

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Annual General Meeting
Monday 11 May 2020 at 7.30pm, via Zoom remote meetings**

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); V Whitehead (Councillor); T Chaplin (Councillor); I Walker (Councillor); D Thorpe (Councillor K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor)(arrived 8.10pm); T Bamber (Clerk).

Attending no members of the public were present

1. Election of Chairman and Declaration of Office as Chairman

Cllr Scarff invited nominations for chair but there were none. After establishing that Cllr Scarff would be willing to stand again as chairman Cllr Whitehead nominated him. This was seconded by Cllr Thorpe and the proposal was AGREED unanimously. Cllr Scarff confirmed that he would sign the Declaration of Office and the clerk will arrange for this to be done.

Action: Clerk to arrange signature

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

There were no volunteers to stand as vice chairman and it was AGREED to defer this matter until later in the year.

3. Apologies for absence

J Crooks (Councillor); C Todhunter (Councillor)(with council's prior agreement);

4. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Public Forum

There were no members of public present.

6. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 20 April 2020

Minutes for 20 April 2020 were reviewed and were to be signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by the Chairman.

Action: Clerk to arrange signature

7. Matters arising from the minutes

County Cllr. Oakes informed the Council that the deteriorated footbridge had been reported but that any prompt response was unlikely, given the current emergency.

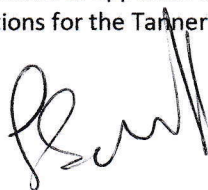
Cllr Chaplin suggested that the discussion on a possible change in venue should be deferred until physical meetings were again possible.

8. County Councillor's Report

Cllr Oakes referred the councillors to her report (appendix i), which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In addition to that, the councillor informed the Council that she had acquired some face masks and would be happy to provide them should any councillor need them for Council-related business.

9. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr. Matthissen referred to his report, attached as appendix ii, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He mentioned that the planning applications for the Tannery were still lodged as two unconnected applications. There were no questions.



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10. Parish Council Chairman's Report

As the Annual Parish Meeting cannot currently be held, the Chairman observed that the usual opportunity to present an annual report would be lost. In order to provide a contemporaneous record for the year he therefore circulated his annual report so that it might form a formal part of the Council's records. This is attached as appendix iii (but will also be publicized separately on the village website).

11. Clerk's Report

No matters not raised elsewhere.

12. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration

i. DC/20/01110 – Land South of Union Road, Onehouse – *outline planning application for up to 146 houses*

Concern was expressed over the potential effect of traffic on Combs Lane and consequently Combs Ford, especially in light of the fact that the proposed access road to the A14 has now been cancelled. It was recognised that any attempt to predict how local people might change their driving habits as a result of these proposed changes is unlikely to prove accurate but it was probable that any problems would cascade into the surrounding area.

Since works had been carried out a while ago, there has often been severe flooding on Combs Lane and it was a further concern that further development is unlikely to ameliorate this.

Councillors agreed that they did not wish to support or oppose the application but that their concerns should be recorded. The clerk will post the concerns on the Planning website.

Action:

b. Decisions received from MSDC

i. No decisions have been notified to the Council.

13. Finance

a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 27 April 2020 was £20,316.10 and the savings account balance as of 2 April 2020 was £1,920.79 .

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted and it was noted that S.137 expenditure for the year had been £100, which is well within statutory limits (being £8.12 per elector, or about £4,847).

b. **Payments received**

i. None received



c. Payments to hand

- i. EON Electricity for streetlights (direct debit) -£ 76.39). Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. MSDC Litter & Dog bin emptying - £542.60 Payment was AGREED by all councillors. Cheque number 22229 was written, and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed by Cllrs Whitehead and Scarff. (*Litter Act 1983, s5,6*)
- iii. T Bamber (clerk) reimbursement for cost of scanner, needed to comply with new internal audit arrangements - £73.49. Payment was AGREED by all councillors. Cheque number 22230 was written, and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed by Cllrs Whitehead and Scarff. (*Local Government Act 1972, s111*)

d. Approval of annual figures and AGAR exemption

The clerk had circulated the annual accounts and it was AGREED that these be accepted. As the income and expenditure for the year were within the required limits (£25,000) the council is entitled to dispensation from the need for an Annual Governance & Accountability (AGAR) return. Councillors therefore AGREED that the exemption certificate be signed and sent to the external auditors.

