

## **MINUTES OF WALPOLE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2013 AT WALPOLE & COOKLEY PAVILION**

**Present:** Members of Cookley & Walpole Parish Council, County & District Cllr Stephen Burroughes and Raymond Catchpole (Clerk to Cookley & Walpole Parish Council). No parishioners present.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr David Cask and opened at 7.17pm following the earlier Cookley Annual Parish Meeting.

### **1. Reports were received as follows:**

Local Villages History Recorder, report by Cally Calloman:

*The job of being a Local Village Recorder is as busy and as full as one makes it. The Local History Society and Records Office in Ipswich offer great guidelines and help if needed and I am in constant contact with them. I concentrate on harvesting the current news items that appear in the media as well as acquiring images and artefacts of a greater historical nature, I can only collect and file those items I come across or that are kindly loaned or donated, but this, in itself, is enough to keep things very busy. Enquiries come in often from abroad and the internet now makes such communication effortless.*

*Recording current village issues can be done easily and efficiently by keeping copies of minutes from Parish Council Minutes but this task has not been possible since April 2012 as Parish Council do not wish such matters to be recorded in the local history books, but I have never been given such a reason. To that end, my enthusiasm to share recent exciting findings and progress with Local History recordings - and so to report these to the Parish Council on a yearly basis- is somewhat muted as may be deemed understandable.*

Clerk confirmed he had earlier apologised to the Recorder for the break in forwarding council minutes and the omission had been rectified. Cllr Anne Thomas would welcome a link between the history website and Walpole Old Chapel and this would improve accessibility to the village records.

Footpaths Officer, report by Cllr Bill Camplin:

*Footpaths and bridleways are an important amenity in Cookley and Walpole. The main activity this year has been to walk these Public Rights of Way to audit their accessibility. There has been no requirement for volunteer clearance activity or substantive remedial works by SCDC.*

*Circa 20% of the paths and bridleways were walked by the footpath officer. All were found to be accessible and in good condition.*

*Suffolk County Council cleared several paths of undergrowth despite funding for such work being more difficult in these times of Government spending restraint.*

*Discussion of the possible redirection of a footpath which runs through the allotment scheme near to Peasenhall Road has resulted in a practical compromise.*

Cllr Camplin said footpath responsibility was reactive and he was happy to hand over to anyone else who could make it more proactive. Councillors thanked him for his work and he will continue.

Highways report by Cllr Mike Porter:

Cllr Porter echoed Cllr Camplin's remarks and said Highways were also a reactive process. However some progress was being made and a thorough physical inspection of all the highways in the two parishes had been undertaken with a SCC Highways officer which looked

as if it will produce results in the medium term. Some actions had already been carried out. In terms of waterways, a similar physical exercise had also been carried out in Walpole accompanied by Environmental Agency officers. The chairman thanked Cllr Porter for his time involved in these inspections.

Tree Report, by Cllr Zoé Mair:

*In the absence of a designated Tree Officer, a small group of councillors surveyed the village green last year to identify work that needed to be carried out to maintain and enhance the trees on the site. The work went out to tender and after a few hitches, was completed this spring. Together with the excellent grass cutting, the green is now a well-cared for and attractive amenity in the heart of Walpole. A specimen red oak was planted in fond memory of Ron Acketts who served on this council.*

*A consignment of whips has been planted on the Playing Field and will in time enhance this area where a circular path is also being developed.*

*All councillors hopefully keep an eye on trees and hedgerows in the parishes and report back to meetings if these require attention. Mike Porter has included concerns in his site meetings with Highways – for example trees and shrubs which overhang roads and footways or take over verges. Some of these concerns have been dealt with, but not all to date.*

*The council has also considered TPOs on trees at or near Marsh View, which have, with the co-operation of the developer, been inspected but sadly deemed unsuitable, due to disease.*

*Having only a small numbers of activists, Cookley and Walpole remain excluded from the county hedgerow survey. Perhaps this could be a target in the coming year.*

George Calver Charity, report by Cllr Zoé Mair:

*The past year has been a quiet one for the George Calver Charity in terms of grant applications despite publicizing the charity in local schools, publications and a Charity shop. However grants have been sought by and awarded to two girl guides to assist with the expenses of overseas trips and to another young local applicant who needs help with expenses in connection with the Suffolk Youth Wind Band. Another grant application is ongoing. As usual, the Charity provides annual awards to pupils leaving Bramfield Primary school. Our treasurer and the Trustees, with the support and guidance of the Charity Commission and its services, have managed to increase the value of the capital held by the Charity.*

