

## Offton and Willisham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Offton & Willisham Village Hall on Monday 8th April  
2024 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr A Cox  
Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh  
Cllr C Eves  
0 Members of the public  
Clerk - T Davis

Cllr L Seddon  
Cllr T Wells

### ACTION

<b>1</b>	<p><b><u>Meeting Administration</u></b></p> <p>a) <b>Chair to open the meeting and welcome everyone</b> The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming</p> <p><b>Apologies for absence;</b></p> <p>b) Cllr Oakes &amp; Cllr Pratt sent apologies.</p> <p><b>Declarations of Interest;</b></p> <p>c) None</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>To Approve the draft minutes of the Council meeting on 4th March 2024 and for the Chairman to sign as a true record</b></p> <p>a) Matters arising from the minutes:- Cllr Cox advised that he was obtaining information for the Compost Toilet for Willisham Church and the Clerk will find out if the CIL money could be used. It was advised that the Litter Pick collected 7 bags of rubbish. It was unanimously <b>AGREED</b> for the Chair to sign the minutes.</p>	<b>Chair</b>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Public Participation Session (<i>To hear reports from the County Councillor, District Councillor, and comments from the Public</i>)</b></p> <p>There were no members of the public attending the meeting.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Planning Consultations &amp; Governance Consultations</b></p> <p>i. <b>Pre-Submission - Aldham Neighbourhood Plan views on draft focused review (13th May)</b> This review was NOTED</p> <p>ii. <b>Pre-Submission - Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan views on draft focused review (13th May)</b> This review was NOTED</p> <p>iii. <b>MSDC DC/24/01057 - Application for Reserved matters for 11 dwellings, commercial (office) space, A1/A3 farm shop/cafe, new vehicular access, new footpath, play area, parking, landscaping and attenuation (extended deadline 9th April)</b> Councillors discussed this application in some depth and reviewed the plans and highlighted the changes made since the outline planning was granted. The council agreed the following points:- 1. Originally the Play Area in the plans was to be for Community Use so that a football pitch could be established and an annual fete could be held. This type of community space is badly needed in the Parish. The current plans provide an unsuitable play apparatus area,</p>	

iv.	<p>which duplicates an existing play area at Offton Village Hall and the council asks for this not to be pursued. In addition who will maintain this land, eg: will it be adopted by the District Council or Parish Council?</p> <p>2. Councillors would ideally like the affordable housing to be for parishioners with a local connection to the parish, they understand they do not yet have a neighbourhood plan in place or a current housing need survey.</p> <p>3. The plans for the Drainage and surface water were considered insufficient following the recent storms, especially storm Babet. It was felt that the development mitigation design would cause more flooding directly into offton. Councillors are concerned the 1 in 100yr no longer applies and needs to be increased and that the lead flood authority should be consulted in respect of this development's plans.</p> <p>4. The parking provision seems to not take into account the existing permission by the land owner for parishioners to use the land for parking already (when they go to church). Councillors are concerned that parking needs for the Church, Shop and Play area need to be considered in this development plan to account for existing local use to mitigate upset for a very long standing agreement.</p> <p>5. Councillors are aware that the footpath has not yet been agreed with the landowner but would be in full support of connecting Offton with Willisham in this way.</p> <p>If the points raised above were looked into and could be addressed by the Planning Officer, the Council Proposed, Seconded and unanimously AGREED to SUPPORT this application.</p> <p><b>NSIP National Grid Norwich to Tilbury Proposal - Mid Suffolk Request for feedback</b></p> <p>It was AGREED unanimously that once the consultation was launched, that the Offton &amp; Willisham Pylon group would collate information and provide it to the clerk to form the Parish Council response.</p>	
5	<p><b>Next meeting is the Annual Parish Council meeting at the earlier time of 6pm on 20th May with the APM starting directly after.</b></p>	Clerk

Meeting end 8:30pm

## ADDENDUM

### 1. District Council Report - April - Cllr Dan Pratt

#### **Council of the Year Award**

The councils of Mid Suffolk and Babergh have just been jointly awarded Council of the Year for their collaboration and focus on their communities. This was awarded by the iESE, a not-for-profit organisation created by local authorities to transform public services and retain experience within the sector.