14. Grants and fundraising

As there is currently a healthy bank account, various ideas were discussed that might make use of the funds for the good of the village. These included:

- a) Raised beds for planting around the village.
- b) Work to assist the Oaks Meadow project
- c) Cycle paths

It was agreed that further thought be given to these and any other ideas, including thoughts arising from the recent village survey. Cllr Matthissen expressed enthusiasm to help with cycle paths.

15. Review of Council Policies

a. Review of Standing Orders

The standing orders, updated last year, had been circulated prior to the meeting for review. It was AGREED that these were still valid and were approved by the Council.

b. Review of Financial Regulations

The Financial Regulations, updated last year, 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

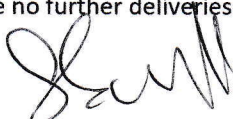
The Risk assessment was reviewed and accepted as before, and the Asset Register was reviewed and confirmed correct. It was the AGREED that these be approved.

d. Review of Internal Control Policy

The Internal Control Policy, initiated last year, was reviewed and slight amendments made. It was then AGREED that this be confirmed as formal policy.

16. Parish Newsletter

In light of the latest Covid 19 advice Cllr Chaplin will update the electronic newsletter, for posting on the website. Until lockdown is released there will be no further deliveries of newsletters to households.



17. Code of Conduct review (b/f from curtailed April meeting)

It was agreed that the code of conduct (available on the website) be reviewed by councillors in time for discussion at the next meeting.

18. Footpaths (b/f from curtailed April meeting)

Cllr Whitehead reported that footpaths in disuse need to be identified and marked before 2026, failing which they may cease to be protected by legislation.

19. Combs Cemetery / St Mary's Churchyard

The clerk reported that the currently marked areas for cremated remains and burials were becoming full. It was AGREED that when full, the next area to be used was that on the opposite side of the cemetery lane.

Cllrs Scarff and Thorpe will proceed to collapse the damaged table tomb in the churchyard.

20. Correspondence

The clerk had received several items:

- a) Report from a resident that they had cut their hedge back as requested. The clerk has written thanking them for their help.
- b) Report from a resident that a streetlight on Tannery Road has started working after some time of not working. As the lighting contractor is not currently working because of lockdown the reason the light has started working is a mystery. This will be considered at a later date.
- c) An email was received from a lady whose father had recently died. As a child her father used to play on the football pitch opposite the old 'Live and Let Live' pub and it had been his wish to have his ashes scattered on that ground. The clerk has established the current owner of the land and has put the lady in touch.

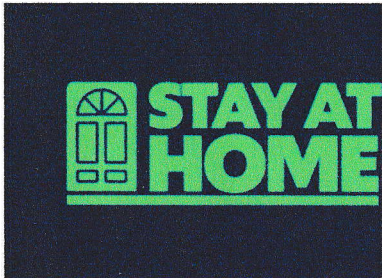
21. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 8 June 2020 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 9.10 pm





May 2020 Monthly Parish Newsletter



Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes, business support and schools guidance.

Keep up to date on the latest guidance on COVID-19 from central government here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

COVID-19 related news

HOME, BUT NOT ALONE

HOME, BUT NOT ALONE
Connecting volunteers and vulnerable people in Suffolk

DOWNLOAD
Tribe - Volunteer
APP TO VOLUNTEER



Need a volunteer's help? Call: 0800 876 6926

#COVID19SUFFOLK

You can call the Home, But Not Alone phoneline if you live in Suffolk and need urgent help during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This is a free service.

