

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 9 November 2020 at 7.30pm, via Zoom remote meetings**

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); T Chaplin (Councillor); I Walker (Councillor); V Whitehead (Councillor); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor) (left at 8:45); T Bamber (Clerk).

Attending: three members of the public in respect of item 9 (a) (iii)

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr T Chaplin in respect of 9(a)(ii).

3. Public Forum

Those members of public present were interested in item 9a)(iii).

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 12 October 2020

Minutes for 12 October 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

In response to a question in respect of the suggestion of changing the Give Way sign at the top of Tannery Road into a 'Stop' sign, Cllr Oakes reported that she was still awaiting a response from Highways.

6. County Councillor's Report

The clerk apologised as he had yet to circulate the County Councillor's report and confirmed it would be sent and appended to the minutes. Cllr Oakes invited councillors to contact her/the clerk with any questions once they had received the report. She also confirmed that she was still trying to speed up the provision of speed signs for the village.

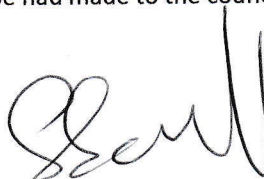
Action: Clerk to forward any enquiry to Cllr Oakes.

7. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr. Matthissen had sent his report but it had not been received by the clerk. He will resend it and it is attached as appendix 2 here.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

There was nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere. However the chairman took the opportunity to express his gratitude for the huge contribution Cllr Thorpe had made to the council, and his sorrow at Cllr Thorpe's resignation, as reported in an earlier email to councillors.



9. Planning

- a. It was noted with appreciation that several residents had not only taken the time to send comments into the planning system but had also taken the trouble to present these at the parish council meeting.

Applications received for consideration:

- i. DC/20/04438 – Moats Tye Livery – *erection of two dwellings*

Following discussion the council voted to object to this application, with the following comments:

- a) The site is outside the settlement boundary;
- b) While this application is not connected with any others it is one of a disproportionately large number of applications for such a small hamlet and the cumulative impact of such proposals should be taken into account including the adjacent plot recently approved;
- c) There are concerns over drainage for the site;
- d) It is believed tawny owls are resident in the buildings that are proposed to be demolished;
- e) While it would seem that traffic is only an issue for planners when roads are actually blocked, the impact of increases in traffic volume on such a small community is considerable.

- ii. DC/20/04524– Land at Little London – *Change of use to 1 dwelling*

At this point Cllr Chaplin left the meeting.

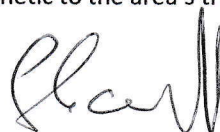
Combs Parish Council voted to support this application but was keen to ensure the comments by Heritage England are taken into account

Cllr Chaplin then rejoined the meeting

- iii. DC/20/04631 – Land East of Gardeners Arms - *erection of two dwellings*

The Council noted and endorsed the comments made by residents and by Sport England in respect of this application and voted to object, noting in particular:

- The site is very close to the Battisford and District Cricket Club. The proposal gives rise to the bizarre possibility that the development's occupants may later seek to have the cricket club closed on the basis that it constituted a disturbance to them. The club is a thriving community facility that has been in existence since 1973 and it is surely wrong that its survival should be compromised by opportunistic development;
- The site is outside the settlement boundary;
- The application is not consistent with core strategy on several points already raised;
- While this application is not connected with any others it is one of a disproportionately large number of applications for such a small hamlet and the cumulative impact of such proposals should be taken into account, including the adjacent plot recently approved;
- There are also concerns regarding drainage in this area;
- Should the proposal be taken further, it should be ensured that the design of the buildings is sympathetic to the area's traditional style.



- iv. DC/20/04759 – 18 Model Farm – *erection of single storey extension*

All councillors agreed to support this application.

Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website

b. Decisions received from MSDC:

- i. DC/20/03090 & 3091 – Mattocks Farm – *planning/ listed building consent* – granted
- ii. DC/20/02197 – Pole Barn – *Erection of 1 dwelling and annex* – granted
- iii. DC/20/03619 – land North of Bildeston Road – *application for 9 dwellings* – granted.
- iv. DC/20/03739 - Walnut Tree Cottage – *application to vary Approved Plans* - granted

Councillors noted these decisions and expressed concern that so many application have been granted recently, in several cases despite what the council considered to be powerful objections. It was AGREED that the clerk make enquiries of SALC regarding future planning training.

