

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 12 April 2021 at 7.30pm, via Zoom remote meetings

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); V Whitehead (Councillor); T Chaplin (Councillor); I Walker (Councillor); S Ottewell (councillor); T Betchley (councillor); T Kitson (councillor); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor) (joined at 8:20); T Bamber (Clerk).

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of interest/ lobbying

Cllr T Chaplin in respect of 9(b) (i), and 10 (c) (iii)

3. Public Forum

There were no members of public present.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 8 March 2021

Minutes for 8 March 2021 were reviewed and it was agreed that they 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

With regard to the diseased tree by Webbs Close the clerk reported that he had again lodged a report on the county council problem reporting portal and this time he received an email advising that the county council would be involving their legal team in enforcing action by the land owners.

6. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor's report had been circulated and is attached as appendix 1.

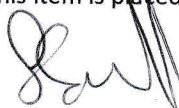
Cllr Oakes also reported on the faded speed limit signs, particularly in the slough. Apparently Highways cannot currently get any stock so she had acquired a sticker privately so that there was at least something legible at the top of the pole. There was some concern that, while well intended, a sign that did not meet highway regulations may be of questionable legality. The chairman proposes to order some speed signs, meeting legal requirements, from the internet.

In response to a question about the proposed automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) camera exercise Cllr Oakes confirmed she would support an application for its use in Combs. She and Cllr Walker will meet to agree the location and details required.

Action: Cllr Scarff to order composite speed signs
Cllr Oakes and Cllr Walker to visit potential ANPR site

7. District Councillor's Report

District Cllr. Matthissen had not yet arrived as he had another parish council's meeting to attend first, and was invited to speak towards the end of the meeting, but this item is placed here for the sake of good order. The councillor's



report (attached here as appendix 2) had been circulated and noted by councillors. He also mentioned that Great Finborough had a good footpath plan and that a copy may be helpful to the footpath sub-committee.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

The chairman had nothing to report that was not covered elsewhere.

9. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

- i. **DC/21/01609 – Moats Tye Livery** – Erection of 1 dwelling following demolition of 2 agricultural buildings

Following a discussion of the application, a majority of councillors confirmed they had no objection to the application, however they were concerned at the absence of a professional ecology report

DC/21/01789 & 1790 – America Cottage, Bildeston Road – replacement of existing porch

Following discussion, a majority of councillors was in support of the application

DC/21/01250 – 10 Model Farm – Replacement windows and door

All councillors were in support of this application

Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website

b. Decisions received from MSDC

- i. DC/20/04524 – Land South of Little London – discharge of conditions - *approved*. Noted

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 26 March 2021 was £33,207.58 and the savings account balance as of 31 March 2021 was £1,920.79.

The finance workbook had previously been reviewed and approved by Cllr Otteswell by email, and the budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.

- b. **Asset Register** : Cllr Ottewell had conducted a review of the asset register. While this affirmed the known assets it highlighted the fact that for the last few years the number of dog bins shown had been incorrect: there are in fact only nine, not 11. This was confirmed by the billing for emptying by Mid Suffolk District Council and furthermore no councillor could recall any other bin location. It was inferred that at some point in the past replacements may have been added to the list without removing those replaced, or a previous audit may have erroneously included the two bins near the cemetery, which are the property of Stowmarket Town Council. It was agreed however that the value for audit and insurance purposes was unchanged.

c. Payments received

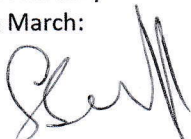
- i. Burial ground fees -

Paid in February:

£2,910.00

Paid in March:

£3,040.00



d. Payments to hand

- i. EON Electricity for streetlights (direct debit) -£ 69.00). Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. SALC – planning webinar £60.00 / membership £340.36, total £400.36. Approved by all councillors. Cheque number 22254 was written, and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s 111/s 133*)
- iii. T Chaplin – newsletter printing. Approved by all councillors and cheque number 22255 was written and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed. (*Local Government Act 1972, s 111*)

Action: Clerk to arrange signatures and send

e. Annual Governance Statement

This had been circulated previously and was approved by all councillors: the clerk was authorised to post it on the village website and to include in the submission to auditors.