This emergency phoneline is for people who:

- do not have support available from friends, family or neighbours
- are struggling for food, medicines or other essential supplies
- are feeling lonely and isolated.

If any of these apply to you, call 0800 876 6926 (available 9am to 5pm every day, including weekends). The telephone line is not a general information line for COVID-19 queries.

The Home, But Not Alone phoneline takes on average 1,300 calls a week, which include calls for support with food, calls for support with collecting medication, and calls relating to loneliness or isolation.

Ipswich Waterfront closed to motorised traffic during the lockdown to help residents get their daily exercise at a safe distance

Suffolk County Council, the county's highways authority, is one of only a handful of councils in the country to take measures to temporarily close off a road to motorised vehicles to assist local people in taking their permitted daily exercise safely, whilst maintaining social distancing.

From 29 April, Ipswich Waterfront is temporarily closed between Custom House and Coprolite Street. The closure will be in place daily for a minimum of 21 days. After this time, the closure will be reviewed in line with the country's COVID-19 response. Signs will be put up advertising the road closure and advising people to keep to a safe distance.

Suffolk County Council is keen to stress this intervention is designed to support safe social distancing and, as per the government's guidelines, members of the public should not be traveling excessively to access public open spaces.

The highway authority will also consider other locations and measures it can implement in built-up areas in our county towns that will allow more people to carry out their daily exercise and support wellbeing, whilst continuing to follow the latest guidelines from government. This may include widening existing footpaths and cycle lanes, providing temporary footpaths and cycle lanes, and changing traffic signal timings to reduce waiting times for pedestrians and cyclists.

Firefighters support paramedics to help deliver life-saving care

Firefighters in Suffolk are joining forces with the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) to help provide frontline care during the coronavirus pandemic.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has volunteered and trained around 30 firefighters to work alongside paramedics to respond to 999 calls over the coming weeks. The firefighters are already blue light trained and will drive frontline emergency NHS ambulances, in turn freeing up paramedics to care for patients.

The firefighters have completed an induction course at Newmarket Ambulance Station, which included familiarising them with EEAST's vehicles and equipment. They were also taught basic life support and safe moving and handling skills so that they can help transfer patients.

Government opens COVID-19 testing site on outskirts of Ipswich

On 17 April, as part of its national COVID-19 testing programme, the Government opened a 'Drive Thru' testing facility on the outskirts of Ipswich.

Based on the existing Park and Ride site at Copdock Mill, off the A12 and A14 Junction, this is one of up to 50 sites being created around the country. This is a Government-led programme, supported by the Suffolk Resilience Forum and partners in Essex.

The site only offers testing on a pre-booked basis.

The Government is now offering testing for COVID-19 for:

- all those working on the frontline in health and social care (with or without symptoms)
- patients in the NHS and residents in care homes (with or without symptoms)
- all other essential workers with symptoms
- anyone over 65 with symptoms
- anyone who goes into work because they cannot work from home (for example, construction workers) and has symptoms
- anyone who has symptoms and lives with someone who meets any of the above criteria.

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> for more information on testing for COVID-19.

Stay at home and record life in lockdown

Suffolk Archives is calling on people across the county to record snapshots of their life whilst they stay at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Life in Lockdown' is a brand-new archive collection, which will preserve the history of today and help future generations better understand the lives we lead and the environment we live in.

Rebecca Harpur, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator, said:

"We want to hear from people from all walks of life and all ages, from right across Suffolk. In years to come we will want to look back on this important period of history, and the responses we receive could become a valuable part of Suffolk Archives' collection.

"It is up to you how much information you want to contribute; it could be a few immediate impressions or a more in-depth representation of life today.

"You can also upload digital content such as scans of documents, emails, social media screenshots, photographs, artwork, posters or diary entries, that capture life during lockdown."

