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**Minutes of the West Acre Parish Council Meeting**

**held at 6:00pm on Monday 22nd May 2023 at West Acre Village Hall**

**Present**

**Parish Councillors:**

Cllr Eoghan Sheils (Chair)

Cllr Ernest Heatley

Cllr Jeremy Cameron

Cllr Peter Wilson

Clerk David Williams

Item 1 **Councillors to sign acceptance of Office for the ensuing 4 years.**

* All Councillors present duly signed, their acceptance of office, and the clerk counter signed it.

Item 2 **Election of Chairman of the Council and Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**

* There being no other nominations Cllr E Sheils was duly elected. Cllr E Sheils signed and dated his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and the clerk countersigned it.

**Proposed Councillor P Wilson and Seconded Councillor E Heatley all present agreed.**

Item 3 **Election of Vice Chairman of the Council and Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**

* There being no other nominations Cllr E Heatley was duly elected. Cllr E Heatley signed and dated his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and the clerk countersigned it.

**Proposed Councillor P Wilson and Seconded Councillor E Sheils all present agreed.**

Item 4 **Discuss chalk stream alliance subgroup – West Acre River Nar**.

* The Chair informed the meeting that the context of this item had arisen due to the Brewery having breaches of consent into the river Nar through the Environment Agency (EA). Also, the media interest in the state of chalk streams in the UK of which there are not many. The Chair did state it was not just the outfall from the Brewery. But also, the state of the river which seems to change through the West Acre Parish Council area.

Mrs Brindle stated that the wildlife using the river was now affected by the state of the river there were fewer fish. The contaminants and silt were rising to unacceptable levels for a live waterway. West Acre River Nar (WARN) is group founded because if we don’t do something we will not have a river.

Three main points:

1. The issue with the brewery and its breaches into the Nar.
2. The issue with run off from the estate and the pig farm.
3. The Issue with Highways and the runoff from the roads after rain.

West Acre is quite unique in that there is not any human effluent being discharged it is all farming or brewery related. One factual example, being that brewery effluent is six times more toxic than that of Human waste. So, the damage will be greater in a shorter time.

Firstly, we need to monitor the river especially after heavy rainfall. The Highways and Environment Agencies need to take a more proactive approach. But funding is a known issue. Villagers could take an active role in supporting the agencies in data collection and feeding back findings.

The Parish Council would support the startup of the group. The Parish Council will facilitate a discussion with all parties. The Chair indicated that the river needed assessment.

Cllr P Wilson proposed the conclusion of the discussion is Strong Support, Strong encouragement from the Parish Council. The Chair suggested educational programmes around testing potentially in the same areas. Along with Community monitoring was needed.

Cllr E Heatley suggested three items going forward.

* It would be useful if the professional bodies, could advise residents what we can do to support the process.
* The last testing advertised by the EA was a positive one for the brewery.
* It was very disappointing that the public funds going to the rewilding bodies are not focused on the creatures that are the natural inhabitants of the local area.

The Chair did say that he thought that Natural England and the planning authority should be engaged fully this time. The Chair thanked everyone for their participation. The Chalk Stream Alliance has been contacted and supportive.

Cllr Heatley volunteered to be the Parish Councils representative on the WARN group.

**Proposed by Cllr E Sheils and seconded by Cllr P Wilson all present agreed.**

Item 5 **To review the Council policies and procedures sent out prior to the meeting.**

* The Clerk would put a policy schedule together with review dates throughout the coming fiscal year. So as not to review all policies at once. They will
* Standing Orders and Code of Conduct for the Council.

Item 6 **Apologies for absence**

* There were apologies from Cllr Ralph Sliwa, Cllr J Moriarty Norfolk County & KL&WN Borough Councils. Councillor Alistair Beales KL&WN Borough Council.

Item 7 **Declarations of interest (under the West Norfolk Borough Council Code of Conduct) and any requests for dispensation**

There were non-pecuniary declarations of interest in planning matters from Cllr Eoghan Sheils (Chair), Cllr Ernest Heatley (Vice Chair), Cllr Peter Wilson.

Item 8 **To confirm that the public will be invited to comment on any agenda items at the discretion of the Chairman. All comments regarding matters under discussion must be addressed to the Chairman and must be made politely, be as brief as possible and finish when requested by the Chairman.**

* The Chair informed the meeting that the Parish Council will listen to residents, and they can speak during the meeting. There were 3 members of the public present.

Item 9 **Approval of the minutes of the Council meeting**

* The minutes, for the previous meeting held on the 20th of March 2023 were presented and approved as true record.

**Proposed Cllr E Sheils and Seconded Cllr J Cameron all agreed who were present.**

Item 10 **Actions arising from the above meeting not covered in this agenda.**

* The Chair informed the meeting that all items were covered in the agenda for this meeting.

