

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 8 February 2021 at 7.30pm, via Zoom remote meetings

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); V Whitehead (Councillor); T Chaplin (Councillor); I Waiker (Councillor); S Ottewell (councillor); T Betchley (councillor); T Kitson (councillor); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor) (joined at 8:10); T Bamber (Clerk).

1. Apologies for absence

none

2. Declarations of interest/ lobbying

Cllr T Chaplin in respect of 9(a) (i) (non-pecuniary interest - neighbour).

3. Public Forum

There were no members of public present.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 11 January 2021

Minutes for 11 January 2021 were reviewed and it was agreed that they were to be signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by the Chairman.

Action: Clerk to arrange signature

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters not covered below

6. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor's report had been circulated and is attached as appendix 1. Cllr Oakes reported that after ensuring that the faded speed limit sign in the slough was reported on the highway reporting tool, she had heard that Highways had considered the sign was not mandatory. This opinion will be corrected.

A question was raised regarding parking in Webb's Close. Due to the width of the road, delivery vans and refuse trucks have had to mount the pavement to get past (legitimately) parked cars. Cllr Kitson will send photos and further details to Cllr Oakes, who kindly agreed to look into this.

Action: Cllr Kitson to send details to county councillor

7. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr. Matthissen had not yet arrived as he had another parish council's meeting to attend first, but this item is placed here for the sake of good order. The councillor's report (attached here as appendix 2) had been circulated and noted by councillors. Upon his arrival the chairman expressed the council's gratitude to him for having arranged collection of Christmas trees from the end of Mill Lane.

Cllr Matthissen reported that, because of the snow and ice, recycling rounds had been suspended and this would probably continue for the rest of the week.



8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

The chairman had nothing to report that was not covered elsewhere.

9. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

- i. DC/21/00155 – High View, Little London – variance of conditions.
The chairman set out the background to this application. All councillors approved of the style being proposed and it was agreed that the council's support of the application should be recorded.

Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website

It had been noted by some residents that a mobile home had been located beside a farm in Little London, for use by the land owner's cousin. Councillors instructed the clerk to ascertain if planning permission would be necessary for this.

Action: clerk to clarify applicable rules

b. Decisions received from MSDC

- i. DC/20/05327 Snowdrop Cottage, Park Road – variation of conditions. *Granted*. The councillors noted with disappointment that all the comments made by interested parties had been ignored by the planning office.

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26 January 2021 was £32,046.04 and the savings account balance as of 30 January 2021 was £1,920.79.

The budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.

b. Payments received

- i. None received

c. Payments to hand

- i. EON Electricity for streetlights (direct debit) -£ 76.39). Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. T Bamber – reimbursement of payment made for planning application in respect of Oaks Meadow (as voted for in December meeting) - £142.00. Approved by all councillors. Cheque number 22249 was written, and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed (*Open Spaces Act 1906, ss 9 &10/ Local Government Act 1972 s 133*)
- iii. SALC – training: New Councillor (Cllr Walker) £120.00 and planning webinar £60.00, total £180.00. Approved by all councillors. Cheque number 22250 was written, and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s 111*)

Action: Clerk to arrange signatures and send

11. Newsletter

It was accepted that, due to the current lockdown, it would be inappropriate to deliver newsletters to all homes in the village and it was agreed that the next newsletter would be scheduled for late March, subject of course to any developments .



12. Combs Website and Domain Name

The clerk had learned that while the cost of hosting the village website was now met by the parish council, there is a separate charge for maintaining the domain name, combsvillage.org.uk. The charge is approximately £10 per year (price is in US\$) and has so far been paid by Ian Clark, who has prepaid for two years more.

It was AGREED that henceforth the parish council will meet the cost of maintaining the domain name and the clerk will handle this.

Action: Clerk to inform Mr. Clark and ascertain procedure.

13. SID Data

The chairman will locate the hardware containing the application for the SID and pass it to the clerk so that it may be installed on the council laptop and used to download data once lockdown is over.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Kitson once lockdown is over

14. Notice Board

Some of the notice boards around the village are in need of renovation. The chairman plans to assess these presently.

Action: Chair to review and propose a repair plan.

15. Infrastructure Plan

Cllr Walker had circulated information relating to infrastructure plans and a sample from a nearby village. All councillors confirmed their interest and all would be willing to sit on a sub-committee to take this forward. While it was noted that the last formal parish plan was produced in 2011, the survey last year (details of which Cllr Chaplin will send to the newer councillors) affirms the areas of interest and concerns within the village and Cllr Walker will circulate a draft questionnaire that will focus on the issues that an infrastructure plan might address.

Action: Cllr Walker to circulate a draft infrastructure questionnaire.

16. Cycle Paths

The Chairman reported he had no update yet.

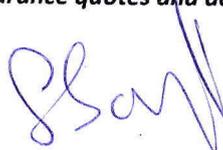
17. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Whitehead provided an update on the project.

- a. The steering committee has received two insurance quotations and she will pass these to the clerk for circulation for discussion and decision at the next meeting;
- b. A five year plan has been produced but this currently has no figures in it. Once it is more detailed Cllr Whitehead will circulate this.