### **Rural Transport Grants**

A new rural transport grants scheme has just been launched to provide new passenger transport options and hopefully open new or improved bus routes across six key areas in Mid Suffolk. More details are available at <https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/rural-transport-grants-scheme>.

### **CIL expenditure framework**

Full council recommended approval of the amendments proposed to the Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Framework following the sixth review. Under the changes, applications for District CIL from sports clubs and community shops and cafes will be supported with provisos that any profit made by such businesses goes back to the community, and allowing more flexibility for community project costs.

### **Suffolk Devolution deal consultation**

SCC has launched the consultation of the proposed devolution deal for Suffolk. MSDC councillors debated this issue at last week's Council meeting but are not involved in the SCC decision. The deal gives SCC some more local power alongside a fund of £480 million over a 30-year period (an insignificant proportion of the total SCC budget). More information and public consultation can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>.

### **District Council objects to National Grid reinforcement plans**

MSDC objected to the National Grid's plans to reinforce the network which would increase the number of pylons around the Bramford substation. The council cited cumulative environmental impacts with other development and construction work in the area.

### **Nationally significant Solar Farm proposal**

A 2000MW solar farm proposal near Mendlesham has been proposed. This is a large nationally significant energy application which will be determined by the Planning Inspectorate. MSDC are just a consultee, but have requested more clarity about certain aspects of the application.

### **Trial an e-bike**

Mid Suffolk have partnered with Eezybikes to provide an e-bike hire service from our Needham Lakes site. The bicycles can be booked on the Eezybikes website: <https://eezybike.co.uk/book-now>

## **2. County Council Report - April - Cllr Kay Oakes**

### **Suffolk County Council considers LionLink proposals unacceptable and unfair**

Suffolk County Council believes that the failure of two National Grid offshore projects to coordinate with each other, will cause irreversible damage to important landscapes in the county.

The council considers that the proposed LionLink and Sea Link projects could share infrastructure where cabling is already proposed to come onshore at Aldeburgh, by the Sea Link project which is at a more advanced planning stage.

LionLink is an interconnector being proposed by National Grid Ventures. Sea Link is an electrical cabling and infrastructure project being proposed by National Grid Electricity Transmission – a different member of the National Grid family.

However, the LionLink project has published details to say that it has no intention to coordinate with Sea Link at Aldeburgh, instead it is proposing a separate landing point at either Southwold or Walberswick.

**Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and Finance said:**

“The high handed and process driven approach by National Grid Ventures is totally unacceptable. They are showing a complete lack of respect to Suffolk and its coastal communities.

“The absence of coordination between the Sea Link and LionLink projects will, if they are consented, result in over 10 miles of some of the most sensitive and important landscapes in the UK being dug up to create more trenches for more cabling.

“This additional and unnecessary destruction of the Suffolk countryside and natural environment could be wholly avoided, if there was project coordination – something we have been calling for, for years.

“If LionLink must make landfall in Suffolk, it must do all it can to minimise harm to our local communities and landscapes.

“The public, the Planning Inspectorate, and ultimately the Secretary of State at the Department of Energy and Net Zero, must have the opportunity to fully consider coordination with the Sea Link project as an alternative to Southwold or Walberswick. This would make for a much fairer process for all, and a better understanding for everyone concerned.”

The council’s submission to the last non-statutory consultation for LionLink [can be read here](#). National Grid Ventures expected to submit a Development Consent Order application in 2025.

### Funding boost for new and existing bus services across Suffolk

The council has been awarded £1.8 million per year for two years – a total of £3.6 million – from the Department for Transport’s Bus Service Improvement Fund Phase 2 (BSIP 2, renamed from BSIP+) to deliver improvements to public transport in Suffolk.