Action: Clerk to post on web site

f. CIL Expenditure Return

This had been circulated previously and was approved by all councillors: the clerk was authorised to post it on the village website.

Action: Clerk to post on web site

11. Internal Control document

Cllr Walker had previously reviewed the internal control statement, which included some updates, and this, together with the latest internal control had been circulated for review. The documents were approved by all councillors and the clerk was authorised to upload it to the website.

Cllr Walker drew attention to his comments on the report, namely that the code of conduct has recently been the subject of review by NALC and when available this should be made an agenda item. He also suggested it would be a good procedure to have a second pair of eyes reviewing documents like this henceforth and cllrs Ottewell and Kitson volunteered for this.

Action: Clerk to post on web site

12. Newsletter

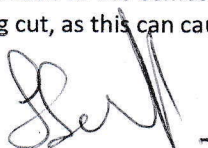
On behalf of the whole council, the chairman thanked Cllr Chaplin for the latest newsletter, which had been delivered in the last few days. It is planned to issue the next newsletter in June.

13. Combs Litter pick

Plans are in place for the litter pick, compliant with prevailing social distancing rules, for Sunday 18 April, starting at 9 AM. The clerk will co-ordinate volunteers from the Tannery car park and ex-councillor Jamie Crooks has kindly offered to clear the roads around Moats Tye and will deliver the stock of pickers and hoops to the clerk.

14. Cemetery

Cllr Betchley reported on a visit he and the clerk had made to the cemetery, and proposed a working party be arranged to attend to detritus prior to the grass being cut, as this can cause problems and potential injury if unseen (and disallowed) vases impede the mower.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Crooks', is written over the text of the Cemetery section.

He also referred to requests for two memorial stones in memory of infants. Neither of the proposed stones were compliant with current cemetery rules and he invited councillors' views on how to instruct the clerk. Following a discussion the majority view was that, until changed, the regulations should be observed, however there may be room for some slight flexibility in the case of children. The clerk was given clear guidance on the council's position and he will write to the stonemasons, for the information of the families, accordingly.

It had also been noted that the fees for burial in the cemetery are lower than many cemeteries in the surrounding area, and this could account for the recent increase in numbers. Cllr Betchley and the clerk will review the fees and draw up a proposal.

Action: *Clerk to write to stonemasons regarding the specific infants' graves*
Clerk to invite working party when next cut known.
Cllr Betchley and the clerk to review cemetery fees

15. SID Data

Cllr Kitson and the clerk were able to make one of the SID devices communicate with the council laptop but have so far not been able to download any data. They are making further investigations.

Action: *Clerk to liaise with Cllr Kitson*

16. PIIP (Infrastructure Plan)

Cllr Walker confirmed work was ongoing

17. Parish Walks

Cllr Kitson reported that progress was being made: Mr Baldry had given permission to build on the walks described in his guides and these are now being updated to take into account changes since they had been written.

18. Battisford Play Area

As discussed at the last meeting, a CIL funds request had been invited and received from Battisford Parish Council, being a request for £1,500 to help repair the play area. In proposing that the request be agreed, Cllr Walker observed the benefits to all neighbouring villages and added that this was a great opportunity to work with the neighbouring council. All councillors AGREED that payment of £1500.00 be made to Battisford Parish Council out of CIL funds. Cheque No. 22256 was written and the clerk will arrange for it to be signed (Local Government Act 1972, sect. 137).

19. Grit Bins

The chairman had provided a map showing the preferred location of two grit bins and the clerk was instructed to request these from Suffolk County Council

Action: *Clerk to request grit bins*

20. Cycle Paths

The Chairman reported he had no update yet.

21. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Whitehead provided an update on the project and explained that it was necessary to apply for an amendment to the planning application. Recognising that if, as previously, the parish council were to submit the application the fee would be much reduced, and appreciating the benefit to the village, councillors AGREED unanimously that the clerk be



instructed to arrange the submission and to reclaim the cost, £117 plus portal fee of £28, total £145, from the parish council funds next month.

Action: clerk to liaise with Ian Clark of Oaks Meadow Project to process application

22. Quiet Lanes

Following a resident's request for further information on the quiet lanes initiative run by Suffolk County Council, the chairman enquired of Cllr Oakes if it were still possible to nominate roads for consideration. The county councillor advised that the period for submissions had closed in October.

Action: Clerk to inform residents

23. Combs Village Sign

Cllr Walker noted that the village sign, in the clearing by the junctions of Bildeston Road, Park Road and Mill Lane, would benefit from some refurbishing. The chairman recalled that it had stood there, without much need for attention, for over 20 years and agreed it would be good to improve its appearance, and all agreed it would help if the surrounding trees could be thinned. The chairman noted that tree cutting could not be carried out at this time of year, but invited councillors to consider this for future planning. In the meantime Cllr Walker will speak with David Thorpe, who may know the name of the person who made the sign, to see if that person may be able to assist.

Action: Cllr Walker to speak with Mr Thorpe.

24. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- Due to the staged reductions in lockdown, and the fact that permission to hold virtual meetings was shortly to be withdrawn, the dates for the annual general meeting of the parish council, and for the parish meeting, were considered.

In the case of parish council meetings (the annual meeting being effectively a normal meeting but with a few legal niceties), these must be held in the month of May. However meetings cannot be held virtually after 7 May, and cannot be held physically before the 17th May. Councillors agreed that, as many people would not have been completely vaccinated by the end of May, it would be prudent to hold the AGM as a virtual meeting, and it was AGREED that this be held on Thursday 6 May.

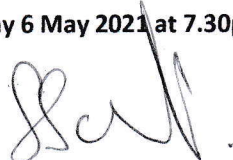
In the case of the parish meeting, while this is not a responsibility of the parish council, it is traditionally coordinated by the parish council. Such meetings must be held between 1 March and 1 June. Given both the problems associated with physical meetings and the fact that the previous five parish meetings were very poorly supported, it was AGREED that a remote parish meeting, in a truncated form, be held this year immediately prior to the council's AGM on 6 May and that the clerk be instructed to post this information on the website.

Action: Clerk to arrange Parish Meeting and AGM for Thursday 6 May.

- Cllr Walker asked that the bus shelter form an agenda item next month.

25. Date and time of next meeting – Thursday 6 May 2021 at 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 10.03 pm



Appendix 1 – County Councillor's Report



April 2021 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

Feedback sought to improve Recycling Centre booking system

People of Suffolk are being asked to rate their experience of the 'book a slot' system that's in place to visit a Recycling Centre.

A booking system was introduced at Suffolk's recycling centres in May 2020 to manage maximum visitor numbers and enable the safe reopening of the service after closure at the start of the first Covid-19 lockdown. The sites welcome around 14,000 visitors per week on average.

Suffolk County Council is working on upgrades to the booking system software to improve the customer experience by making it quicker and easier to make and amend bookings. Before any improvements can take place, the council is seeking feedback on how well the booking system has worked so far.

People can give their views by completing the 2-minute questionnaire online at suffolkrecycling.org.uk.

Suffolk has long held ambitions to Create the Greenest County and the Suffolk 2020 fund, which is a programme of work all about investing in projects that benefit Suffolk communities, aims to support the council's climate emergency declaration and improve Suffolk for all residents in years to come.

Suffolk County Council secures £3.1M for building decarbonisation initiative

It was announced on March 9 that Suffolk County Council, working in conjunction with property specialists Concertus, was successful in gaining over £3M of funding.

This funding has been received from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to promote capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within buildings used to provide frontline public services.

Working with Concertus, the council has been preparing a range of packages to support the decarbonising of various buildings in the Council's estate including applications for the council's headquarters at Endeavour House in Ipswich, four rural fire stations, Beacon House, Waterloo Centre and Leiston Children's Centre.

