

WESTHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
followed by Annual Parish Meeting

Held in the Village Hall on Monday 11th May 2015 at 7.30pm

Members Present: Mr S Darch (Chairman); Mr D Thompson; Mrs L McTaggart;
Mr J Lickman and Mr M Rogers, Mrs L Palin

In Attendance: Mrs M Rogers (Clerk)

Public Members: Mr P Langford; Mr T Goldson.

Declarations of Interest.

Mr Rogers declared pecuniary interest in relation to clerk, finance and audit. Mrs Palin and Mr Lickman proposed that Mr Rogers remain in attendance for these items and any further items relating to finance and accounting but not to vote or comment. Council voted agreement. Mr Darch and Mr Lickman declared interest in Allotments.

Election of Officers

Declaration of Acceptance

Code of Conduct

Re-Election of Bankers.

Due to 2015 being an election year this will be dealt with at the meeting following the AGM/Parish Meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Mrs E Clark and PC Green (Suffolk Constabulary)

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held 12th May 2014 were approved and signed. Proposed by Mr Mr Lickman; Mrs L Palin and Mr Rogers.

3. **Matters Arising** – Allotment Gate at Locks Road still needs work.

4. **Annual Report by the Chairman**

Mr Darch gave thanks to Clerk and Mr Thompson for their work on Audit; thanks to Mrs Clark and Mrs Palin for allotment audit and inspections and thanks to Mr McTaggart for his work on Locks Road Allotments and to Mr Lickman for his role as Vice Chairman. He also thanked the retiring councillors. On Mr Goldson's instigation of meetings held in Halesworth and liaising with SCC Highways there will be progress with Mill Common parking and there will be changes in the services being provided by district and county councils. These changes need to be embraced and either carried out by voluntary groups or the precept increased to employ people to carry out the work. Earlier in the year the PC decided to consider instigating a parish plan annually at the AGM in order to keep this item current. He explained that though a parish plan entitled us to have more say in how the parish is developed the plan has a specified timescale and as costs to create a parish plan were extensive with a review and edit system and then on to referendum before the plan was published. WDC Local Development Plan did not at present include Westhall, when this was reviewed then a parish plan may be required.

With the onset of a new parish council he pointed out that we were not a political body and personal views should not be brought into any decisions the PC made. The PC must be completely unbiased in

deciding planning applications any decision should be made according to Planning Rules. He pointed out that public have a right to run their business/hobby but this does not affect their right to complain, but any noisy minority does not mean this is the view of the whole village. As an unelected council we should take account of parishioners. He then thanked the clerk for her efforts.

There followed a short discussion over the statement of unelected council. The PC were nominated and uncontested/unopposed.

5. **Treasurers Report**

Mr Thompson presented his report as attached. He stated that we are mainly keeping our heads above water. Precept was increased by 3% which only equates to 25p per household. Our expenses have changed very little since last year. But with more responsibilities being devolved from district and county council this will change. We have a reserve account which should be kept for emergency for example travellers on pleasure ground other than this we have always kept expenses and precept to a minimum.

6. **Allotment Inspection – half year.**

Due to illness this inspection will be carried out next month, but thanks were given to Mr Darch and Mr McTaggart for overall work on hedges, grass cutting and to the village members who hold allotments and keep them tidy.

7. **Pleasure Ground Committee.**

Whilst the committee was mainly made up by parish councillor's clerk explained it was an advantage to have members of the public in order to be unbiased. The new committee will comprise of Mr Darch, Mr Thompson, Mr Rogers and Mr Lickman and Mr Langford for the PC.

8. **Neighbourhood Plan**

Under the Waveney Area Local Plan the development of areas in Halesworth could mean that Westhall would not under consideration for some time. Clerk explained that in the past the lack of sewerage facilities was a consideration for no development, this was not the case now as developers installed digesters to handle waste. There was a danger that a landowner could apply for development in which a Neighbourhood Plan would be an advantage in ensuring that the layout, design and type of development was in keeping with the village.

9. **Any Other Business** – Mr Goldson thanked the retiring councillors and congratulated them on carrying out a remarkable job. We should feel proud of how we have kept going under several contentious issues, and by making decisions we were ahead of the game and is embracing change.

10. **Date and Time of next AGM** – due to May bank holidays and election dates 9 May at 7.30 in Village Hall. (To be confirmed)

PARISH MEETING

There were no other public members.

The meeting closed at 7.55.