

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 11 October 2021 at 7.30pm, Battsford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battsford

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); S Ottewell (councillor); T Betchley (councillor); T Kitson (councillor); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor); T Bamber (Clerk).

Attending: One member of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

V Whitehead (Councillor) (by prior agreement); T Chaplin (Councillor) (by prior agreement); I Walker (Vice Chairman);

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying

Cllr Betchley in respect of item 18 – non-pecuniary

3. Public Forum

Ms D Shelley attended to update the council on the Oaks Meadow project

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 13 September 2021

Minutes for Monday 13 September 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 circulated her report and it is attached as appendix 1. She confirmed to Cllr Ottewell that the request for footpath posts had been put forward but that it may take time.

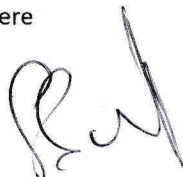
The Chairman expressed concern that, while Highways usually give due notice of road closures, and generally arrange logical diversions, the same could not be said of Anglia Water. Cllr Oakes explained that those kind of closures were usually the consequence of an emergency with the result that organisation might not be as good as it could be. The chairman gave an example of insufficient signage resulting in two articulated lorries meeting head to head in Mill Lane.

7. District Councillor's Report

The District Councillor went through the points in his previously circulated report. This is attached as appendix 2.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

There were no matters not raised elsewhere



9. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

- i. DC/21/04984 – Land South of Little London - application for change of use

Councillors agreed to support this application

- ii. DC/21/05315 & 6 – America Cottage – erection of extensions (planning and 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/21/02217– Fir Tree Farm – erection of small industrial unit - *Granted*. Noted

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 2 October 2021 was £40,185.55 and the savings account balance was unchanged at £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. Precept – second instalment £4,500.00
- ii. Burial ground income £ 955.00

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 (clerk) – postage stamps: £15.84 . Approved by all councillors .Cheque number 22275 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s 111*)
- iii. Community Action Suffolk (Website hosting):£42.00 . Approved by all councillors .Cheque number 22276 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s 142*)

Action: Clerk to send cheques

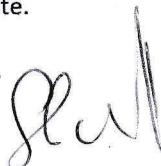
d. Earmarked Reserves

The clerk reported that guidance on council finances was that no more than a year's income should comprise 'free' or unallocated reserves. In light of CIL funds and also a reduction in outgoings over the last year or so, the amount of unallocated cash in the account is higher than this guideline. It was AGREED that £12,000 of council funds be earmarked for the upcoming PIIP work that is being discussed.

11. Training

The clerk reported that there was still no sign that SALC had plans to provide face to face new councillor training sessions: he will continue to monitor the website.

Action: Clerk to organise training as available.



12. Village Sign

The clerk reported that work was progressing and that the resident who has kindly volunteered to do this needs more paint. It was AGREED that this be reimbursed.

13. Newsletter

Councillors discussed the draft of the next newsletter, and agreed the proposed layout and content (the chair will add a brief note on hare-coursing to alert people following the recent activity). All expressed appreciation of the excellent work done by Cllr Ottewell, made all the more impressive by the fact that the task is still new to her. The newsletter should be ready for collection from the printers in the next day or two.

14. PIIP (Infrastructure Plan)

In Cllr Walker's absence Cllr Kitson outlined the draft document he had drawn up, based on the committee's discussions. All appreciated the quality of the work. Cllr Kitson will work with Cllr Walker on the development of this over the next few weeks.

15. Parish Walks

Cllr Kitson reported that two new walks had been added to the village website.

16. Quiet Lanes

Councillors noted that Battsford Parish Council were progressing the establishment of Burnt House Lane as a quiet lane. There is an article about these lanes in the latest newsletter to elicit any further views from residents.

17. Cycle Paths

The Chairman reported he had no update yet.