To contribute simply visit www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/life-in-lockdown and complete the online survey. You can also sign up to keep a diary, make a scrapbook, or record the lockdown using photography or by producing artwork.

There are also activities available that can be done at home, including a challenge to create a miniature of a Suffolk building out of Lego bricks, printable colouring sheets and online jigsaw puzzles of documents from the Suffolk Archives collection.

A time capsule competition **has also been** launched by the Engagement Hub, part of Suffolk County Council's Children and Young People's services, in partnership with Suffolk Archives and The Hold. **'The Art of being 2 metres Apart!'** time capsule competition is to help children and young people to express and share their feelings during this difficult time through art, music or creative writing.

Councillor Paul West, Portfolio Holder for Heritage, said:

"We wanted to engage with young people and, as we can't see them face-to-face at the moment, this is a great way to connect with them.

"It gives young people a place to express their emotions about the virus, how their lives have changed and adapted, and how they are managing hopes and fears.

“They will be helping to record Suffolk history from a different viewpoint and help people in the future understand what it was like. The selected entries will go into The Hold for future generations to see.”

There are three categories (artwork, music or creative writing) and two age groups: 5-11 years old and 12-19 years old (up to 25 with SEND). You can enter more than one category, and the creative work submitted will be exhibited later in the year.

To enter, and for more information, visit: www.thesource.me.uk/timecapsule. The deadline is 1 September 2020, and there is a £30 voucher for the winner in each category and age group.

Financial assessments for those receiving care to be postponed

Each April, Suffolk County Council carries out an annual financial assessment review for those with care packages.

This year, in light of the current Coronavirus pandemic, a decision has been made to postpone the financial review until further notice.

On 16 April, the Council announced that those in receipt of care will continue to be charged in the same way that they are currently and there will be no change in the way in which people make their payments.

The situation will be kept under review, and customers will be informed when the time is right to consider undertaking the annual financial review. No back charges will be incurred as a result of this postponement.

The fight against scams

Times of distress and disruption are a magnet for scammers and, sadly, now is no different.

Action Fraud has reported that, in February alone, victims lost over £800,000 as a result of COVID-19 related scams. This figure is likely to be just the tip of the iceberg, as many will have felt too scared or ashamed to report, and others will be completely unaware that they have been duped.

Here in Suffolk both residents and businesses have been targeted by fraudsters in a variety of ways.

Trading Standards have seen emails that contain malware links and attachments, as well as those sending you to phishing sites, where the criminals attempt to steal your personal information. There have been reports of criminals knocking on doors and offering to go shopping for people who are self-isolating at home. Some purport to be from well-known charities such as The Red Cross, with others claiming to be from local community groups, including working on behalf of Suffolk County Council's Home, But Not Alone.

Other scams include online shopping scams involving sought-after items like face masks and hand sanitiser, with either no products being supplied or, worse still, products that don't comply with safety standards. There are also reports of fake websites that imitate agencies including HMRC, offering false tax relief assistance.

Trading Standards have highlighted all these scams on their social media channels as well as in their weekly email to over 700 Trading Standards Champions. Their followers on social media have helped share the information to thousands of people, who in turn have shared it with friends

and family both on and offline. Consumer Champions are residents, businesses and community groups of Suffolk, many of whom share the information on their community websites or in newsletters.

You can join the fight against scams by:

- Reporting scams to Suffolk Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133
- Following Trading Standard on Twitter, www.twitter.com/SuffolkTS, and Facebook, www.facebook.com/SuffolkTradingStandards, to help share messages to your friends, family and followers.
- Signing up to receive a weekly email alert by going to www.suffolk.gov.uk/JoinTheFight

Council continues to work with providers during Coronavirus pandemic

As the Coronavirus pandemic continues, the county council is keen to reassure people that it is doing everything in its power to support care providers.

