

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Annual Meeting  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 7.30pm, Battisford Cricket Club**

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

**1. Election of Chairman**

Cllr Scarff confirmed his wish to stand down from the role of chairman. All councillors thanked him for the many years in which he had held the post and during which he had served the village and the council so well.

Although absent tonight, Cllr Walker had confirmed to the clerk that he would be prepared to accept nomination. Cllr Scarff proposed Cllr Walker be elected chairman for the coming year. This was seconded by Cllr Kitson and AGREED unanimously. The clerk will procure Cllr Walker's signature on the Declaration of Office.

As the new chairman was unwell, Cllr Scarff kindly agreed to chair the meeting this evening.

**Action: Clerk to ensure Declaration of Office is completed**

**2. Election of Vice-Chairman**

Cllr Scarff asked for nominations for vice chair. None were forthcoming but upon being asked, Cllr Kitson confirmed that he would be prepared to stand, but felt he should undertake the councillor training that the newer councillors had been deferring in the hope that face to face training would resume. The clerk confirmed he would arrange the online training and Cllr Scarff then proposed Cllr Kitson as vice chair and this was AGREED unanimously. There were no other nominations.

**Action: Clerk to arrange training for all newer councillors**

**3. Apologies for Absence**

I Walker (Chairman) was unwell and had given his apologies to the clerk. The absence was approved.

**4. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying**

Cllr Betchley in respect of Oaks Meadow (item 16)

**5. Public Forum**

No members of the public were present

**6. Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 11 April 2022**

Minutes for Monday 11 April 2022 were reviewed and it was agreed that they be signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by the acting chairman.

**7. Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising that are not dealt with elsewhere.

**8. County Councillor's Report**

The County Councillor had sent her report and it is attached as appendix 1. In addition to that she mentioned that she was providing finance to help rebuild a gate in Combs Wood that had fallen into disrepair.



## 9. District Councillor's Report

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

Cllr Scarff noted that work appeared to have been started on the new houses by the Tannery and that all the trees had been chopped down. Furthermore the plans approved for the Tannery required that the new commercial structure should be commenced at the same time and Cllr Matthiessen confirmed he would look into this.

## 10. Parish Council Chairman's Report

Nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

## 11. Planning

### a. Applications received for consideration:

- i. DC/22/00081 – 1 Model Farm – Installation of wood burner (planning and listed building consent sought)

The Council had no objection to this.

**Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website**

### b. Decisions received from MSDC

- i. (None received)

## 12. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – The clerk reported the Current Account balance as of 2 May 2022 was £46,969.03 and the savings account balance was £1,922.90.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted..

### b. Payments received

(i) Precept 1 <sup>st</sup> instalment	£4,500.00
(ii) CIL payment	£6490.59

### c. Payments to hand

- i. Npower for streetlights (direct debit): £79.96. This was approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)

### d. Annual figures and AGAR Accounting Statement:

The clerk had circulated the draft of these and all councillors approved the figures as presented and authorised the chair to sign the Accounting Statement.

**Action: Clerk to submit papers to external auditor and post on website**

### e. Review of Internal Audit Report:

The internal audit report had been circulated by the clerk who explained that he would be addressing the relatively minor items that required attention and reporting back. It was agreed by all councillors that the report was acceptable. The clerk was authorised to post this on the website.



**Action: Clerk to post on website and address auditor's comments**

f. **Publication Period for annual reporting documents**

The clerk suggested that the publication period be set as between 6 June and 15 July, and this was agreed.

**Action: Clerk to post Public Rights Notices on 5<sup>th</sup> June**

**13. Review of Council Policies**

a. **Review of Standing Orders**

The standing orders, updated two years ago, had been circulated prior to the meeting for review. It was AGREED that, with one minor error that the clerk will correct, these were still valid and were approved by the Council.

b. **Review of Financial Regulations**

The Financial Regulations, updated two years ago, had been circulated prior to the meeting for review. It was AGREED that these were still valid and were approved by the Council.

c. **Review of Asset Register and Risk Assessment**

The Risk assessment was reviewed and accepted as before, and the Asset Register was reviewed and confirmed correct. It was then AGREED that these be approved.

d. **Review of Internal Control Policy**

The Internal Control Policy was reviewed and accepted as before. It was then AGREED that this be approved.

e. **Review of Data policies**

The Data Protection policy, data breach and subject access policies were reviewed. It was AGREED that, with one minor error that the clerk will correct, these were still valid and were approved by the Council.

