

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting**  
**Monday 9 March 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); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor)(arrived 9.00pm); T Bamber (Clerk).

**Attending:** (no members of the public were present).

**1. Apologies for absence**

C Todhunter (Vice Chairman)(with council's prior agreement);

**2. Declarations of interest**

Cllr T Chaplin in respect of 11(c) (iv)

**3. Public Forum**

No members of the public were present

**4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 10 February 2020**

Minutes for 10 February 2020 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.

**6. County Councillor's Report**

Cllr Oakes referred the councillors to her report (appendix i) and invited the Clerk to send her a copy of the SID invoice.

**7. District Councillor's Report**

Cllr Matthissen arrived later and went through his report. This is attached as appendix ii. Councillors asked if the District Council may be able to help with litter picking sticks and also if he may be able to use some of his budget on the second SID that has been ordered. The Clerk was asked to send him details.

**8. Parish Council Chairman's Report**

The Chairman thanked everyone for their good work in the litter pick. Other than this there were no matters not raised elsewhere.

**9. Clerk's Report**

No matters not raised elsewhere.



## 10. Planning

- a. Applications received for consideration
  - i. DC/20/00741 - Fen Stables, Combs Lane – installation of sewage treatment plant.  
*No objection.*
- b. Decisions received from MSDC
  - i. DC/20/00020 –Peppits, 3 Tile Row, Moats Tye – erection of two and single storey extension –  
*Planning Permission granted. Noted*
  - ii. DC/19/05572 – Land adjacent to 2 Oak Thatch, Park Road - outline application for erection of 2 dwellings – *approved. Noted*
  - iii. DC/19/05573 – Land adjacent to Model Farm House, Park Road - outline application for erection of 2 dwellings – *refuse..Noted*

## 11. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26 February 2020 was £16,835.68 and the savings account balance as of 2 March 2020 was £1,914.07.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.

### b. Payments received

- i. T/L D Havers – Interment £530
- ii. T/L C Pinson-Roxburgh– Interment £370
- iii. T/L V Moore – Interment £ 50
- iv. T/L V Moore – Inscription £100

### c. Payments to hand

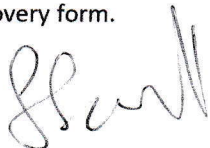
- i. EON October energy bill - £76.39 (Direct debit) Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. Morelock Signs Ltd (Speed Indicator Device) -£2752.80. Payment was AGREED by all councillors. Cheque number 22224 was written, and signed by Cllrs Whitehead and Scarff. (*Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s 72(1)*)
- iii. Clerk's pay (£2536.12)& PAYE to HMRC ( £633.80) Payment was AGREED by all councillors. Cheque numbers 22225 & 22226 were written, and signed by Cllrs Whitehead and Scarff. (*Local Government Act 1972, s112*)
- iv. T Chaplin – newsletter expenses - £54.00 Payment was AGREED by all councillors. Cheque number 22227 was written, and signed by Cllrs Whitehead and Scarff. (*Local Government Act 1972, s 142*)

### d. Donation Requests

Requests for donations had been received from Age UK, SARS and EACH. A sub-committee had considered these in light of the Council's policy and reached the recommendation that all three be declined, as there was insufficient tangible or specific benefit to the village. It was noted that no other nearby parish councils appear to use their funds to support charities other than purely local projects and then for very modest amounts. It was AGREED that all three requests be declined.

### e. Review of Internal Control Statement

Cllr Walker reported that he had reviewed the internal control report and confirmed that it appeared in order. He mentioned that the Code of Conduct, while being the version currently recommended by SALC, was published in 2014 and recommended that this be reviewed to ensure it is still fit for purpose. He further suggested that now may be a good time to collect the outstanding VAT due to the Council. It was AGREED that the Internal Control Statement be approved and that the Clerk should circulate the Code of Conduct for review and file the VAT recovery form.



**Action:** 1) Clerk to lodge Internal Control Statement on the website and file it for subsequent audit .  
2) Clerk to circulate Code of Conduct and submit VAT recovery form.

**12. High Kerb, Jack's Lane/Park Road**

Cllr Walker confirmed that the issue was under control, although the hedge nearby was noted to have caused difficulty for wheelchair users. The clerk was instructed to write to the property owner requesting their assistance.

**13. Flooding, Combs Lane**

Cllr Oakes confirmed that she would take this up with Highways.

**14. Recycling Workshop**

Cllr Chaplin suggested that this be held over until the Cricket Club extension work is complete.

**15. Litter Pick**

Cllr Crooks confirmed the litter pick was a great success, in that many people turned up to help and 56 bags of rubbish were collected. The clerk was instructed to write letters of thanks to Mr James Portway for the use of the Tannery car park and to MSDC for their prompt collection of the bags.

The clerk was instructed to ask MSDC for a new supply of bin bags, so they would be in place for the next litterpick.

**Action:** Clerk to issue letters and request bags.

**16. Street Lights**

Cllr Thorpe reported that there is a street light in Tannery Road where one resident wants it turned off permanently while another would like it to be on as it gives her a feeling of security. Before making a decision, the clerk was asked to ascertain the legal position: does a parish council have a duty to maintain in working order a street light that they own? Cllr Oakes offered to make enquiries of the County council as to how they handle conflicting preferences for street lights.

**17. Parish Newsletter**

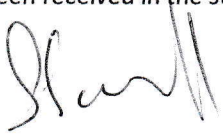
The Chairman thanked Cllr Chaplin for her good work in putting together the latest newsletter. It was AGREED that future deliveries were to include the houses technically in Little Finborough, where these were interspersed with Combs houses.

