

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 13 January 2020 at 7.30pm, Battisford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battisford

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); D Thorpe (Councillor); J Crooks (Councillor); V Whitehead (Councillor); T Chaplin (Councillor); I Walker (Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor); T Bamber (Clerk).
Attending: six members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

K Oakes (County Councillor); C Todhunter (Vice Chairman) (with council's prior agreement)

2. Declarations of interest

In respect of items 10 a (i) and 10 a (ii): Cllr S Scarff, having a pecuniary interest; Cllr D Thorpe (ex work colleague).

In respect of item 10 a (iii): Cllr V Whitehead (neighbour)

In respect of item 11 c (ii): Cllr T Chaplin

3. Public Forum

The members of the public present were all interested in item 10 a (i) so this item was held over.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 9 December 2019

Minutes for 9 December 2019 were reviewed and were signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by the Chairman.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

No matters arising that are not dealt with elsewhere. Cllr Thorpe observed that the Christmas tree recycling scheme appeared to have been very well supported.

6. County Councillor's Report

Cllr Oakes had previously apologised for her absence. While there was nothing to report she had mentioned that her budget might be able to help with the purchase of a second Speed Indicator Device. Councillors agreed that this offer should be taken up if possible.

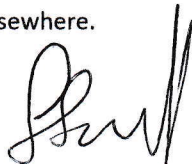
Action: Clerk to write to Cllr Oakes to confirm interest in the purchase of a second SID

7. District Councillor's Report

Cllr Matthissen took councillors through his report (attached as appendix). He also mentioned that his budget may be able to help supplement any shortfall in purchasing the aforementioned second SID and councillors agreed this offer should be taken up if possible.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

No matters not raised elsewhere.



9. Clerk's Report

No matters not raised elsewhere.

10. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration

In accordance with Standing orders, Cllr Scarff left the meeting for the next two items and Cllr Whitehead took on the role of Chair.

i. DC/19/05572 – Land adjacent to 2 Oak Thatch, Park Road –*outline application for 2 new dwellings*

Cllr Whitehead invited comments from the public. Two residents referred to objections they had lodged and the opportunity was taken to ask questions of the District Councillor as to standard procedure for planning officers. Following discussion by councillors it was **agreed**, with one abstention, that the council object to the application on the grounds that the proposed development lay outside the settlement boundary. In addition, councillors wished to comment, should the planning office approve the application:

- i. Outline plans indicate the proposed dwellings are to have four or more bedrooms each and, should the District Council choose to approve the application, they would enquire if consideration could be given to the most suitable sizes for any new houses in the village.
- ii. Should the application be approved, could it please be made a condition that contractors' vehicles be prevented from parking on the road in the vicinity?

ii. DC/19/05573 – Land adjacent to Model Farm House, Park Road –*outline application for 2 new dwellings*

Councillors considered the application and the objections that had been lodged by some residents. It was noted that one objector had stated: *"..it should be pointed out that the owner of the proposed development is the Chairman of the PC so any support from the PC should be ignored as at best this is a conflict of interest at worst it could amount to misconduct in a public office"*. Cllr Walker voiced the views of all the Council, saying he was saddened that one individual has had to include in their public comments what can only be perceived to be a lack of belief and trust in this council's professionalism, integrity and its robust approach to its standards and code of conduct.

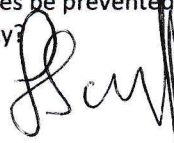
He added that the parish council's work ethics are to a high standard so to ask the planning department of our local council to ignore any support to this application, if there were to be any, displays a preconceived lack of trust in the parish councillors' morals and principles.

To full agreement he expressed the hope that future village discussions/comments do not sink to this level.

It was noted that the objector had not attended this meeting, nor, so far as anyone was aware, any other council meeting where he may have had an opportunity to become familiar with those he would presume to criticise.

Following discussion councillors **agreed** unanimously to support the application. In addition, councillors wished to comment:

- i. The Parish Council understands it is intended that the pond and some trees are to remain. They would like to suggest that this be a condition of any approval, and that perhaps the lime trees could be made the subject of a tree preservation order..
- ii. Could it please be made a condition that contractors' vehicles be prevented from parking on the road in the vicinity?



At this point the Chairman returned to resume chairing the meeting

- iii. DC/20/00020 – Peppits, 3 Tile Row, Moats Tye – erection of two and single storey rear extension.

