

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 13 September 2021 at 7.30pm, Battsford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battsford

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); I Walker (Vice Chairman); S Ottewell (councillor); T Betchley (councillor); T Kitson (councillor); T Bamber (Clerk).

Attending: no members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

V Whitehead (Councillor) (by prior agreement); T Chaplin (Councillor) (by prior agreement); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor)

2. Declarations of interest/ lobbying

Cllr Betchley in respect of item 17 – non-pecuniary

3. Public Forum

No members of the public were present

4. Minutes of meetings held on Monday 12 and Wednesday 21 July 2021

Minutes for Monday 12 and Wednesday 21 July 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.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

6. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor had apologised for non-attendance but her report had been circulated and is attached as appendix 1.

7. District Councillor's Report

The District Councillor had apologised for non- attendance but his report had been circulated and is attached as appendix 2.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

No matters not raised elsewhere

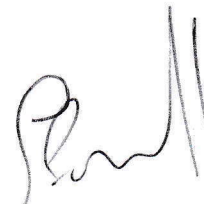
9. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

i. DC/21/04699 – 2 Model Farm – Installation of woodburner - application for listed building consent

Councillors agreed to support this application

Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website



- b. Decisions received from MSDC
 - i. DC/21/03107– Land adjacent to 2 Oak Thatch, Park Road Combs *Granted. Noted*
 - ii. DC/21/03376 – Wilburs View, Tannery Rd *Granted. Noted*
 - iii. DC/21/03388 – 12 Model Farm *granted. Noted*
 - iv. DC/21/03190 – Corner Cottage, Jack’s Lane *granted. Noted*

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 2 September 2021 was £35,511.58 and the savings account balance was £1,922.71.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted. The clerk confirmed that the Section 137 expenditure had been zero so far this year.

- b. **Payments received**

- i. (none)

- c. **Payments to hand**

- i. EON Electricity for streetlights (direct debit) July and August -£73.93 & £76.39). Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*).
 - ii. SALC- Developing Conversations Course -£30.00. Approved by all councillors .Cheque number 22271 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s 111*)
 - iii. Community Action Suffolk (insurance renewal) £276.64.Approved by all councillors .Cheque number 22272 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s 142*).
 - iv. PKF Littlejohn – external audit - £240.00. Approved by all councillors .Cheque number 22273 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s 111*).
 - v. A Eno-Daynes (Village sign refurbishment) - £158.00. Approved by all councillors. Cheque number 22274 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s 111/144*).

Action: Clerk to send cheques

11. Training

The clerk reported that SALC still had no plans to provide face to face new councillor training sessions; it was agreed to wait as it seems likely that guidance will change in the near future.

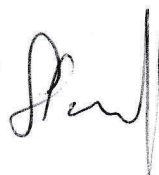
CLlr Betchley had attended a SALC course: “Developing a two way conversation with your community”. The main benefit to Combs was to learn that the council is already doing everything well

Action: Clerk to organise training as available.

12. Village Sign

The clerk had circulated a draft of a proposed new village sign, kindly drawn up by a resident. All agreed it was an excellent design and the clerk was instructed to ask the resident to proceed with the refurbishment. It was also agreed that the costs incurred so far for paint (£158) be reimbursed.

Action: Clerk to contact resident – and deliver cheque for paint costs.



13. Newsletter

Councillors discussed items for the next newsletter, and agreed the delivery date should be early October. In light of comments made, the clerk will verify the current bus timetable and send it to Cllr Ottewell for inclusion.

Action: Clerk to send bus timetable to Cllr Ottewell.

14. PIIP (Infrastructure Plan)

Cllr Walker will shortly circulate the latest outline of possible projects for review by councillors and Cllr Kitson kindly did not resist the suggestion that he draw up a formal document in the professional style for which he has become so appreciated.

15. Parish Walks

Cllr Kitson provided an update, and he and Cllr Ottewell, having learned how to edit the village website, have drafted new additions to the footpath section.

16. Cycle Paths

The Chairman reported he had no update yet. To refresh memories he explained that the proposed path would require the assent of the landowners affected. To optimise the attitude of those landowners the chairman is awaiting the ideal opportunity.

17. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Betchley reported that Ms Desiree Shelley, chair of trustees of the Oaks Meadow project, had just sent out an update and he will circulate this to councillors.

