

Westley Parish Council minutes

6 July 2017

Present: Colin Clayton (CC); Alan Green (AG); Mike Spenser-Morris (MSM); Jim Sweetman (JS); Gary Smith (GS); Steve McClellan (SM)

Jen Larner (JL, Clerk); Karen Soons, (SCC)

Apologies: Chris Anderson. Meeting chaired by Colin Clayton.

14/2017. Declarations of interest: None received.

15/2017. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2017 were approved and signed as a true record.

16/2017. Reports from County Councillor – Karen Soons had circulated her June report.

17/2017. Finance – authorisation of payments: The balance in the bank is £4724.38. The following payments were authorised: Clerk quarterly salary £221.61, SALC sub £130.63, Trevor Brown, internal audit and travel (shared with Wetherden pc) £58.47.

18/17. Report from internal auditor – this had been circulated. The report was positive. He had made one recommendation regarding internet banking, that the clerk should not be both the instigator and the authoriser of payments, as this leaves both the Clerk/RFO and the Council vulnerable and is not good practice. The council noted the recommendation and accepted it is a risk, but decided not to change the current system.

19/2017. Village gates – JS had circulated a report noting that the system for getting this done has been changed – Suffolk County Council Highways department is now charging for all aspects of this job, including surveys, site visits, drawings, utilities enquiries, consultation etc. The estimate for this is £4,500, meaning that the total cost of the job (with manufacture and installation costs) has risen to around £8000. £4,500 had been allocated from last year's locality budget and agreed. It was felt that the price of £4000 per gate to welcome people to Westley and remind people to drive safely through the village is unreasonable. Karen Soons pointed out that just replacing the existing signs would probably be little or no cost, but the gates are a new project so needing more information before erecting. It was agreed that MSM will follow this up with the relevant authorities to see if this cost can be reduced/eradicated.

20/2017. Update from Highways on the state of Fornham Road. MSM reported that he had just heard from Guy Smith that the work will be completed during the last week of July/first of August. MSM has also requested a meeting to bring to SCC's attention all the work that needs doing, but there is a major re-organisation underway, so this will be arranged at a later date. It was noted that some of the loose stones left from the last resurfacing have been removed. CC noted that the road has been built up by the church, such that there is now no kerb to prevent water entering the churchyard, and thus flooding it. It was agreed to add this to the list of problems for the meeting. MSM was thanked for his tenacity in pursuing this.

21/2017. Improvements to verges. It was noted that the verges throughout the village are looking very unkempt, and discussion took place regarding possible options, ranging from approaching the community service volunteers, to hiring a contractor to do a regular cut/litter pick. Karen Soons reported that funding for this would be difficult as it's an ongoing job not a one off project. The Clerk will clarify who is responsible for cutting the verges, and, if possible, who owns which bit, before a decision is made as to how to proceed.

22/2017. Planning – no planning applications had been received.

23/2017. Correspondence – Merchant Navy Day, 3 September; Magpas donation request; copy of Suffolk View; consultation on creating a single council of West Suffolk (end of consultation date 31 August) – circulated.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 7 September 2017 at 7.30.

