

**Draft until signed**

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting  
Monday 12 February 2018 at 7.30pm, Battsford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battsford**

**Present:** S Scarff (Chairman); D Thorpe (Councillor); C Todhunter (Councillor); J Crooks (Councillor); S Reynard (Councillor); A Whybrow (County Councillor); Cllr D Whybrow (District Councillor).

**Attending:** T Bamber (Clerk)

**1. Apologies for absence**

D Stephens-Row (Vice Chairman); T Whitehead (Councillor);

**2. Declarations of interest**

Cllr D Thorpe (neighbour in respect of item 9 (a)(ii))

**3. Public Forum**

Mr K Mudd was present to discuss item 11.

**4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 8 January 2018**

Minutes for 8 January 2018 were signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting.

**5. Matters arising from the minutes**

There were some arising that are not covered elsewhere:

- a. Item 16 – Combs cemetery: Cllr C Todhunter reported that he had found a website that sold Perspex of a sort suitable for the notice board at £42/sq m plus delivery. Cllr Thorpe will compare this with prices at local stores.
- b. Item 11 – Bus shelter: Cllr J Crooks had procured costings for materials to repair the bus shelter roof. It was PROPOSED by the chairman that the council approve spending up to £400 to purchase materials and repair the roof. This was seconded by Cllr Thorpe and agreed unanimously. (*Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1970, S.1*)

**6. County Councillor's Report**

There is no written report this month but main issues are:

- The council tax is to rise by 4.99%.
- Cllr Whybrow has made enquiries regarding Jockey's Lane/America Lane and was told that this is not an authorised way. They have now learned that it is a byway and are to reassess the matter.
- The council have also been informed about the condition of Jack's Lane.
- The county council have circulated a survey to parish clerks asking how their parish councils might be able to take on some work now beyond the ability of the county council. Cllr Whybrow recommended that the clerk respond to this.
- School transport is still an important issue for many people.
- The application for funding under the locality budget for a WWI beacon has been forwarded to the appropriate office.

Cllr Thorpe enquired if the council, being financially unable to assist in many works needed for the village, would be able to confirm that their liability insurance would protect parish councilors if they were to undertake any of the work themselves. County Cllr Whybrow advised that such cover was not always available.

The chairman raised the issue of drainage problems in Jack's Lane. It was agreed that photographs of the problems in Jack's Lane and Gilbert's Hill would be sent to Cllr Whybrow.

## **7. District Councillors Report**

See Appendix 1

Cllr Whybrow also confirmed that an application for financial assistance with costs of the WWI beacon will be put forward.

## **8. Church Magazine (agenda item 11) (brought forward for earlier discussion)**

The chairman introduced Mr Mudd, the editor of the church magazine, who provided details of the publishing process, confirming that current costs are 30pence per issue and that advertising revenue of £100 per full page per year (12 issues) and pro-rata for smaller adverts was not currently sufficient to meet costs: to be self-funding would require 10 pages of adverts (there are currently 4). Mr Mudd also mentioned that he had previously tried to include relevant local information but that he had received very little by way of feedback.

While there was general support for the magazine – it would be an excellent way of distributing local news around the village - the Chairman expressed concern at the cost, being around £1,000 per year, which has not been budgeted. It was appreciated that costs for the first year or two may well be helped by the district and county councilors but such support could not be relied on indefinitely.

Mr Mudd mentioned that the overall costs per magazine may reduce with a larger print run and he offered to obtain more detailed costings for the council. It was agreed to await details of the cost before further consideration.

## **9. (agenda item 8) Parish Council Chairman's Report**

Nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

## **10. (agenda item 9) Planning**

### **a. Applications received for consideration**

- i. DC/17/04684 & 04685 – 7 Model Farm, Park Road – planning and listed building consent request for installation of central heating boiler. *No objections.*
- ii. DC/18/00110 – Acorns, Park Road – Erection of first floor rear extension and alterations. *No objections.*

### **b. Decisions received from MSDC**

DC/17/04545 – Ebbs House, Bildeston Road - Erection of cart lodge with accommodation – *noted.*

## **11. (agenda item 10) Finance**

- a. Accounts review to date – Current Account balance as of 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018 is £8,054.55 and the savings account balance as of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 is £1,901.10.
- b. Payments received
  - i. Memorial fee T/L John William Harvey £250.00
  - ii. Memorial fee T/L Peter Tricker additional £45

- c. Payments to hand
  - i. Folley Electrical Services - Streetlight maintenance - £317.16. Payment was proposed by Cllr Todhunter, seconded Cllr Thorpe, all agreed. Cheque number 022157 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe. (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S3; Highways Act 1980, S 301*)
- d. Unpresented cheque: a cheque issued to Battisford Cricket Club in March has not been presented. Following a discussion whether to pursue the matter it was agreed by a narrow majority that the clerk be instructed to make enquiries of the club whether this payment is to be cancelled.
- e. It was agreed that the clerk will send out copies of the budget analysis in advance of the meeting in future.
- f. For the sake of simplicity, and with the full agreement of the clerk, it was agreed that the clerk's salary should be paid annually, as the clerk's tax code changes regularly and so monthly PAYE requirements for just one employee would otherwise pose an unnecessary workload on the council and clerk (*Local Government Act 1972, s. 112*).

