all proceeds going towards the upkeep of the Church.

The Covid pandemic meant there were no meetings from February 2020 to September 2022 and our final talk of the season is in June. The 2023/24 season starts in September and a full programme of events will be published shortly. Comprehensive reviews of all our talks are published by Andy Sheppard on the LWHS blog.

We are very grateful to our trustees; Rose MacNeil – History Recorder; Di Langford – Booking Secretary; Andy Sheppard – Secretary; and Robert Wheeler – Treasurer for all their dedicated work. We must also pay tribute to Sue Sheppard, a mainstay of the Society and instrumental in its success – her loss will be deeply missed.

The full report is attached as Annex E.

12. Report from the Over 60's & Friendship Club – Tricia Eddington: -

We are a small group, currently around 20, coming from Acton, Gt Waldingfield, Cornard and 3 from this village. We meet regularly in the Parish Room and our activities include talks, coach trips and lunch outings. We also have teas in the Parish Room and would welcome any new members.

13. Public Forum

A question was raised as to where people new to the village could find information on local groups and events.

The Chair replied that some information was currently available on the village website and in the Box River News magazine delivered monthly to all houses in the village. Also a new email database is being set up that residents can join and then receive information on local events and activities.

A point was raised that in the past there had been a village 'welcome card' that was given to all new arrivals. Following discussions, it was agreed to look in to reviving the card and investigate other means of disseminating local information.

Another question was raised regarding SCC Highways position on potholes and also the forewarning of road closures of which there have been many seemingly unannounced closures recently.

SCC Faircloth-Mutton replied that the current strategy is to concentrate repairs on where the greatest road usage i.e major roads. That strategy is anticipated to change to focus more on areas of greater population rather than greater car usage. Secondly SCC has changed highways contractors which should provide quicker and higher standard repairs to the roads. Regarding road closures a new electronic system has been released which should allow monthly updates to be given to Parish Councils on future road closures.

A further question was raised regarding speeding in the village and whether there was a community speed-watch initiative.

The Chair replied there had been a scheme in the village in the past but had lapsed due to a lack of volunteers. The PC is in the process of collecting data via the Speed Indicator Devices to use as evidence along with the details of serious events to then take both professional advice and obtain local views on possible further measures to reduce speeding and improve safety in the village. In the meantime, a request will be made for a speed camera van to visit the village on occasions.

There being no further questions the meeting closed at 8:35pm.

Annex A to APM 2023 Minutes

Report from Chair of the Parish Council

Council Composition

Since the last annual meeting the Council has operated with 5 Councillors, out of a full complement of 7, and there were 7 meetings over the year. Stewart Braybrook resigned in January 2023 and we were pleased to welcome Tina Impett onto the Council in September 2022. It has not been possible to fill the 2 remaining Councillor vacancies despite a number of appeals.

Following the resignation of the Clerk in January 2022, the Council has had to operate without a Clerk for much of the year with the Chair -Chris White - continuing to adopt the additional role of acting Clerk and RFO. Attempts to recruit a new Clerk have been unsuccessful as qualified Clerks willing to take on low hours, part-time positions are in short supply throughout the region. Attempts to set up job-share arrangements with other Parishes in a similar position have also proved unsuccessful.

At the recent elections all Councillors were re-elected for a further 4 years. At the first meeting of the 'new' Council, following Chris White's decided to stepdown as Chair, Tim Sheppard was elected as Chair and Matt Foster as Vice-Chair.

Council Business

Council business has been varied throughout the year as ever. The Footpaths Working Group has continued its work looking at ways of improving the footpath network.

There have been 7 planning applications in the past year, 5 involving alterations to existing properties and two for new buildings. The most significant being a proposal to restore Brookwood Manor/Holbrook Hall and convert it into a family orientated boutique hotel. Meetings were arranged with the developer and local residents so that concerns may be raised, and views exchanged.

Following information from Suffolk County Council about a Countywide upgrade programme for streetlighting and the fact that the old-style bulbs were no longer available, it was decided to replace the streetlights with LED fittings, which have greater flexibility in relation to brightness and timings. Early indications are they will reduce the energy costs by over 50%.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee was celebrated by the Council in many ways, with a focus on the young people of the Parish:

1. Commemorative mugs presented to each child living in the village at the time, and a line of trees on the playing field was planted on their behalf this spring. A commemorative board inscribed with their names was also put up.
2. The old bench at the entrance to Croft Lea was replaced with one dedicated to the Platinum Jubilee and 2 planters added. Our thanks go to local District Councillor Margaret Maybury for the donation from her locality budget to fund the project.

Work was done last year to clear the undergrowth around the edges of the cemetery and closed churchyard and further work is planned. Our thanks to all the volunteers who turned out to help, and also to the 16 or so that helped with the annual litter pick where some 25 bags of litter were collected.

