

Draft until signed

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 9 July 2018 at 7.30pm, Battisford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battisford**

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); C Todhunter (Vice Chairman); T Whitehead (Councillor); D Thorpe (Councillor); J Crooks (Councillor); S Reynard (Councillor).

Attending: T Bamber (Clerk); Over 35 members of the Public, in respect of item 10 (a) (iv) and two in respect of item 10.(a)(ii).

Absent: Cllr D Whybrow (District Councillor)

1. Apologies for absence

A Whybrow (County Councillor)

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr S Reynard in respect of item 10 (a)(ii)

3. Public Forum

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public and explained the standard rules applying to meetings open to the public. He suggested that the public agree between themselves who should be their spokesperson and until their return the meeting would follow the order of the agenda.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 11 June 2018

Minutes for 11 June 2018 were reviewed. It was noted that the comment regarding grass clippings was shown under item 14 (Combs Cemetery) whereas it should be shown under item 15 (St. Mary's Churchyard). This was amended and the minutes were then signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by Cllr Scarff (Chairman).

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising that are not covered elsewhere.

6. County Councillor's Report

Cllr A Whybrow was not present.

7. District Councillor's Report

Cllr D Whybrow was not present.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

There was nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

9. Clerk's Report

Nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

10. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

- i. DC/18/02636 – Ash Tree House, Bildeston Road- Erection of single storey rear extension. *No objection.*
- ii. DC/18/02798 – Post Office Cottages North, Tannery Road – Application for listed building consent – demolition of existing rear extension and erection of new rear lean to extension. *No objection.*

Item 10 (a) (iv) brought forward:

DC/18/02380 – Outline planning application for erection of up to 160 buildings on land to east of Poplar Hill.

Cllr Whitehead summarised for the benefit of the public the letter of objection that had been filed with Mid Suffolk Planning Department. Cllr Todhunter then added that the issues raised by the council were on the basis of public interests, not private interests, which could be raised by individuals.

On behalf of the public attending, Mr K Mudd summarised the issues over which people had concerns:

- Strain on doctors and other public services;
- The traffic survey carried out by Gladman had not been conducted at peak times;
- The moisture surveys were not conducted at an appropriate time, given the extraordinarily hot and dry weather for the last few weeks;
- The importance of maintaining the gap between Stowmarket and Combs
- Environmental issues – the effect of so much concrete on Combs Wood and the wildlife reserve;
- The importance of the environs of Combs Church;
- Loss of agricultural land.

Cllr Todhunter observed that these were all important points and recommended that all present write to the planning department to object. He emphasised that a simple objection was far less effective than one that referred to specific statements in the Gladman proposal documents and rebutted them. In some cases there may be factual issues to raise but in other cases, where Gladman's papers dismiss an issue as minor 'in their opinion' a letter from a local resident emphasising that in their opinion the matter is a major one would be most effective.

In answer to a question Cllr Todhunter confirmed that there was no limit on the number of letters that a resident could write in objection to the proposal.

Mrs. J Truelove, on being invited to speak by the Chairman, congratulated those involved for their hard work in researching and writing the letter of objection. Mrs. Truelove then noted that the area is represented by the District Councillor and that it would be helpful to ensure the Parish Council has his support.

It was noted that Cllr Whybrow's wife is currently unwell but enquiries will be made to ensure his absence is being covered by others in the council.

The Chairman thanked all present for their contributions and encouraged them to write with their objections. He then mentioned that a Neighbourhood Plan may well help prevent future attempts to build inappropriately in the area and invited Cllr Todhunter to explain further.

Cllr Todhunter explained that a neighbourhood plan is a document that sets out how a town or village wishes to see itself develop. It is not a document designed to stop any development at all but rather one that sets out where appropriate development would be acceptable and where development would not be appropriate. Combs is currently categorised as a 'secondary village', meaning no significant development is anticipated and a plan for Combs would set out what residents believe makes the village special, including, for example, specific views. If a plan had been in place prior to the Gladman proposal it would have been an even stronger argument in favour of retaining the gap between Combs and Stowmarket.

Cllr Todhunter added that it could take two years to develop a neighbourhood plan but once in place it would be a very useful defence against any future planning attempts that were considered inappropriate.

Cllr Thorpe asked if such a plan may help ensure that there would be no attempt to build over the gap on the other side of the road from the current proposed development. In response Cllr Todhunter explained that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that planning must be granted aside from very limited exceptions. At present Mid Suffolk does not have a five year housing plan (i.e. details of five years of developable land), and as a consequence the burden on objectors to planning proposals is greater. The answer to the question is therefore that if a five year plan were in place then a Neighbourhood Plan should succeed in preventing such development.

With the exception of two, the members of the public then left (8.20 PM).

Returning to agenda item 10 (a)(iii):

- iii. AP/18/00013 – Planning Appeal – Moats Tye Livery, Moats Tye - Erection of two detached dwellings. It was recalled that the council had recorded a view that they had no objection to the original application and following further discussion it was agreed by a majority that the council's position remained unchanged.
- b. Decisions received from MSDC
 - i. DC/18/01715 – Colbern, Bildeston Road, – Erection of single storey rear extension. *Planning permission granted.* Noted
 - ii. DC/18/01954 – Vine Cottage, Park Road – Prior approval requested for erection of single storey rear extension. *Prior approval not required for this.* Noted
 - iii. DC/17/03427 – Stable Cottage, Bildeston Road – *conditions satisfied.* Noted
 - iv. DC/18/02788 Tannery Cottage, Tannery Road – *conditions satisfied.* Noted.

11. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26th June 2018 is £9,565.51 and the savings account balance as of 2nd July 2018 is £1,907.79.
- b. **Payments received**

i. Inscription fee – T/L Hazel Kerry	-	£100.00
ii. Interment fee – Albert Robinson	-	£680.00
iii. Interment fee – Roger McDowell	-	£250.00
- c. **Payments to hand**
 - i. Community Heartbeat – Replacement pads for defibrillator (replacement date 30.11.20) - £171.60. Payment was proposed by Cllr Thorpe, seconded Cllr Todhunter, all agreed. Cheque number 022175 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff

and Cllr Thorpe (*Public Health Act 1936,s234*). It was noted that there had been no anticipation of this cost and it should be included for future budget work.

- ii. SALC – Internal Audit fee - £170.40. Payment was proposed by Cllr Thorpe, seconded Cllr Whitehead, all agreed. Cheque number 022176 was written, and signed by Cllr Scarff and Cllr Thorpe (*Local Government Act 1972,s.111*).

d. To discuss and consider ordering memorial beacon

The Chairman reported that he had received two quotes for the metal part of the beacon, the lowest being £700 plus VAT from Barking Forge. Cllr Crooks confirmed that he could obtain the required length post in oak. There was a little uncertainty about the exact price but provided it proved to be no more than £500 plus VAT, it was AGREED unanimously that the respective councillors be empowered to proceed and place orders. Cllrs Crooks, Scarff and Thorpe will meet to erect the beacon.

12. Speeding vehicles, Park Road.

Cllr Todhunter had received an email from a resident expressing concern at the speed of some vehicles along Park Road. The resident referred to speed signs that had been borrowed in the past and offered to contribute to the cost of procuring one for the village. Cllr Scarff observed that the village participates in a sharing scheme with other villages for a sign that flashes at speeding motorists but which only reminds them that the limit is 30 MPH. It was noted that this does not have as much effect as some of the signs used in other villages, which show the speed of the vehicle.

It seems the cost of such a sign is around £2,000. And it was agreed that the chairman would look into costs while the clerk would investigate any legal or regulatory requirements affecting the siting of such a device.

Action:

- **Chairman to investigate costs of speed indicating signs**
- **Clerk to investigate any restrictions on use of such signs.**

13. Request from Battisford Village Hall Management Committee

The clerk read out a request from the village hall committee requesting support in their application for a grant towards replacement flooring. It was Agreed unanimously that the clerk be instructed to write a letter providing the support requested.

Action: Clerk to write to Battisford Village Hall Management Committee.

14. Street Lighting

- i. Cllr Thorpe reported that 7 lamps are yet to be upgraded. There is currently around £1,100 in the budget for this and he will investigate costs and report back at the next meeting.
- ii. A resident had pointed out that the new lamps in Tannery Road do not turn off on a Wednesday night. Cllr Thorpe was under the impression that this has been addressed although Cllr Reynard mentioned that the problem arose on Sunday nights too. Cllr Thorpe will report this to the electricians.

15. Combs Cemetery

The Chairman had been informed that due to the recent hot dry weather a large crack had appeared in the earth beside a recent grave but this has been attended to. The Chairman has been warned that once the weather breaks, some recent graves may drop by up to two feet so it may be necessary to monitor this. Other than this the cemetery is in very good condition.

16. St Mary's Churchyard

The Chairman had also visited the churchyard and was pleased to report that this too is in very good condition.

17. Correspondence

- a) The clerk circulated a letter of thanks from Citizen's Advice Bureau following the recent donation.
- b) A message has been received from a resident requesting help in reducing the speed limit at the bottom of Tannery Road. It was noted that this is a relatively lightly used road and the cost and effort involved, together with the low likelihood of success, did not seem justified. It was decided that the clerk be instructed to respond accordingly.

Action: Clerk to respond to resident

18. Any other business

- i. Cllr Crooks noted that the triangles around Gilberts Hill and others have been cut nicely, presumably by a neighbour.
- ii. Cllr Whitehead enquired if local verges were to be attended to soon as they are beginning to obstruct views of traffic. It was AGREED that the clerk be instructed to enquire of Highways when verges will be cut.
- iii. Cllr Thorpe drew attention to the comments made earlier by Mrs Truelove regarding the absence of the District Councillor and it was AGREED that the clerk be instructed to write to Cllr Whybrow seeking confirmation of his support in resisting the Gladman proposal.
- iv. Cllr Whitehead requested that future agendas include Neighbourhood Plans as an item for discussion.
- v. The Chairman noted that the hedges in front of several houses are beginning to grow and intrude into the footpath/road. It was AGREED that the clerk be instructed to ascertain the legal position and, if appropriate, draw up a circular leaflet/letter courteously reminding residents of their responsibilities in this regard.
- vi. The Chairman noted the fact that there was a vacancy for a councillor and following discussion it was unanimously AGREED that a person known and respected by all on the council be approached by the Chairman to see if they would be willing to be co-opted onto the council.

Action:

- ***Clerk to write to Highways re verges***
- ***Clerk to seek support from Cllr D Whybrow.***
- ***Clerk to ascertain legal position re homeowners' hedges and if appropriate, draw up draft letter to residents.***
- ***Chairman to sound out a putative new councillor.***

19. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 10 September 2018 - starting at 7.30pm.

The Meeting closed at 9.30 pm.