Along with the NHS and health providers, the care system is vital to our response to Coronavirus and they are truly on the front line in terms of supporting our most vulnerable. The demand for their services has never been higher and the council is supporting them meet this challenge.

The council has changed the way in which it pays care providers in order to ensure they are able to remain operational during the crisis.

The council has also moved quickly to obtain extra capacity for care needs to be met by using CQC registered providers of home care that do not normally contract with the Council and buying more beds in care homes.

The council's own Home First service is also preparing for increased demand and planning for sickness levels by initially redeploying staff from across Adult Community Services. Basic training is already underway to upskill or refresh the skills of these staff in order to be ready for redeployment.

Adult Care Services are also working closely with the Home, But Not Alone hub to identify what other support can be offered to ease the pressure on carers as the crisis continues.

The council also recognises that the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) is an ongoing, national issue for care providers. Whilst care providers are responsible for sourcing PPE for their service, the high demand globally has made this increasingly difficult, adding to the pressure and anxiety of frontline workers. The council has lobbied tirelessly to ensure that care providers are given the same prioritisation as health workers in terms of receiving PPE and will continue to do so.

In order to support our local care providers Suffolk County Council are providing a centralised cell for PPE in Suffolk with a dedicated email address.

The council has been collating information for Adults and Children's services, districts and borough councils, Suffolk Constabulary, and the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and this is then fed into the stock and procurement system. The council's procurement team has established some good supply chains, both nationally and internationally. Endeavour House, Ipswich, is the

central base for all PPE delivery, storage, pack prep, and distribution. Packs are being sent out to frontline services in Suffolk on a daily basis.

In the week of 6 April alone, 65 care homes were provided with the emergency PPE they asked for and the council has responded to every care provider that has approached the council for support.

Residents show their support for Keep Moving Suffolk campaign

Residents and organisations in the public and voluntary sector have come out in support of the county's Keep Moving Suffolk campaign.

Led by Suffolk's Most Active County Partnership, the campaign supports everyone in Suffolk to get active from the safety of their homes and gardens, or during their one session of daily exercise away from their home, under the current COVID-19 pandemic social distancing arrangements.

It's all about giving people tips and advice to support a healthy mind and body. The key focus is the website keepmovingsuffolk.com which is full of local and national information and resources that have been developed specifically to make it easy for people to become, or remain, active at home during these challenging times.

The website has come about as a means to address the need to give people a range of options following the closure of gyms, leisure centres, and swimming pools and the cancellation of classes and activities. Without us all taking positive action, physical activity levels could tumble and cause a long-term impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing in the county.

The website launched on 1 April and, within its first week, the website was used over 2,500 times. There has also been great support through the Keep Moving Suffolk social media channels, where you can share with us your stories of how you are keeping active. On Facebook, visit [KeepMovingSuffolk](https://www.facebook.com/KeepMovingSuffolk) or on Twitter [@Most Active](https://twitter.com/MostActive)

Suffolk County Council to offer tenants rent deferral as part of support efforts during COVID-19 pandemic

Suffolk County Council owns and lets a range of properties and land to tenants throughout the county which are used in a number of ways, including the provision of care and education. During this challenging period, as residents of Suffolk stay at home to reduce the spread of infection and the majority of businesses remain closed, as a considerate landlord the council believes it should do what it can to support the local and regional economy through the management of its rental agreements with tenants.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Housing & Enterprise, Councillor Nick Gowrley, said:

"The authority has identified 87 of its most vulnerable tenants, which encompasses 123 properties. We have been in touch with each tenant to ask if there is anything we can do to support them at this difficult time. We believe these tenants should be given the opportunity to arrange deferral of their rent and charges for three months, should they wish to do so. This would give them a degree of financial support for a short period of time as the impacts of coronavirus on business continue.

Other news

More than 98% of pupils receive a preferred primary school on National Offer Day

On 16 April, it was reported that over 98.57% of Suffolk children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of the schools preferred by their parents.