18. Meeting Venue

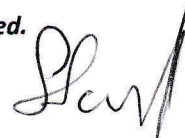
Councillors are planning to visit the cricket club to review the facilities and verify its suitability for future meetings.

Action: Clerk to arrange visit to cricket club.

19. Quiet Lanes

The clerk had circulated an email from Battsford Parish Council explaining that the action to designate Burnt House Lane as a quiet lane is near to completion. As previously advised, for the part of the lane that is in Combs to be included, the approval of the parish council is required. While there was some concern as to the effect of such designation, councillors agreed to approve the action in the interests of good neighbourliness.

**Action: Clerk to inform Battsford Parish Council
Clerk to send a copy of the minutes to Battsford PC once signed.**



20. Cemetery

Councillors noted with thanks that Mr Thorpe had levelled the uneven graves previously reported. There was nothing further to report.

21. Notice Board use

Following earlier discussions about demands on space within the notice boards it was agreed that, as activity was presently low, the clerk be empowered to use his discretion over prioritising use. He will put clear signs informing residents that the key is held by the clerk.

Action: Clerk to put up signs inviting residents to contact the clerk for access.

22. Festival of Suffolk

The chairman will speak with the Oaks Meadow committee regarding the festival of Suffolk, due to run from May to October 2022.

23. Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The chair confirmed that the beacon should be lit for this event and he will liaise with the parochial church council. Cllr Walker observed that there would need to be a risk assessment and, observing the convention that no good observation goes unpunished, it was agreed that Cllr Walker draft a formal risk assessment.


**Action: Chair to contact Parochial Church Council
Cllr Walker to draw up risk assessment**

24. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- Following an enquiry, the chairman confirmed he would arrange for the scrap wood (from the roof renewal) behind the bus shelter to be tidied away.

25. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 11th October 2021 at 7.30pm in Battisford Village Hall.

The Meeting closed at 9.12 pm





Appendix 1 – County Councillor’s Report

Statement on behalf of all Suffolk councils regarding Afghan refugees

Statement on behalf of all Suffolk councils.

“On Wednesday 18 August, the Government announced its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees. Whilst the full details are yet to be confirmed, it is crystal clear that the Government needs local authorities everywhere to step up and support this national effort.

“All councils in Suffolk are committed to this cause. We have already helped a small number of Afghan interpreters and their families to resettle in Suffolk, in addition to ongoing work to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and other refugees entering the UK. In the coming days and weeks, the district, borough and county councils will continue working with the Government to do what we can to aid vulnerable refugees.

“Times like this call for acts of humanity. Suffolk will play its part.”

Make one simple change today in a bid to tackle climate change

COP26 will bring into focus the need for us all to reduce our carbon emissions in order to slow climate change

A column by Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council.

In early November, the eyes of the world will be on the UK. Glasgow, to be exact.

This is when the COP26 conference takes places.


COP26 is the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties. It will be a momentous event and I expect some significant decisions and agreements to be made, as the world continues to combat climate change and reduce its carbon emissions.

But how will an international event affect each of us in Suffolk? Although COP26 will be an event attended by Presidents and Prime Ministers, it will impact us all.

COP26 will bring into focus the need for us all to reduce our carbon emissions in order to slow climate change. This has been the message for a long time of course, but we must all be changing our behaviours and choosing to use less energy.

And I do mean all of us.





Global industry, national corporations and governments must lead the way to enable us all to make greener choices. But slowing climate change is everyone's responsibility, we each have a duty to tackle this situation and play our part.

Suffolk County Council has been addressing climate change challenge for many years, but we know that the organisation must be doing more and doing it more quickly. This is agreed across all Suffolk's authorities which is why, together, we have recently approved the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan - a document to keep us accountable in our ambition to make Suffolk a carbon neutral county by 2030.

I'm proud of the work Suffolk County Council has been doing for several years now. We are planting trees and hedgerows. We are supporting businesses with advice and funding to reduce their carbon emissions. We are running schemes to reduce the cost of solar panels on homes. We are providing the infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling. We are providing greener ways to travel. We are installing electric vehicle charging points in rural areas. There is much, much more besides, but we are working hard to develop this work.