18. Oaks Meadow

Ms Desiree Shelley, chair of trustees of the Oaks Meadow project, kindly provided councillors with an update:

- The eco toilet will be installed this coming weekend;
- A gap has been cut in the hedge for pedestrian access and Mr Bellamy will be building a bridge, with a gate;
- The committee will be putting out a survey to canvass views on the desirability of a village hall;
- The project has been recognised as a Healing Wood which, while good news in its own right, also means the project will benefit from further funding as a result of this;
- A landscape designer is preparing to draw up plans for a reflective space;
- An 'Acorn Day' is planned for the first Sunday in November, when families will be given acorns to take home and nurture before returning to plant in the meadow;
- A change of use application is being drawn up to permit a gazebo and play area;
- The Committee is still waiting to hear from Viridor, who are considering a grant request: approval of this should result in a cascade of grants from other bodies;
- The first AGM of the committee will be held at Battsford Village Hall on 1st December;
- The meadow will be used in the Festival of Suffolk celebrations, on 21st June 2022, a significant feature of which will be a medicine wheel garden.

Councillors expressed their admiration of all the work being done in connection with this project.



19. Meeting Venue

Several Councillors reported on their visit to the cricket club and recommended that it be used for future meetings. The club have confirmed that the council would have exclusive use of the hall during meetings and that the bar would be closed. They also agreed to match the current hire cost (£20/meeting)

Action: Clerk to book meetings from January 2022 and update Battsford Village Hall Committee

20. Bus Shelter

In response to an enquiry from a resident, the chairman confirmed that the new roof on the bus shelter will be given a coat of protective oil in the next few months.

21. Cemetery

Councillors noted the good quality of the bench recently installed in the cemetery. The clerk was instructed to invite the lady who requested it to make a donation of £50 every 10 years towards maintenance.

Action: Clerk to contact relative

The clerk reported that the current areas for burial are becoming full and soon the next planned zones will begin to be used. It should be noted that at some time there will be a need for the lane to be extended.

22. Festival of Suffolk

The chairman noted with thanks that the Oaks Meadow Project will be arranging some events for this occasion.

23. Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The chair confirmed that the beacon should be lit for this event and the clerk was instructed to complete the formal registration process.

Action: Clerk to register beacon

24. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- The clerk had received an enquiry from the organisers of Barclif magazine, who were concerned that the council's usual financial contribution of £100/year may cease. For the avoidance of doubt councillors confirmed that there was no plan to change that arrangement.

Action: Clerk to contact Barclif

25. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 8th November 2021 at 7.30pm in Battsford Village Hall.

The Meeting closed at 9.00 pm



Appendix 1 – County Councillor’s Report

Suffolk’s first ‘healing woods’ locations announced.

On September 6th, four locations were announced by Suffolk County Council as ‘healing woods and spaces’.

They will offer people better access to nature and provide a positive legacy to the pandemic.

The healing woods and spaces will be located in:

- Bury St Edmunds
- Combs and Little Finborough
- Eye
- Hopton

The council’s healing woods project connects with the motion unanimously passed by the county’s councillors earlier this year, to commit to developing mental health support in Suffolk, in response to the impacts of the pandemic.

Research, such as that recently published by the University of Essex with The Green Light Trust, demonstrated that access to woodlands and green space can significantly improve people’s wellbeing.

The four sites will develop unused spaces and existing green areas, to make them more accessible and offer dedicated places for peaceful reflection and a positive focus.

“I’m really grateful to the parish councils, local councillors, and volunteers for all they have done to make these projects a reality - demonstrating the fantastic community ethos we have here in Suffolk.

“The inspiration for healing woods was as a memorial to those we have lost during the pandemic. These spaces will offer that opportunity for reflection, whilst also showing that nature is accessible to everyone and our mental health can benefit from being in touch with these outdoor spaces.

“Thank you to everyone who has contacted us with suggestions for sites. We’re still hoping to create more sites, and would very much welcome suggestions for Ipswich, East Suffolk, and anywhere else in the county that may be interested. Not every location can be suitable, but we will look into every site, and I hope to be able to announce more soon.”

If you would like to propose a suitable site which could be developed as healing woods or spaces, email HealingWoods@suffolk.gov.uk.

Showcasing Suffolk’s environmental achievements as the UK hosts COP26

On September 8th Suffolk County Council launched Creating the Greenest County Awards 2021.

Creating the Greenest County is now more important and more relevant than ever - going green, reducing carbon and protecting biodiversity are choices we must all be making.

The United Nations COP26 event in November will rightly focus on the international agreements that need to be in place, and the 2021 Creating the Greenest County Awards will bring this huge issue into a Suffolk focus and give us encouragement and inspiration to make changes to how we live our lives and secure a better future.

