

Draft until signed

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 11 June 2018 at 7.30pm, Battisford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battisford**

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); C Todhunter (Vice Chairman); T Whitehead (Councillor); D Thorpe (Councillor); J Crooks (Councillor); S Reynard (Councillor).

Attending: Members of the Public, including S Borges, T and D Oates, S Waterer, in respect of item 10 (a) (i).

Absent: A Whybrow (County Councillor); Cllr D Whybrow (District Councillor)

1. Apologies for absence

T Bamber (Clerk)

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr J. Crooks in respect of item 11 (c) (ii)

3. Public Forum

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public and confirmed the meeting would follow the order of the agenda.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 14 May 2018

Minutes for 14 May 2018 were reviewed and signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by Cllr Scarff (Chairman).

5. Matters arising from the minutes

The Chairman had actioned items 18 and 19 from last meeting minutes; he had met with D Windle and both agreed four weeks is too long between cuts in May/June so an extra cut will be undertaken.

6. County Councillor's Report

Cllr A Whybrow was not present.

7. District Councillor's Report

Cllr D Whybrow was not present.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

There was nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

9. Clerk's Report

Nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

10. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration

i. DC/18/02380 – Outline planning application for erection of up to 160 buildings on land to east of Poplar Hill.

The chairman invited comments from the public and these comprised concerns over various aspects including:

- Traffic – with existing traffic including HGVs and the Wattisham base using the road this development would make Poplar Hill a main artery for traffic;
- No consideration to people affected, who had been led to believe the view and area were to remain as currently;
- Poor pre-planning consultation;
- Destruction of landscape;
- This did not form part of the Stowmarket Action Plan;
- People had received no reply to communications to Gladman;
- The parish boundary was being eroded;
- The element of green area would be reduced to the bottom of the field;
- Lack of separation between Stowmarket and Combs;
- The Edgecombe Action Plan mentions “Importance of views, separation, rural feel”
- Parking on Poplar Hill is already a problem without further traffic;
- Access to A14 needs improving to embrace other developments;
- Lack of cut-off date for Gladman consultancy document;

Cllr. Todhunter gave a presentation including various quotes from documents within the Gladman application including:

- a) MSDC not meeting targets for building new homes;
- b) traffic plan was selective with its times when and where surveys carried out and these could be contested;
- c) carefully avoided ‘back up’ on Poplar Hill;
- d) Suffolk County Council Development comments include infrastructure not up to further development;
- e) Access was a known black/blind spot.

Cllr Whitehead added that the second access was near Hill Rise and although currently described as for emergency vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists only, this was likely to be revised immediately planning given as had happened with Edgecomb and would cause further chaos through these streets too.

Cllr Thorpe commented it was the worst thing to happen in village in his lifetime.

Cllrs agreed they have been badly let down by MSDC.

Cllr Scarff (Chairman) proposed to object to planning, Cllr Thorpe seconded. All agreed, bar Cllr Crooks who abstained.

It was AGREED that Cllr Todhunter and Cllr Whitehead to liaise for letter to be created and sent. Letter to be forwarded to all those attending including public. Public left meeting at 8.25pm.

b. Decisions received from MSDC

- i. DC/18/010306 – Wilburs View, Tannery Road – Change of use of land from commercial to residential use Class C3. Erection of building to accommodate holiday let, annex and home office. *Planning permission granted subject to conditions.*
Noted

- ii. DC/18/01308 – Combs Parish Council Cemetery – Erection of Commemorative Beacon. *Planning permission granted. Noted*

Action: Cllr Crooks to get quotation for the post for the beacon.

11. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26th May 2018 is £10,158.83 and the savings account balance as of 2nd June 2018 is £1,907.79.
- b. **Payments received**
 - i. Inscription fee (further payment) – T/L Molly Webster - £45.00
 - ii. Interment fee – Albert Robinson - £680.00
 - iii. Interment fee – Roger McDowell - £250.00
- c. **Payments to hand**
 - i. Stowmarket Town Council – Final grass cutting for Churchyard - £120.00 Payment was proposed by Cllr Reynard, seconded Cllr Todhunter, all agreed. Cheque number 022173 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe (*Local Government Act 1972,s.214 (2)*).
 - ii. J E Crooks Ltd – topsoil for burial ground - £54.00 Payment was proposed by Cllr Todhunter, seconded Cllr Reynard, all agreed. Cheque number 022174 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe (*Local Government Act 1972,s.214 (2)*).
- d. **To consider and approve internal audit for the year ending March 2018.**
The internal audit report issued by Suffolk Association of Local Councils, having been previously circulated and reviewed, was discussed. It was PROPOSED by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Thorpe, that the report be accepted and approved, and this was AGREED unanimously.
- e. **To consider and approve Annual Governance Statement for the year ending March 2018**
The Annual Governance Statement, provided to all local councils by PFK Littlejohn LLP (appointed auditors for all councils for this period), having been previously circulated, was considered. In response to a question by Cllr Todhunter it was noted that the clerk had been criticised for failing to ensure a risk assessment had been carried out during the council year. By way of background it was noted that the clerk had explained risk assessments had been carried out in January 2017 and April 2018, so ‘bookending’ the year in question. Furthermore the clerk had clarified with SALC that there were no material issues. Following further discussion it was PROPOSED by Cllr Todhunter, seconded by Cllr Crooks, that the Chairman be authorised to sign the statement on behalf of the council, and this was AGREED unanimously.
- f. **To consider and approve Accounting Statement for the year ending March 2018**
The accounting statement for the year 2017/18, having been previously circulated with supporting documents, was considered. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Todhunter, seconded by Cllr Reynard, that the accounting statement be approved and that the Chairman be authorised to sign the statement on behalf of the Council, and this was AGREED unanimously. It was further AGREED that, to be in compliance with regulations, the clerk be instructed to publicise the availability of the audit documents for 30 days from 29 June.

ACTION: clerk to publicise availability of audit documents.

12. Invitation to work with Battisford Parish Council to produce a Neighbourhood development plan.

The suggestion of working with Battisford Parish Council to develop a neighbourhood plan was discussed. Cllr Todhunter commented that MSDC are likely to be always behind targets. The question was raised if this should include details of numbers of houses including e.g. five bed, rental, bungalows, etc.

It was AGREED that Cllr Scarff (Chairman) will discuss further with C Knock (Chairman, Battisford PC).

It was AGREED that T Bamber (Clerk) be instructed to establish what other villages have completed a Neighbourhood Plan (the current document with this detail is out of date) and to invite someone to present at a subsequent meeting, maybe an officially open meeting or perhaps a separate open event.

In light of this suggestion and the Gladman proposal it was also AGREED that a leaflet be circulated to the parish to draw attention to the above and the number of developments currently planned, etc.

Action: - *Chairman to discuss Neighbourhood plan with Battisford PC Chairman*
- *Clerk to seek examples of other nearby neighbourhood plans*
- *Clerk to arrange distribution of leaflet to residents advising potential production of a Neighbourhood Plan*

13. Street Lighting

There is further work to be done in order to complete the project to renew the village street lights and provided the budget remains available this will be completed during the year.

Action: *Clerk to verify budget and inform councillors accordingly.*

14. Combs Cemetery

Following a complaint from a family that a grave that had been covered with clippings, this has been cleared. With the exception of this there is nothing further to report.

15. St Mary's Churchyard

Cutting of the grass has been started under the new contract (see also comment under item (5) above.

16. Correspondence

None received other than that discussed.

17. Any other business

The Chairman reported that a caravan had been dumped on Burnthouse Lane. This has been reported to MSDC for collection.

Cllr Reynard drew attention to an article in the SALC newsletter regarding funds that are available for mental help and loneliness.

18. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 9 July 2018 - starting at 7.30pm.

The Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.