

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

### Minutes

Of an Extra-ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

- Present:** Cllrs A Grimes, K Grimes, Karunaratne, Lavelle, Smith and Turner  
 Clerk: Hilary Workman  
 Trustees of Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre: Mrs B Merritt, Mr K Mayes & Mr S Thwaite  
 6 Residents of the parish
- EO.24.08.01 **Noted:** the following apologies for absence:  
 1. Approved: Cllr Paul Couzens – annual leave  
 2. Noted: SC Cllr Bobby Bennett & WS Cllr Sarah Pugh<sup>1</sup>
- EO.24.08.02 **Noted:** That when invited, there were:  
 2.1 No Members' Declarations of Local Non-Pecuniary Interests Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and/or Other Registerable Interests in subsequent Agenda items -  
 2.2 No declarations of lobbying for planning matters on the agenda their nature, including gifts of hospitality exceeding £25  
 2.3 No requests for dispensations  
 2.4 No additions and/or deletions to the Council's Register of Interests.
- EO.24.08.03 **Noted:** Public Forum – (**Open Session**)<sup>2</sup>. 19:02  
 That when comments or questions on any Agenda item or matter of concern from those members of the public present were invited, the following:  
**Securing the Recreation Ground and Six Acres**  
 Mr Steve Thwaite, Chair of the Trustees of MSC thanked Cllr Lavelle and the parish council for securing the Recreation Ground and Six Acres at such short notice at the end of July, and also noted that the cutting of the Recreation Ground had also recently been much improved. He advised that whilst the chains and combination locks securing the open space were of a temporary nature, and were causing some aggravation to some of the users of the open space, the Trustees had met recently and were in favour of installing a more permanent barrier adjacent to the MSC. Issues which they had identified which should be considered in reaching a choice on the type of barrier included:  
 – access for emergency vehicles (n.b. MSC is listed as the Rescue Centre)  
 – ease of access for Tennis club and Bowls Club  
 – MSc also the rescue centre  
 Mr Thwaite further advised that he had recently taken down the old COVID signs at the play area, and that the MSC would support a circular bench around the large oak tree which has attracted ongoing memorials (measurements had been sent to the clerk).  
**Withdrawal of Stephenson's 10:46am No 14 Service**  
 Mr John Norton (and others) concerned at the recent withdrawal of this service, and noted that:  
 • Residents should have been included in a consultation and received a questionnaire  
 • The change would take away a lifeline for villagers without cars, which included not just elderly people, but young people without private transport  
 • The hubs at Stradishall was difficult for many villagers to access, particularly on a return journey with shopping.

<sup>1</sup> Apologies for absence had been received for the ordinary meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July.

<sup>2</sup> The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

**Signed:** Paul Couzens

**Dated:** 26/09/2024

- Withdrawal of the service would also be likely to affect residents from other villages trying to access Wickhambrook Surgery and Pharmacy for appointments and medicines (the surgery has a wide hinterland, extending as far north as Horringer)

Cllr Lavelle summarised the action that the parish council had taken so far to advocate on behalf of its residents which included:

- Escalating through our County Councillor, Bobby Bennett
- Contributing a statement to the Suffolk News story on this issue
- The clerk following up through wider parish networks

And suggested that an additional mechanism to raise the profile of this issue to work towards a resolution would be for local residents to write to their MP.

**Cllr Karunaratne arrived at 19:13 and raised no declarations at EO.24.08.02**

The meeting asked the clerk to make contact details for the West Suffolk MP available on the website.

#### **Householder Planning Application for Australia farm DC/24/0909/HH**

Mr Roger Merry and Mr Alan Willis (and others) raised their concerns about aspects of this application, namely:

- Notices had only been posted physically on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August
- Whilst there were no identified concerns with the development of the house, there were a number of concerns with the access proposals:
  - The application proposes changes to the bridleway which a large number of residents use (the bridleway forms part of one of the few circular walks accessible within the parish). See rogers submission
  - Traffic would be likely to increase as work was undertaken, and there may also be a longer-term increase in traffic arising from increased parking spaces
  - The proposal encroaches on neighbouring land not owned by the applicant
  - When the land was sold in 1974 a covenant was put in place allowing the owners of Australia Farm to purchase land a separate 12' track alongside the bridleway, to make provision for any future doubt about private rights over the Bridleway.
  - Running alongside the bridleway is a ditch which is needed to move water away from bridleway to maintain adequate access.
- Concern that it could be a commercial property<sup>3</sup>.

Cllr Lavelle advised that the parish council, having listened to their concerns, would also consider how the application met the criteria in its draft neighbourhood plan and emphasised that neighbour submissions carry weight with West Suffolk.