**Action: Clerk to modify/ arrange signatures where appropriate and post to website**

**14. Model Publication Scheme**

It had been brought to the clerk's attention that the council's website did not contain a publication scheme. Upon investigating, the clerk could not find any evidence that the council had ever adopted a publication scheme, even though this had been a requirement since 2009. However, as there is no information in the possession of the council that is not publicly available, the simple remedy is to adopt the model publication scheme provided by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Councillors agreed that the clerk draw up a publication scheme and circulate it for approval prior to publishing on the website.

**Action: Clerk to circulate model publication scheme**

Abelton

## 15. Code of Conduct

Councillors had reviewed the new model code of conduct that has been promulgated by the Local Government Association and agreed that it be adopted by Combs Parish Council. The clerk was instructed to post it on the council's website.

**Action:** Clerk to post new code of conduct on website

## 16. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Betchley provided an update on the Oaks Meadow project. The committee is hoping to deliver flyers around the village publicising the medicine wheel and the activities surrounding it, which will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> June as part of the Jubilee celebrations. It was proposed that the council donate £200 towards the cost of the publicity exercise, and this was AGREED unanimously. Cheque number 22288 was issued and signed by cllrs Scarff and Ottewell (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10).

Councillors also agreed that Cllr Betchley should inform the committee that the council would look favourably upon a request for financial help with the provision of a structure in the centre of the medicine wheel.

## 17. Jubilee Celebrations

Cllr Scarff reported that a choir was now assembled and that its members will sing at the lighting of the beacon on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

It was suggested that in order to make more of the evening, refreshments might be provided: the vicar had confirmed that the church and its grounds were available for this and councillors agreed that a barbecue and drinks be provided, with a budget of £500. All councillors will endeavour to be there to help with organisation and Cllr Scarff will co-ordinate the procurement of food and drink.

## 18. PIIP Priorities

As Cllr Walker was absent this item has been deferred until the next meeting.

## 19. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- Cllr Ottewell proposed that the next newsletter be sent out in the first half of June and this was agreed.

## 20. Date and time of next meeting –Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm in Battsford and District Cricket Club.

The Meeting closed at 8.50 pm

ABE

## Appendix 1

# County Council report – May 2022

### Violence Against Women and Girls funding announced

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, Suffolk County Council announced £350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022.

This fund has been provided by Suffolk County Council to support the work of the strategy in preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system.

Organisations will be able to apply for this funding to support initiatives that are synonymous with the objectives of the strategy and aim to stop violence against women and girls.

### 'Just say hello, just listen, just reach out'

A new film featuring various partners from across Suffolk has been released which aims to prevent suicide.

The 'Just Say Hello' campaign aims to raise awareness of how a simple 'hello' can make the difference to a person's mental wellbeing, whether it be a loved one or a stranger.

With evidence suggesting that 75% of people who die by suicide have no contact with mental health services, or even their GP within the 12 months preceding their death, it is important that everyone knows they can play their part. Simply reaching out and starting a conversation can be enough to help someone or by interrupting their thought process and encouraging them to get further help.

Featured in the film is Terry Waite who used to work as a hostage negotiator in some of the most dangerous parts of the world and unfortunately was captured and spent almost five years in strict solitary confinement. He says, "Each year in Suffolk alone, 65 people die this way. And those figures are frankly tragic and unacceptable."

This video highlights suicide being the biggest killer for men under the age of 45, with 3 in 4 deaths by suicide being men.

### 99% of pupils receive a preferred primary on National Offer Day

This year 99.22% of children were offered a place at one of their parents' three preferred schools and 95.6% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 7144 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2022.

Families who applied online can log on to the Admissions Portal from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email with details of the school place offered.

### Fire service delivers much-needed equipment to Ukraine

It was announced on April 19<sup>th</sup> that Staff from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service embarked on a 1,000-mile journey to transport vital firefighting kit to help their counterparts in Ukraine

The deployment team, consisting of six volunteers, will drive across Europe to deliver Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's donation of two fully operational fire engines and accompanying equipment, which forms part of the wider National Fire Chiefs Council and Fire Aid initiative.

Their journey will see them travel to Kent to join the national convoy of vehicles departing for Ukraine. From there, they will head to Poland, where they will hand over the vehicles and kit to the Polish Fire Service, who will distribute the items to the Ukrainian fire stations most in need.