Good Neighbours Scheme report by Cllr Zoé Mair on behalf of Pam Neil:

*The services of the Good Neighbours have not been greatly in demand since the last annual meeting. This may be due to the fact that two more regular users have died as well as to the good efforts of actual neighbours. None the less, we would like to have more phone holders to support the scheme and as well as other volunteers.*

*The Cookpole Café is going from strength to strength. We have had special celebrations for important birthdays and times of year. A group from the Mencap workshop at 'Vision' in Halesworth usually joins us. These guests love to choose from the menu of home-made food and relate well to our regular guests whom they are getting to know over time. We have had further offers of help for the café. The Café provides a good opportunity for visitors from AgeUK and Community Action Suffolk to bring useful information or simply socialize.*

*Gifts of goodies and fruit have been given to local residents returning from hospital and are much appreciated.*

*Despite being unsuccessful this year in our bid to Heveningham Hall Country Fair Trust for a grant, we are still financially sound.*

*The Good Neighbours are also arranging a First Aid Course for volunteers and other interested local residents and some volunteers are going to participate in a dementia awareness session.*

Cookpole Energy Action Report by Cllr Zoé Mair:

*The CEA committee continues to meet monthly and during the last year has been joined by two new committed young members with relevant skills. As the council receives a report at each meeting, I will provide a brief summary of CEA activities over the past 12 months.*

*The allotments are becoming a reality – Anne Thomas will provide further detail. After full consultation with the Cookpole Committee and a feasibility study, solar panels have been installed on the pavilion roof, mostly funded by grants from the Co-operative and the HHCFT. As well as meeting the environmental aims of CEA in our community, the solar panels are also drawing down funds through sales of green electricity and Feed In Tariffs which will enhance the financial independence of the Playing Field Trust.*

*CEA is now registered as a Company and proceeding with registration with the Charity commission. CEA has set up a community oil buying consortium which is about to make a second group purchase at favourable summer prices. The Winter Craft Barn in November 2012 was once more a success, raising funds and the profile of CEA. CEA promoted a Greener Homes insulation scheme which provided free insulation to householders. We also took part in a renewable heating project which enjoyed a minimally positive outcome with two households installing new systems with grant aid. CEA has been providing assistance with an MSc student's research.*

*In March our entry submission to the Suffolk Greenest County Awards won us the title of Greenest Community or Village – a very welcome recognition of our efforts.*

*As we have planning consent for a community wind turbine, CEA is vigorously pursuing grant funding and sponsorship from a range of local companies, individuals and organisations through targeted letters so that we can raise the capital to bring this key project to fruition at the earliest possible date.*

Walpole & Cookley Playing Field Trust and Cookpole Community Council, chairman's report by Cllr Mike Porter:

*The Community Council / Playing field trust have had another successful year with the use of the pavilion for more functions including the monthly Café for the elder members of the community. The planting of the shrubs, supplied for by the Woodland Trust, on the South Western corner was carried out by some of the students from Bramfield School. Thanks to them. The Car Boots started well last month with funds raised. The wildlife and exercise area is progressing well and hopefully will be finished by the autumn. The largest function last year of course was the Jubilee supper together, with the lighting of the Beacon. A great time was had by all who attended. The monthly craft mornings have been a great success with knitters and embroideries.*

*To the future, we are planning a Jazz night together with supper, on July 13, when everyone is well. Do ask your friends and book your tickets in advance.*

*Thanks to all who have helped over the last year.*

CEA Allotments report by Cllr Anne Thomas:

*Progress has been rapid in the last 6 months. In November the Parish Council signed a 21 year lease with SCDC for the allotment field, and some preliminary ground preparation and clearance was carried out for us by Porter's Farms Ltd. A grant of £1,000 was secured from County Councillor Cohn Hart's Locality Budget to cover startup costs and insurance. The Development Group, by then able to meet more purposefully, worked on Tenants' lease, Allotment Rules and Allotment Society Constitution, using those provided by the National Association of Allotment Holders and Leisure Gardeners and by Beccles Allotment Society (recently revised). The sub-lease between the Parish Council and CEA is now coming to the point of signature. In April the CEA Allotment Society Walpole held its inaugural meeting, and elected officers: Chairperson — Jane Henson, Vice Chair Jez Hawes, Secretary Anne Thomas, Treasurer Paul Grimwood. After a meeting I had with Chris Forden Planning Officer in April, the group met a number of times to work on site planning and layout, and also met with the Rights of Way Officer for advice about fencing, gates and maintaining the public right of way across the field. A Site Plan is now being finalised, having been through a number of drafts. This will be posted on the Allotments page of the CEA website when the final version has been agreed, and will also be used for the Change of Use Planning Application. The site has been difficult to plan. Diagonally bisected by a public way, land on the south east is stony, very sloping and of poorer quality, while that along the northern boundary has been colonised by scrubby blackthorn. Fortunately the vice chair has software which he used to develop a site plan showing up to 25 plots of approximately 10 rods each, though some are irregularly shaped. Of these, some will have level access and raised beds, and some will have small plots, so people with disabilities, those who only want a small plot and younger children can also benefit. Allotment holders will be able to have their own small shed, and rainwater harvesting, and composting facilities on each plot. In terms of other amenities: there is no water supply to the site, and being at present open on 3 sides it is habituated by rabbits and muntjac deer, so a water supply, rabbit and deer proof fencing/gates are essentials, and I will be making grant applications for funding for these. The water supply will come from a borehole — I have had a favourable estimate — with solar powered pump. In time we will also have a timber cabin or shed for equipment storage, allotment society meetings etc — this will be situated on the south east side and be provided with electricity from roof- sited photovoltaic panels (not connected to the grid but to batteries) for the making of tea, hand washing, winter lighting and heat etc . This will be in the same area as the small Community Orchard which we may plant out (with support from pupils and staff at Bramfield House School) in the autumn of 2013.*

*The Community Orchard will be adjacent to the public footpath and open to anyone to enjoy. In time, benches will be provided, and once the fruit trees start cropping we expect to have an Apple Day event in October each year when residents can come and pick their own fruit (we will provide a picker if anyone is unable to pick their own). We hope that some residents may wish to fund a commemorative bench or plaque in this part of the site. As we are an Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Association, we also plan to have an occasional event with speakers/speaker, an annual flower and produce show, occasional social events and (maybe not this year) weekly or fortnightly stall selling surplus produce. Anyone can join the Association for a modest fee, and if you or anyone you know is interested in having an allotment please contact me — we have vacant plots and welcome new members.*

Cllr Porter said diversion of the footpath would be a separate matter. Cllr Camplin asked if there was any progress towards increasing membership numbers. Anne Thomas replied that further opportunities were ongoing.

Suffolk Coastal District Council report by District Cllr Stephen Burroughes:

#### **ENVIRONMENT & WASTE**

*In August 2012 a new contract was signed, extending the highly successful partnership between Suffolk Coastal Services Limited and Suffolk Coastal District Council for the provision of key local value for money services to residents across the District. Since it was set up, SCS Limited has played a large part in SCDC's success in delivering over £1 Om of savings.*

#### **GROUPS & COMMUNITIES**

*A new online guide was produced in December 2012, to offer guidance to voluntary and community groups and volunteers in Suffolk Coastal. In the last four years, the Suffolk Coastal*

Resource Network (SCRN) has helped local groups attract over £1.7m of funding and given advice to over 400 groups. The new directory of resources can be seen on [www.srn.co.uk/about-scrn/directory-of-resources.html](http://www.srn.co.uk/about-scrn/directory-of-resources.html)

#### ELECTORAL REVIEW

An Electoral Review, is taking place at Suffolk Coastal to look at reducing the number of Councillors who represent the Council from May 2015. The Boundary Commission requested that SCDC provides a council size submission by March 2013. The Council decided that the number of Councillors be reduced to 43. Communities will be consulted throughout the review.

#### COUNCIL TAX & FINANCE

Despite freezing its Council Tax for a third successive year and achieving £5.4 million of efficiencies, SCDC is geared up to promoting growth and prosperity in the District. Council agreed in February 2013 to keep Suffolk Coastal's Council Tax at £149.40 for a band D home, generating £6.9 million towards its budget of £12.7m for 2013/14. Council Tax income from residents will be over £500,000 less than last year and its net budget requirement £300,000 lower.

#### SIZEWELL 'C'

EDF Energy are developing plans for a new nuclear power station at Sizewell and, at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet in February, a consultation response was agreed to the initial proposals and options for the development of Sizewell C. This response can be found at <http://Sizewell.edfenergyconsultation.info/proposal/>

#### LEISURE

A thorough review of SCDC's leisure facilities is to take place and could result in significant investment in modernising services. The DC Leisure contract is coming to its end and a potential new two piece contract is proposed which will not only deliver a longer term leisure facilities operator but will also include a leisure development partner that will support the Council with future planning and development options of its leisure offer. A consultation exercise will be carried out and we hope you will take the opportunity to participate.

