

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 11 April 2022 at 7.30pm, Battsford Cricket Club**

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); I Walker (Vice Chairman); S Ottewell (councillor); T Kitson (councillor); T Betchley (councillor); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor) (arrived 8:45 PM); T Bamber (Clerk).

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no absences

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying

Cllr Betchley in respect of Oaks Meadow (item 14)
Cllr Scarff in respect of item 10(c)(iii)

3. Public Forum

No members of the public were present

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 14 March 2022

Minutes for Monday 14 March 2022 were reviewed and it was agreed that they 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 that are not dealt with elsewhere.

6. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor had sent her report and it is attached as appendix 1. Recognising that the councillors would have already read her report she kindly refrained from further comment and invited councillors to contact her with any questions.

Cllr Kitson thanked Cllr Oakes for the help she had given in respect of the footpath light by Webbs Close.

7. District Councillor's Report

The District Councillor had not arrived at this point but his contribution, on arrival after another parish council's meeting, at 8:45 pm, is recorded here for agenda consistency.

The district councillor had provided his report earlier. This is attached as appendix 2.


Cllr Matthissen reported that he would be seeking an extension to the time limit for comments on the forthcoming governance review.

In response to a question he explained that the district council was still considering the possibility of kerbside collections for recycling items such as glass.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

Nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

9. Planning



a. Applications received for consideration:

i. DC/22/00947 – 26 Combs Green – erection of side extension

The Council voted to object to this application as the proposed change would be an overdevelopment. It would be out of keeping with the neighbourhood and disrupt the style of the area.

Furthermore it would be an unfair infringement on the neighbour's right to enjoyment, and would constrain any future building amendments that the neighbour may wish to consider.

ii. DC/22/01611 – 2 Oak Thatch, Park Road – erection of two storey rear extension.

Councillors agreed to support this application

iii. DC/21/05626 – Land West of Tannery Road – re-consultation following amended details

The Council voted to object to this application.

As had been mentioned in the objection to the previous submission, the council supported the original outline application, but subsequent details proposed appear to be an attempt to involve much larger properties, and the council considers that these would be out of keeping with the area and spoil the appearance of what is a visually important site, being on the edge of the village and opposite a grade two listed building.

Compared with the previously proposed details, these plans appear to be going in the right direction but the council considers there should be fewer two storey buildings.

Councillors would also ask that the planning officer consider requiring the developers to use materials more in keeping with the area.

iv. DC/22/01530 – Land at Woodlands Farm, Stowmarket Road, Badley – installation of a solar array

Councillors appreciated being asked to comment on this proposal, which is outside the parish boundary.

They neither support nor object to the application, as there are strong arguments both for and against the idea:

- "Solar panels should go on roofs, not fields";
- Councillors recognise the need to move to renewable energy but in considering the impact on landscape versus benefit to society it could be that there are less visually sensitive locations to install such an array;
- The proposed site is adjacent to the historic Combs Wood and would have an unwelcome effect on both wildlife and the visual impact;
- This would be a loss of agricultural land that would never return;
- Recognising that very few people want necessary infrastructure to be located near their homes, a benefit of this site is that it would not have any impact on local housing;
- As the proposed array would feed into the neighbouring substation, there would be less disruption than is often the case with solar arrays;
- The proposed construction may well constitute overdevelopment.



Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website

- b. Decisions received from MSDC
 - i. DC/22/01020 Land North of Bildeston Road – discharge of conditions - Noted

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – The clerk reported the Current Account balance as of 2 April 2022 was £36,363.38 and the savings account balance was £1,922.90, having increased by the addition of annual interest amounting to 19 pence.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted. The clerk confirmed that the Section 137 expenditure was unchanged at £250 for the year ending 31 March 2022.

There had been no changes to the council's assets over the year and the chairman was authorised to sign the asset statement.

It was noted that there had been an underspend in the budget of £2,888 and it was agreed that this be carried forward to supplement the budget for 2022/23.

- b. **Payments received**
(none)

- c. **Payments to hand**

- i. Npower for streetlights (direct debit): January £86.34 and February £75.16. These were approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. Posters for litter pick: this had been arranged by the chairman and purchased through an account with the printers held by Mrs Scarff. It was agreed that this should be reimbursed and cheque number 22286 was written and signed. (*Local Government Act 1972, s 142*)
- iii. SALC membership renewal: £342.04. Approved by all councillors and cheque number 22287 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s 133*)

Action: Clerk to post cheques

- d. **Annual Governance Statement:** The clerk had circulated the draft of this and all councillors agreed that the clerk be authorised to post it on the village website and submit it to auditors.

