



WALSHAM le WILLOWS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the **ANNUAL** meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2025 commencing at 7.00 p.m. in the Memorial Hall.

[Informally approved. Formal approval, at the next meeting with any corrections]

PRESENT: Cllrs. Bartholomew, Belson, Brookes, Mecrow, Roberts, Tuck, Winch.

ALSO PRESENT: District Councillor Richard Winch

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR & APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR The Chair invited proposals for re-election of Chair. a. Cllr Roberts proposed Cllr. Richard Belson. This was seconded by Cllr. Winch. No other proposals or dissent were made known to the Clerk. Cllr Belson was therefore duly re-elected as Chair. Acceptance of Office to be completed at next meeting. The Chair asked for proposals to appointment of vice-Chair. Cllr. Belson proposed Cllr. Ian Bartholomew and this was seconded by Cllr. Brookes. Cllr Bartholomew duly re-appointed as vice Chair.	Clerk
2. OPENING STATEMENT & CHAIR'S ITEMS - none	
3. APOLOGIES a. Cllr. Nick Mecrow. b. Consent to apology for absence was given.	
4. DECLARATIONS of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests a. To receive declarations of pecuniary, local non-pecuniary interest(s) including personal interests in items on the agenda and to include declarations of any gifts of hospitality – none received b. To receive declarations of lobbying for planning matters on the agenda – none received c. To receive requests for dispensation – none required	
4. MINUTES - To receive and consider the minutes of the following meetings (as previously circulated) a. Minutes of 9th April 2025 were approved as true and accurate record of the meeting and for signature and duly signed. b. The Clerk confirmed that there were no actions outstanding from the last meeting that were not in hand.	
5. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM (POF) - To note questions and matters of concern with regard to items on the agenda and any other matters, for future consideration. 12 members of public were present. Frances Jenner addressed Council to raise awareness of the upcoming issue of safe storage for history documentation which is an important and unique archive of considerable significance for the village and also a wider audience. This issue has become particularly acute since the closure of the Bury County Archive and its relocation to Ipswich. It is felt that this archive should be kept closer to 'home' and the history group are currently looking for a suitable storage facility. This was noted and the Chair indicated that this could be added to a future agenda for consideration with regard to assistance with	

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raising funding or finding other resources in support of the safe storage of the archive. • A number of residents put forward very strong views on the application DC/25/01874 which addresses proposed access arrangements for the Land North of Well Cottages. There is as yet no appointed developer or outline application for the actual housing. The Parish Council were able to clarify matters and illustrate what was proposed by referring to the map included with the application and based on discussions with a representative for the landowner at a previous meeting. Most of the concerns raised had already been identified by the Parish Council. It was emphasised that considerable weight is given to the numbers of objections and attendees were strongly encouraged to add their own objections to the planning portal alongside any comment the Parish Council may decide to make. • A number of residents shared their concerns about the use of the green space at Staples Close, expressing strong views that there should be no change to its use or current layout. The Parish Council advised that as decided at a previous meeting in response to correspondence received, that the intention is to facilitate a resolution by formally seeking the views of all Staple Close residents. However, the Parish Council does not own the land and therefore can only add its weight to any representations made by residents. The issue of ownership of this space was raised by residents. Clerk to investigate and report back to council.	Clerk
6. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION & QUESTIONS a. County Councillor Fleming. Not in attendance and report to be uploaded when received. b. District Councillor Winch - CLlr Belson asked about housing targets in respect of the changes to housing legislation that are in the pipeline. District CLlr. Winch advised that it is almost certain these changes will make it harder for objections to be lodged. - CLlr Belson asked about the planning enforcement with regard to an objection lodged by a resident concerning structures erected by a neighbour and was advised that a court date is awaited. - CLlr Bartholomew asked about enforcement with regard to the disruption caused by deliveries to the mini market since it opened. The pavement is often blocked by pallets before, during and after deliveries are made. CLlr Winch advised that there is little that can be done about this as the application was granted on the basis of the designation of the property as a commercial site many decades ago.	
7. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS a. Traffic Group Report was noted. Proposal 1: That Council agrees how to take the discussion forward and how to respond to Josh White with the aim of agreeing a workable way forward to	

