

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 14 September 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)(left at 8:25); T Bamber (Clerk).

Attending no members of the public were present

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of interest

The Chairman queried if he may be deemed to have an interest in respect of 9(a) (i), as he currently farms the field whose edge is the subject of the planning application. The clerk noted that the Chair would neither lose nor gain anything as a result of either approval or rejection of the application. To avoid any risk of impropriety it was suggested that councillors could consider granting the chairman dispensation in respect of this application, and this was unanimously agreed.

3. Public Forum

There were no members of public present.

4. Minutes of extraordinary meeting held on Monday 3 August 2020

Minutes for 3 August 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

5. Matters arising from the minutes

The Chairman asked if there had been any approach to the Council in respect of the collapsed manhole cover in the churchyard, as he had heard that a quotation was being obtained. The Clerk confirmed that he had heard nothing further but he will contact Rev Childs on the matter.

Action: Clerk to contact vicar

6. County Councillor's Report

Cllr Oakes referred the councillors to her report (appendix i), which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There were no questions at this point.

7. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr. Matthissen referred the councillors to his report (appendix ii), which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

In response to a question regarding the possibility of financial support for the Cricket Club both the County Councillor and the District Councillor invited the club to contact them.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

Nothing to report that is not mentioned elsewhere



9. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

- i. DC/20/03619 – Land North of Bildeston Road – *Outline Application for up to 9 dwellings.*

Following discussion it was agreed by all, with one abstention, that the council oppose this application, for the following reasons:

- a) The location is outside the current settlement boundary;
- b) The location forms a welcome gap that gives character to a rural village;
- c) If the gap were developed it would turn this unclassified road into a virtual street, with a long unbroken row of houses;
- d) Further loss of good farming land should be resisted while other means of satisfying local housing requirements are available.

The councillors felt that if, despite their views, the planning department saw fit to grant the application, it would be better if the houses were more in keeping with the bungalows adjoining the plot, but it was agreed that this should not be commented on in the formal response to the planning department lest this be misinterpreted as acceptance of the application.

- ii. DC/20/03717 – The Appleyard, Bildeston Road – *Erection of two storey and single storey front extensions.*

All councillors agreed to support this application.

- iii. DC/20/03739 – Walnut Tree Cottage, Moats Tye – *Application to vary planning conditions.*

All councillors agreed to support this application.

Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website

b. Decisions received from MSDC:

- i. DC/20/02346 – Land at Moats Tye – outline planning permission for one dwelling – *Granted. Noted*
- ii. DC/20/02630 – Snowdrop Cottage, Park Road – Erection of extensions – *granted. Noted*

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26 August 2020 was £19,770.68 and the savings account balance as of 31 August 2020 was £1,920.79 .

The budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted, as was the asset statement that had also been circulated previously.

b. Payments received

- i. None received

c. Payments to hand

- i. EON Electricity for streetlights (direct debit) -£ 73.93). Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. Community Heartbeat –replacement batteries for defibrillators - £446.40. Payment was AGREED by all councillors. Cheque number 22236 was written, and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed. (*Public Health Act 1936, s234*)

Action: Clerk to arrange signatures and send



11. Cycle Paths

The Chairman confirmed that he was in contact with relevant land owners regarding the possibility of agreeing a village cycle path and would report back.

12. Newsletter

It was suggested that the Council might distribute its newsletter using social media but in light of the extremely limited response to the previous attempt to use technology it was agreed to maintain a physical delivery to each house in the village, and to monitor this annually.

Cllr Chaplin informed councillors that the deadline for the next newsletter was 24th September.

13. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Whitehead reported that the topography work had been carried out and the committee were now identifying the best location for structures. In answer to a previously raised point, the committee had confirmed to Cllr Whitehead that memorial trees and benches would be welcomed on the meadow.

Work is being done to assess the size and price of a rainwater harvesting system and the cost of this may be something with which the Council could consider assisting.

14. Traffic speed Moats Tye and missing sign

The clerk reported that he had still heard no more from Morelock, the SID suppliers, despite a chasing call. He will continue to pursue this.

Cllr Oakes has acquired a supply of speed limit reminder stickers to put on wheelie bins. These will be made available from Cllr Chaplin's and the clerk's address and mentioned in the newsletter.