Action: Clerk to research planning training courses for councillors

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26 October 2020 was £32,501.57 and the savings account balance as of 30 October 2020 was £1,920.79 .

The budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.

b. **Payments received**

- i. CIL receipt (Bowl Meadow) £7,367.61

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. T Bamber – reimbursement for cost of website subscription paid by card to Community Action Suffolk - £42.00. Payment was AGREED by all councillors. Cheque number 22240 was written, and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed. (*Local Government Act 1972, s 142*).

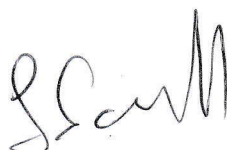
Action: Clerk to arrange signature and send

d. **Cheque Signatories**

In light of the resignation of Cllr Thorpe there remain only two authorised cheque signatories. Following discussion it was AGREED that Cllr Chaplin be nominated as an additional signatory.

For the sake of good order it was agreed that the current valid signatories be noted in the minutes. They are:

Cllr Stuart Scarff
Cllr Victoria Whitehead
Cllr Tracey Chaplin



Action: Clerk to arrange authorisation of new signature and send update to bank.

e. Budget Planning

All councillors AGREED to meet immediately after the current lockdown ends (2nd December) in order to agree a budget proposal prior to the December meeting.

Action: Clerk to put papers together and ensure meeting occurs prior to December meeting.

f. Citizens' Advice Bureau

A request for financial help had been received and circulated. The clerk reported that he had clarified with the Stowmarket office that 12 people from Combs had been helped by CAB. In light of the current workload faced by the bureau councillors AGREED to make a donation of £250 to the organisation.

Action: Clerk to draw up cheque (to be recorded at next meeting)

g. CIL Funding Application Form

Cllr Walker referred to the draft CIL application form that had been circulated for review and explained that such a form would help to ensure fairness in any selection process and it would also help protect the council from any criticism of their procedure.

It was AGREED that this be adopted as a working practice, to be adapted as appropriate with the benefit of experience.

h. Cricket Club Donation request

The Council had received a request for help with the cost of new chairs and the secretary of the club, Julia Stephens-Row, who was present for the planning discussions, explained that help was also being sought from Battsford Parish Council, and that a contribution from each of around £250 – 350 would be appreciated.

Councillors were receptive to the proposal and Cllr Walker suggested that this may be an appropriate use of CIL funds. It was AGREED that the clerk should first establish that such expenditure would be in accordance with CIL rules and then send the newly drafted CIL funding application form to the club for completion.

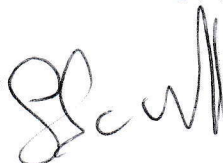
Action: Clerk to make enquiries and if appropriate send CIL form to cricket club

11. Councillor Vacancy

The clerk had circulated details of the three residents who had expressed a willingness to be co-opted onto the council and councillors were unanimous in agreeing that all three seemed ideal assets for the council.

Given that there are now three vacancies the problem of making a selection no longer arose and it was agreed that the volunteers be invited to attend the next meeting (by Zoom), with the intention that, should their interest remain, they be invited to be co-opted.

Action: Clerk to contact volunteers



12. Venue for meetings

It was agreed that this item be deferred until life showed signs of returning to normal.

13. Cycle Paths

The Chairman reported he had no update yet.

14. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Whitehead reported that the group were hoping to apply for planning permission for various items including a two access points to the site from the road, a pond, and compost toilets. Cllr Matthissen had suggested that if the application were to be submitted by the Parish Council the fee would be lower. The chairman asked if this was feasible, given the council did not own the land or have any authority over the committee, and the clerk, together with the County Councillor, confirmed that such an application was permissible.

All councillors agreed that the planning application be submitted in the name of the parish council and Cllr Whitehead confirmed that the Oaks Meadow Committee would draw up the necessary forms.

It was also agreed that the newly drafted CIL funds application form be sent to the Oaks Meadow Committee

15. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- The clerk had received a letter from St Mary's Parochial Church Council requesting financial support towards the cost of repairing the collapsed drain cover in the church drive. The chairman added a little background to explain why the estimate had increased: when the contractor who had provided the original quote was asked to guarantee his work for a year the quote was withdrawn. All agreed that unless the work was demonstrably reliable there would be little point proceeding so this latest quote, £1500 plus VAT, was considered worthy of support. The possibility of using the CIL funds for this was considered and it was AGREED that the clerk should first verify that such expenditure would be permissible under the rules relating to use of CIL funds and, if so, he should send the CIL funds application form to the PCC.