As Suffolk works hard towards its net zero carbon 2030 target, the Awards provide an excellent opportunity for individuals, businesses, communities, schools and voluntary organisations to be celebrated for the environmental work they do to combat climate change, or simply for improving the area where they live.



Nominations for the Creating the Greenest County Awards are now open and close on Thursday 14 October 2021. Nominations can be submitted online at greensuffolk.org/awards.

This year's categories will include biodiversity and landscape, business, community, schools and waste and recycling, and we will be recognising our county's green heroes. Many individuals have taken it on themselves to lead the way in making change, voluntary organisations have formed to help transform their local communities and businesses are taking their environmental responsibilities even more seriously.

Since its inception in 2007, Creating the Greenest County has seen Solar PV generation becoming mainstream without government subsidy, the world's largest wind farm operating from our coast and virtually no waste going to landfill. 500 businesses have been accredited and over 900 supported to develop carbon reduction plans and the county is embracing the move towards electric vehicles.

Work begins to replace streetlights in Suffolk and save energy in the County

On September 13th, Suffolk County Council and Bouygues Energies & Services (Bouygues E&S) have started work replacing 43,400 street lighting lanterns in Suffolk with LED lanterns.

The picture shows the team installing some of the first lanterns on Bergamot Close, Red Lodge on Friday, 10th September.

SCC and Bouygues E&S joined forces to create a flagship partnership with the aim of reducing energy, minimising light pollution, bringing down ongoing maintenance costs for the Authority and providing the best value to residents. SCC expects to reduce its annual electricity costs on these assets by around 76 percent, saving more than 1.7 million pounds a year.

The upgrade of the lighting system will include a further rollout of SCC's central management system which will allow lights to be switched on or off and dim individual or groups of lights. This smart technology will increase the control the Authority has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs. The system will also automatically flag any lights that are not working which reduces the need for night-time inspections.

The Street Lighting LED Upgrade contract commenced in May 2021 and the scope of works includes:

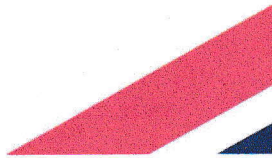
- Survey
- Design to latest British and European Standards
- Supply and installation of new LED Street Lighting with wireless control system
- Removal of existing luminaires
- Updating inventory
- Verification.

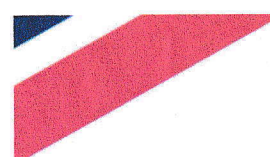
All roles are being advertised locally to Suffolk and social value activities undertaken throughout the period of the contract will include volunteering days, tree planting and presentations to local school children.

Youth Focus Suffolk puts young people at the heart

On September 13th, it was announced by Suffolk County Council that 18 youth projects from across the county have been awarded a share of just under £240,000.

This is in response to the gaps faced after Covid-19 for activities and services for young people.





Almost 2.5 times over-subscribed, the Youth Intervention Fund, hosted by Suffolk Community Foundation, attracted an array of bids and has successfully granted both rural and urban projects from Lowestoft to Newmarket, Hadleigh to Eye.

It is expected that an additional 1,900 young people will benefit from these activities offered through the voluntary and community sector over the next 12 months and the schemes include performing arts to increase confidence, mentoring programmes to support mental health, forest schools and construction skills.

HRH The Duke of Gloucester officially opens The Hold

His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester has officially opened The Hold, a new archives and heritage centre on Ipswich's Waterfront.

The Duke was given a tour of the £20million building, a partnership between Suffolk County Council and the University of Suffolk, which is home to more than nine centuries of history safely preserved by Suffolk Archives.

His Royal Highness was greeted by Suffolk's Lord Lieutenant, Clare, Countess of Euston, as well as a line-up of civic guests, and was then shown round by Kate Chantry, Strategic Manager of Suffolk Archives.

During the visit The Duke met Tim Greenacre, Chief Operating Officer at the University of Suffolk, Dr Harvey Osborne, Course Leader for BA (Hons) History and students, and saw the state-of-the-art teaching facilities including a 200-seat auditorium and seminar rooms.