Following discussion, councillors **agreed** unanimously to support the application.

b. Decisions received from MSDC

- i. DC/19/05325 14 Model Farm, Park Road – replacement of roof tiles –*Listed Building Consent granted. Noted*

11. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26 December 2019 was £14,210.42 and the savings account balance as of 2 January 2020 was £1,914.07.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.

b. **Payments received**

- i. (none)

c. **Payments to hand**

- i. EON October energy bill - £73.93 (Direct debit) Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. Battsford Village Hall Management Committee – Hall hire/broadband/Barclif - £ 390.00. Cheque number 22221 was written, and signed by Cllrs Thorpe and Scarff (*Local Government Act 1972, s 133*). It was **agreed** that the clerk should inform the committee that use of the broadband would no longer be required after the end of 2020.
- iii. T Chaplin – newsletter printing - £90.00). Payment was agreed by all councillors. Cheque number 22222 was written, and signed by Cllrs Thorpe and Scarff (*Local Government Act 1972, s 142*).

d. **Budget and Precept for 2020/2021**

Following the approval last month of the budget and precept for 2020/2021, the clerk produced the relevant form and this was duly signed by the Chairman, two councillors and the clerk.

e. **Instruction of Internal auditor**

It was **agreed** to instruct Suffolk Association of Local Councils to conduct the legally required internal audit for the year 2019/2020, as has been the case in the past few years.

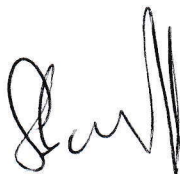
Action: Clerk to write to SALC to confirm instruction.

12. Oaks Meadow Project

Cllr Matthissen informed the Parish Council that there was to be a meeting regarding the project, at Blackberry Barn at 10 AM on 20 February, involving Mid Suffolk District Council Planning dept. Cllrs Whitehead and Scarff confirmed they would be attending.

13. CIL receipts

No further action at this point



14. Street Lights

Cllr Thorpe shared a quotation from Folley Electrical Services for the repair of the street light on Tannery road. They have given a price of £1,080.04 plus VAT. The clerk will forward this to the insurers.

It was noted that the BT pole to which the lamp had been attached was leaning towards the road and debris around its base suggested that it had been in contact with several vehicles of late. The clerk will bring this to the attention of BT.

Action: clerk to contact insurers and BT

Cllr Thorpe also reported that the defective lamp by Queens Close may cost more than £4,000 to repair/replace. However there is a possibility that the problem is one for UK Power Network to address and this is being investigated.

15. Parish Newsletter

The deadline for the Spring newsletter is the end of February. Details of the Spring Clean Litterpick, proposed for 15th March, will be included. Cllr Chaplin has been asked to provide a report for the BARCLIF news and the clerk will work with the chairman on this.

16. CAB request for support

Stowmarket Citizens' Advice Bureau had written requesting financial support. Councillors noted the significant amount of help that had been provided to local people and AGREED to a donation of £100. Cheque number 22223 was written, and signed by Cllrs Thorpe and Scarff (*Local Government Act 1972, s 137*).

17. Grants & Fundraising

Councillors noted with gratitude the offers from the County and District Councillors to support the acquisition of another Speed Indicating Device.

18. Diseased Tree, Webbs Close

The Clerk has still heard nothing more from Landlink Ltd., the owners of the land around Webbs Close. As they have apparently chosen not to become involved in the issue, councillors instructed the clerk to obtain a quote for cutting the tree from local firms.

Action: clerk to seek quotations for cutting the diseased tree.

19. Overgrown Hedges

Letters have been handed to some hedge owners and councillors were pleased to note that action was being taken immediately in some cases. Some residents have accepted that industrial cutters are needed on their hedges and Councillors will look into assisting in this. The clerk was provided with details of further houses in the village that should be given a similar letter.

Action: Clerk to deliver the letters.

20. Combs Cemetery

Cllr Thorpe and the clerk will visit the cemetery at the end of January to clear away Christmas wreaths etc..



21. St Mary's Churchyard

Table tomb: as noted last month permission has been granted to dismantle the tomb as proposed. Cllrs Scarff and Thorpe will attend to this once the ground is firmer.

22. Meeting Dates 2020/2021:

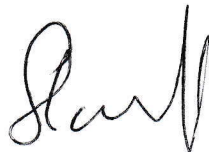
The clerk reminded councillors that they had agreed last month, in light of Easter Monday coinciding with the standard date for meetings, to have a meeting on 20 April and to skip a May meeting unless it became essential. The clerk has since become reacquainted with the Local Government Act 1972, which requires that the Parish Council hold an annual meeting in May. It was **AGREED** to hold the AGM, as well as the Annual Parish Meeting, on 11 May 2020.

23. Any other business – potentially for inclusion on the next agenda

- Battisford Parish Council have written suggesting the two councils pool the speed data from their SIDs. It was **AGREED** that the clerk implement this.
- Battisford preschool had left a note in the village hall asking for a donation towards the cost of ipads for the preschool children. After a discussion in which councillors expressed support for the preschool group generally, it was **AGREED** unanimously that they decline this request.
- Several areas in the village are in need of attention from the Highways department: ditches in Jacks Lane damaged by cars, resulting in them being blocked; the mouth of Verneuil Avenue/Poplar Hill – outside the village but of relevance – a large and growing pothole; footpath in the Slough (on the way to the Church hall) – vegetation on the path itself preventing access by pedestrians unless they walk on the road). The clerk is to contact Highways with a copy to Cllr Oakes.
- A councillor had noted the difficulty wheelchair users have in negotiating the kerb on the junction of Jack's Lane and Park Road. This is to be discussed at the next meeting.

24. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 10 February 2020 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 9.25pm



Appendix 1 – County Councillor Report

County Council report December 2019

Fines for poor parking in Suffolk to be consistent across the county from 2020

Parking fines will be the same across the whole of Suffolk from early next year, when stronger enforcement is set to take place. The long-delayed transfer of civil parking enforcement from police to local authorities is expected to take place from the end of January in Suffolk.

This means each council will be responsible for issuing parking fines, warnings and notices in their area, although a deal has been struck by Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils to have their parking enforced by Ipswich and West Suffolk officers.

With police unable to dedicate resources currently, it is expected that once the powers transfer councils will be able to crackdown on poor parking more than police. A consistent approach is being planned across the whole county, meaning fines will be the same, regardless of which authority manages parking in that area.

Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways said:

"A parking management plan is being developed that sets out the priorities for different types of on street parking restriction, dependent on their location. "This approach is supported by the borough and district councils.

"From the parking management plan, each of the councils involved will develop a parking enforcement protocol that sets out their plans for enforcement, including resourcing and how the sites are going to be visited."

School travel policy implementation review outlined

On 4 November, the group looking into the implementation of the new school travel policy outlined the scope of their review.

The review, which is being headed up by Chief Fire Officer Mark Hardingham, will be delivered in two phases. In phase one the group will analyse a wide range of evidence from stakeholders about the implementation of the policy to determine the lessons to be learned.

Evidence will be gathered using various approaches including data analysis, document research, appeals evidence and outcomes, stakeholder group discussions, written statements and one-to-one interviews. The findings will then be put together in a report, which will draw conclusions and make recommendations.

In the second phase, the report will be reviewed. This may well lead to further work on changes to the implementation of the current School Travel Policy, or to elements of the Policy itself to ensure it operates more efficiently.

Councillor Mary Evans, Cabinet Member for Children's services, Education and Skills said:

"I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this review and will carefully consider the recommendations made by the group. The implementation of the policy has been far from ideal, so it is essential that we review what went well and what did not go well to learn from this for pupils, parents and schools in 2020 and future years.

"The new school travel policy is based on guidance from the DFE and brings Suffolk County Council in line with other authorities across the country. SCC's previous policy was able to exceed these requirements but with lower budgets and increasing demand, specifically for pupils with SEND, this was no longer sustainable. "If we had not changed the policy the council would have to reallocate finances from other vital services such as children's services, adult social care and/or highways."

Chief Fire Officer, Mark Hardingham said:“I am pleased to be heading up this review, this is an important piece of work which aims to improve the process for those applying for school travel from 2020. Work has begun on the review and the final report is due to go to the Scrutiny Committee in February 2020.

Appendix 2 – District Councillor Report

District Councillor Report from John Matthissen for November 2019 (December meeting)

General Election – December 12	As you will be aware, a General Election has been called for Thursday 12 December. This signals a pre-election period which restricts some council activities. There is thus less to report.
Peartree place, Gt Finboro	The revised application layout has been refused while I was trying to call it into committee.
Buxhall Lodge, Gt Finboro	there is no further news at the moment
Locality budgets	Are on hold until after the election. I expect deadlines will be extended
Finborough Road flooding	I am chasing for outcomes from planning officers speaking to the developer the county council and the environment Agency.
Union Road Phase 2	Endurance Estates - DC/19/04993 I attended the public exhibition which drew many people with lots of concerns pointed out to the architect and developers the very recent flooding problems also pressed them to make best use of the Southerly aspect of the site.
Christmas tree recycling	This will be available as usual, with collections about mid January from the site previously used. Parish clerks should receive posters for display.
Grants for home adaptations:	Do you know people who need to adapt their home to help them cope with the challenge of living at home with a long-term health condition? Mid Suffolk District Council offer grants of between £1,000 and £5,000. This scheme is open to all homeowners, private tenants and council property tenants. For more information call 0300 123 4000.
Infrastructure support:	From any development, whether one house or one hundred, the developer or builder must pay a levy known as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). For larger developments a legal agreement known as S106 is also drawn up to pay for things such as affordable housing, highways improvements or provision of open space. To give you an example of the money involved, the payments due from a single four-bedroom house would be approximately £4000 to the Parish Council and £30,000 to the District Council for use towards district-wide infrastructure. Information for each parish and development is publicly available via Mid Suffolk's website (www.midsuffolk.gov.uk) Click on the Planning and CIL links until you get to the Developer Contributions Database. It is good to see the information provided openly and transparently.