The www.greensuffolk.org website will be updated soon with these Suffolk events. I'd recommend it as a great place to start finding out more.

Suffolk targets devolution talks with Government

It was announced on August 17th that public sector leaders in Suffolk say they welcome early discussions with Ministers about a possible devolution deal for Suffolk.

In a joint letter sent to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, the leaders of all of Suffolk's six councils and Police and Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore, said:

"Suffolk has already demonstrated its credibility as a place where Government will find strong and ambitious delivery partners.

"The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) group...has a track record of effective partnership working. These robust relationships enable more innovative ways of working, including exploring opportunities for devolution as part of a County Deal.

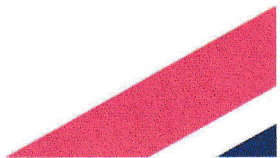
"Suffolk...is an ideal place to help Government demonstrate how levelling up can work in diverse geographies. Suffolk has a strong offer to make to Government and we would welcome early discussions with MHCLG Ministers to explore proposals for a County Deal ahead of the White Paper being published."

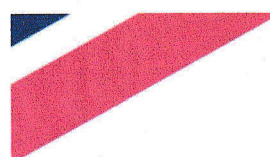
The Government wrote to councils in July 2021, setting out its ambition to make available to county areas the kind of devolved decision-making powers and public funding currently enjoyed by larger cities and urban areas. It's part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda and will see a White Paper published in the coming months.

Councillor Suzie Morley, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council and chairman of the SPSL, said:

"Suffolk is known for working well together. Whether it's partners joining forces during the COVID-19 pandemic, pooling public funding for the greater good or developing shared strategic priorities, collaboration is what we're good at.

"From inclusive economic growth and community safety to climate change and strong communities, we're focused on collaborative actions that deliver the biggest and best additional benefits for our communities.





“We believe this makes Suffolk a strong contender to work with the Government as part of its Levelling Up agenda.”

It is understood that Suffolk’s approach involving all councils is rare among other expressions of interest being submitted to Government, a point that has been welcomed by the county’s seven MPs.

In an accompanying letter to Robert Jenrick MP, they said:

“We are...writing to wholeheartedly support the vision set out, collectively, by Suffolk County Council and all of Suffolk’s District and Borough Councils. We believe this unity of purpose behind taking the next step in devolution through a County Deal cannot just help persuade you that we should be in the vanguard of the next stage of devolution, but also that Suffolk can use such a deal to deliver better services locally.

“This is not a recent or short-lived view. For many years local leaders in Suffolk at all levels have worked more closely together and have put forward constructive propositions for further improvements. We hope to work with you on your forthcoming White Paper to show that strong local leadership and strengthened local governance can deliver better.”

Read a copy of [the letter sent to Robert Jenrick MP](#) (PDF, 207KB), as well the [supportive letter from Suffolk’s seven MPs](#) (PDF, 205KB).

Suffolk homeowners can cut carbon emissions as successful solar panel buying scheme returns


On August 25th it was announced that Suffolk residents will come together to invest in renewables through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage.

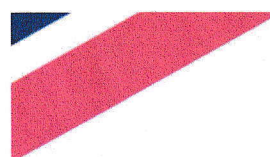
Solar Together Suffolk, in conjunction with Suffolk County Council, helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers.

This innovative scheme builds on three years of the highly successful Solar Together programme run in Suffolk. Since 2018, the scheme has installed solar panel systems in 1,028 households across the county. On average, homeowners have saved 33% on installation costs, £263 on energy bills in year one, and stopped harmful carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.

Suffolk residents have until 27 September 2021 to register their interest, for free and with no obligation, to join the group-buying scheme to have solar panels installed at their home. Not only does Solar Together Suffolk offer solar panels, but also optional battery storage and retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels.

How does it work?

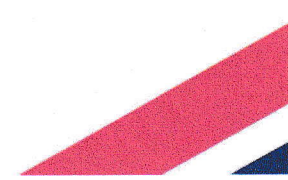
- Until 27 September: Householders can register to become part of the group, for free and without obligation, at www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk
 - 28 September: Pre-vetted UK solar PV installers participate in an auction. They can offer competitive pricing as the volume and geographic concentration makes it possible for them to realise greater efficiencies, which they pass on with lower prices for installations.
 - After the auction, registered households will receive a personal recommendation which is specific to the details they submitted in their registration.
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- If they choose to accept their recommendation, the specifics of their installation will be confirmed with a technical survey after which a date can be set for the installation of their solar PV system.
 - Telephone and email helpdesks are on-hand throughout the whole process which, together with information sessions, will allow households to make an informed decision in a safe and hassle-free environment.

