

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 14 October 2019 at 7.10pm, Battisford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battisford

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); D Thorpe (Councillor); J Crooks (Councillor); V Whitehead (Councillor); T Chaplin (Councillor); I Walker (Councillor); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor)(arrived 9.00 PM);T Bamber (Clerk).

Attending: Ian Clark

1. Apologies for absence

C Todhunter (Vice Chairman)(with council's prior agreement)

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr T Chaplin (11c(iii))

3. Public Forum

The Chairman welcomed Ian Clark, who explained he was there to introduce himself as the newly-appointed Community Champion for the village. This is an initiative from Suffolk Community Foundation, a grant-giving organization that is seeking to ensure there are local conduits between charitable causes and themselves as potential funders. On behalf of the organisation Mr Clark invited councillors to contact him should they be aware of suitable opportunities to help.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 9 September 2019

Minutes for 9 September 2019 were reviewed and were signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by the Chairman.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

The Chairman reported that the Speed Indicator Sign was now operational and that the relevant land owner had confirmed he was happy for a further pole to be located beside his land on Poplar Hill between the Slough and Scotches Corner. The Clerk was instructed to write to Highways for approval of this additional site.

Action: Clerk to write to Highways

6. County Councillor's Report

Cllr Oakes reported that the Highways department had not yet responded to her regarding road closed signs.

The Chairman mentioned that several areas of Mill Lane were sunken, in the areas above the sewer pipe and Cllr Oakes confirmed she will report this (again) to Highways.

7. District Councillor's Report

The Councillor arrived later but his monthly report is attached as appendix 1. He invited suggestions for use of his locality funds.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

No matters not raised elsewhere.

9. Clerk's Report

No matters not raised elsewhere.

10. Planning

- a. Applications received for consideration
 - i. DC/19/04378 Moats Tye Hall – *change of use from Office (B1(a)) to dwellinghouse Class(C3)* no objection
 - ii. DC/19/04493 The Gardeners Arms, Moats Tye – *Application for Lawful Development*. The Council agreed that the clerk should emphasise to the Planning Authority its concern that the only remaining pub in the village seems likely to be lost forever. The Clerk is also to draw attention to the fact that this issue has been the subject of correspondence with the LPA in the past.

- b. Decisions received from MSDC
 - i. None received

11. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26 September 2019 was £14,237.43 and the savings account balance as of 2 October 2019 was £1,914.07.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.

b. Payments received

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| i. T/L Gary West –inscription | - | £ 100.00 |
| ii. MSDC – Precept | - | £4,000.00 |

c. Payments to hand

- i. EON September energy bill - £76.39 (Direct debit) Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. Community Action Suffolk – Insurance - £260.68. Payment was agreed by all councillors. Cheque number 22213 was written, and signed by Cllrs Thorpe and Scarff. (*Local Government Act 1972, s111*).
- iii. T Chaplin - newsletter expenses (printing) - £94.50. Payment was agreed by all councillors. Cheque number 22214 was written, and signed by Cllrs Thorpe and Scarff. (*Local Government Act 1972, s 142*).

12. Good Neighbour Scheme

The Clerk reported that it had become clear there was more work (bureaucracy) involved in this than was first anticipated, and that the villager who had initiated the discussion had now opted to withdraw from an active role. Cllr Oakes mentioned that a similar exercise had been carried out in Needham Market a while ago, and 20 or so volunteers had been trained, checked and insured, only to find after a few weeks that there was no take-up or evidence of need. The Chairman observed that in his experience people in Combs were already helping those in need and suggested that this venture may be left in abeyance until and unless it was noted that there were any villagers who may benefit from it.

13. Litter – McDonalds etc.

Cllr Crooks expressed disappointment that, from its first day of opening, the village (particularly Tannery Road) has been blighted with extra litter. While recognising that McDonalds itself is not antisocial, Cllr Oakes announced that she would write to them. It was suggested that McDonalds may be interested in sponsoring the next village litter pick.

14. Bin Collecting Moats Tye

Cllr Chaplin reported that since the change in refuse collection routes, Tile Row has been missed several times, even though the bin lorry has driven along the other two sides of the triangle it forms. Furthermore, it has been noted that all rubbish, from recycling bins and those destined for landfill/incineration is being mixed in the same truck. The clerk was instructed to write to MSDC (copy to the district councillor) enquiring when and how this will be rectified.

Action: Clerk to write to MSDC Waste Services, copy to Cllr Matthissen.

15. Local Policing

Cllr Walker expressed concern that Combs was not at the forefront of policing in the area. In particular he noted that a recent police community engagement exercise held at Battsford Village Hall had not involved Combs. Cllr Walker had acquired contact details for the Stowmarket Engagement officer, and it was agreed that the clerk be instructed to invite Mr Henriksen to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to invite Police Engagement Officer to the next meeting

16. Street Lights

Cllr Thorpe reported that the streetlight opposite Rose Cottage on Tannery Road had been knocked and that he is contacting Folley Electrical Services to ensure this is made safe. A repair quotation will be obtained and the clerk is to initiate a claim under the insurance policy.