#### PLANNING

SCDC's Core Strategy & Development Management Policy document is the principal planning document in the district and sets out the strategic vision for the next 15 years. The document was submitted for examination by the Govts Planning Inspector for legal compliance and 'soundness'. The Inspector has held 12 public hearings where evidence from all parties on the main issues was presented. Following the conclusion of the Hearings, the Council was requested by the Inspector to publish and consult on the Main Modifications (and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal). The final stage of consultation has been held and responses have been provided to the Inspector and the Council is currently dealing with some of the Inspector's queries regarding this. A final report will be made by the inspector by June 2013, and if the document is found to be 'sound', the Council can move on to formally adopt the document.

#### COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Council continues to provide grants for capital and revenues schemes, together with a small pot of money for youth initiatives (visit the website for details & application forms).

#### ECONOMY & SKILLS

Through SCDC's 10 year Business Plan, the Council will promote economic growth. The Business Plan has also allocated part of the New Homes Bonus monies, relating to 2011/12 and 2012/13, towards delivering this priority. Cabinet agreed the allocation of up to £100,000 towards projects targeted at business start-ups, growth and developing the local economy. The Suffolk Skills for the Future Strategy identified a need to increase young peoples' awareness of local growth sectors and careers and to enhance links between current employers and the future workforce. Working in partnership with District Councils across Suffolk, U-Explore are proposing the introduction of their nationally recognised careers and employability platform as a significant step towards achieving the County's 'Raising the bar'

strategy. Cabinet, at its meeting in April 2013, agreed to promote and support the delivery and installation of the U-Explore platform across East Suffolk High Schools and further establishments. In conclusion, other achievements made by SCDC in 2012/13:

- A balanced budget and frozen Council Tax
- Further efficiencies and partnership working continue
- Front line services protected
- Recycling rates in top 10 one of the country's highest
- 90% of food businesses rated in top level for hygiene
- We led a countryside project that won £265k to help make local homes warmer
- Agreed an environmental policy to make our district 'greener'
- SCDC's economy was recognised by Government as being one of the best in Suffolk
- We have been working with town and parish councils and developers to increase the number of new affordable homes in our District
- Residents can now have their textiles collected from home, saving tonnes going to landfill and cutting collection costs see website for details on all these, and other services from Suffolk Coastal District Council at [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

In subsequent discussion it emerged that councillors were unaware of any historic assistance from SCDC community grants and this will be followed up. Cllr Anne Thomas referred to the award to Cookley and Walpole of Greenest Village 2013.

Suffolk County Council report by County Cllr Stephen Burroughes:

*Firstly, I am delighted to have been elected as your new Suffolk County Councillor for the next 4 years, representing the Framlingham Division & taking over from Colin Hart, and I look forward to working closely with your Parish Council. I will arrange to attend your meetings on a regular basis, but not each one, and hope to set aside some time in order have a more in-depth conversation about specific issues you may have, and how we can work to address them. From 2<sup>nd</sup> May Suffolk has a new range of councillors: 39 Conservatives, 15 Labour, 7 Lib Dems, 9 UKIP, 2 Greens and 3 Independents. The conservative administration now governs with a majority of 3. A new Cabinet has been proposed which will be adopted at the Annual Council Meeting on 23 May in the Chamber at Endeavour House.*

- *No increase in council tax this year. The county council agreed the county's budget for 2013/14 earlier this year. The council needs to save around £25million from its budget this year, due to reduced government funding and increased demand for services. However, through strong financial management – cutting management and back-office costs and reducing bureaucracy – these savings will be delivered without a serious effect on front-line services. At the same time, council tax will be kept at the same level it's been at since 2010.*
- *No increase in council tax for the next four years. During this year's budget debate, the Conservative administration announced that its number one pledge would be a four-year freeze in council tax, thus helping households through strong financial management and greater efficiencies, whilst maintaining front line services. This would be on top of the three years of no increase that the Council has already delivered. These three years, in turn, came after two years with record-low increases.*
- *County Council to complete the Schools Organisation Review – Raising Standards In 2006, a cross-party group of councillors concluded that children in areas with First, Middle and Upper schools were put at a disadvantage compared to those in areas which had Primary and Secondary schools. This was due to having an extra change of school at a crucial time, and the lack of clear accountability for results at Key Stage 2 level. Results at Key Stage 2 in the three-tier areas were consistently around 6% worse than in the rest of the county – a gap that was never made up by the time the pupils sat their GCSEs. The school organisation review (SOR) which was then instigated, was therefore a vital and long-overdue step which needed to be taken. After nearly 8 years, and with this month's decision on the Stowmarket and Stowupland schools, it is now nearing its final stages. The benefits of SOR are already being seen in areas such as Haverhill and Lowestoft, where improvements at Key Stage 2 have been nearly*