Action: Clerk to make enquiry of infrastructure team and if appropriate, to send CIL form to Church PCC.

- It was noted that with the new lockdown rules in effect, an update should be put on the coronavirus noticeboards. The clerk was instructed to procure the appropriate posters and send them to the chairman, who volunteered to put them out.

Action: Clerk to procure lockdown poster templates

16. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 14 December 2020 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 10.10 pm



November 2020 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

A message from Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, on free school meals

While Suffolk County Council is not providing the Government-funded vouchers to schools for Free School Meals over this half term week, we are supporting families and children in need as we don't want any child to go hungry.

In August, DEFRA awarded Suffolk County Council £770,000 as our share of the hardship grant. Suffolk Public Sector Leaders provided further match funding of £800,000 in September. So far, the Suffolk system has spent £600,000 and this covers:

- The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme that funds supermarket, food and fuel vouchers; school uniforms; essential furniture items; white goods; and oil heating refills.
- The Suffolk Advice and Support Service phone line.
- A donation of £100,000 to the Suffolk Community Foundation to provide grants to organisations to help communities with immediate hardship.

Some of the help provided to date by the hardship fund includes:

- Supporting families with food and fuel vouchers, paying utility bills, and buying school uniforms.
- Buying a bike for a man to get to his new job, after losing his old job due to Covid-19 and having to sell his car to cover expenses.
- Buying special boots for a child with disabilities, which the family could no longer afford.
- Covering rent arrears for people.

On top of this, Suffolk County Council has also committed £250,000 to Suffolk Foodbanks and awarded a further £60,000 to the Suffolk Community Foundation's emergency hardship fund.

Schools receive government funding to provide free school meals. For maintained schools, this funding comes through Suffolk County Council and is forwarded to our community and voluntary controlled schools annually. In Suffolk, there are now about 19,000 children receiving Free School Meals.

In the early summer, we widened the support given in Suffolk by providing vouchers to families once they apply for Universal Credit and giving vouchers to children entitled to Free School Meals but who are not in school. As you will be aware, the Government funded an extension of the provision of meals for children throughout the school holidays. At SCC we provided extra funding to ensure that children who qualified for FSMs after the Government's deadline still got the vouchers throughout the summer holidays.

Families who need help to feed their children or with any other financial concern can access support in many other ways in Suffolk. In the early days of the pandemic, one of our main challenges was helping

those who were isolated and struggling for support. This was addressed through the Home But Not Alone phone line, which is ready to stand up again if needed. We recognise that the challenges that many families face now are financial – and many of these families will be facing hardship for the first time in their lives. The Suffolk Support and Advice Line has been set up to help address these issues. It can help with debt advice, budgeting, mortgage, rent or credit card problems and employment queries. The number is **0800 068 3131** and is manned Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. People can also go to: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>

We appreciate that the needs of people across our county will change as we go into winter. We will work with our partners to ensure that we can adapt and flex to address these needs and offer the right support at the right time.

Council announces £228,000 for tree-planting, protecting hedgerows and verges across Suffolk

Suffolk's natural environment will receive investment for tree-planting, restoring hedgerows, and improving roadside verges for wildlife.

£228,000 from the Suffolk 2020 Fund will enable Suffolk County Council to enhance its work to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. The authority will do this through a number of new schemes, as well as building on existing work.

Working with The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Wardens, landowners, and county farm tenants, the funding will support the planting of around 100,000 trees, including replanting hedgerows in suitable locations across Suffolk over the next 18 months. It will also help establish around 10 community tree nurseries, which will support more planting in years to come. Local volunteers will be supported to collect seeds, set up nursery beds and grow trees in their communities.

The funding will also be used to trial better ways to manage roadside verges for wildlife. This includes exploring the use of new technology and cutting techniques, as well as developing new partnerships with parishes and landowners. The funding will help expand the existing Roadside Nature Reserve network managed by the council with the help of volunteers, seeing a 25% increase in the overall length of verges managed for wildlife.

Councils ready with Test and Trace Support Payment for most vulnerable

Councils in Suffolk are helping administer a Government scheme to provide financial help to those on low incomes and benefits who must self-isolate.

Details about the Test and Trace Support Payments, and how to apply, can be found on District and Borough Council websites.

