

Draft until signed

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 12 March 2018 at 7.30pm, Battsford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battsford**

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); D Stephens-Row (Vice Chairman); T Whitehead (Councillor); D Thorpe (Councillor); J Crooks (Councillor); S Reynard (Councillor).

Attending: T Bamber (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

C Todhunter (Councillor).; A Whybrow (County Councillor); Cllr D Whybrow (District Councillor).

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr S Reynard (neighbour in respect of item 14)
Cllr J Crooks (financial interest in respect of item 10 (c) (iii))

3. Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 12 February 2018

Minutes for 12 February 2018 were signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were some arising that are not covered elsewhere:

- a. Item 16 – Combs cemetery: Cllr Thorpe reported that the Perspex available from Wickes was 5mm thick and so thinner than that to be replaced. He will investigate the Perspex mentioned by Cllr C Todhunter .
- b. Item 8 Church Magazine – Cllr Scarff has not yet heard back from Ken Mudd regarding alternate printing prices. It was suggested that more advertising may help, as is the case with other local magazines. Cllr Whitehead will send some samples to the chairman.
- c. Item 16 – Gilbert’s Hill – Cllrs Scarff and Thorpe reported that the blockage in the ditch had been cleared.
- d. Item 23.3 – disabled access – the doors at the front of the hall were identified as wheelchair friendly.

6. County Councillor’s Report

The County Councillor had sent apologies so there was no report, but Cllr Scarff reported that she had previously advised him that following her request she had been informed that a planning fee would still be required in respect of the WW1 beacon.

7. District Councillor's Report

The District Councillor had sent apologies but mentioned in his email that the Boundary Commission timetable has been extended and the period for consultation on draft recommendations now runs from 6 March to 30 April 2018, with a final recommendations commission meeting on 24 July 2018.

Cllr Whybrow also confirmed that the application for financial assistance with costs of the WWI beacon have been approved and the Council will be receiving payment of £700 .

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

Nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

9. Planning

- a. **Applications received for consideration**
 - i. DC/17/04684 & 04685 – 7 Model Farm, Park Road – planning and listed building consent request for installation of central heating boiler. *No objection.*
 - ii. DC/18/00110 – Acorns, Park Road – Erection of first floor rear extension and alterations. *No objection.*
- b. Decisions received from MSDC
 - i. DC/17/04545 – Ebbs House, Bildeston Road - Erection of cart lodge with accommodation – *Noted.*

10. Finance

- a. Accounts review to date – Current Account balance as of 26th February 2018 is £7,977.94 and the savings account balance as of 2nd March 2018 is £1,901.10.
- b. Payments received
 - i. (none)
- c. Payments to hand
 - i. Information Commissioner - Data protection Registration - £35. Payment was proposed by Cllr Thorpe, seconded Cllr Crooks, all agreed. Cheque number 022158 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe. (*Local Government Act 1972, s.111*).
 - ii. Battisford Village Hall Management Committee - £160.00. Payment was proposed by Cllr Reynard, seconded Cllr Whitehead, all agreed. Cheque number 022159 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe. (*Local Government Act 1972, s.133*).
 - iii. J Crooks – Cemetery topsoil, posts & tool hire for ditch work - £192.48. Payment was proposed by Cllr Stephens-Row, seconded Cllr Reynard, all agreed. Cheque number 022160 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe. (*Local Government Act 1972, s.214 (2)*).
 - iv. Mid Suffolk District Council – Dog Bin emptying - £ 450.00. Payment was proposed by Cllr Thorpe, seconded Cllr Crooks, all agreed. Cheque number 022161 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe. (*Litter Act 1983, ss.5,6.*)
 - v. Staff Salary August – March including tax to HMRC – £1708.98. One cheque for HMRC – 341.60- and one for the clerk - £1367.38. Payment was proposed by Cllr Whitehead, seconded Cllr Crooks, all agreed. Cheque numbers 022162 and 0221623 were written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe. (*Local Government Act 1972, s.112.*)
- d. **It was noted that the cost shown for hire of the village hall was higher last year. It is possible that this included broadband costs and the clerk will investigate this.**

11. Annual Internal Audit

Following discussion it was agreed that the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) be instructed to conduct the internal audit for the council. The Clerk will attend to this.