Suffolk County Council brings [Solar Together Suffolk](#) to residents as part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, on behalf of all of Suffolk's local authorities. This is in partnership with independent experts iChoosr to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible. Across the UK, iChoosr has delivered almost 5,000 installations to date and over 80,000 tonnes of avoided lifetime carbon emissions.

Marie-Louise Abretti, iChoosr UK Solar Manager added:

“The Solar Together group-buying scheme offers a simple process and the reassurance of a trusted and vetted installer for residents of Suffolk who are looking for ways to reduce their carbon emissions, save on energy bills and increase their independence from the grid.”



Appendix 2 – District Councillor’s Report

District Councillor Report: Onehouse Ward - September 2021

<p>Land off Wash Lane, Gt Finborough (beside river)</p>	<p>You will probably have seen in the parish magazines and press that MSDC bought this land to safeguard the ecology corridor along the river Ratt. This is something I had sought since last December, and ensure there will not be attempts at speculative attempts to gain planning permission for houses, which had been in prospect. (relevant for Onehouse residents also)</p>
<p>Afghan refugees</p>	<p>Following the Government announcement of its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees, councils in Suffolk, including MSDC, have expressed their commitment to assist. We have already helped a small number of Afghan interpreters and their families to resettle in Suffolk. There will be ongoing work to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and other refugees entering the UK.</p>
<p>Devolution</p>	<p>Together with other councils in Suffolk, MSDC have written to the Secretary of State responsible for local government to indicate a desire to discuss a possible devolution deal for Suffolk. It is important that any deal should avoid an extra tier of government and extra costs to our council tax benefits.</p>
<p>Gateway14</p>	<p>The development proposals have been granted planning permission with a number of conditions. One of these is a financial commitment towards community and recreational facilities.</p>
<p>Development of Needham Market former HQ site</p>	<p>This development of homes for private sale is progressing well and show homes can now be viewed by potential buyers. Development will include a small supermarket and affordable homes for shared ownership and for social rent.</p>
<p>Covid and MSDC Council meetings</p>	<p>There are no signs that the Government will renew the legislation to enable virtual or hybrid meetings. Committee meetings are being held in the Council Chamber and it is anticipated that the full Council meeting on 23 September will be held in the Chamber. Staff are continuing to work from home but, when necessary, access to workspace in Endeavour House can be booked by staff and councillors.</p>
<p>Taxi licensing – no encouragement given to switch to electric vehicles</p>	<p>The Conservative administration rejected the opportunity to improve Mid Suffolk’s environmental credentials when they put forward a new taxi licensing policy at the Council’s recent Licensing Committee. This despite the fact that no new diesel or petrol car can be purchased after 2030, the ten year policy included no provisions to encourage cab drivers to move to electric vehicles and contained none of the incentives other councils use. The policy, without mention of any efforts to reduce emissions, was approved on the Chair’s casting vote.</p>
<p>Cycling and</p>	<p>Babergh and MSDC have set up a Joint Task and Finish Group to prepare a Local</p>

Walking	Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) to prioritise locations across the Districts for new or improved cycle and pedestrian provision.
Solar Carport in Stowmarket	MSDC has let a contract for the construction of a solar carport in the Stowmarket Leisure Centre car park; works are expected to begin shortly and be complete by spring 2022. More than half of the cost is being met from the Government's Getting Building Fund.
Compost Giveaway	The date for collection of free compost from Mill Meadow, Needham Lake has been changed and will now be Sunday 19 September from 9.00 to 12.00.
Planning	There are an exceptional number of applications awaiting decision at present, and I have notes and comments on these according to village and any concerns
Locality Awards	There is still funding from the annual locality awards. Amounts of £250 or more are available to local community groups and organisations. Please encourage groups in the village to contact me for an application form or telephone for further information and help in applying.

John Matthissen

councillor@matthissen.net

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