It was noted that, once the capital cost of the project had been met, there would be annual running costs to meet and councillors were interested to know how it was planned that these would be covered. Cllr Whitehead explained that the items currently planned would be unlikely to incur running costs but of course this aspect would be addressed as the project develops further.

Action: Cllr Whitehead to circulate insurance quotes and detailed five year plan



18. Webb's Close Parking

This item had been discussed with Cllr Oakes in item 6

19. Salting the roads around Gilbert's Hill

It had been noted that during recent icy weather, conditions on Tannery Road had been very difficult. It was recalled that there had been a grit bin on Gilbert's Hill some time ago but that had been removed and nobody was certain of the reasons for this.

Cllr Oakes said she would ascertain the rules regarding grit bins, and any associated liability that the parish council may incur by having them, and pass this to the clerk.

Action: Cllr Oakes to send grit bin details to the clerk; clerk to investigate.

20. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- Cllr Walker noted that the play equipment in Battsford playing field was in need of repair and observed that the area was enjoyed by children from many surrounding villages. He suggested that it would be a decent gesture to see if Combs can help. All agreed this was a good idea and Cllr Whitehead will raise this with the chair of Battsford when she next sees him'

Action: Cllr Whitehead to speak with Battsford Parish Council

- It has been noted that large rocks have been placed on the verge of several houses in Moats Tye, presumably with the intention of protecting residents' lawns. However as the road is only one car wide, and furthermore the first metre of verge is not the property of the householder, the question was asked if this is either reasonable or legitimate. Cllr Oakes invited councillors to send her photographs by way of example and she will make enquiries.

Action: Councillors to send photos of obstructed verges to Cllr Oakes

21. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 8 March 2021 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 9.43 pm





February 2021 Monthly Parish Newsletter

Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes,

business support and schools’ guidance.

Keep up to date on the latest guidance on Covid-19 from central government here:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus



Coronavirus rapid testing centre opens at University of Suffolk

On the 13 January A new Covid-19 rapid testing centre has opened at University of Suffolk for people without symptoms in Suffolk.

The centre, based at the former Profiles gym at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich, provides lateral flow testing, with results delivered in under an hour.

The tests (LFTs) are most useful at identifying people who are infectious on the day of the test but not showing symptoms.

The centre has been opened by Suffolk County Council (SCC) in partnership with the University of Suffolk. Testing is for anyone working in the town who cannot work from home.

Also targeted are employers and organisations in Ipswich whose staff cannot work from home. They are being urged to block-book their workforce in for tests.

However, people showing symptoms of Covid-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has, should not visit the centre – instead they should ring 119 or go to the NHS website to book a test at one of the 12 symptomatic testing sites in Suffolk.

The centre began operating on January 4 testing teachers, university students, school pupils and support staff.

The test involves taking a swab from the throat and nose to see whether coronavirus is present in the body. The person tested will then receive a text message giving the result within an hour.

Anyone giving a:

- **positive test** will be told to self-isolate and advised on what to do next, including the need for further testing.
- **negative result** is invited back to carry out a further test after a few days. This is in case levels of the virus in a person at the earlier test were too low to be detected at that time.

The testing is being run by contractors Commisceo on behalf of SCC through government funding.

New vehicle banners encourage Suffolk to be food and freezer savvy

On January 18, it was announced that Waste and recycling vehicles in Suffolk will help to deliver the food savvy message and cut food waste across the county.

Over 50,000 tonnes of food is thrown away in Suffolk every year, and an estimated average of £730 of edible food goes to waste per household each year.

The fleet of 24 vehicles display the new banners, which have three simple messages with easy advice for people to follow.

- Bananas – one of the most commonly wasted food items across the UK. You can bake with them or blend them rather than throw them in the bin.
- Bread – another of the most commonly wasted food items. You can freeze or toast bread to prevent it from being wasted.
- Freezing - food storage is key to preventing food waste. Check the dates on your food and remember to freeze it when it is nearly out of date. Bread, bananas, cheese and even milk can all be frozen!

Suffolk 2020 fund project embraces love of the great outdoors – Discovering Suffolk

On January 20, as part of the Suffolk 2020 fund, the Discovering Suffolk project was launched.

The aim of the project is to raise further awareness of the range of great walking routes, areas of interest and variety of landscapes that form Suffolk's beautiful countryside through public rights of way and points of access.

Given the experiences many people have faced over the last year living through the pandemic, it is recognised that exercise and wellbeing is a fundamental element in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and whilst we continue to live within Government guidelines at present, Suffolk's countryside offers a freely accessible means for many of us to experience nature and stay healthy.

The key element of the Discovering Suffolk project is the development of a smartphone app alongside a range of supporting QR codes fixed to rights of way signposts located along different routes to promote walking, cycling and exploring Suffolk's countryside.

Discovering Suffolk builds on our changing behaviours when visiting the countryside, as people become ever more interested in local exploration and taking short walks and cycling exercises during the pandemic. The project will continue to promote the Discover Suffolk website as new content, information and advice continues to be added to the current offer, promoting walking routes and cycle rides through local communities. The project seeks to actively engage new audiences who are not aware of the options available on their doorstep or have perhaps only begun to explore the local countryside beyond their neighbourhood.