**18. Grants & Fundraising**

Cllr Whitehead reported on progress with the Oaks Meadow project. Cllr Matthissen had informed the committee that they would need to have a bank account in place in order to receive a contribution from him. As no such account had yet been established it was AGREED that the Parish Council would permit the use of its bank account to hold the funds in trust. The clerk mentioned that in order to avoid falling into a more onerous audit category it would be important to ensure that the council's turnover did not exceed £25,000. This is currently unlikely but should be monitored.

**19. Diseased Tree, Webbs Close**

The Clerk reported that a quotation had been received in the sum of £600. Details will be sent to the land owners before instructing the work to start.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. Smith', is written below the text of item 19.



## **20. Overgrown Hedges**

The clerk was provided with details of further houses in the village that should be given a letter requesting attention to their hedges.

**Action: Clerk to deliver the letters.**

## **21. Combs Cemetery**

The clerk reported that a family had asked if a grave could be reserved near to that of their very young child. Despite the tragic circumstances the councillors regretfully **AGREED** that there could be no exception to the policy of no further reservations, as the rule existed to comply with health and safety regulations.

## **22. 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.

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

- Cllr Scarff will provide a plan of the village footpaths to Cllr Oakes, and the subject is to be discussed at the next meeting.
- The possibility of changing the venue for council meetings is to be discussed at the next meeting.

## **24. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 20 April 2020 at 7.30pm**

The Meeting closed at 9.30pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Scarff', is written over the text 'The Meeting closed at 9.30pm'.



# March 2020 Monthly Parish Newsletter

## **New street lighting proposed to reduce the county's carbon footprint**

Suffolk County Council is looking to reduce its carbon footprint by investing £9.8m in street lighting, after Cabinet approved an LED street lighting replacement project.

Following a review of its street lighting policy in 2010, and with energy prices set to increase at between 8% and 12% a year, the Council has decided the high energy consumption of its existing lanterns could create further pressure on its resources in the near future.

The Council owns and maintains over 60,000 street lights. Back in 2010, the Council took numerous steps to help reduce both the energy costs and carbon footprint of its lighting stock. This included the introduction of part-night lighting arrangements and conversion to LED for those lighting units that were consuming the highest level of energy.

The proposal to convert the remaining street lighting stock to LED will help to reduce both Suffolk's energy consumption and carbon footprint, whilst providing crisper illumination of the streets for residents. The project will also ensure that Suffolk remains resilient to any future energy price increases. The project will be completed in the autumn of 2022.

## **Suffolk Highways waives fees for VE and VJ Day Commemoration events**

In commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe and Victory over Japan Days, Suffolk Highways has confirmed it will waive road closure application fees and help support communities with event traffic management.

Communities in Suffolk will be organising commemorative events, some of which may require an application to Suffolk Highways for a road closure.

Communities can find out more about how to apply for a road closure as part of a commemorative event they're holding, by visiting: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/eventroadclosure](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/eventroadclosure)

## **Refilling your weekly shop without unnecessary plastic is getting easier in Suffolk**

A number of shops in Suffolk are offering refills for a host of household items in a bid to cut down on the amount of plastic and packaging we use.

The Suffolk Waste Partnership has launched a handy online directory which lists the shops, businesses or charities that host refill points for items such as cleaning products and toiletries, and dried foods such as rice or oats and even loose-leaf tea and chocolate. At the moment there are 22 organisations that stock refills, but the partnership is encouraging other businesses to consider introducing similar schemes.

Residents can search their local area on the directory to find where their nearest refill point is. The directory can be found here <https://suffolkrecycling.org.uk/reduce-your-waste/refill-directory>. If any retailers or businesses would like to offer refill services and get listed on the online directory please contact [Waste.Management@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Waste.Management@suffolk.gov.uk).

County Councillor Kay Oakes



## District Councillor Report: Parish Council - March 2020

Full Council meeting	A very long and at times acrimonious meeting eventually approved the Council budget while rejecting opposition amendments. A Council Tax increase of 1.66% was agreed; this equates to a £2.76 pa, 5p per week, increase for a Band D property. The housing budget was also approved, including big increases to service charges and utility bills, which were opposed by half the council.
Leisure centres	Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and Stradbroke Swim and Fitness Centre have recently been named as some of the country's best following a national industry assessment. Their GP exercise referral scheme was assessed by Quest and awarded the status of 'excellent'. The assessment looked at all aspects of performance, and the final report praised the high level of coordination and effort that goes into the exercise referral schemes at both centres.
Needham station	Needham Market railway station is set to receive £380,000 in government funding to improve accessibility including level access for prams, bikes and wheelchairs to the Ipswich-bound platform. The funding from the Department of Transport Access for All programme, plus a similar sum from MSDC and SCC, will benefit Needham Market, providing much better access from the town to the lake, thus giving a further boost to plans to regenerate Needham Market
Council and Cabinet	The Leader of the Council has cancelled a number of Council meetings in the coming months, reducing the opportunities for Councillors to hold the Administration to account. Also, portfolio holders' reports will in future be presented to Cabinet rather than to full Council; this will mean that any Councillor wishing to put questions to a portfolio holder will need to make an extra trip to Ipswich.
Corona virus	The District Council managers are currently reviewing contingency plans and sign-posting enquiries to Government and W.H.O. advice. We will have staff off sick like other organisations but already many staff are working from home on some days. Council will aim to maintain basic services if infection takes hold but will not be able to roll out lots of extra help. Parishes will be key, with good neighbour schemes, formal and informal a help.