

WHINBURGH & WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Whinburgh & Westfield Parish Council on Tuesday, 12th December 2023 at 7.30 p.m. in Whinburgh and Westfield Parish Pavilion, Whinburgh Playing Field, Shop Street, Whinburgh.

Present Councillors: Nick Anema (Chairman), Simon Whiteley, Richard Gundry, Robert Plummer, Jeremy Riches, Rebecca Wade (Clerk)

Also present DC Paul Plummer and 6 members of the public.

In the absence of the Council Chair and until the Vice Chair arrived Cllr R Gundry took the Chair, he welcomed everyone and informed them that the meeting was being recorded.

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Siân Carrel.

Cllr N Anema joined the meeting and took over as Chair.

2. Declarations of interest

There were none.

3. Open forum for public participation

Residents from the Northfields development raised their continued concerns over the pollution into the River Tud. It is their understanding that the sewerage treatment system installed at their property is not adequate and they are concerned they could be liable for the discharge going into the river.

The Chair advised that the systems fitted were not what were approved on the original planning application. He said if they were happy for him to do so he would bring this up with the Rivers Trust when discussing the citizens science project who are liaising with the Environment Agency.

He also suggested the possibility of seeking legal advice or contacting Breckland planning enforcement and asked if they had a builder's guarantee.

A resident said the Dog Waste bin at the Westfield footpath was overflowing and asked if there was the possibility of having a second dog waste bin installed near the gates of the playing field in Whinburgh. The Clerk to enquire how frequently the dog waste bin is emptied and whether or not there is a possibility of getting another bin or increasing the size of the current bin.

A resident asked would it be possible for a road sweeper to come down Shop Street as there was lots of mud and debris which had been caused by the lorries going to the new development. The Clerk to ask Highways.

A resident asked about item 7.3. The Clerk said she had written a letter to Breckland planning, and they had asked for this to be sent to planning enforcement. DC Plummer had talked to planning but had no update. The resident said it is mostly coming off the farmer's field. It was suggested that as the ditches had been filled in and a pipe put in this had hugely reduced the capacity to collect rainwater and this was causing some of the flooding.

4. Standing item: Play equipment inspection.

4.1. To consider the monthly Play equipment inspection

Cllr R Gundry reported the playground was all in order, but the mole problem still exists. Cllr S Whiteley has recently added spikes to the top of the big swings to prevent birds landing.

4.2. To receive an update on quotes for the Playground fence

Cllr S Whiteley has met with several fencing businesses and has only received one written quote. After talking to various fencing businesses, it was felt the best way forward would be to replace the fence panels with close board panels. The quote for this is £2,500 including disposal.

A quote to repair the roof on the storage shed was also obtained, being £300.

Cllr S Whiteley proposed that as the Parish Council was not meeting again until February 2024 a total sum of £3,000 be agreed for the fence and the roof repairs. He would then get more quotes and be able to give the go ahead to get the job completed. This was seconded by the Chair and **all agreed**.

5. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14th November 2023.

The minutes of the meeting were approved without amendment and were signed by the Chair as a correct record. **All agreed.**

6. Correspondence received since November meeting

Breckland's Electoral Services, Norwich Western link project, NALC, Filigree – Breckland's Local Plan virtual session, Breckland's Environmental Enforcement and Highways Programme Engineer (Maintenance).

7. Planning

7.1. To receive and consider any new planning applications

None.

7.2. To note any planning decisions

3PL/2023/0995/VAR - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) and condition 3 (materials) on 3PL/2023/0781/VAR - to change external rendering on Plot 2 to facing brickwork and agree materials on both plots - Adj Lowdells House Shop Street – **Approved**

7.3. Other planning issues

To receive an update on flooding at building work's on land adjacent to Lowdell's House
As discussed in the public session.

8. To consider granting the Freedom of the Parish

Cllr S Whiteley explained that Mr and Mrs Cooper are moving away and they have done a huge amount for both Whinburgh and Westfield. Mr Cooper had served on the Parish Council, being Chair for a period of time, Mrs Cooper was Church Warden, they cut the hedges and the playground, organised the dog show and provided storage. He proposed granting them the Freedom of the Parish, the Chair seconded, and **all agreed**.