The council's Children and Young People service also reviewed their portfolio of school buildings along with Concertus. This review resulted in the submission of grant applications for nine schools across the county, all of which were successful.

This grant scheme aligns with BEIS' new mission and priorities: fighting coronavirus, backing business, unleashing innovation, and tackling climate change. Through this scheme, it is supporting the council's own commitment to be net zero by 2030 along with the Government's own net zero goals and encouraging further green investment within the UK.

Packages of work vary from building to building, but many include the fitting of solar panels and battery storage, as well as improvements to wall or roof insulation and installation of Air Source Heat Pumps to move away from the use of fossil fuels for source of heating.

Suffolk partners with environmental charity in new campaign to stop people trying to recycle disposable nappies

It was announced on March 11 that Suffolk Waste Partnership has joined forces with environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy and other local authorities across the country to launch a new campaign aimed at stopping the millions of disposable nappies that are contaminating recycling.

The campaign comes after a new survey revealed that seven per cent of nappy users – parents, grandparents and carers – wrongly put their disposable nappies in with their recycling, which equates to more than *one million people.

Locally, around 150 tonnes of nappies end up in Suffolk recycling bins each year. This equates to approximately 3000 nappies needing to be removed from the recycling every day. This truly unpleasant job needs to be done by hand by staff at Suffolk's Material Recycling Facility (MRF) in Gt Blakenham. So, by keeping nappies out of our recycling bins, you are not only helping to get our recycling right but protecting staff at the MRF.

The national survey, carried out by YouGov, also revealed that younger people, aged 18-24 were more likely to put them in their recycling bin (15%) and more than one in ten Londoners who used disposable nappies (11%) tried to recycle them.

Now, the Suffolk Waste Partnership is trying to reach nappy users with a new campaign that has been tested with them and offers a clear message that disposable nappies should never go in their recycling.

The campaign is fronted by 'Ted' and will be appearing on billboards around the country and on social media to drive the message home. In Suffolk, additional information will be shared on the Suffolk Waste Partnership's website, social media channels and newsletters.

Suffolk to be included in Government's UK Gigabit Broadband programme

On March 19 it was announced that Suffolk is to be included in the £5 billion strategy to deliver next generation, gigabit-capable broadband to the entire country.

The programme aims to connect the first one million homes and businesses with gigabit speed broadband in the hardest to reach 20% of the UK by 2025. Gigabit-capable broadband connections offer the fastest and most reliable speeds currently available. Connections will enable and create a range of social benefits alongside boosting jobs and economic growth over the coming decades, and help improve connection and opportunities, especially for rural communities. It is hoped the rollout will give people the freedom to live and work more flexibly.

The scheme will use a broad range of interventions to deliver gigabit broadband, including contracts for new publicly funded infrastructure, use of broadband vouchers and other innovative solutions to deliver the roll out.

Success following £500k boost for highways improvements near schools

It was announced on March 23 that locations around schools across Suffolk have benefitted from new road markings and signs, following £500,000 Highways Investment Fund (HIF) cash boost.

The extra funding, which was announced by Councillor Andrew Reid, cabinet member with responsibility for highways during his speech at February 2020's full council meeting has been focussed on improving the safety of pupils and parents travelling to and from school, refreshing lines and cleaning and repairing signs in and around school zones.

Following inspection of the condition of road lining and signs in the vicinity of every school in Suffolk, 146 locations were identified as requiring new signs to replace those that were damaged or missing. Additionally, 218 areas with faded road markings are receiving a refresh.

Sign cleaning and light vegetation works have also been carried out where it was required.

100,000 trees planted as part of ambitious council scheme

On March 23 it was announced that 100,000 trees had been planted in just five months, since Suffolk County Council committed £228,000 from its Suffolk 2020 Fund to protect biodiversity.

Located in the Little and Great Waldingfield area, the 100,000th tree, a field maple, is part of 6.4 miles of new hedgerow which the council has planted across a number of its farm holdings.