Item 11 **To receive an update from Borough / County Council matters (Cllr J Moriarty)**

Cllr J Moriarty Norfolk County Councillor sent the following report:

Norfolk County Council

**County Council elects new leader.**

Conservative group leader Councillor Mason Billig was voted in at the full council’s annual meeting on 9 May. She succeeds Councillor Andrew Proctor, who stood down from the role due to ill health.

Cllr Mason Billig said it was an honour to be elected. She paid tribute to Cllr Proctor for putting the council in a strong position and wished him a speedy recovery.

**The new leader has named her new cabinet:**

• Leader and portfolio holder for Strategy and Governance – Kay Mason Billig

• Deputy Leader and Finance – Andrew Jamieson

• Public Health and Wellbeing – Bill Borrett

• Adult Social Care – Alison Thomas

• Children’s Services – Penny Carpenter

• Communities and Partnerships – Margaret Dewsbury

• Environment and Waste – Eric Vardy

• Economic Growth – Fabian Eagle

• Highways, Infrastructure and Transport – Graham Plant

• Corporate Services and Innovation – Jane James

The same meeting elected Councillor Barry Stone as chairman of the county council – the authority’s civic leader. Councillors paid tribute to Councillor Karen Vincent, who has completed her year as chair of the county council.

**Norfolk Climate Strategy Approved**

A climate strategy, to support Norfolk’s move to net zero, has been agreed by the cabinet.

Retrofitting insulation in buildings, boosting sustainable transport, supporting green jobs and helping nature recover are among measures in the county council’s climate strategy, to support Norfolk’s move to become carbon neutral by 2030.

The strategy follows the county council’s commitment, made in 2019, to achieve net zero on its own estate. It aims to reduce the county council’s 2016/17 carbon emissions of 21,000 tonnes per year, which have already been halved, by 90 per cent by 2030, with the remainder offset.

The strategy emphasises that most of Norfolk’s carbon emissions come from heating people’s homes, from transport and from land use and agriculture. It also warns that Norfolk is already seeing the effect of changed weather patterns and needs to adapt to more-frequent flooding, drought and extreme heat, and that residents, businesses and public services will all need to adapt.

Link to the Climate Strategy on the county council website here

**County Deal for Norfolk Consultation update**

The public consultation has now closed, and the detailed results have been published.

The public’s views on Norfolk’s proposed devolution deal with the Government will be considered by the county council’s scrutiny committee on 18 May 2023.

The county council’s cabinet will meet in the summer to consider the results of the consultation, decide whether to proceed and, if so, submit the consultation results to the Government.

The consultation received over 1,200 responses.

If approved, the Deal would give Norfolk more control over funding and decisions on skills, jobs, housing and transport, which are currently decided in Westminster.

All county councillors will be asked in the December 2023 Full Council Meeting whether they support the move to an elected leader and cabinet system of governance.

In spring 2024, Parliament will decide whether to approve the 'statutory instrument' required to let the Deal proceed.

The county council website has been updated to include an introduction from county council Leader Kay Mason Billig and a link to the full detailed results of the consultation.

Link to our updated County Deal web pages and the consultation results here.

Lin to the scrutiny committee report here.

**Million trees for Norfolk update**

Norfolk could be set for a new country park.

An update on the success so far of the 1 million Trees for Norfolk project, with 250,000 already in the ground will be heard by Norfolk County Council’s infrastructure and development committee on 17 May 2023.

To meet the ambitious target members are set to consider proposals that could see a large new woodland area created and opened to the public. Members of the committee are being asked to comment on the proposal before it is considered by Cabinet at a later date.

The update outlines a proposal for the county council to buy land to plant 500,000 trees over the next two planting seasons. It’s estimated that 333 hectares would be needed to provide enough space for planting on the scale required, however this may not all be in one single location. Sustainable transport links would be needed, and no locations have been chosen as yet.

Further details and a link to the committee report here.

Further information about the million trees for Norfolk project available on the county council website here.

**Investment for Special Educational Needs (SEND) in Norfolk**

Norfolk County Council has secured a £70 million funding boost for special needs education for children in Norfolk (SEND).

Known as Local First Inclusion, it will provide significantly more advice, support and funding for mainstream schools and introduce 15 new school and community support teams to give early help and support to both parents and schools.

It also means the council will develop dozens more special education classrooms, known as specialist resource bases (SRBs) and alternative provision at mainstream schools as well as building two more special schools.

Norfolk’s Local First Inclusion plan is the next stage of their SEND Improvement Programme covering the period 2023-29.

Further details of the SEND Local First Inclusion Programme here.

**Norfolk County Council support for Home-Start Norfolk**

A Norfolk charity facing financial difficulties is set to benefit from a £90,000 grant to help it continue its work to support families with young children.

Home-Start Norfolk recruits and trains volunteers, mostly parents, to provide informal, practical and confidential support within the home to families with at least one child aged 0-5. In 2021/22 it supported approximately 330 families with 145 volunteers.