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deliver speed reduction measures whilst he is still driving the process: After consideration of the draft proposals from Josh White it was agreed to follow up the rationale for the extent of the proposed changes to the speed limit on the Finningham Road by Townhouse Road, and the rationale for not including the crossroads by The Six Bells. Including these extra areas does not change the overall cost of the Traffic Regulation Order but there is a balance to be struck in negotiations on this to ensure that the proposal finally put forward has the greatest possible chance of being accepted by SCC Highways. The whole process is likely to take 12-18 months. Proposal 2: That Council continues to follow up engineered solutions to specific problems: It was agreed that the traffic group should continue to investigate solutions on which they have a number of ideas to pursue. b. Flood Group - No report this month. c. CEP Group i. Monthly report was noted. Cllr Brookes noted that the CEP would now be update in the light of responses received from MSDC. Cllrs Brookes and Bartholomew displayed hydro-sack and hydro-snake flood defence systems with a view to suggesting these to residents at risk of flooding as self- help measures that can be put in place. These are relatively inexpensive and much easier to store than sand/sandbags. It was agreed that these should be promoted to residents as part of the Community Emergency Plan flood preparation. ii. It was noted that Cllr Mecrow has completed and passed the Highways NRSWA Unit 2 - Signing, Lighting and Guarding training course. Clerk to add to next agenda for formal report back from Cllr Mecrow.	Clerk
8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS, LICENCING, ENFORCEMENT & RELATED MATTERS a. Standing item to consider, and Clerk to document, any parts of Neighbourhood Plan that need to be revisited at time of next review. Nothing to note. b. APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/25/02077 Proposal: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce height of 1 No. Oak (T1) by approximately 3 metres and the lateral spread of the tree over the road by 4-5 metres. Raise low canopy of 1 No. Prunus (T2) to 5m. Location: Land At Summer Road , Walsham Le Willows, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 3AH THE PARISH COUNCIL MADE NO COMMENT c. APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/01343 Proposal: Full Planning Application - Erection of extension to the existing gymnasium building, erection of container and installation of LED Video Screen Location: Sports Pavilion, Summer Road, Walsham Le Willows, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP31 3AH THE PARISH COUNCIL SUPPORTED THIS APPLICATION in order to support and encourage physical activity but wanted to highlight concerns about the aesthetics and would like to note that efforts should be made to ensure that this structure,	

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and similar on same site, should be of more subtle colouring that blends better with the environs and that is in keeping with the Neighbourhood Plan Design Codes.

- d. APPLICATION FOR OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/01874 Proposal: Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved except access) - Development of up to 15no. dwellings, garaging, vehicular and pedestrian access, and associated works and infrastructure Location: Land North Of Well Cottages , Palmer Street, Walsham Le Willows, Bury St Edmunds IP31 3DA THE PARISH COUNCIL OBJECTED TO THIS APPLICATION ON THE FOLLOWING GROUNDS:

This parcel of land lies within the Settlement Boundary of Walsham le Willows and has been regarded by many as a suitable location for residential development for some years. An application which proposes a sensitive development of appropriate dwellings is therefore to be welcomed. As this site will provide more than 5 dwellings we feel that a "Masterplan" style approach informed by public engagement and collaboration is appropriate (see Neighbourhood Plan WLW2 page 55). This application relates only to access and in its current form is regarded as being far from satisfactory; for this reason the Parish Council wishes to object to the application.

As stated in the Heritage Assessment, para. 2.2, the "site can be accessed from Elm Drive . . . and from the junction of Grove Road and Palmer Street"; this is repeated in part 1 of the Desk Study and Risk Assessment. These two access points have probably existed for several hundred years and in recent years it is the access from Grove Road that has been used for agricultural purposes. We are extremely concerned that the application proposes to use only the access from Elm Drive; this presents several serious problems:

(a) when the existing Elmside development is added to the proposed development of 15 units there will be over 90 dwellings served by only one vehicular access. This access point from the Finningham road is limited in size and because of the pattern of parking is often difficult to negotiate; there are often situations where large vehicles such as the MSDC refuse collection lorries are unable to serve the estate because they cannot get round to all houses. This situation would be exacerbated by the current proposal but could be alleviated if access also went through to Grove Road. The Design and Access Statement, para. 117(d), states that the layout should "allow for the efficient . . . access by services and emergency vehicles"; we feel that this proposal fails to provide safe access and would inevitably create possibly serious problems in the future.

(b) the problems of access to the new site would be especially serious during the construction phase. Elm Drive is more problematic in reality than it appears on the map, and if you walk through Elmside from the Finningham Road to the new site on a normal day it is obvious that the winding nature of the road and the pattern of pavements and parking would make it virtually impossible for large lorries to bring roof trusses or ready-mixed concrete or other materials into the site. It is also totally unreasonable to expect

existing residents to accept this level of disruption and the potential danger to life and property.

(c) it has been a fundamental principle of development in Walsham over recent years for new sites to be closely integrated into the rest of the village and the creation of isolated enclaves is avoided; this can be illustrated by the Elmside and Acorns developments. This principle is embodied in the Neighbourhood Plan, policy WLW2, where it says that any "proposals should deliver a seamless relationship between the existing development and the new development, in terms of connections". The current access proposal would create a very isolated, and for most an undiscovered, residential area.