In November 2022, the PC took the decision to have the village sign completely renovated. It had deteriorated significantly since it was last repainted in 2014 such that most of the scroll work and lettering had to be replaced. Following 3 months of work, the sign was reinstated so that it coordinated with the King's Coronation weekend. The renovation was carried out by local firms and thanks goes to local County Councillor Phillip Faircloth-Mutton for helping to fund the project.

The renovation of the Swan Pub has advanced, although the current economic climate and difficulties particularly in the hospitality sector seem to be making it difficult for the owner to secure a tenant and sadly it remains closed for the time being.

Speeding through the village is a continuing issue and the fact that there were 3 accidents at the bend by Haymarket Cottages this year is a matter of concern. The existing arrangements of sharing the Speed Indicator Devices with Chilton and Great Waldingfield Parishes will continue, and the Council is looking at other options to reduce the level of speeding.

Looking forward over the coming year

The PC has a range of responsibilities which include being a consultee on planning applications within the Parish. With the community based Neighbourhood Plan in place, residents views now have a greater influence on the outcome of any planning application. The overall decision on whether an application is granted or refused, however, is still the responsibility of Babergh District Council, the local planning authority.

The PC is also responsible for maintaining the closed Church burial ground, most footpaths around the village and the street lighting. The grass cutting of most of the footpaths around the village together with the Churchyard and Cemetery will continue and further work to improve the cemetery and the look of the roadsides through the village are planned. The Footpaths Working Group will also be working to further improve the footpath network.

The process of gathering data on level of speeding through the village is continuing and further consultations with Suffolk Highways will take place regarding possible measures to combat it. A Suffolk County Council trial using Automatic Numberplate Recognition technology linked to the SID's is taking place, which might prove a more effective - albeit temporary - deterrent. Expect a Parish-wide consultation on what measures to adopt to address speeding in due course.

Council Budget

It was resolved to leave the Parish Council Tax unchanged for 2023/24 and the Budget was set at £11,925.

Information

Finally, all information and notifications of meetings, agendas and the minutes of all meetings are posted on the village website. They are also posted on the PC notice board by the telephone box.

Members of the public are always welcome to attend any meeting and raise any issues about which they have concerns.

That concludes our annual report about the work of the Parish Council in 2022 -2023, I am happy to take questions if there is anything you wish to ask at the end of the meeting.

Annex B to APM 2023 Minutes

Little Waldingfield Footpaths Group - Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 2023

The group first met in September 2021. The purposes of the working party are:

- to secure the future of the Public Rights of Way in Little Waldingfield for current and future generations;
- to ensure continuing public access to the Public Rights of Way;
- to develop the local footpaths network where possible.

There are many other walkers in the village, but it was decided that six was a good number for such a group. The group meets formally five or six times a year. The establishment of the Group was supported by the Parish Council and the group works in partnership with it, as both a working party and a form of sub-committee. The Group presents a report at each Parish Council meeting.

One of our first tasks was to familiarise ourselves with the local Public Rights of Way network and, in so doing, identify any issues. We did this by the use of maps with the assigned identification numbers of the paths and by going on a series of fact finding walks of the network.

The Group has become familiar with the Definitive Maps of Public Rights of Way and the Definitive Statements of Public Rights of Way for Little Waldingfield. We have gained knowledge of paths in adjoining parishes, especially where they are continuations of, or connections with, those of Little Waldingfield parish. We have also shared with each other, historical knowledge of local path routes.

We have established contact with appropriate people in neighbouring parishes so that we would be in a position to work together with other parishes where that could be useful. We have established contact with the Definitive Maps Officer, whose advice and knowledge is always useful, and with Suffolk County Council's Area Footpaths Officer. Through him we plan to undertake training in setting up waymarkers at useful intermediate points on our public rights of way. We have also established contact with the Sudbury Ramblers.

We have established the identities of landowners and tenant farmers, to the best of our knowledge, for the whole parish, and drawn up a map to this effect. We have initiated contact and liaised with some of these landowners and tenant farmers, and we have undertaken some minor maintenance where appropriate.

We have drawn up a spreadsheet as a working document for future planning and a spreadsheet identifying where better signage is needed, along with possible bridge repairs, to pass on to the Suffolk County Council Footpaths Officer. In the last few months, three new bridges have been installed on our paths, and another on a continuation of one of our paths.

The group has published a revised edition of the leaflet. 'Circular Walks around the Waldingfields'. This is available on the village website.

The Group has undertaken a thorough examination of footpaths cuts to ensure cuts are where they are most needed and are, as far as is practicable, best value for money. The Parish Council has in turn established new arrangements with the contractor. However, these are open to amendment to match need as it arises. We are also seeking public engagement to plan forward, and in this process have recently undertaken a survey through the form of a questionnaire.

Robert Wheeler (Chair, LWFG) May 2023

Annex C to APM 2023 Minutes

Parish Council AGM - Parish Rooms Update

People Update

- . Chairman Allan Campbell stepped down - many thanks for his years of service.
- . Richard Bowden now Chairman
- . Kay Beane has joined the PR
- . And of course, the sad news of Sue Sheppard passing.

