

Walberswick Parish Council (WPC) – report to Annual Parish Meeting – 2026

Let's begin with some of the many positives from the past year:

- The Council has set its budget for the 26/27 tax year and we are very proud to have been able to hold the element of the Council Tax that goes to the Parish Council (called the precept) completely flat for a 6th consecutive year, despite the inflation of recent times.
- We have also had another smooth year accounts-wise with completely clean audits again from both our internal and external auditors. In this regard, I would like to thank our extremely professional and capable Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer who have both now worked for WPC for 7 years. All the details of the Council budget, meetings and decisions can be found on our website at: <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/walberswick-parish-council/>
- We are very fortunate to have a number of advisory groups working with the Parish Council, including the Scroll Advisory Group and the Speed Watch team, all of whom I would like to thank for their input and advice. Our most active advisory group continues to be the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) and we remain indebted as a Council and a village to them for the excellent work they do in assessing the many planning applications we receive.
- Our NDP has also made good progress this year and we are about to submit our first draft to ESDC for their feedback and we plan to consult again with the village this summer on it. Once approved, it should make it much less likely that the planners will be able to ignore the arguments put forward by PAG and WPC that seek to limit overdevelopment in our village.

Now for some of the tougher stuff:

- WPC remains heavily engaged on the NSIPs that are impacting our area and we are all highly grateful to Councillor Josie Bassinette who continues to work tirelessly on our behalf. Having been involved in SZC consultations and Inspection Panel Hearings, WPC ensured that Walberswick is a legally recognised member of the Northern Transport Forum, the B1125 Transport Working Group and the SZC Community Forum. WPC regularly includes news items in the Village News and on the website to update the Parish on what is happening particularly with regard to any mitigation. As part of this the B1387 will be widened and improved between the Water Tower and the A12. A better turning on to the A12 will be constructed. Once this work is done, the B1125 going north into Blythburgh will be closed for the remainder of the SZC construction (at least 10-15 years). This is needed to stop SZC workers, contractors and non-SZC rat-running on the B1125. The short-term pain associated with this mitigation, however, is upon us. From 15 June-27 July, the B1387 will be closed between the water tower and A12. Diversions will be north through Blythburgh or south to Darsham/Westleton/Yoxford. The closure will be weekdays from 7am to 5.30pm. Night-time and Weekends will be open, or occasionally traffic light controlled. The WPC is working closely with SZC/Suffolk Highways on safety and serious congestion issues that may arise especially as we get into the height of the summer season. Please check the Village Website for updates. At the southern end, where it meets the B1122, the B1125 will connect to the Sizewell Link Road. WPC added its voice to all the other Councils in the Northern Transport Forum to win a commitment by SZC to include an

area of the massive worker park and ride being built next to the Darsham Train station for use by the public taking the train.

As for Lionlink, the Council is also working with our MP, SCC, ESC, WALL and neighbouring Councils who are unanimously opposed to NGV's plans for Lionlink here as there are clearly better options including offshore and using existing brownfield sites. An excellent opportunity for combining Lionlink with the Belgian interconnector, Nautilus, coming through the Isle of Grain is one obvious solution that NGV should be made to follow. Given the strong links between NGV's Sealink landing in Aldeburgh connecting to a converter station in Saxmundham (where the LL converter station would also be located), WPC (again thanks to Josie) has participated in the Sealink Planning Inspectorate process. We can expect to see the same process kicking off for Lionlink towards the end of this year. An important date for your diary is Wednesday 15th July, when the Parish Council will hold an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting in the Village Hall with Lionlink representatives.

The Parish Council

- At our recent Annual meeting of the Parish Council I chose to step down as Chair and Rebecca Whiting was unanimously elected Chair, with me serving as Vice-Chair. Congratulations and thanks to Rebecca for taking on this role which it has been my honour to fulfil for the last 5 years
- I am very happy to report that the Parish Council remains at full strength with regard to Councillors. All Councillors serve our community on a purely voluntary basis and we are all indebted to all of them for doing so and therefore please join me in thanking my fellow councillors: Josie Bassinette, Esme Richardson, Lee Sutton, Emilie Dadswell, Peter Watson and Rebecca Whiting for all they do for the village.
- May 2027 is scheduled as an election year for Parish Councils and we know that at least one Councillor will be stepping down from the council at that time, so if you have any interest in finding out more about the work of the Parish Council and what it means to be a Councillor, please contact either myself or the Parish Clerk

Andrew Lewis

Vice-Chair, Walberswick Parish Council