9. To receive an update on River Tud pollution

This item is covered in the public participation session.

10. To receive an update on Shipdham Road, Westfield speed limit

The Clerk had provided the Councillors with the criteria required for a 30mph or a 40mph speed limit. Cllr S Whiteley asked the Clerk to prepare a poster to be put on village notice boards to inform the residents what is happening, and the costs involved.

Cllr S Whiteley said there used to be a "slow" marking on the road which with time had worn away and suggested it should be reinstated. The Clerk to contact Highways.

It was agreed to look into different ways to raise money towards the cost of a feasibility study.

11. **To review** and discuss adopting the Biodiversity Policy to comply with our duty under the Environment Act 2021

The Councillors discussed ways in which the Parish can conserve and enhance biodiversity. It was agreed to add the policy to the February agenda so they could consider this further.

12. **Highway Surveyors Land, Steggs Lane**

The Chair reported that there was funding under the District Level Licensing (DLL) to put in ponds for Great Crested Newts and the funding would cover the cost of the entire pond including the clearance work. It was felt the back of Steggs Lane might be a suitable location. The Chair said he would put this forward to the pond project.

The Chair said there was lots of funding available from DLL which is part of Natural England.

13. **Finance**

13.1. To agree the following items for payment (December) * already paid

To pay	Detail (invoices available for viewing)	Total	VAT	Ex VAT
Octopus Energy	November electricity	60.91	2.90	58.01
Clerk	Wages and expenses	532.16	-	532.16

The Clerk reported an advice note had been received from National Association of Local Councils confirming the National Salary Award had been agreed increasing the Clerk's salary from £14.48 to £15.48 per hour. This is applicable from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

All agreed.

13.2. To note receipt of the any credits

Detail	Total
None	

13.3. To agree the Budget for 2024/25

The Clerk presented a draft budget for the next financial year.

All agreed to approve the budget including an additional £1,000 for Shipdham Road speed limit review.

13.4. To agree the Precept for 2024/25

The Clerk presented the precept calculations for the next financial year.

After discussion and with reference to the agreed budget it was **agreed** to increase the precept by 2.5% from £8,967.00 to £9,191.18 resulting in a tax band D rise from £55.70 to £58.03 per year. Proposed by Cllr S Whiteley, seconded by the Chair and **all agreed**.

13.5. To receive the monthly financial report

In the absence of up to date bank statements the financial report will be sent round by the Clerk before the next meeting.

14. **Urgent business** to consider any issues raised by Cllrs that the Chairman considers urgent.

The Chair explained that the Dereham Barclays bank is closing in February 2024 and the nearest one would be Kings Lynn or Norwich. For Councillors to move any monies between accounts would require two councillors to go to these locations as the account is not online. This is to be added to the next agenda.

15. To decide on any matters for consideration at the next meeting.

The Parish Council banking arrangements.

Biodiversity policy.

Whinburgh and Westfield PCC – Burial Ground maintenance.

16. The next Meeting of the Parish Council was confirmed as Tuesday, 13th February 2023 at 7.30 p.m., in Whinburgh & Westfield Parish Pavilion, Whinburgh Playing Field, Shop Street, Whinburgh

17. Co-option of Councillor

The Chair explained there had been two applications for current Councillor vacancy. These being Mr Paul Blanch and Mr Darren Godliman. He said applicants would have an opportunity to introduce themselves and then Councillors could ask them questions.

The Chair then invited the applicants to address the Parish Council.

Cllr R Plummer said it was a very hard decision to make as both applicants were very similar in terms of their commitment and experience.

The Chair asked for votes for each applicant. With three votes to two Darren Godliman was duly co-opted to the Council. The Chair congratulated him, and he signed his acceptance of office.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.00 p.m.

Confirmed:

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Sian Carrel, Chairman