Action: Clerk to post on website

- e. **CIL Expenditure return:** This was agreed by all councillors as an accurate summary of the income and expenditure in respect of CIL. The clerk was authorised to post this on the website.

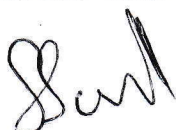
Action: Clerk to post on website

11. Litter Pick

The chairman thanked everybody for their participation and reported that over 15 bags full of litter had been collected..

12. Jubilee Celebrations

The chairman reported that he was still waiting for further information from the church choir regarding their participation in the lighting of the beacon on 2nd June.



13. PIIP Priorities

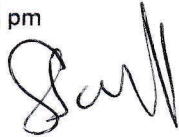
Cllr Walker will circulate his list for consideration and discussion at the next meeting.

14. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- The chairman announced that he would not be standing for the position of chair next month and invited anyone who was willing to consider the position to contact either him or the clerk.
- The chairman drew attention to the fact that the next meeting, the AGM, would be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting, starting at 7:00pm
- Cllr Betchley asked that Oaks Meadow be an agenda item next month as he wished to propose a contribution to their costs in organising the Jubilee Event.
- Cllr Walker asked that the new model code of conduct be made an agenda item next month

15. Date and time of next meeting – Annual General Meeting - Tuesday 10th May at 7.30pm in Battsford and District Cricket Club. This will follow the Annual Parish Meeting, to be held at 7:00PM immediately prior to the AGM.

The Meeting closed at 9.31 pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Walker', is written below the text 'The Meeting closed at 9.31 pm'.

Appendix 1

County Council report – April 2022

Help to reduce the environmental impact of your home

“Low Impact Living in Suffolk” is a new campaign making it easier for Suffolk residents to improve the energy efficiency and lower energy use of their homes.

Our homes are responsible for generating 20% of all UK carbon emissions, primarily through the heating and energy they use. There are many ways to reduce these emissions, with Low Impact Living in Suffolk sharing steps through the www.greensuffolk.org website.

Information is available to demystify the products, technology and grants that help reduce the impact of our homes on the environment and save money on increasing energy bills.

Residents can find out their carbon footprint, look for green energy tariffs and compare new, more sustainable heating systems including ground and air source heat pumps, biomass boilers, heat recovery, hydro and wind electricity.

Detailed information on solar panels, including buying schemes, water heating and electricity sits alongside up to date advice on recycling. Options for improving or replacing windows across properties that vary in age, materials, location, and style are also available.

of homes and budgets, to help plan your own Net Zero journey more easily.”

Low Impact Living in Suffolk is part of Suffolk’s commitment to be a Net Zero county by 2030, which is being delivered through the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. All Suffolk’s local authorities have declared a climate emergency and are working together to meet this ambition.

For more details on how you can plan your journey to Net Zero at home, visit www.greensuffolk.org.

Thousands of trees to be planted as children create one of Suffolk’s first healing woods

Pupils from Howard Community Academy on 15 March planted the first of 3,000 new trees in their school grounds.

The primary school in Bury St Edmunds is creating a healing wood, in response to Suffolk County Council’s ambition to create these reflective spaces around the county. Once planting is complete, the space will be open to the public, as well as the pupils and staff.

The school will also continue to work with Abbeycroft Leisure’s Explore Outdoor team to deliver further educational and wellbeing support programmes for the children at the school.

150 native Suffolk Clayland tree species were planted, along with a 5-foot Oak tree as a symbol of the woods that will grow on the site. This Eastern Claylands species mix was chosen to reflect native woodlands commonly found in Suffolk, comprising of Hornbeam, Wild Cherry, Crab Apple, Birch and Oak, and have been provided by the Woodland Trust.

Campaign urges households to recycle glass properly

Residents across Suffolk are being encouraged to get behind a campaign calling for people to recycle glass properly.

Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) is launching 'Glass – It's Better in The Bank', a 12-week campaign aimed at getting people to stop putting glass in their household recycling bins and to use a bottle bank instead.

Suffolk Waste Partnership comprises the county, district and borough councils working together to improve waste management services.