Work will shortly start on developing the Discovering Suffolk App and setting the sites for the QR code points around the county. After development, the new, free App will provide access to the full range of Discover Suffolk outdoor guides with over 100 walks across the county. The App and QR codes will include audio, video, imagery and fun activities to further enhance people's enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of Suffolk's natural and built environment.

New recycling campaign aims to get Suffolk's recycling right

On the 25th January, a new campaign was launched in Suffolk to help people get their recycling right.

Each year more than 10,000 tonnes (about 20%) of recycling from Suffolk homes is rejected due to the wrong items being placed in Suffolk's recycling bins. This is the same as 1 in 5 lorries full of recycling going to waste. The cost of sorting and disposing this spoiled recycling is more than £1million.

The new awareness campaign, launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership is called Together We Can Get Our Recycling Right. It includes a leaflet to all households with the do's and don'ts of what can easily be recycled at home, plus tips on how to recycle other items not accepted in home recycling bins. The campaign will be supported on the Suffolk Recycling website and social media channels.

There are three simple steps that householders can take to improve the quality of their recycling. These include:

- Put glass in a bottle bank, not in your wheelie bin
- No bagged items. Keep your recycling empty, clean and dry
- Keep all food out of your recycling bin. Put any food you cannot eat or compost in your rubbish bin.

You can recycle the following items in your recycling bin at home: plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, metal cans, aerosols and foil and paper, card and books. The worst offending items incorrectly found in recycling bins include glass, black sacks, food waste, cartons and nappies.

Appendix 2 – District Councillor’s Report

District Councillor Report for Onehouse Ward – February 2021

Housing acquisitions and building	MSDC has purchased 97 homes on new housing developments in Haughley, Woolpit and Stowmarket. These new homes form some of the S106 affordable homes contributions from these new developments. These will help to redress the loss of council houses which have been sold under the Right to Buy scheme. Work is currently underway building more council houses on both the Needham Middle School site and the former Council office site in Needham Market.
Waste services	A new awareness campaign to get Suffolk’s recycling right has been launched. A leaflet explaining what can and can’t go into recycling bins will be delivered to all homes, and this will be followed up with social media and press articles. Artwork is to be put on the waste tankers. More details can be found at https://www.babergh.gov.uk/news/new-recycling-campaign-aims-to-get-suffolks-recycling-right/ . There has been renewed concern about tetra-paks but these were no longer acceptable in green bin since 2018. I have asked about possible “bring” sites (like bottle banks) as tetra-pak volumes are growing. Brown bin collections have been temporarily paused during lockdown to ensure that the Council delivers more critical services.
COVID vaccination programme	A Suffolk wide webinar was held with officials from Health services for Councillors across the county to ask questions about the vaccination programme. Information is also available for members of the public. More information can be found at https://sneevaccine.org.uk/
Strategic Asset Management Plan	MSDC has approved and adopted a Strategic Asset Management Plan for 2020-2025. This is a document outlining how the Council uses and manages all the land and buildings to support the strategic priorities. The main objectives include generation of income, asset management and development of long term housing procurement. This plan covers the Council assets, not CIFCO’s.
Treasury Management	The half yearly Treasury Management report was discussed at Full Council in January. There was full compliance with the CIPFA code of practice. With other Green councillors I am trying to eliminate investment in fossil fuel companies.
CIFCO Ltd	Despite Government announcing that such borrowing would cease, MSDC with Babergh has bought a business centre in Coventry for £5.5m. The Conservative administration concede they will have to stop this after 31 st March as any property purchase for income would mean no further recourse to Public Works Loan Board to finance affordable house building. It is alarming that they appear to be rushing through further purchases to spend the full £100m.
Anti-Semitism Declaration	Mid Suffolk Council has agreed to adopt the definition of antisemitism as set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and pledged to combat anti-Jewish racism, in line with the Government ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 th January.

<p>Planning – Union Road Deferred DC/20/01110 (146 houses)</p>	<p>Deferral reasons: “Insufficient information submitted to demonstrate there would not be a significant landscape impact on rural character and locality to allow the principle of 146 dwellings.- That officers investigate and negotiate whether any further affordable homes could be secured.” It should be noted that a motion to approve was defeated 4/3 after the Chair had left the meeting. Some planning decisions (and even disputed minutes) are being decided on the Chair’s casting vote. Voting is now often on party lines.</p>
<p>Planning – Buxhall Lodge Appeal DC/18/04491</p>	<p>MSDC refused this application for 28 houses in April 2020, for 3 reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outside settlement boundary and likely to be dependent on private cars (absence of services in village) 2. Suburban and inappropriate, not reflecting local character 3. Insufficient information regarding surface water strategy <p>The appeal inspectorate has decided on written representations rather than a hearing. All submissions from the original committee have been sent to the inspector. Any new views or evidence (e.g. absence of a bus service, postal service?) must be submitted to arrive by 2/3/21. Full details on MSDC web site.</p>

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