The one-off grant from Norfolk County Council and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) aims to support Home-Start Norfolk through the funding challenges which threaten its services.

A total of £60,000 is being provided by Norfolk County Council, via Children’s Services and Public Health grants with £30,000 from NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB.

The grant will be for April 2023 to March 2024 and will be overseen by Children’s Services.

**More information about Home-Start Norfolk here.**

NHS Health checks in Norfolk: update

From May, Norwich’s Castle Quarter Wellbeing Hub will offer a free NHS Health Check for Norfolk residents aged 40-74. The check-up will tell you your risk of developing health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, and stroke.

The free Health Checks are also available in a number of other locations across Norfolk.

Reed Wellbeing provides Norfolk NHS Health Checks on behalf of Norfolk County Council. The service is designed to help 36,000 Norfolk residents to have their NHS Health Check.

Book your NHS Health Check today by calling 0808 175 0413.

Further details and a list of locations across Norfolk available here.

Cllr Beales new King’s Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Councillor sent a report:

After the elections the Independent Group have formed the new administration at the Borough Council having formed a partnership with Liberal Democrat and Green councillors, and a confidence and supply arrangement with the Labour Group. On a personal level I was offered the Cabinet portfolio for Business which I was delighted to accept. I look forward to updating you further at your next meeting.

Item 12 **Budget for 2023/2024 ratification by the Council.**

* The Budget was accepted by the Parish Council proposed by Cllr E Heatley and Seconded by Cllr E Sheils all present agreed.

Item 13 **Update on West Acre Way (NCC discussions).**

* The Chair informed the meeting this was on-going and would be discussed more at the next meeting with further information from the Norfolk County Council Officers comments.

Item 14 **Appoint of internal auditor**.

* The Clerk informed the Parish Council, and they agreed to appoint Mrs Pam Bailey as the internal auditor.

**Proposed Cllr P Wilson and seconded by Cllr E Heatley all present agreed.**

Item15 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 (AGAR) Authorities claiming exemption.**

* The Clerk updated the Parish Council, and they understood the AGAR form 2 with exemption would be sent to PKF Littlejohn the National auditor by the Clerk after it had been signed by the Chair. The publication of the notice of public rights and publication of annual governance & accountability return (exempt authority)**.**

**Proposed Cllr E Sheils and Seconded by Cllr e Heatley all present agreed.**

Item 16 **Finance – To approve payments as per the schedule presented.**

Payments for 21/01/2023 to 21/05/2023

* The only payments are the Clerks salary £262 for March and April**,** and payment of £10 to West Acre Village Hall.
* Cllr P Wilson asked for a contingency to made of two test kits for £160 and the Parish Council agreed in principle. The Clerk would seek if there was any funding available.

**Proposes Councillor E Heatley Seconded Councillor P Wilson all agreed.**

Item 17 **Community Infrastructure Levey (CiL) discuss proposals.**

* There was one response by letter to seating on the walkways and litter collection. The Chair indicated that these were good ideas. There should be a schedule for litter picking within the Parish.
* Cllr J Cameron proposed that items should be brought forward to the next meeting.

Item 18 **Planning matters- 23/00552/F and 23/00553/LB to be discussed.**

* The Chair stated the two applications from the estate would adapt buildings to the rear of the brewery’s main barn. The plans look very modest in impact. There is a further application which will need comment on, and this is to update the plans for the Stag Public House. The stance the Parish council has taken along with other key consultees is to not fully support the plans in their entirety. The Parish Council will look out for the formal email to make comment. The Chair said it was a better scheme, but questions still needed answering. Cllr E Heatley would make some notes and send them around to Councillors.
* Mrs Brindle raised the issue of the of the stones egressing on to the road from the theatre entrance. Cllr E Sheils said he would add it to the Parish Schedule for Highways.
* It was also raised about the potholes on the roads around the parish and linking with other villages. The Chair requested that pictures are taken so they can be added also to the Highways Schedule he would then take matters up on behalf of residents.
* Cllr J Cameron raised the issue of swift nest boxes and Cllr E Heatley also agreed that the planning application for the Stag Public House and Ford Cottage should address the issue. Cllr J Cameron was to write a comment from the Parish Council on the planning portals relevant planning application.

Item 19 **To receive update on defibrillator for the Parish.**

* The Chair informed the meeting the theatre did have a defibrillator but inside. The email exchange had stopped, as Cllr R Sliwa was not present this matter would need to be added to the next agenda.

Item 20 **To invite requests from the public to propose items for the next Parish Council meeting.** [These may be addressed to any Parish Councillor or the Clerk at any time before the agenda of the next meeting is published].

* None made at the meeting.

Item 21 **Date and Time of the next meeting.**

* The next meeting will be **Monday 17th of July 2023** at 6pm in West Acre Village Hall.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed 7:58 pm