## **12. WWI Commemorative beacon**

The chairman has learned that planning permission would be needed for the beacon, and that the cost would be £172. County Councillor Whybrow observed that a block discount may be possible for all parish councils undertaking such a project and she will make the necessary enquiries. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Scarff, seconded by Cllr Todhunter, that the council approve payment of whatever fee be determined (up to £172) in respect of planning permission application. The motion was agreed unanimously (*Local Government Act 1972, s. 137*).

The possibility of a gas fired burner, rather than wood, was discussed and this will be investigated.

Cllr Crooks reported that he had obtained a quotation of £500 plus VAT for the necessary post.

## **13. Data Protection Bill**

Cllr Todhunter invited comments on the paper and draft policy that had been distributed prior to the meeting. It was observed that the regulations do not require a formal data protection policy but it was agreed that by having one in place the council was complying with best practice. Cllr Todhunter PROPOSED that the council adopt the policy and that the clerk (whose agreement had already been given) be appointed Data Protection Officer. This was seconded by Cllr Reynard and approved by all.

**Action: Clerk to incorporate DP policy into standing orders**

## **14. Street Lighting**

The invoice for repairs has been received and agreed per item 11

## **15. Sign Posts Burnt House Farm**

Cllr Thorpe reported that he had contacted the county council regarding the sign posts by Burnt House Farm, as one is on the ground and the other is pointing in the wrong direction. As no help has been provided by the council it was agreed that the clerk write to Philip Waspe, the landowner whose employees moved them in the first place, asking him to assist.

**Action: Clerk to write to Philip Waspe**

## 16. Gilberts Hill Ditch

This was discussed with County Cllr Whybrow and is noted in 6 above.

## 17. Spring Litter Pick

It was agreed to try to organise a litter pick on a date to be confirmed (the initial proposal was Mothers' Day but this is being reconsidered). The clerk will apply for the support offered by the District Council and upon confirmation of the date will speak with James Portway about meeting in the car park of the Tannery.

**Action: Chairman to establish date for litter pick; clerk to contact District Council re supplies and the Tannery for use of the car park.**

## 18. Donation Request

The circular from Neighbourhood Watch in Suffolk requesting a donation of £50 was read out. Following discussion it was agreed that there was no reason to depart from the Council's standard policy of not donating to causes unrelated the specific needs of the village.

## 19. Locality Funding

This was covered under item 6

## 20. Combs Cemetery

The Council considered a request to allow the installation of a bench near to the grave of a loved one. It was noted that the Church does not now allow the installation of any benches in its churchyard and while the cemetery does not have a specific rule in this regard it is best practice not to permit the establishment of a custom whereby individuals can choose the location of benches. It was agreed that the clerk be instructed to respond explaining that the council has no objection to the donation of memorialised benches but that for practical purposes the location must be a matter for the council in light of the overall cemetery plan. Any donated benches must also meet the authority's quality specification.

**Action: Clerk to respond advising that location cannot be chosen but that if it is still a wish to donate a bench details of the council's specifications will be provided.**

## 21. St Mary's Churchyard

David Windle has provided a quote, which is the same as last year. The price is 'worst case' and if the strimming work takes less time than expected the cost will reduce.

Cllr Scarff will seek a tender from Green & Clean (the firm that currently maintains Model Farm) before a decision is made.

**ACTION: - Chairman to obtain a tender from Green & Clean**

## **22. Correspondence**

- a) This year's Information Commission Office fee has been received (£35 due 18 March). Cllr Todhunter enquired if the Council needs to pay this due to the very low level of involvement in data. It was agreed that he make further enquiries and instruct the clerk accordingly.

**Action: Cllr Todhunter to investigate the applicability of the ICO fee to the Council**

## **23. Any other business for inclusion on the next agenda**

1. Despite rumours to the contrary there is no indication that an application has been submitted to demolish the Gardeners' Arms.
2. It has been reported that Park Road is to be closed for five weeks from Jacks Lane to Scotches Corner (no formal documents have yet been received).
3. Cllr Thorpe observed that there appears to be no facility for disabled access at the village hall and it was agreed that the clerk make enquiries in this regard.

**Action: Clerk to write to BVHMC regarding disabled access.**

## **24. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 12 March 2018 at 7.30pm**

The Meeting closed at 10.05 pm.