Lord Lieutenant, Clare, Countess of Euston then gave a short history of the Suffolk Medal, including showing a replica which is on display in the building's main street.

Representatives from local history groups were introduced to The Duke in the John Blatchly Local Studies Library, named in honour of the esteemed local educator, author and historian.

The Duke was shown treasures from the Suffolk Archives collections spanning 900 years of Suffolk's history, including the oldest document - a Charter of King Henry I granting churches and property to the monks of Eye Priory from around 1119 - and the newest contemporary collections of Black Lives Matter protest placards.

His Royal Highness also met representatives from organisations which contributed to The Hold, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund which awarded nearly £11million to make the project possible, as well as those involved in the design and construction of the building.

To complete the visit to The Hold, His Royal Highness unveiled a plaque to declare the building officially open and signed a book which will be added to the archive as a record of the visit.

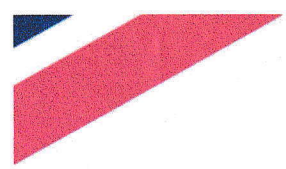
Now that The Hold is officially open, appointments can be booked to view printed local studies materials in the John Blatchly Local Studies Library or archives in the Searchroom. Visit www.suffolkarchives.co.uk for more information or to make a booking.

New Suffolk Recycling Centres online booking system improvements to deliver greater customer experience

On September 20th it was announced that Suffolk County Council has developed a new, more user-friendly booking system which enables residents to book slots for recycling.


For bookings from 27 September, people can view all available time slots in real time, to see which booking slots are free at any given moment. The system allows you to book up to seven days in advance. If circumstances change, you can easily cancel your slot up to one hour beforehand or equally, you can click to amend your booking if required.





The system is also able to advise customers on which sites accept specific materials, such as plasterboard to ensure the correct type of booking is made to save customers' time, and it can also be used to share real time messages with customers, for example if any site needs to close due to adverse weather or emergency situations. The new booking system is connected to automated numberplate recognition to allow for a trial of automatic entry gates.

Customer survey results show overwhelming support for the use of a booking system and the Council has gathered feedback from customers and site staff on how the booking system can be further improved, which have shaped the design of this new system. Through the use of bookings the council can avoid the frustration of long queues at peak times and increase the overall throughput and efficiency of the service for residents.



Appendix 2 – District Councillor’s Report

District Councillor Report: Onehouse Ward - October 2021

MSDC Council meeting	<p>The full Council meeting was on 23rd September with a very full agenda due to the cancellation of the July meeting. Items included: a No Casino motion (passed), senior staff pay review (withdrawn) CIFCO business plan (noted) changes to Neighbourhood Plan procedures, wellbeing strategy. Wwildlife friendly streetlighting motion and a motion on proposed voter ID were not heard as meeting adjourned after 4.5 hours. To be resumed Monday 18th oct.</p> <p>The senior staff pay review was withdrawn after Babergh District Council voted against it two days earlier. The proposal was to significantly increase senior staff pay without also recommending increases for the majority of staff.</p>
Council: No Casino policy	<p>At the meeting, Councillors defeated the Administration motion which was asking <i>not</i> to have a “No Casino” policy. The majority wanted to have a No Casino policy meaning we do not welcome casinos in Mid Suffolk, giving certainty to developers and residents.</p>
Council: CIFCO	<p>The business plan for CIFCO, the Council’s investment arm, was discussed. The commercial property portfolio is from an investment of £100 million by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils in which each council had £5 million equity. This equity is now at zero although expected to improve over the next 10 years. There is currently a book value of £83 million on this portfolio. The business plan was approved by a margin of six votes.</p>
Council: Scrutiny Committee	<p>Our group has asked that the Council’s Scrutiny committee review the health provision in and around Stowmarket – particularly regarding the current shortage of GPs and lack of dental services.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee is currently reviewing rural transport such as access to bus services.</p>
Joint Local Plan examination	<p>The public hearing for the draft Joint Local Plan has re-started and all sessions are online via Microsoft Teams. Various witnesses have been contributing to this including Councillor Andrew Stringer – notably on housing, infrastructure and environment issues. Once complete, a report from the Planning Inspectors will then be provided to the Council for Mid Suffolk to act on.</p>
Locality Awards	<p>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.</p>

John Matthissen

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