The council has been working closely with the farm tenants, The Woodland Trust, Giles Landscapes, The Suffolk Tree Warden Initiative and local communities to ensure that a total of 102,586 saplings have been distributed and planted in the best possible places available over this last winter.

Hedgerows are important features of Suffolk's agricultural landscape, providing a habitat for many species and 'corridors' for wildlife to move through them. All the planting stock being used is UK sourced and grown to reduce plant health risks and improve biosecurity.

Local straw mulch is being used to reduce competition from weeds and to help retain moisture as the hedges become established. The tenant farmers will continue to maintain the hedgerows located on their land.

Automatic number plate recognition cameras to be installed in villages across Suffolk

An announcement on March 24 noted that Suffolk County Council and Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner and Suffolk Constabulary, has launched the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras.

The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras are being used to help detect and deter speeding offences that have been highlighted in Suffolk villages, and educate drivers on the importance of road safety.

An ANPR camera will be installed at a site where it has been identified by a parish council, with support from their county councillor, there is a problem with speeding and / or rat running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit.

An ANPR camera will identify a speeding vehicle by capturing an image of the number plate of the vehicle. Data will then be shared with the Police and the County Council. The County Council will write to the owner of the vehicle on behalf of both parties explaining that their vehicle has been registered as speeding. Repeat offences at a particular location could prompt the deployment of speed enforcement vans and subsequent fines to those who breach the speed limit.

Ten ANPR cameras will be purchased and each one will remain in situ for up to one week per site. There is the option of extending this period if needed.

The project has received funding from the Suffolk 2020 Fund, which is a programme of work all about investing in community projects and improving Suffolk for all residents now and in years to come. The funding secures the ANPR project for a two year pilot where its impact to reduce speeding will be monitored before it receives a further financial commitment.

Appendix 2 – District Councillor's Report

District Councillor Report for Onehouse Ward – April 2021

Pre-election period County Council Elections	Elections to Suffolk County Council take place on 6 May. There will therefore be no meetings of MSDC, except regulatory committee meetings, during April. The next MSDC Council meeting will be on 24 May and will be the annual meeting at which the Chair for the new municipal year will be elected.
Motion relating to Green Space in Mid Suffolk	<p>Green Group presented the following motion to the full council meeting of MSDC in March:</p> <p><i>That the Council carries out a review of green space to ensure that it is optimising the biodiversity and wellbeing aspects of natural and amenity space in Mid Suffolk.</i></p> <p>It gained the support of the Conservative group and was carried unanimously.</p> <p>Green space can contribute significantly towards meeting the Council's climate change and biodiversity targets; it also contributes greatly to the health and wellbeing of residents. The data collected during the review will feed into the work of the environmental task force set up to identify ways to reduce climate change and enhance biodiversity throughout the district.</p>
March MSDC Council meeting	Apart from the Green Space motion, the only significant item on the agenda was a report on the annual review of the CIL Expenditure Framework. No major changes to the bidding procedure will be made. The report reiterated the requirement that bids should show that funding from sources other than MSDC has been agreed in advance of the bid to MSDC; that bids must be for capital infrastructure projects with all necessary formal approvals in place, with evidence of how the project will assist in offsetting the impacts of growth in the district.
Strengthening Biodiversity	Parishes should have received an email from Will Burchnell, seeking proposals for tree planting on public or private land, and areas of grass suitable for meadow management to enhance wild-flower and plant diversity. I do hope you will respond positively to this initial outcome from the District Council's work on addressing the biodiversity emergency.
Tree Nursery	A reminder that any seedling native trees unwanted in vegetable and flower beds will be very welcome at the Red Gables tree nursery.
Litter Picking	It is encouraging to see reports of litter picking by individuals, family groups and socially distanced small groups. If you are aware of any other individuals or small groups who need equipment or bags in order to pick up litter, please let me know.
Food for Families in need	Mid Suffolk District Council have funded food to help those most in need over the Easter school holidays.

John Matthissen

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