*DOUBLE the rate they were prior to the changes. This is why all the head teachers in the Stowmarket and Stowupland area (with the exception of the middle school heads) are anxious to complete the process.*

- *Suffolk Growth Strategy. The county council has been working with borough and district councils, as well as local businesses from sectors across the Suffolk economy, to produce the strategy, which will now have a detailed delivery timetable for the coming years. At the same time, a new, official, 'Invest in Suffolk' website was launched — an easily-accessible site for businesses looking to invest in the county — [www.investinsuffolk.com](http://www.investinsuffolk.com). A new 'Inward Investment Service' — made up of a team of professionals to provide a single point of contact for investors was also announced.*

- *New vehicle-activated speed signs across Suffolk (SCC & Police) 10 temporary vehicle-activated signs (VAS — the type that flashes up the vehicle speed as it passes) and 10 mobile tripod-mounted signs will now be used across the county. The temporary VAS, will move around the council, to locations designated by the police, county and parish councils as having the biggest impact. Meanwhile, Community Speedwatch groups will have access to the mobile tripod mounted signs for up to four weeks at a time. Some groups have already made use of the new equipment.*

Cllrs Porter and Camplin were in favour of using the VAS and County Cllr Burroughes will investigate availability.

Cllr Thomas mentioned the Boundary Review and expressed concern as to how the reduction in councillor numbers must affect rural parishes. Cllr Mair supported this concern. Cllr Burroughes said he would be starting 'chairman's meetings' in the rural areas. Clerk will also again chase up the Huntingfield Villages Together meetings.

County Cllr Burroughes mentioned his Wellbeing/Quality of Life Budget amounting to £20,000 per annum and he was looking into application guidelines. Cllr Porter raised concerns about a dearth of people coming forward for employment in agriculture and horticulture. Cllr Burroughes said educational proposals include attention to land, growth and food.

**2. Approval of Minutes:** minutes of the annual parish meetings held 21 May 2012 were available, taken as read, and approved unanimously by those present at that meeting to be signed by the chairman.

**3. Matters arising:** there were no matters arising from the minutes.

**4. Annual Report 2012/13 by the Chairman of Cookley & Walpole Parish Council:** Cllr David Cask reported as follows:

*2012/2013 has been an eventful year in a number of ways and I am not going to dwell on the downside on one particular event which you all probably remember. The approach by the village of Cookley to break away from Cookley & Walpole Parish Council and set up their own Parish Council was presented to us by their spokesman Jonothan Carman. Since the requirements of SCDC were not proceeded with, this council remains as Cookley and Walpole. This council took up grievances from the tenants of Flagship Housing and met with members of their management to get complaints put right about their new homes This has proved to be a success and demonstrates how local government can look after their tenants and residents. We welcomed Councillor John Winter to join us and strengthened our numbers for Walpole. The planning applications that have come before us have been dealt with in a professional and proper manner, which will also see the site at Marsh View come to a satisfactory conclusion.*

*Fellow councillors, I thank you for your loyal support over the past year In all matters that had to be dealt with, and on your behalf I would like to thank clerk for all his support and wise words when needed.*

**5. Parish Council Audited accounts to 31 March 2012:** copies of an executive summary of the audited accounts were available and the clerk offered to answer any queries from residents by email, telephone or meeting.

**6. Local Issues:** **(a)** Cllr Cask mentioned yellow markings had been seen on local highways and particularly in The Street, along with a SCC Highways van. Cllrs Whitwood and Porter thought this presaged patching. **(b)** Cllr Cask mentioned a disappointing response from Tim Passmore, Suffolk Police & Crime Commissioner, about suspension of the visiting Mobile Police Station service. Clerk was chasing up this matter and had involved our County Cllr and MP. Cllr Zoé Mair thought more regular visits and reports from PC Bryant would be helpful in the absence of the mobile facility. **(c)** Cllr Mike Porter gave notification of his company's intention to seek planning permission for a wind turbine. The matter was discussed generally and deferred for further consideration in the parish council meeting to follow later this evening. No planning application had yet been submitted, but several signatures of support had been received and the clerk had received one written objection.

*There being no other issues or matters raised, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.03pm.*

**Chairman Date**