The SWP campaign runs until 31 May and will feature in adverts on buses, at supermarket billboards and on a van touring part of the county, plus on social media and on radio.

District and borough councils, which collect our rubbish, will be applying bin tags and stickers to recycling bins containing glass.

Crews will have a prompt in the cab to remind them to be on the look-out and recycling bins may not be emptied if they are found to contain glass.

There will be a dedicated web page about the campaign on the [Suffolk Recycling](#) webpage with a set of FAQs and an information leaflet to distribute at events.

Glass is not accepted in household recycling bins as the Materials Recycling Facility at Great Blakenham near Ipswich, where the bins are taken for sorting, is unable to separate glass from other materials.

Glass mistakenly placed in household recycling bins costs the SWP around £500,000 a year. It will **not** be recycled and can spoil other good recycling, especially card and paper.

Glass represents about half of all the wrong material in household recycling bins – other bad eggs include black rubbish sacks, food, nappies, textiles, and cartons – and rejection levels are currently running at around 20%.

Lifesaving fire equipment to help efforts in Ukraine

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has pledged its support for Ukraine by providing much-needed fire engines and kit for those on the frontline.

This forms part of the ongoing National Fire Chiefs Council and Fire Aid initiative, which will see a convoy of donations travel to the war-torn country.

Two surplus engines no longer in service have been donated to Ukraine by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, along with vital equipment including hoses.

In addition to donating kit to Ukraine, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service will host a charity car wash at fire stations across the county between 10am and 2pm on Saturday March 26. Funds raised from this will be shared between the Disasters Emergency Committee, who continue to provide food and shelter to those fleeing Ukraine, and The Fire Fighters Charity, which offers invaluable support to both serving and former fire staff.

Suffolk County Council votes to condemn Putin's invasion of Ukraine and pledges its support for refugees

At a meeting of the County Council held on March 24th, councillors from across the political divide voted in favour of a motion condemning the war in Ukraine.

Suffolk County Council is pledging their full backing for the Ukrainian people and committing to support refugees arriving in Suffolk.

The cross-party motion described the invasion of Ukraine as "immoral and reprehensible" and praised the "enduring bravery" of the Ukrainian people against Russian aggression. The motion also stated that the council in no way associated the actions of the Russian government with individuals of Russian heritage living in Suffolk.

On the issue of refugees the council made clear its willingness to help settle individuals and families fleeing the conflict. Committing itself to support the people of Ukraine and pledged to work with District and Borough Councils along with the Suffolk Resilience Forum, the Voluntary Sector, Suffolk Refugee Support and MPs to ensure all efforts are made to welcome Displaced People coming from Ukraine to Suffolk.

The motion went on to praise the Government's economic response to the conflict but stressed the need for easier and faster routes for refugees wanting to come to this country.

The Homes for Ukraine Scheme [Homes for Ukraine – Homes for Ukraine – Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine \(campaign.gov.uk\)](#) was launched on Monday 14 March to allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the UK to bring Ukrainians to safety – including those with no family ties to the UK.

What we know so far about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme:

- There will be no limit on the number of Ukrainian refugees who can come to the UK for up to three years
- Refugees will be able to work, claim benefits, and access health and education provisions
- The portal for host households to offer accommodation either in their own homes or separate properties is now live and can be accessed at [Homes for Ukraine: register your interest - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Arrivals will be split into two waves, with the first being host households who have already linked in with Ukrainian refugees and will submit a joint application, and the second consisting of refugees who have been matched to host households by charities and community groups
- Host households must commit to offering accommodation for a minimum of six months and will be entitled to claim £350 per month as a 'thank you payment' for up to one year
- Safeguarding checks will need to be carried out on adults in the host households
- Any accommodation offered will be assessed for suitability
- Once a host household stop accommodating the refugees, there will be an expectation for local authorities to help the refugees find alternative accommodation

We are still awaiting further detail on:

- How many refugees will be coming to Suffolk or where they will be living
- How the DBS, or enhanced DBS for any households where there will be children or vulnerable adults will operate
- What the criteria is for suitable accommodation to enable Suffolk's local authorities to undertake the required assessments

We are working with partners to put necessary provisions in place for the above and will update you once we have more information about this.