Suffolk County Council received 7,602 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2020.

Some 7,116 children received offers for their first preference school and 7,493 children received an offer for one of their three preferred schools.

Council leaders call on EDF Energy to fully consult with local authorities before any public engagement commences

On 9 April, Leaders of East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council wrote to EDF Energy urging them to fully consider how and when they will consult with local communities as part of the planning process for a new Sizewell C power station on the Suffolk coast.

EDF Energy plan to submit their Development Consent Order to the Government's Planning Inspectorate in the next few weeks which triggers a formal process and timescale which includes a period of formal public engagement.

Whilst the two councils remain supportive of EDF Energy making the DCO submission, both councils are calling on the energy provider to consult with the two local authorities regarding their plans for speaking to the public.

There is concern that any period of consultation that begins during the current COVID-19 pandemic will not give the community the fullest opportunity possible to engage.

[Read the joint letter to EDF Energy from council leaders](#) (PDF, 190KB).

Suffolk councils tackle dangerous parking to aid key services

Parking management in Suffolk moved from the police to local councils from 6 April – it has been in operation in Ipswich since 2005 – with the aim of driving down unlawful parking. However, given the current COVID-19 situation, councils will be taking a common-sense view and focusing on tackling obstructive and dangerous parking to ensure emergency, care, delivery, refuse and highways services can get around safely at this challenging time.

As part of the national response to the pandemic, advice from the British Parking Association and the Local Government Association is that parking enforcement is an important public service that keeps roads safe and ensures access to goods and services.

This is vitally important, particularly for key workers, as Suffolk's councils strive to continue providing essential services to their residents.

Appendix ii – District Councillor's Report

Parish report May 2020 - district councillor John Matthissen

Virus response - people

Council staff are ensuring all areas have voluntary groups co-ordinating and supplementing the informal family and neighbour support for those unable to go out to shops, pharmacies etc. Back up to this is the Suffolk – wide Help line - 0800 876 6926 - Our staff are helping to run this.

People eligible for Council Tax support have been given £150 grants which will eliminate their bills altogether for the year.

Staff have been extremely busy in housing all homeless, rough sleepers and also sofa surfers in order to reduce risk of virus transmission. Council houses falling vacant are not being inspected and repaired for reletting as moving house is discouraged by government at present. This creates extra pressure. Achieving these actions required the renting of two entire hotels in the district, recently reduced to one.

Virus response – businesses and organisations

The council is able to support small businesses with grants and so far, has distributed over £32M to nearly 3000 businesses across both districts, which should be reimbursed by Government. Officers have tried to make contact with all small businesses but there are still some outstanding. More information about how to apply for a grant is available on the website. <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/>

Organisations eligible for business rate discounts, such as charities, village halls, rural shops and pubs have had additional help.

Emergency needs grants of up to £2500 have been paid out to groups playing a key role in protecting vulnerable residents.

Meetings - Since the lockdown more and more internal meetings are being held on-line, and as much council business as possible continues, with all staff working at home. Formal meetings have begun with planning committees and cabinet, with a Scrutiny committee coming next. Political group leaders are being kept up to date with regular meetings with the Chief Executive.

Decisions - Under delegated powers as augmented by government legislation some key decisions have been made by the chief executive. Most significant are the approval of section 106 conditions regarding Snoasis, approval of £2.2m Improvements to the Stowmarket Leisure Centre and amendments to our statement of community involvement which means no site notices for planning applications.

Government has instructed councils to keep the planning system moving, with increased delegated decisions, but ward councillors can ask for decisions to be made by committee where they feel it is essential.

Building sites – where MSDC have works in progress, these have been suspended for the present.

Waste services – the collection teams have been depleted by illness and self-isolation but managed to maintain collections of green and black bins by suspending the brown bin service. This will resume Monday 11th May. It is hoped a restricted reopening of HWRC sites will be possible soon, but no firm date yet.