The lamp outside Queens Close is also being investigated for erratic behaviour.

Action: Clerk to commence insurance claim.

17. Parish Newsletter and Survey

Cllr Chaplin reported that she would be looking into initiating some of the special interest groups identified in the recent survey.

18. Grants & Fundraising and ideas for Projects

Cllr Whitehead provided further details of the proposed Oaks Meadow project, for a sustainable village hall and outside activities area in the meadow on Bildeston Road. Councillors were receptive to the idea and agreed that Desiree Shelley, who is the landowner and main proponent of the project, be invited to discuss this at the next council meeting.

Action: Clerk to invite Desiree Shelley to the next meeting

19. Diseased Tree, Webbs Close

The Clerk has now received a response from Landlink Ltd., the owners of the land around Webbs Close. They seem to think the council was seeking permission to deal with the diseased tree so the clerk will be writing to remind them that it is their responsibility.

Action: Clerk to write to owners

20. Combs Cemetery

The Clerk reported that a review of past correspondence showed several grave owners had been contacted previously about inappropriate ornamentation on the graves, and it was suggested that a letter be sent to all recorded owners to remind them of the regulations, to ask them to remove items that are not permitted, and to tell them that, as the regulations authorise the Council to remove inappropriate ornaments, no further letters will be sent.

It was AGREED that a letter in the form proposed as a draft be sent to all recorded grave owners, and that the cost of around 230 second class stamps be approved for the purpose.

Action: clerk to write to owners of graves.

21. St Mary's Churchyard

Table tomb: The Clerk has submitted a request to the diocese for permission to dismantle the tomb and is currently awaiting a reply.

Cllr Thorpe has confirmed that he will tidy the Commonwealth War Grave

22. Any other business – potentially for inclusion on the next agenda

The Chairman reported that some of the power lines in Bildeston Road have been replaced, and put on newer poles. It would seem that the old poles are still being used by BT, with the result that in some places there are twice as many poles as necessary along the road. The Clerk was instructed to write to both the power company and BT to try to ensure both firms use the same new poles and remove the old ones.

Cllrs Walker and Thorpe have between them addressed some pavement issues near the letter box by Jacks Lane, following a report from a resident. The clerk is to write to Highways about the poor condition of the pavement outside Acorns, Park Road.

The clerk was also asked to draw up a draft letter to be posted/handed to residents whose hedges are intruding onto the pavement or roadway..

Action: Clerk to:

- **write to (National Power and BT)**
- **Report pavement issue**
- **Draft a letter for residents.**

23. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 11 November 2019 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Appendix 1 – District Councillor Report

October 2019 District Councillor Report: John Matthissen

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| Climate change, biodiversity and trees | Despite agreeing to a Climate Emergency and action on biodiversity, the Conservative Administration voted down a motion taking practical steps towards this. It was aimed at supporting Parish Tree Wardens, planting more trees and ensuring planning applications took this into consideration. |
| Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) | As from 1 st September, Government has changed how CIL is reported and spent. (CIL is the levy that developers pay towards infrastructure. In our area it is set at £115/m ² and Parishes get to keep 15% of all CIL paid in the Parish.) The District Council is reviewing the list that details what CIL can be spent on. It is worth noting that parishes have wider discretion in spending their share. Money available from CIL is publicly available https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-and-section-106/developer-contributions-database/ |
| Draft Joint Local Plan Consultation | The consultation on the draft Joint Local Plan has ended. It is expected that it will take some months for the officers to get through all the responses. The next stage will be a technical consultation (Regulation 19) before being examined in public by an inspector with a view to the Plan becoming “made” in Summer/Autumn 2020. We note, however, that this timetable has changed a lot since the first draft and has been put back by many months. |
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| Citizens Advice | We have expressed our concern about the future funding of Citizens Advice. A Task and Finish group of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which is chaired by Keith Welham is about to commence a review of how the service is delivered across Suffolk, with the aim of securing longer term funding. |
| Treasury Management Report | Full council discussed the Half Year Treasury Management Report at last month’s meeting. To March 2019 CIFCO Ltd (the investment company set up by Mid Suffolk and Babergh Councils) made a loss of £4.6M (split evenly across both councils). This is mainly due to the downward valuation of the company’s investment properties. MSDC also made a loss of £1.5 on the Gateway 14 project; this is still in the early stages of development and has yet to start generating income. |
| Locality Budget | A reminder that each District Councillor has £7,350 to allocate to community projects and groups in their ward. We would like to receive applications or expressions of interest as soon as possible. Any community group wishing to apply for funding should contact one of us. The minimum award amount is £250 and any grant awarded must meet one of the Council’s strategic objectives. |
| Development of Needham Lake | MSDC has plans to create a new visitor centre at Needham Lakes. There is to be a public consultation event at Needham Market |

Visitor Facilities

Community Centre on 10th October. It is hoped that the new facility will encourage more visitors to the Lake, and the council are seeking tenders for the management of the facility.

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