We are conscious of the plight of Ukrainian refugees and want to do all we can to ensure that their arrival into Suffolk goes as smoothly as possible. To assist with this, we are already considering how best to meet the refugees' health and wellbeing needs, what assistance can be provided with school admissions, and how we can offer support to help with integration and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), particularly if there are lots of people arriving in dispersed, rural locations.

Work currently underway includes:

- A specific multi-agency task group to collaborate on support delivery
- Comms to the public, including regularly updated information on Suffolk County Council's website [Supporting Afghan and Ukrainian refugees | Suffolk County Council](#)
- A dedicated email address (refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk) to facilitate information sharing with the public and community groups
- Liaison with government and regional partners

Now, we do not have any specific requirements for donated items here in Suffolk. If anyone wishes to do something practical, they could fundraise to raise contributions for charities working to support the refugee response. Details of some of those charities are below:

- To help meet the needs of the Ukraine refugees, you may wish to support national and international charities such as The Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal [Ukraine Crisis Appeal | British Red Cross](#)
- Suffolk Refugee Support are our local refugee charity, you can find out about their response to the Ukraine situation on their website [Update on Ukrainian refugee situation – Suffolk Refugee Support](#)
- Further information on how to help can be found on the Disasters emergency committee website [DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal | Disasters Emergency Committee](#)

We are grateful for your support so far, and our regular updates will include further information on how you and your communities can get involved, as we continue to work together as a county to do all we can to help those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

Appendix 2 – District Councillor’s Report

Governance	<p>At the last Council meeting, the new Code of Conduct, as suggested by NALC was adopted. This will come into force from the next Annual Council meeting.</p> <p>It was also agreed to undertake a Community Governance Review. Councils should have such reviews every 10-15 years and can consider creating, merging or altering or abolishing parishes. Formal communication will be sent to all Parish and Town Councils and community groups explaining the process.</p>
Pay policy	<p>New pay scales for the Senior Management Team were agreed at full council, as well as agreement that the Chief Executive will conduct a pay review for all staff over the next 12 months.</p>
Hybrid meetings	<p>Council agreed to support the petition to Government to allow Councils the flexibility to hold remote and hybrid meetings when appropriate. Currently voting members of a Council have to be present to make any decisions, but officers and others are allowed to make representations remotely. The technology and license are now ready for this to take place and it is hoped that this will be trialled in the next couple of weeks.</p>
More support for Neighbourhood Plans	<p>Our group proposed a motion at Full Council for MSDC to actively encourage communities, especially all the core villages, to create and update neighbourhood plans. The Council will allocate resources in order for this to happen. The vote was carried 15 for; 13 against and 1 abstention. All of the administration group (bar the one abstention) voted against this motion.</p>
Zero Net Carbon Toolkit	<p>Our group proposed a motion for the Council to adopt the Zero Net Carbon Toolkit as technical guidance for developers and homeowners to help reduce the carbon footprint in new and existing dwellings. This toolkit had been produced by the LGA together with Forest of Dean, West Oxfordshire and Cotswold District Councils. This proposal was unanimously approved.</p>
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	<p>BMSDC’s first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was approved at Cabinet. The plan sets out the councils’ approach to improving and developing the local cycling and walking network across the district over the next 10 years, to support residents in shifting towards more sustainable transport. After an online public consultation almost 200 potential infrastructure improvement schemes across the two districts have been identified and prioritised according to a variety of factors such as effectiveness, policy, economic factors and deliverability. This prioritisation will be key to obtaining local, regional and national funding towards improving sustainable travel facilities and routes in the districts.</p>
Corporate Peer Challenge	<p>The initial findings of last month’s Corporate Peer Challenge have been published and we are awaiting the full report. The initial findings include that BMSDC is a well-run organisation with huge ambition which does not always match capacity and resources. There is more work to do to embed climate concerns and wellbeing into all activities.</p>
Planning applications	<p>Concern continues regarding several of these. If applications go to planning committee, I will be there to ensure local views are heard. If there is opposition from the parish council, I will discuss with the planning officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Road, Onehouse (Bloor) – was approved and work started the next day – ahead of permission being issued. I have of course complained about that. • Tannery garden, Combs – new plans submitted with single storey elements • Forest Road, Onehouse – in discussion over planning issues with officers, who consider the application “finely balanced” - Probably to committee April 20 • Pear Tree Place, Great Finborough – detail - no committee date yet • Prospect Cottages, Combs ‘move-on’ units – discussed with officers – new request to SCC social services for comment