#### **Public Forum Closed 19:26**

In accordance with Standing Order 10(a)vi, item 24.05.23 on the Agenda was considered at this point and is Minuted at EO.24.08.6.1

EO.24.08.04 **Noted:** the following correspondence to this meeting not dealt with as an Agenda item or in the Clerk's report:

- 4.1 Unity Trust Bank – changes to fees & charges
- 4.2 West Suffolk – Changes to bin collections – August bank holidays
- 4.3 West Suffolk – Safer Summer leaflets
- 4.4 ICO – annual renewal
- 4.5 Rural Coffee Caravan – the clerk reported that Rural Coffee Caravan would like to visit on four occasions each year and had asked for room hire to be waived. Cllr Turner reported that there was a games afternoon held at the WI hall on Wednesday afternoons, and this might be a feasible option
- 4.6 Multiply Suffolk Project

EO.24.08.05 **Noted:** Reports from Representatives of the Council on External bodies, Ward Members and other external bodies as appropriate.

4.1Cllr Mrs Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council (previously circulated)

<sup>3</sup> Not a material consideration, as any future change of use would be subject to a further planning application

EO.24.08.06 **Noted:** The following planning applications listed below as notified by West Suffolk Council for comment.

6.1 **DC/24/0909/HH** – Householder Planning Application

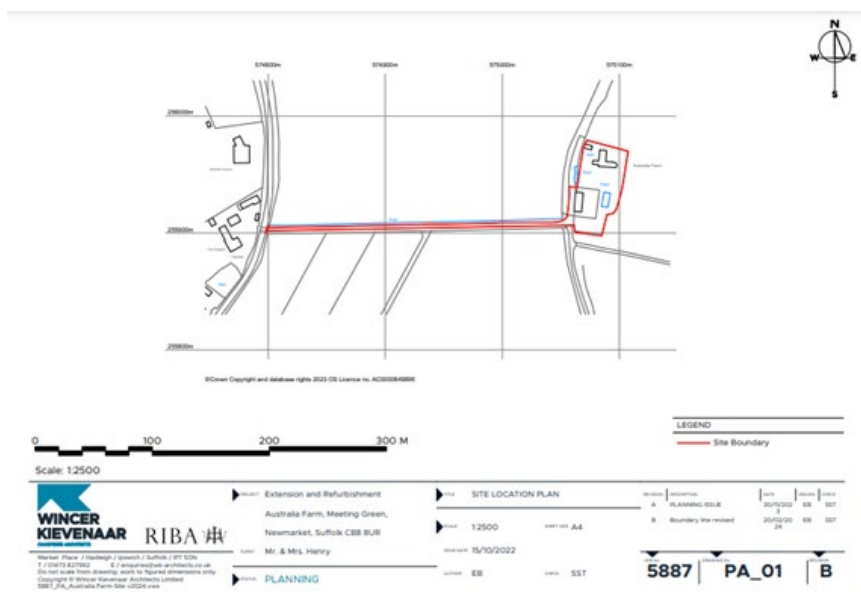
- a. single storey extension to the south elevation
- b. single storey extension to the west elevation (following demolition of existing single storey elements)
- c. two storey extension to the east elevation (following removal of existing conservatory)
- d. alterations and conversion to existing barn to provide detached garage and gym with first floor bedroom
- e. surface improvements to the track leading to Australia Farm

**Australia Farm Meeting Green Wickhambrook CB8 8UR**

See report **WPC.EO.24.08.01**

The parish council considered this application and having considered:

1. The application and additional supporting documents available on West Suffolk's planning portal
2. A briefing paper (**Report [WPC.EO.24.08.01](#)**) prepared by the clerk
3. Concerns raised by residents at Public Forum, and minuted under EO.24.08.03 and additional comments submitted in writing and summarised below:
  - The applicant is not the owner of the land over which the bridleway crosses
  - Passing places would not improve accessibility for users of bridleway if there is an increase in the number of cars, delivery vans and lorries
  - Design of the proposed changes to Australia Farm not in keeping with the listed buildings in the area:
    - Large expanses of glass would increase light pollution having a negative impact on fauna
    - Negative impact on views of countryside from Footpath running perpendicular to Byeway 31
4. the following points of concern identified by Cllrs at the meeting:
  - that the property would benefit from improvements under the proposed development but that the means of access to and from it needed to be resolved, specifically:
  - that the proposed access is over a bridleway (Route: W561/032/0)



- The proposed increase in the number of car parking spaces from two to seven

**Signed:** Paul Couzens

**Dated:** 26/09/2024

- The proposed insertion of two new garden walls between the main house and the barn, and the barn and further greenspace with three new parking spaces



- The Neighbourhood Plan currently being prepared by the parish has identified the following policy which is relevant to this application:

**Policy WHB 18 - Public Rights of Way**

Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way and bridleways will be supported where their value as biodiversity corridors is safeguarded and any public right of way extension is fit for purpose. Where practicable, development proposals should incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity within the improved or extended public right of way.