12. Clerk's Book-keeping Course

Following a discussion it was agreed unanimously that the clerk be authorised to attend the upcoming Clerk's Book-keeping course at SALC. (*Local Government Act 1972, s.111.*)

13. WWI Commemorative Beacon

The Chairman reported that the District Councillor has procured funding of £700 (as noted earlier) and that the Village Fete Committee will be funding the rest of the cost of the beacon and its installation. A decision on whether to use a gas burner will be made when all information is available.

14. Street Lighting

The Chairman reported that there had been an issue with the street lights in Tannery Road, with three lamps not working. FES had attended and while these were now working two of them, which had been replaced with LED units, were causing concern to residents, as it was reported that they were very bright and not shielded. The third light is not of the same type and does not appear to be a cause of concern.

Cllr Reynard reported that the new lights were a very bright blue and that they disturb residents. The posts for these lamps are concrete and so cannot be fitted with shields. It had been noted that the county council has installed timers to all lights under their control, so that they turn off at midnight. The cost of a timer is approximately £350 each and councillors agreed that such cost could not be justified for all the lamps in the village. Following a discussion in which it was noted that there appeared to be no local concerns over the need for street lighting in that area, it was proposed that these lights be switched off completely and the situation be reviewed if there is any feedback. This proposal was agreed by all councillors except one and it was therefore RESOLVED that those lights be turned off.

Action: Cllr Thorpe to arrange for these lamps to be turned off.

15. Highways Survey

The invitation by Highways department for local councils to consider offering to take on work that the Highways department are now no longer able to do was discussed and it was agreed that there was no great interest in taking on more work. It was agreed that the county council be requested to provide information on what work is being done by Highways in the village.

Action: clerk to raise question with Highways.

16. Sign Posts Burnt House Farm

The landowner has informed the parish council that the county council had been informed of the problem, and that it is out of his hands. Cllr Thorpe will look into the matter and councillors hope the county council will attend.

17. Spring Litter Pick

The litter pick will be conducted on 18 March and will be co-ordinated by Cllr Crooks. It was agreed that following the event posters should be displayed around the village thanking residents for their support.

18. Combs Cemetery

- (i) Following a request by a resident to donate a bench for installation in the cemetery councilors considered various specifications that were available in order to determine an acceptable quality. It was agreed that the charity Genesis in Ipswich (part of Mencap) be the approved supplier and the preferred model is the Brandon bench 1.5m.
- (ii) Another resident has enquired if an urn of cremated remains may be interred in a burial plot already owned by the family. It was agreed that provided this would not impinge on grass mowing the urn may be interred and a plaque be placed flush with the ground.

Action: Clerk to respond accordingly to each resident.

19. St Mary's Churchyard

Following a review of the tenders for maintaining the churchyard it was agreed unanimously that the contract be offered to David Windle. The clerk will draw up a letter to Stowmarket Town Council thanking them for their work in the past but informing them that a local resident has now offered to take the work on. The letter will not be sent until the chairman has spoken with David Windle.

ACTION: - **Chairman to speak with David Windle; clerk to write to Stowmarket Town Council.**

20. Correspondence

A request has been received for a donation to Citizens' Advice Bureau. The good work of the bureau was recognised by councilors and it was agreed that the clerk be requested to ascertain, to the extent possible, how many residents of Combs (not Combs Ford) have been helped in the past and the general nature of assistance given, as this may identify areas where the council could offer more direct help.

Action: Clerk to write to CAB

21. Any other business for inclusion on the next agenda

1. Cllr Stephens-Row observed that the mini roundabout at the bottom of Poplar Hill needs repainting and in its present condition could cause traffic problems. The councillor will register this on the Highways website.

22. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 9 April 2018 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 9.05 pm.