### **Suffolk County Council to freeze post-16 travel costs to schools and colleges**

It was announced on April 28<sup>th</sup> that Suffolk County Council is to freeze charges for travel for over 16s to schools and colleges from September.

The council's Cabinet agreed fares should remain at 2021/22 levels for another 12 months to help families faced with soaring living costs. The decision means costs for the 2022/23 academic year will remain at £930 per year for mainstream transport and £750 for SEND pupils.

#### **Councillor Rachel Hood, Cabinet member for Education, SEND and Skills, said:**

"With the fuel, energy or other price rises at this time, Suffolk County Council does not feel it would be appropriate to ask families to pay any additional charge. We are particularly concerned that any uplift would affect less well-off families. We are also concerned that any increase might be considered unaffordable and may limit post-16 options for students, which absolutely is not an outcome desired by Suffolk County Council."

The decision will be reviewed in 12 months' time.

The Post-16 Travel Policy applies to full-time learners aged 16-18 years, and those aged 19 years and over if they are continuing the same course started before their nineteenth birthday. It also applies to continuing learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) aged 19-25 years.

To qualify for funding under the scheme young people need to continue to study or train in one of three ways:

- Study full-time in a school, college or with a training provider (at least 540 hours of planned learning per year)
- Full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more per week) combined with part-time education or training leading to relevant regulated qualifications (at least 280 hours of planned learning per year)
- Be working in an apprenticeship, supported internship or traineeship

The council is not required by law to fund Post-16 Travel and does not receive any funding from central government to fund it.

## Appendix 2 – District Councillor’s Report

### District Councillor’s Report: Onehouse Ward Parish Councils May 2022

Gateway 14	Construction of the multi-million-pound business, innovation and development hub in Stowmarket is now officially underway. A ground-breaking ceremony was held last week. Gateway 14 is being brought forward as part of Freeport East, which will offer businesses tax relief and simplified custom arrangements.
Homes for Ukraine	Both Mid Suffolk and Babergh are members of the county-wide scheme to support Ukrainian refugees. Housing officers are responsible for carrying out property inspections, once sponsors are matched up with Ukrainian families.
Council Tax rebates	Households in Council Tax bands A to D will receive a one-off £150 rebate. For residents who pay by direct-debit, this rebate should be processed automatically. Those households who do not pay by direct-debit will be contacted in the next few weeks but do need to be aware of potential scammers. Details can be found on the website <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-and-parish-charges/council-tax-online-bill/">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-and-parish-charges/council-tax-online-bill/</a> .
Planning Tannery rd, Combs	The reduced impact design is now likely to be approved in the next few days
Planning Onehouse	Next week I will be arguing in the planning committee that there is no need to breach policies to allow another 20 houses opposite the bungalows on Forest road. After months of argument, the idea of building on the land between Paupers Graves and the village has been withdrawn.
Climate Change and Biodiversity	The annual report on climate change and biodiversity was published in April. This summarised progress during the last year as well as indicated the next steps. These include the completion of the Solar Car port at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, increase the number of EV charging points in carparks with the help of Government grants, publish the tree canopy survey and consider the implications of the Government’s Recycling and Waste Strategy.
Tree Planting	As part of the Biodiversity Action Plan, over 100 trees have been planted at Needham Lake and about 40 at Green’s Meadow in Stowmarket. This project was partly funded by Forestry Commission Treescapescapes fund
Community Infrastructure Levy	Community Infrastructure bids of over £175,000 were awarded to Museum of East Anglian Life (now renamed) and Stowmarket Football Club as well as to both Botesdale Parish Council and Walsham-le-Willows parish council.
Women’s Cycling Tour	The Women’s Tour is returning to Suffolk this year, with the finish of the opening stage on 6 <sup>th</sup> June in Bury St Edmunds. The route from Colchester to Bury will pass through Mid Suffolk on International Women’s Day, immediately following the 4-day bank holiday weekend to commemorate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Full details of the route will soon be released.
Locality Grant scheme 2022/23	The next round of Locality Grants is now open. Although the deadline is not until March 2023, I welcome applications from community groups now. Details are available on the website <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/communities/grants-and-funding/locality-awards-guidance/">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/communities/grants-and-funding/locality-awards-guidance/</a> . Please contact me in the first instance.

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