Suffolk’s Enhanced Partnership, which represents the county council and local bus operators, has agreed to allocate the first year’s funding in three ways.

First, following an open call for suggestions, £1.2 million will be allocated to support operator- and local community-led proposals for new or enhanced services across the county.

Submissions were reviewed against criteria including value for money, the number of passengers that could benefit, how they integrate with existing services, and their likely long-term financial sustainability after the BSIP 2 funding ends.

A full list of the successful schemes can be found [here](#).

All schemes are expected to commence operations between April 2024 and September 2024. A further £450,000 has been allocated to commercial bus operators in order to support and stabilise the existing bus network and maintain essential social and economic transport links for local communities.

The final £150,000 will be used to develop bus priority schemes, creating opportunities for smoother and more convenient bus journeys and making bus travel a more attractive transport option.

It is proposed that funding for the successful schemes will continue into the second year using a similar proportion of that year’s allocation.

A decision on how to spend any remaining funding will be informed by further reviews of the existing commercial bus network in collaboration with the operators and continued feedback from partners and communities.

## Suffolk to benefit from huge £7.3 million EV investment

Suffolk County Council has secured millions of pounds of funding to help develop electric vehicle (EV) charging across the county.

The county council has been allocated the money after successful bids to the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, which supports local authorities to plan and deliver charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking.

Suffolk residents without off-street parking will benefit from £5.9 million to support EV charging, and a further £1.4 million will be used to develop the county's existing EV charging network in community locations.

Homes without a driveway face challenges when it comes to charging an EV - in some cases it is just not possible, and it is unsafe and hazardous to run cables across pavements. Along with inconvenient access to public charging, these are common reasons that people give for not choosing an EV.

However, the funding will start to provide solutions to some of these issues, with opportunities to develop:

- kerbside charging points
- community charging hubs
- car park charging points
- fast and rapid charging point infrastructure improvements

Suffolk residents are invited to 'nominate' their street for consideration for on-street charging points, using [this online form](#). Although not every road may be suitable, suggestions from residents will help indicate where there is demand for charging points.

This investment continues the council's contribution to the [Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan](#), which identifies that the decarbonisation of vehicles in Suffolk is a key aspect of meeting the net zero by 2030 target for the county.

Complementing the new funding, is Suffolk County Council's recently published [Suffolk Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy](#). It has been written with the input of all borough and district councils, aiming to improve the EV charging experience for drivers in Suffolk.

## Even more potholes filled as Roadmender trial hits Suffolk

The Roadmender has arrived in Suffolk, as the county sees a 34% increase in pothole repairs through extra investment, more resource, and new ways of working.

The county council has been working to repair the increasing number of potholes which have been breaking out following very wet and cold weather recently. One way in which the council is increasing its repair rate is by trialling new methods of fixing potholes.

Suffolk Highways welcomed 'Highway Workforce' with their Roadmender Elastomac solution - a repair method which results in sealed, longer-lasting pothole repairs, which are quicker to carry out.

The trial which began on 11 March, is eco-friendly and lowers the carbon footprint of repairs by 80% is effectively supporting Suffolk Highways in its fight against the rising number of potholes on the county's roads.

The 'Roadmender' works on both asphalt and concrete roads and is designed for repairs to all types of road defects and is capable of overlaying areas with multiple defects in a single visit.

The process is more efficient, reducing material and waste by 90% and avoiding unnecessary disruption on roads.

**Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding, said:**

"Potholes are a huge issue currently facing local authorities up and down the country, here in Suffolk is no different.

"The extremely wet weather conditions have meant an increase in the number of potholes breaking out, so we are doing all we can to stay on top of the problem.

"Our efforts have included bringing additional resource in and trialling new machinery and methods which are focussed on fixing more defects, quicker and more sustainably.

"By investing more resource and trying new methods, we have been able to fix 34% more potholes than last year."