

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 10 February 2020 at 7.30pm, Battsford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battsford

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

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

Attending: one member of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

T Chaplin (Councillor); C Todhunter (Vice Chairman)(with council's prior agreement); J Matthissen (District Councillor)

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest

3. Public Forum

Mr James Portway introduced himself as owner of Combs Tannery, and outlined the plans he had to develop the site. To address a business need it was proposed to apply for permission to erect a 20,000 square foot commercial building behind, from the perspective of Tannery Road, the existing building. To help fund this, it is proposed to seek planning permission to build around eight houses on the land they own on the other side of Tannery Road, to the South of the pond. Councillors clarified a few aspects and thanked Mr Portway for taking the trouble to inform the Council prior to submitting the applications. It is likely that both applications will be lodged within the next month.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 13 January 2020

Minutes for 13 January 2020 were reviewed and were signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by the Chairman.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

No matters arising that are not dealt with elsewhere.

6. County Councillor's Report

Cllr Oakes referred the councillors to her report (appendix i) and kindly left it to them to read in their own time. Highways have now replied to a much-chased request regarding the sunken road near the old site of the Gardener's Arms. Apparently this will be added to the planned patching programme for 2021.

7. District Councillor's Report

Cllr Matthissen was unable to attend but his report has been circulated and will appear as appendix ii.

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/19/04832/3 - 4 Ropers Row, Park Road – *replacement of front porch (planning and Listed consent)*. This was received too late for the agenda but councillors noted that the only changes from the application previously considered were to address the objections made by Heritage and consequently they agreed their original position was unchanged – no objection but a request that workmen’s and contractors’ vehicles be prevented from parking on and blocking Park Road .
- b. Decisions received from MSDC
 - i. DC/20/00020 –Peppits, 3 Tile Row, Moats Tye – erection of two and single storey extension – *Planning Permission granted*. Noted
 - ii. DC/19/05572 – Land adjacent to 2 Oak Thatch, Park Road - outline application for erection of 2 dwellings – *approved*. Noted
 - iii. DC/19/05573 – Land adjacent to Model Farm House, Park Road - outline application for erection of 2 dwellings – *refused*. Noted

11. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 27 January 2020 was £13,902.03 and the savings account balance as of 2 February 2020 was £1,914.07.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.

b. Payments received

- i. T/L P Platt – Interment £530
- ii. T/L V Moore – Interment £200 (further £50 to follow)
- iii. T/L L Gillespie – Interment £250

c. Payments to hand

- i. EON October energy bill - £76.39 (Direct debit) Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)

d. Donation Requests

Requests for donations had been received from Age UK and SARS. It was agreed that a sub-committee be set up to assess these and future requests in light of the formal charitable donations policy and to report back.

e. Information Commissioners Office

Councillors **Agreed** to set up a direct debit mandate for this and future renewals of the Data Protection registration and this was duly signed by cllrs Whitehead and Scarff.

Action: Clerk to submit direct debit mandate.

12. High Kerb, Jack’s Lane/Park Road

Cllr Walker will monitor the difficulty residents experience with this and will report back.

13. Flooding, Combs Lane

Cllr Oakes advised that the main problem was failure of land owners to maintain ditches on their land. Apparently despite riparian legislation placing clear responsibility on property owners such breaches are not being policed by Highways. This had been raised by Cllr Chaplin and so may be carried over.

14. Recycling Workshop

This had been raised by Cllr Chaplin so will be held over.

15. Litter Pick

Cllr Crooks confirmed the litter pick will take place on Sunday 8th March, meeting at the Tannery car park, courtesy of Mr James Portway..

Action: Clerk to arrange collection of collected litter from the drive of Cllr Crooks on Monday 9th March.

16. Street Lights

Cllr Thorpe reported that the street light outside Queens Close has been repaired. There have been no complaints regarding lights being on or off this month.

The clerk reported that the insurers have confirmed payment in full, less the excess, for the damaged lamp in Tannery Road.

In light of the increasing age of the lamps it was agreed that the clerk should include an annual sinking fund provision in future budgets.

17. Parish Newsletter

The deadline for the Spring newsletter is the end of February.

18. Grants & Fundraising

Councillor Oakes confirmed that she would be awarding £2500 to the Parish Council towards the purchase of a second speed indicator device. Councillors thanked her for this and **Agreed** that the clerk should order one of the same specification as before.