Fund Raising Events

- . Quiz
- . Wine Tasting
- . Race Night

All sold out and add to the PR Funds and continues to keep the PR facility in people's minds.

Forthcoming Events

- . Sale Trail
- . Bingo
- . Then wine tasting, quizzes etc. on a quarterly basis

Other Events

- . Platinum Jubilee Tea
- . Kings Coronation Tea
- . Again * full and well received and by donation only - add to the PR funds.

Warm Space

- . During the winter months this was experimented with and unfortunately was not attended, though advertised and most likely not something for this year but will be discussed and consider lessons learned for next time.

Parish Rooms Building

- . Maintenance been the priority.
- . Secondary double glazing, roof vents, and a new dishwasher!

External dampness at the rear is being looked at - ongoing issue and will be discussed at the next meetings.

Finances

- . Continue to be healthy with funds in the account in case of any emergency repairs.
- . Fund raising and hire fees (History Society, elections, LWPC etc)
- . Could do with more private hire.

Parish Room in General

- . The Committee remains dedicated, willing to give up time and electricity etc for the events.
- . Monthly meetings are well attended as always.
- . In a healthy position.

Annex D to APM 2023 Minutes

Little Waldingfield Charities

Good Evening

A report on the activities of Lt. Waldingfield Charities these past 12 months.

A few changes have been made to our team most notably the retirement of trustee Sue Mitchell after serving 18 years.

She has been replaced by Coleen Hamblett and Father Rob McGee.

In the closing weeks of last year as a charitable organisation and in partnership with the Parish Room trustees we decided to facilitate a warm space in the Parish Room. This proved to be a total mis-judgement of the need for such a facility in our village as absolutely nobody attended any of the fourteen sessions. But I think Alan will agree that we had to show willing.

You may have noticed on the wall a photocopy of a map depicting land owned by the charity in 1827. The linen on paper original was in our possession until earlier this year but due to it's fragility we decided to donate it to Suffolk Archives in Bury St. Edmunds. It. now resides in their Ipswich depository where I believe it can be viewed by appointment.

Now for financial details:

We have restricted funds of £114,640 split between COIF at £109,640 and an additional £5000 forming part of a Virgin Money one year fixed rate bond.

We have available funds of £26,623 split between Lloyds Bank, a 30 day notice Virgin Money account and the remainder of the Virgin Money fixed rate bond.

Terry Weston

Annex E to APM 2023 Minutes

LWHS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT APRIL 2023

Firstly I would like to thank our members new and old, for your continuing and enthusiastic support, which helps to make our events so enjoyable and rewarding for us all. Gratitude must also go to all of our wonderful speakers, for their talks on such a wide and interesting range of topics. Relatively speaking, and most fortunately, there were not that many cancellations due to the pandemic disruptions.

LWHS incredibly now celebrates its tenth season since inauguration and almost nine years since the publication of our very popular and successful book entitled "Little Waldingfield - Our Village History from 1840 to 2014"; copies are still available should anyone wish to buy, and please remember that 100% of book sale proceeds goes towards preserving the fabric of our lovely St Lawrence church.

Our last pre pandemic talk was on February 5th 2020, and the last Chairman's report was dated 17/4/2020. With the pandemic firmly behind us we resumed talks properly on September 14th 2022, with yet another fantastic talk from the large repertoire of the ever-popular Charlie Haylock.

The final events of the current season are:

Dr Nick Amor	17th May: Keeping the peace in Medieval Suffolk
Pip Wright	21st June: Whistlecraft - The true story of the poachers of Rickinghall

Our next season starts in September with talks by:

Jenny Antill	20th September: Inconvenient Truths, based on her book 'Small acts of Kindness - A tale of the first Russian Revolution'
Martyn Roper	18th October: The De Veres of Castle Hedingham
Ashley Cooper	15th November: Scott's Polar Expedition of 1910 to 1912

The programme of events for 2023/24 season will be finalised shortly, then circulated to members.

Our gratitude as always goes to our trustees for their dedicated and tremendous work:

- Rose MacNeil - LW History Recorder;
- Di Langford- Bookings Secretary;
- Andy Sheppard - Secretary; and
- Robert Wheeler - Treasurer.

We would also like to pay tribute to Sue Sheppard, who was a mainstay of the Society since its foundation, working tirelessly and conscientiously to achieve our huge success; she is a great loss for LWHS and is sadly missed.

For those members who were/are unable to attend any talk, it is always possible to refer to Andy's astonishingly comprehensive reviews posted on the LWHS blog:

<https://littlewalingfieldhistorysociety.wordpress.com/>

And if you 'click to follow' on the blog site, you will be emailed whenever Andy posts another entry.

Lastly, if any member has any ideas for future speakers, events, places to visit or indeed any other suggestions, please do contact any trustee, who will be pleased to hear from you.

LWHS Accounts will be presented at the AGM following the talk on April 19th.

Gillian Harritt (Chairman)