(d) the proposal falls well short of the expectations for pedestrian and cycling connectivity as stated in policy WLW6 of the Neighbourhood Plan. The approved plans for the Elmside development included four different pedestrian access points which create a wide variety of safe potential routes that are now widely used by many different people in the village. Access through the proposed development onto Grove Road would make a very significant contribution to improved connectivity, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. This would provide a safe and attractive route for children and parents going to the Primary School from Palmer Street, Staple Close and Jolly's Way; it would similarly create a desirable link from Elmside and The Street to the network of Public Footpaths and Permissive Footpaths to the east and south of the village. As indicated in the Design and Access Statement, para. 2(g) we should "prioritise movement by foot (and) bicycle including linkages to create/contribute to a walkable neighbourhood".

(e) connectivity in this area of the village can also be much improved by the creation of a pedestrian route from this site through to Grove Park. There is considerable space between No. 40 Grove Park and the line of bungalows where a safe and very pleasant pedestrian link can be created at relatively low cost and at no detriment to the development of this site. It must be noted that some maps, including the site map which forms part of this application, show incorrect property boundaries. The garden of No. 40 is the same width as the adjoining houses and the remaining section of land between this house and the bungalows is part of the public open space currently managed by MSDC.

(f) we are also very concerned about the proposals for shared surfaces from Elm Drive into the new development. We are all trying to "create places, which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles" - Design & Access Statement para. 117(c), but this suggestion is likely to create confusion and cause conflict. There appears to be no need for this; the access area from Elm Drive is roughly 10m wide and easily accommodates the road and a full width pavement on each side of the road. This indicates that on the new site there should be adequate space for a separate road and a pavement along one side.

We feel that this new development could make very significant contributions to both the built environment and the social environment of Walsham le Willows. The current

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proposal only partly fulfils what could be achieved and that is why we are lodging this objection. We urge that efforts are made to realise the full potential of this important site and avoid serious potential problems.	
9. PLANNING OUTCOMES (decided by Mid Suffolk District Council, Planning Authority) a. Application Reference: DC/25/00979 Proposal & Location of Development: Householder Application - Erection of a single storey rear extension, replacement windows and doors, and cladding details. High Hedges, Palmer Street, Walsham Le Willows, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP31 3BZ MSDC GRANTED PERMISSION b. Application Reference: DC/25/01362 Proposal & Location of Development: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 1 No. Norway Maple (T1) Display Land, Clarkes Of Walsham Ltd, The Street, Walsham Le Willows Suffolk MSDC RAISED NO OBJECTION	
10. ANNUAL BUSINESS a. The report arising from the Clerk's annual appraisal was considered along with recommendations in the form of three proposals: Proposal 1: That Council develop a planning pro forma aligned with National Policy Framework and the Neighbourhood Plan to give clear criteria when assessing planning applications. This would help in deciding if a site visit and thus an extension are required (Badwell Ash PC have one we could ask to see): It was decided that the Clerk seek out the proforma used by Badwell Ash before considering again. Proposal 2: Core of our agenda should be reports for noting, discussion and questions along with proposals received 10 days before the meeting: This was agreed as ongoing practice. That has helped to curtail the length of meetings. It was noted by Cllr Bartholomew that future investigations into Community Led Housing may be another candidate for the working group model. Proposal 3: Embedding Zoho email and document sharing with support from clerk: This was noted. The Clerk enquired as to any further difficulties with the use of the Zoho shared drive system. None were mentioned. b. Council confirmed the re-adoption of standing orders and financial regulations as reviewed 02/02/2025 and approved for re-adoption on 12th February and 9th April 2025. c. Council approved the annual subscriptions & donations to other bodies for 2025/26 (including review of expenditure incurred under s.137 of Local Government Act 1972). d. Council confirmed the re-adoption of the policies, procedures and practices as reviewed and approved at meeting held on 12th February 2025. e. Council approved the times and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council in 2026 (see website). f. Council approved the re-appointment of SALC as internal auditors for 2025/26 following the approval of the terms letter in meeting held on 12/03/2025.	Clerk

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Payments for Authorisation MAY 2024

#	Payments OUT	Amount	Description
1	Monthly Bank Service Charges	6.00	DIRECT DEBIT
2	Nurture Landscapes	214.49	Play Area and Stream Grass cutting
3	Parish Council Employee	739.47	Remuneration
#	Payments IN & Other Payments/Transfers	Amount	Description
1	Precept	12,997.50	2nd payment 2025/26
2	Transfer to deposit	5,000.00	

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