Action: Clerk to order SID

19. Diseased Tree, Webbs Close

The Clerk reported that a local firm was in the process of providing a quotation for removing the tree.

20. Overgrown Hedges

The Chairman reported that most of the houses contacted have done a very good job of tidying their hedges. The clerk was provided with details of further houses in the village that should be given a similar letter.

Action: Clerk to deliver the letters.

21. Combs Cemetery

Cllr Thorpe reported that he has cleared away Christmas wreaths etc. It was agreed that he and the clerk would leave it a few weeks before visiting to clear away vases and ornaments that are in breach of cemetery regulations.

The clerk reported that some funeral directors had commented that Combs cemetery fees were lower than average. It was **Agreed** that the clerk review and provide a report for discussion at the next meeting.

22. St Mary's Churchyard

Table tomb: as noted last month permission has been granted to dismantle the tomb as proposed. Cllrs Scarff and Thorpe will attend to this once the ground is firmer.

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

- Cllr Crooks reported that the triangle on Gilberts Hill has been damaged by commercial vehicles cutting across it. It was Agreed that a tree be planted on the corner in the hope this will discourage further damage.
- Cllr Crooks also mentioned the fact that delivery drivers tend to speed up on leaving the 30 MPH area going towards Little London from Moats Tye. While it is a quiet, dead end lane there are families living there and it may be helpful to see if the speed limit area could be extended to cover the remainder of the lane. Cllr Oakes informed the council that it is notoriously difficult to get a speed limit area changed but she will make enquiries.
- The Clerk reported that the Ramblers' Association was arranging a working party to clear FP32 (footpath from Jacks Lane to Combs Lane, where a fallen tree has blocked it).

24. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 9 March 2020 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Appendix i – County Councillor’s Report

County Councillor report – February 2020

A Statement from Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, on the Ipswich Northern Route

Since Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) first took the decision to pursue development of an Ipswich Northern Route (INR), I have been clear, as leader of Suffolk County Council (SCC), that the project must be fully collaborative and follow the processes set out by the Department for Transport (DfT) if it is to enjoy any realistic chance of success.

This week, SCC met our commitment to SPSL to undertake phase one of the DfT process, by publishing the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). This concluded that there was a good economic business case to continue the project to phase two. However, alongside the SOBC, SCC outlined five issues which would need to be considered if SCC were to recommend whether the project proceeds. These issues are:

- The way Government allocates funding for road projects has evolved since 2016. There is now a need to provide not only a compelling business case for the road itself, but also to show how the road will enable or support additional housing growth. This need for additional housing falls under the remit of district and borough councils. SCC, as the transport authority for Suffolk, will need clarity on the willingness and ability of the district and borough councils to deliver such growth, beyond that already committed to in their respective local plans.
- The need for widespread political support, both at a national and local level, to proceed to the next stage, factoring in the levels of public support and any local changes to the political landscape as a result of the May 2019 and December 2019 elections.
- A petition received from the STOP! campaign, which is against the project, is scheduled to be responded to by a meeting of Suffolk County Council on 13 February 2020.
- Serious consideration of the climate emergency declared in 2019.
- Acceptance that the scheme has no realistic chance of succeeding in gaining government funding as a “road only scheme”.

So far, we have received responses from Ipswich Borough Council, East Suffolk Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council. We have also received a response from Tom Hunt, MP for Ipswich. Dr Dan Poulter, MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, and Dr Therese Coffey, MP for Suffolk Coastal, have also made their views on the Ipswich Northern Route clear prior to publication of the SOBC this week.

This is a complex issue for everyone in Suffolk. The SOBC suggests there is a strong business case to proceed. However, pursuing a project of this scale and financial size clearly needs widespread political support as, without this, Government is unlikely to even support the next phase when £3m is needed to complete the Full Business Case.

Furthermore, without agreement of the district and borough councils to build the additional houses necessary to secure government funding (above those already agreed within their local plans), I do not believe this project can proceed with any degree of success.

Therefore, after careful consideration of the above and the wider political views, along with the very real concerns of families and businesses located close to any of the proposed routes, and all the responses received, it has become increasingly clear that, as Leader of Suffolk County Council, I am now in a position to recommend to my Cabinet that the Ipswich Northern Route should not proceed to the next phase of development.