If you have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate, you are under a legal obligation to do so, and could be eligible for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment.

Those who are eligible will need to meet all the following criteria:

- Told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- Employed or self-employed.
- Cannot work from home and will lose income as a result.
- Currently receiving at least one of the following benefits: Universal Credit; Working Tax Credit; income-based Employment and Support Allowance; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; and/or Pension Credit.

Applications are made for one person only and any further applications within the same household must be made by each individual. Payments are subject to tax but not National Insurance. People must make the application within 14 days of the last day of their NHS test and trace self-isolation period.

Applicants should ensure that they have the below information available before starting the application:

- NI number
- 8-digit test and trace ID number
- Recent bank statement, proof of self-employment, or wage slips.

If asked to do so by Test and Trace, you must self-isolate by law. Failure to do so will mean you are no longer eligible for the payment and steps will be made to recover the funds.

Please visit the [NHS Test and Trace](#) website for more details of the NHS Test and Trace self-isolation requirements for those:

- Testing [positive](#)
- Those who have been in [contact with someone](#) who has tested positive and now has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

Visit your District or Borough Council websites for details on how to apply for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment:

- Babergh District Council www.babergh.gov.uk
- East Suffolk Council www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk
- Ipswich Borough Council www.ipswich.gov.uk
- Mid Suffolk District Councils www.midsuffolk.gov.uk
- West Suffolk Council www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

Appendix ii – District Councillor’s Report

District Councillor Report for Onehouse ward – November 2020

Home, But Not Alone

The Home, But Not Alone free phonenumber, which supports vulnerable people in our communities who may be struggling with the impact of coronavirus, was paused in August because of low demand and the lifting of COVID restrictions. However, in light of Thursday’s national lockdown, the Collaborative Communities Board (which Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are part of) has resumed the service. The telephone number is **freephone 0800 876 6926** and will be staffed from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Suffolk Advice and Support Service

Residents suffering with financial hardship, or in need of support can call The Suffolk Advice and Support Service on 0800 068 3131, from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. The service provides free advice on mortgages, credit cards, rent arrears or other debts, COVID related concerns and access to food. This phonenumber, also delivered by the Collaborative Communities COVID-19 Board, is staffed by the Citizens Advice Suffolk Alliance, which includes the eight Citizens Advice Bureaus across Suffolk, and Anglia Care Trust and Ipswich Housing Action Group.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (was shielding)

The Government has written to all those who are defined as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus on medical grounds, setting out detailed advice while the new restrictions are in place. Anyone in this category should now work from home. However, if this is not possible, those affected can check their eligibility for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA). Others living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable are not advised to follow this guidance. They should instead continue to attend work and school in accordance with the National Restrictions guidance from 5 November.

Homelessness

All Suffolk councils have collectively agreed that accommodation will be provided to everyone found or known to be rough sleeping - other than those previously evicted from temporary accommodation or for whom no alternative or suitable placement can be found.

Support for low-income earners told to self-isolate

Residents can apply for a £500 payment to compensate for loss of earnings if they comply with the NHS Test and Trace notification to self-isolate, are employed or self-employed, unable to work from home, and in receipt of certain benefits. Find information about how residents can apply on our website and the scheme is being promoted on our councils' social media channels. We have also produced printable versions of the information for Babergh and Mid Suffolk should they be of use for towns and parishes within your wards.

Community support groups

In August, the Leaders of both Councils wrote to community groups across the Districts to thank them for the support that they have been providing to vulnerable residents within their communities throughout the pandemic. Following the announcement from the Prime Minister on Saturday, Officers have been in touch with those community groups operating across our area to understand their readiness and to offer support and advice should they need it.

Lockdown business grants

As businesses prepare for the second national lockdown, the Government has announced two new grant schemes for businesses.

While these grants will be administered by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council, the details and criteria of the schemes will be defined by Government. At present, we are awaiting more details about the grants and as soon as this is available, the information will be updated on our website, including how businesses can apply.

The two new grants are the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LSRG) and Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).

The Government is due to release more details about the grants and the criteria in the coming days, in the meantime, an outline of the grants is available [here](#).

Social distancing signage

Earlier in the year, we produced a range of posters to promote social distancing measures, which include wearing face coverings, keeping a 2 metre distance and advice for using play areas. These posters are available to download for free from our website.

Councillor John Matthissen

councillor@matthissen.net

07976 308128