The Councillors were informed of the huge waiting list for work to be carried out by Highways, despite some of the issues, such as speed limit signs being so important. Councillors felt that such poor service should be made known to the press but first Cllr Oakes will try to find a way to accelerate matters.

In response to news of two missing traffic signs in Moats Tye, which will cost £500-1,000 each, Cllr Oakes kindly confirmed that she would arrange for their replacement out of her budget.

Action: Clerk to chase supplier

15. Coronavirus Response

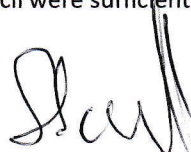
The Chairman will print updated government posters to put on the coronavirus noticeboards.

Action: Chairman to print new posters

16. Future use of Village Hall

Cllr Oakes reported that Parish councils are in the list of groups exempted from the 'rule of six' and they could, should they wish, resume face to face meetings.

It was generally agreed that the needs of the village and council were sufficiently met by using remote meetings at present, however this should be reviewed every few months.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shaw', is located at the bottom right of the page.

17. GDPR

The clerk reported that Cllr Walker had kindly provided a draft data breach policy and this will be circulated for review, to be approved/amended at the next meeting..

Action: Clerk to circulate draft

18. Code of Conduct Review

The update from NALC on the recommended code of conduct has been circulated. Councillors agreed that it would be best to await the outcome of NALC's review, and consider being guided by that.

19. Correspondence

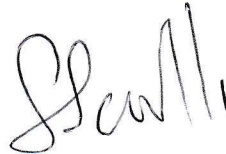
The clerk had received no current items

20. Any Other Business

- Details of the councillor vacancies will be mentioned in the newsletter.
- If space permits, posters regarding littering will be added to the coronavirus noticeboards

21. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 12 October 2020 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 9.23 pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Scott', is written over the text 'The Meeting closed at 9.23 pm'.

September 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

Preparations are finalised for SCC funded school travel for the new school term

Suffolk County Council (SCC) have made preparations to ensure all pupils who are eligible for SCC funded school travel are transported to school safely for the start of term. SCC transports approximately 12,000 pupils, which is around 12% of the school population.

On 11 August 2020, the Department for Education published official guidance on the measures that need to be in place to ensure that school transport is COVID-19 safe. SCC have been working closely with bus operators and schools to put these into place.

There are three types of school transport that children travel on - either a dedicated closed contract, shared route, or public transport route. The guidelines for these routes are slightly different.

The majority of eligible pupils travel to school on dedicated, closed routes. This means that the vehicle only carries school children. On these routes, social distancing will not apply. There will be other measures in place to ensure pupils' safety. For example, children need to make sure they wash their hands before and after travelling, and no eating and drinking will be allowed on these vehicles. Face coverings are also recommended for children aged 11 and over.

Some children travel to school on shared routes. This is where most passengers are pupils going to school or college, but there are also a few members of the public travelling on the vehicle. SCC have worked closely with operators to ensure that there is enough space on these shared transport routes. Pupils should observe social distancing guidelines with members of the public and sit in the seats marked; they can sit next to members of their family or fellow pupils. On these routes, face coverings will be mandatory unless a child is exempt from wearing one, in line with guidance.

For pupils who travel to school by public transport, where routes are used mainly by the general public, social distancing will apply and face coverings will be mandatory unless the child is exempt from wearing one.

For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) most of their routes are dedicated, so this means there is little change to their transport. Where changes are being made, we are getting in touch with the families to explain the arrangements for the new term.

A child **must not** travel on any of these routes if anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19, which are a new persistent cough, high temperature and/or a change in their sense of taste or smell. If the child or anyone in the household has these symptoms, then public health advice should be followed as usual.

Spare seats

Planning school transport has been complex, as SCC has to plan transport across the three types of school travel routes. This involves, trying to predict how many fare-paying passengers there will be on shared and public routes. This has an impact on dedicated routes and how many spare seats will be available. We may need to use some of the spare seats for entitled pupils, but this will not be known straightaway. Therefore, spare seats will still be unavailable, to enable SCC to monitor capacity. Parents will be able to apply for spare seats from October half-term, subject to availability.

New project website for Suffolk County Council's A140 improvement scheme

Suffolk County Council has partnered with Interserve Construction to deliver a vital upgrade to the A140 road near Eye, Suffolk.