To bring the uncertainty surrounding this issue to an end for all concerned, I will be bringing a paper to a meeting of Cabinet on 25 February where the final decision will be made, which we must do as the highways' authority for Suffolk. To avoid pre-empting my own Cabinet's decision, I do not intend to offer further commentary beyond this statement.

New permit scheme aims to address roadwork disruption

On 28 January, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet gave the go-ahead for a new permit scheme that they hope will reduce delays on Suffolk's roads caused by roadworks.

The introduction of a roadworks permit scheme for the county's roads will give Suffolk County Council's Network Assurance Team enhanced powers to place conditions on work carried out by utility companies and other organisations, including Suffolk Highways.

At present, public utilities simply need to inform Suffolk County Council of the dates when they are planning to do their works. Under a permit scheme, they would have to ask for permission and the council can either approve, refuse or amend their request as they see fit.

Applicants would also have to pay a fee when applying for a permit to do roadworks. The cost will vary depending on the duration of the proposed work, the strategic importance of the affected road, and the time of day the work is due to take place. If roadworks occur outside of the peak congestion periods, the fee could be reduced.

The permit scheme is used successfully elsewhere in the country and there is typically a reduction in congestion on the network.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:

"A permit scheme will provide more power to control proposed roadworks. It places responsibility on the applicant to better plan their work. I hope a permit scheme could reduce the impact of that work on the road network and our residents.

"A permit scheme should result in less disruption and less time that vehicles spend in traffic/delays. Consequently, there should also be a reduction in fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

"According to the Department for Transport, other counties that have run a permit scheme have seen a reduction in disruption and so we will endeavour to ensure those who live, work and visit our county also benefit."

There will be a cost to the local authority to administer the permit scheme because they will need to recruit additional staff and amend existing software to cater for permits. However, the costs associated with the additional work involved will be recovered through the fee income associated with the scheme, making it cost neutral.

The permit scheme will be in place from 1 April 2020.

Don't let your waste be fly tipped

Suffolk residents are being urged to dispose of their waste safely to protect the countryside as part of a new fly-tipping campaign.

Last year in Suffolk, there were 3,496 incidents of fly-tipping reported to councils, which costs taxpayers and landowners hundreds of thousands of pounds to clear. Incidents ranged in size from a few bags of household waste left on street corners, up to tipper loads of industrial waste discarded in Suffolk's countryside.

The SCRAP fly-tipping campaign is aimed at residents and businesses whose waste is sometimes fly-tipped by unlicensed operators. It aims to remind people that they should only allow licensed waste carriers to take waste away for them.

The fly-tipping campaign brings together all of Suffolk's councils, along with the Environment Agency, Suffolk Constabulary, the Forestry Commission, the Broads Authority and rural business groups the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Country Land and Business Association (CLA).

Peter Stevens, chair of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, said: "Fly-tipping is a blight on our local environment; a source of pollution; a potential danger to public health and a hazard to wildlife. This campaign will help us to inform householders and others about their duty of care to prevent waste ending up in the wrong place."

Paul West, cabinet member for waste at Suffolk County Council said: "This campaign will raise awareness of the simple steps that members of the public can take to ensure their waste doesn't end up dumped in the corner of a field or on a roadside verge.

"We look forward to working with our partners to tackle fly-tipping."

The Suffolk Waste Partnership says people can avoid an unlimited fine by following the SCRAP code:

- Suspect ALL waste carriers.
- Check with the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506, or on their website, that the provider taking your waste away is licensed.
- Refuse unexpected offers to have waste taken away.
- Ask what will happen to your waste.
- Paperwork should be obtained – get a full receipt.

For more information about fly-tipping and legal ways to get rid of unwanted items, please see www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/fly-tipping

Suffolk Highways has worked in collaboration with Bury St Edmunds Town Council and West Suffolk Council to agree suitable construction methods and timeframes. Businesses have also been engaged with to address their concerns and ensure the works cause minimal disruption to trade.

In an attempt to alleviate parking issues for Zone D permit holders, West Suffolk Council has agreed to allow them to make use of Ram Meadow car park, free of charge.

Date agreed for plans to tackle Suffolk's parking problems

Councils in Suffolk are ramping up activity in order to take on responsibility for local parking management from 6 April 2020.