The proposal to remove part of the hedge-line to make way for passing places is not consistent with this policy.

- The bridleway (Route: W561/032/0) is restricted under law to walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs. Whilst the applicants may have private rights over the bridleway for the purposes of access to land, there is further access via BOAT 31 south to Coltsfoot Green
- That Suffolk County Council Public Rights of Way Team had provided a response to the application recommending that any permission which the planning authority may give should include the conditions identified in the interests of:
  - public amenity
  - that safety of users is not compromised by the traffic associated with the development

The meeting determined to **object to parts (d) and (e) of the application** for the following reasons:

**1. Sustainable Development:**

- a. The proposals to include passing places on the Bridleway involve removing part of an established hedge, which is not consistent with Policy WHB 18 – Public Rights of Way of the parish council’s Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Biodiversity would be diminished by the removal of (parts of) the hedge.

- b. The application does not appear to make provision for the installation of an electric charging points for the proposed dwelling. This could have a negative impact on air quality in the vicinity and is not consistent with the NPPF paragraphs 105 & 110<sup>4</sup>, Air Quality Planning Guidance, [CS2 – Conserving and where possible, Enhancing of Natural Resources including Air Quality], [DM14 – Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources, Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards], and Section 3.2 of Suffolk Parking Standards, which sets out requirements for electrical charging infrastructure.
2. **Noise and Disturbance:** site clearance, preparation and construction activities (including deliveries and removal of waste materials) would result in noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties, particularly at weekends and bank holidays, a material consideration.
  3. **Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards:** Hazardous materials must be removed from site and not burnt, to ensure that there is no risk to contamination of ground or surface water and that the amenity of neighbouring areas is protected. Relevant policies are NPPF (paragraphs 170, 178, 179), (GP3), Policy CS2 (Sustainable Development) and Policy DM14.
  4. **Infrastructure Capacity:** that the proposed access is over a bridleway (Route: W-561/032/0).
  5. **Safety of Parish Residents and users of the bridleway**  
In February '24, the parish council wrote to Suffolk County Council PRoW stating that: *"the parish council would like to be reassured that SCC PROW, when commenting on any future planning application, be assured that access over the bridleway to Australia farm be for residential use or access for other landowners for agricultural purposes, such that the safety of public users of the bridleway is not impeded in anyway"*

- 6.2 **DC/24/0946/TPO – Tree Preservation Order**  
TPO 256 (1998) and TPO 504 (2010) tree preservation order - as per tree survey  
**The Meadows Wickhambrook CB8 8GW**  
See report **WPC.EO.24.07.02**  
The meeting considered the application and whilst accepting that the schedule identified necessary works to the trees identified on the schedule within the application, were concerned that the hedge identified for coppicing should not be removed, and referenced the Community Action below in its draft Neighbourhood Plan:

**COMMUNITY ACTION 2 - WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION**

The Parish Council will work with the Wickhambrook Estates Committee and interested parishioners in order to sustain and improve the natural environment in and around the village.

Actions to be considered will include:

- conserving trees and hedgerows, initially by carrying out an audit of assets,
- protecting green spaces and woodlands and enhancing their value for wildlife,
- working with landowners to promote take-up of stewardship schemes, including:
  - a) opening up permissive paths,
  - b) fostering wildflower mixes on field margins, and
  - c) promoting biodiversity by establishing wild areas, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors around the Parish.

- 6.3 **Resolved:**  
**That the Clerk make known the Council's comments on planning applications above to the Corporate Manager, Growth & Sustainable Planning at West Suffolk Council.**

<sup>4</sup> adequate provision of parking for ...ultra low emission vehicles and enabling of charging for such vehicles.

- EO.24.08.07 **Noted:** The following expenditure under delegated authority:
- c) To spend up to £1000 in situations where (s) considers such expenditure to be justified after consultation with the Chairman of the Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee. Such authority to be evidenced by a Minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed –

**V1076 B & Q – Chains & Locks for Six Acres £162.37**

EO.24.08.08 **Noted:**

That when any other matters for information, to be noted or for inclusion on a future agenda were invited, the following:

- Securing access onto Six Acres
- Bus Strategy Funding and Stephenson's route N14
- A Whatsapp group for councillors
- Planning Applications [DC/24/1045/FUL](#) and [DC/24/1106/HH](#)

EO.24.08.09 **Noted:**

Confirmation that the scheduled date for the next meeting was Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September beginning at 7:00pm at Pavilion, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre.

EO.24.08.10 **Noted:** Close of meeting. 19:56pm