This stretch of road has seen a number of issues over the last five years. The scheme will improve journey time reliability and road safety in the area, and advance access to the Eye Airfield Development Area.

The improvements include:

- Two new roundabout junctions on the A140 Castleton Way and south of Rectory Road.
- A link road through to B1077 from the Northern roundabout.
- Restricted movements at the A140/B1077 junction: prohibit right turns in and out, improving journey times and safety.
- Closure of the A140/Rectory Road junction.
- Landscaping and new pathways for walkers and cyclists.

Keeping the local community and key stakeholders updated and informed is a vital part of the project. Therefore, the project team is happy to announce that a dedicated website has been developed.

<https://eyea140scheme.co.uk/> aims to update all interested stakeholders regularly about the project's recent activities and any traffic management measures which may be in place to help support the work. A phone number is also available (07917 598 686) to directly contact the project's representatives.

Remembering VJ Day, 75 years on

Saturday 15 August was the 75th anniversary of VJ Day in the UK, marking Victory in Japan at the end of the Second World War.

With celebrations often centred around VE Day earlier in the year, this period of the Second World War is sometimes overlooked, but it is important to remember that the war between the Allied Forces and Japan continued until August. In fact, on VE Day in 1945, Churchill reminded the British public that the country should "not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead" and for many people this certainly proved to be true.

Troops from the Suffolk Regiment served across the Far East including in the Razmak District of Pakistan, Burma, and Singapore, as well as in Europe and Africa. It was following the loss of Singapore in February 1942 that the 4th and 5th Battalions spent three and half years as Prisoners-of-War, initially in the infamous Changi Jail, then constructing the Burma to Thailand Railway.

The team at Suffolk Archives have put together a [special online exhibition marking VJ Day](#), exploring the stories of two Suffolk men who were taken prisoner in the Far East, Able Seaman Harold Lock and Private Raymond Suttle, from the 4th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, as well as looking at the way our county marked the end of the Second World War.

The Suffolk Archives display also features a digitised version of a 1944 War Office handbook explaining the challenges of contacting and supporting POWs in the Far East, and a series of extracts showing how VJ Day activities across Suffolk were reported in local newspapers.

The development of online displays such as this has been made possible thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, aimed at increasing use and understanding of the archives through a series of countywide initiatives.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Portfolio Holder for Heritage, said; "We hope that this new display will help people to remember and recognise those Allied Forces who served in the Far East, in particular those who were imprisoned or who lost their lives. Not only did the Allied Forces have to contend with the War itself but also faced the menace of deadly and unfamiliar tropical diseases as well high temperatures, high humidity and monsoons. Seventy-five years on it is important to look back and realise how many people made the ultimate sacrifice."

Suffolk celebrates 1,000 miles of newly surfaced roads

Suffolk Highways has completed its 1,000th resurfaced mile, following the Council's commitment to relay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's road network.

In 2017, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet committed to resurfacing 1,000 miles of road across Suffolk over a four-year period; in a bid to improve the quality of roads, reduce the number of potholes and to help stop potholes from forming in the first place.

The commitment also makes sound financial sense, as preventing the deterioration of road surfaces by machine surfacing or surface dressing helps reduce the need to spend more money on reactive maintenance repairing potholes now, and in future years.

The 1,000th mile was laid at Horham Road in Eye on Tuesday 4 August 2020.

Free cycling sessions for the people of Suffolk

The County Council's Bikeability team is now offering FREE cycling sessions to provide practical skills on how to cycle on today's roads. Everyone is welcome to take part - adults, families, and children. The sessions are aimed at those who want to cycle more regularly, whether to keep fit, to commute to work or school, or to visit friends.

A session lasts between 2 and 2.5 hours and is delivered by a fully qualified Bikeability Cyclist Trainer. The trainer chats to you first about what you are trying to achieve and tailors the session to your specific needs.

Travel behaviour has transformed during lockdown, both nationally and in Suffolk, as more people turn to cycling for essential journeys and exercise. It has been a cycling revolution!

- Journeys made by bike rose by 120% during the pandemic, while bus, rail, ferry, plane and car journeys fell by as much as 95%.
- Latest research also suggests that as much as 16% of the population in England (8.9 million people) have been cycling per week during the pandemic.