Parking patrols in Suffolk will soon be managed by district and borough councils, in a bid to improve parking locally and drive down nuisance and unlawful parking in towns and villages across Suffolk.

Traditionally, roadside parking offences were a matter for the Police. However, parking has become a lower priority for them, so Suffolk County Council is transferring this responsibility to local district and borough councils under a process known as civil parking enforcement, or CPE.

Councils already manage public car parks in many towns and villages, so the changes make sense. Suffolk Constabulary is supportive of the move because the transfer of responsibilities will enable them to spend additional time on keeping communities safe and arresting and bringing offenders to justice.

Moving the responsibility from the police to local councils requires that statutory notice is given in Parliament. The parliamentary order was laid on 9 January 2020.

CPE has been running successfully in Ipswich since 2005. Both Ipswich Borough Council and all the district councils have been working collaboratively with Police and Suffolk County Council in the planning stages to ensure a smooth implementation county-wide.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:

"Civil parking enforcement powers will soon sit with our district and borough councils across Suffolk. It is essential in enabling our communities to have closer management of their local parking challenges.

"A lot of residents come to us with concerns that people parking in their towns and villages are becoming more inconsiderate, and something needs to be done about it. We agree, and as a result are committed to seeing these parking issues managed locally to ensure fair and safe parking for all.

"I very much welcome the cross-council collaborative working in order to deliver better parking for residents and those visiting Suffolk. Our colleagues will continue working together to ensure CPE is successfully launched and I look forward to seeing the benefits locally that these changes will bring."

Appendix ii – District Councillor’s Report

District Councillor Report: Parish Council - February 2020

Planning enforcement	There is currently a review of enforcement processing and procedures. The long-term aim is to make the enforcement service swifter, more efficient and transparent, and it is hoped that this will be completed by the end of March. In the meantime it may take a bit longer to respond to and acknowledge reports of alleged planning breaches.
Full Council meeting	There was very little on the agenda for the last full Council meeting on 23 January. The portfolio holders’ reports were published but questions on these was limited to 30 minutes, and in future portfolio holders’ reports will go to Cabinet meetings instead of Full Council meetings. The only other item on the agenda was the adoption of Botesdale and Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan.
Budget	The budget and financial strategy will be agreed at Cabinet meeting on 10 February. It is proposed that there will be a Council Tax increase of 1.66%; equating to a £2.76 per year, 5p per week, increase for a Band D property. Following Cabinet agreement, the budget will be due for approval at Full Council on 27 February. Green group have put forward proposals to make Mid Suffolk more sustainable - from housing to transport to biodiversity - and Rachel Eburne has been negotiating with the Conservative Administration to include some of these proposals in the budget.
Climate Change	The Climate Change working group have had some meetings where different aspects are discussed but, disappointingly, few actions or recommendations have so far been brought forward.
Stowmarket Regal	Stowmarket Town Council and MSDC are funding a project to add 2 screens and refurbish the Regal in Stowmarket. Work is due to begin in March and should be complete by the end of the year. During this time some films will be shown at the John Peel Centre. <i>‘Regal on the Road’</i>
Civil Parking Enforcement	Preparations are continuing for the transfer of parking enforcement from the Police to Suffolk County Council. Enforcement within our area will be managed by West Suffolk District Council, and further east by Ipswich Borough. There are concerns about funding the scheme and the enforcement of obstructive and dangerous parking. If enforcement against yellow line and obstructive parking on pavements is successful, drivers may park in more dangerous locations. District staff will have no remit to deal with dangerous parking; responsibility will still rest with the police and they may not be able to give this a high priority.
Suffolk Police	The police will increase by 4.69% their element of Council Tax - equivalent to £9.99 per Band D property for the year or 19p per week. Suffolk Police are to recruit 54 extra police officers by March 2021; all costs associated with this are being met by a Central Government grant of £6million.
Citizens Advice funding	Mid Suffolk District Council’s cabinet has agreed to continue granting Citizens Advice £86,700 for each of the next three years, but overall CA face a sharply increasing workload but reduced funding overall.
Tree For Life	The scheme reaches its second year with even greater take up, last year one in five of every child born claimed their free tree, this year we have reached more than one in four. Babergh District Council has now rolled out the scheme, and East Suffolk Council has plans to follow suit.