Suffolk County Council wants to encourage more people to get out and about by cycling and walking for their short journeys. The aim is to embed active travel as part of a long-term habit and reap the associated health, air quality and congestion benefits.

Suffolk has already implemented several cycling schemes in Ipswich as a result of funding received from the Department for Transport and further schemes are now being considered in Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Beccles, Felixstowe, Stowmarket and Sudbury.

It is also promoting the Government's Fix Your Bike £50 voucher scheme, and has provided funding to Greater Anglia to install more cycle racks at their train stations across Suffolk to help more people make cycling part of their commute or daily routine.

Suffolk and Norfolk businesses set for extra boost for apprentices

Apprenticeships Suffolk and Apprenticeships Norfolk are launching a reward package, **Recruit Retain Reward**, providing £1,000 grants for businesses taking on new and/or redundant young apprentices, aged 16-24.

In a bid to give small and medium-sized Suffolk and Norfolk businesses as much support as possible, the project aims to offer a flexible 'Apprenticeship Incentive Fund' of £1000, giving businesses a boost to recruit their workforce for the future.

Employers who take on apprentices can experience a wide range of benefits. Developing apprentices' skills to be relevant to the organisation, along with improved productivity, better quality of product or service, and higher staff

morale are benefits highlighted by around three-quarters of employers. More than 8 out of 10 employers recommend an apprenticeship to others *

The new incentive scheme across Suffolk and Norfolk, will complement and enhance the new Government apprenticeship incentives announced recently by the chancellor Rishi Sunak (£2,000 for 16-24, £1,500 for 25+), and also the existing age incentives of £1,000 for 16-18s (19-24 with an Education Health Care plan).

In addition to the one-off financial payment, there will also be continued support for organisations who are new to apprenticeships. A collection of online resources is being created to support businesses employing an apprentice for the first time. This includes practical guidance and useful information from existing, local apprenticeship ambassadors to help add real value to the business.

It is hoped that the project, which is sponsored by the East of England Employer Ambassador Apprenticeship Network, will encourage apprenticeship starts across Suffolk and Norfolk, post COVID-19.

Suffolk County Councillor Mary Evans Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills said: "I am delighted to see the launch of this reward package for businesses in Suffolk. The project provides an excellent package of support for our local employers who are keen to find and develop emerging talent and invest in the future growth of their organisation."

Apprenticeships Suffolk and Apprenticeships Norfolk provide an impartial service to all employers, providers, apprentices and stakeholders. Further details of the project can be found here: apprenticeshipssuffolk.org and apprenticeshipsnorfolk.org

* Data source: [GOV.UK publications](https://gov.uk/publications)

Appendix ii – District Councillor's Report

District Councillor Report: Onehouse Ward September 2020

New Council group	The 12 Green councillors and 5 Liberal Democrat councillors have agreed to form a joint group which comprises half the council.
	Other news comes from the first full council meeting held virtually on July 23rd
Joint Local plan timetable	An updated version of this was approved while noting that this was the fourth delay to the joint local plan process since it began. It is now intended to carry out a technical consultation in the autumn of 2020 and send a version to government in the winter. This should be followed by examination in public during the summer of 2021 and adoption sometime in the winter of 2021/22.
Cycling	A Green Party proposal to increase the involvement and resources the District commits to cycling was unanimously approved after amendment.
Cifco	This was followed by a proposal to halt any further purchases of investment property by the council's company Cifco. After a very thorough debate there was an equality of votes 17 each side. A motion requires a majority to succeed and the chair declined to cast a vote so the proposal failed.
Cifco II	There was then a second debate regarding the future business plan for Cifco which again resulted in a tied vote and the chair cast a second vote in favour of the business plan. All this took place a few days after Cifco had purchased a GP practice in Nottingham but without the benefit of seeing the very unsatisfactory Cifco accounts for the year to 31st of March 2020. These had been signed off a few days before the council meeting but were not published until afterwards
Locality Awards	A reminder that Locality Awards have been launched for 2020/21. I have £7,350 and hope to make awards to all villages, allocating some money soon and the balance towards the end of 2020. If you know of a community group in need of some funding, please put them in touch with me.
Covid	A sharp increase in infections in Mid Suffolk last week, from a very low base in recent weeks, to 10 new cases.
On street parking	Restrictions are being enforced, with lots of tickets issued in Stowmarket.