

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 13 December 2021 at 7.30pm, Battisford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battisford

(DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED)

Present: S Scarff (Chairman); I Walker (Vice Chairman); S Ottewell (councillor); T Kitson (councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor)(arrived 8:35 PM); T Bamber (Clerk).

1. Apologies for Absence

T Betchley (councillor); V Whitehead (Councillor) (by prior agreement); T Chaplin (Councillor) (by prior agreement); K Oakes (County Councillor);

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying

None

3. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 8 November 2021

Minutes for Monday 8 November 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.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes

Cllr Walker reported that the drain issue in Park Road has been resolved, no doubt thanks to the intervention of Cllr Oakes.

6. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor was unable to attend but had sent her report and it is attached as appendix 1.

7. District Councillor's Report

The District Councillor had not arrived at this point but his contribution, on arrival after another parish council's meeting, at 8:35 pm is recorded here for agenda consistency. The district council report is attached as appendix 2.

Cllr Matthissen is still in discussion regarding the application relating to the development opposite the Tannery, and he will look into the application for two houses in Moats Tye.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

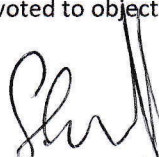
Nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere.

9. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

- i. DC/21/06247 and
- ii. 06243 (plots 1 and 2)– Land at Moats Tye – Erection of two dwellings

The Council voted to object to these applications.



It appears to be a cynical attempt to make extra profit by turning one approved outline plan into two plots and councillors would reiterate all the comments lodged by local residents.

- The property at the front is overly large for the area and too imposing, while the second is simply overdevelopment;
- The application relates to an area that is already the victim of overdevelopment;
- There are concerns over the adequacy of sewer drainage in the area;
- As noted in application DC/21/01609: "The proposed development would be car dependent, remote from local services and lacking accessible sustainable transport modes. The proposed development therefore represents an unsustainable form of residential development in the countryside for which no essential justification for agricultural or similar land use need as required by Policy H10 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (September 1998) and Policies CS1 and CS2 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (September 2008) has been provided. The application site is located in the countryside outside of a housing settlement boundary where new housing is restricted in accordance with the provisions of Policy H7 of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). The proposed development does not accord with these policies in that the proposed dwelling would not constitute one of the exceptions to the restrictions on new housing in the countryside as detailed in Policy H10 of the Local Plan or paragraph 79 of the Framework." The council trusts such concerns will be taken into account in this instance.

iii. DC/21/06591 – Corner Cottage, Jacks Lane – erection of summerhouse

Councillors voted to support this application

Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website

b. Decisions received from MSDC

- i. DC/2121/04699 2 Model Farm – installation of woodburner – *listed building consent granted*. Noted
- ii. DC/21/049 84 Land South of Little London – *change of use. Refused*. Noted
- iii. DC/21/05580 Land North of Bildeston Road – *Dropped kerb installation*. Granted. Noted

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – Current Account balance as of 2 December 2021 was £39,236.95 and the savings account balance was unchanged at £1,922.71.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted. The clerk confirmed that the Section 137 expenditure had been £250 so far this year.

b. **Payments received**

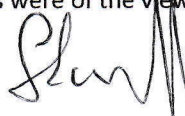
c. **Payments to hand**

- i. Eon Electricity number 22281 for streetlights (direct debit): £76.39. Approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. D Windle – grass cutting £992.50. Approved by all councillors. Cheque number 22281 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s 214(2)*)

iii.

d. **Budget and precept 2022/23**

The clerk presented a draft budget for consideration, aimed at meeting all known commitments but without any additional plans. Councillors were of the view that, in the current circumstances, it would be imprudent



to plan for greater expenditure but that there was a reasonable sum available in funds earmarked for PIIP projects which could likely be utilised if considered necessary. It was noted that Mid Suffolk District Council had not yet finalised its tax base but it was likely to be little different from that on which the budget was based. Following a discussion it was AGREED that, subject to there being no significant change to the tax base the budget, based on a planned expenditure of £14,292 be approved. It was further AGREED that the precept should remain unchanged at £9000.

e. Cemetery Maintenance

Cemetery maintenance. As David Windle had announced his retirement the clerk had invited tenders for the job of cutting the cemetery and churchyard grass, and for maintaining the hedges. Following a review of the tenders it was AGREED that Hartleys Garden Services be invited to take on the work, with the situation to be reviewed in six months.

Action: Clerk to contact those who tendered.

11. Donation Request

Requests for financial support had been received from Lighthouse Women's Aid and SARS. Councillors agreed they would consider the requests in the context of the charitable donations policy and discuss their views at the next meeting.

Action: Councillors to consider.

12. Parish Walks

No further developments at the moment.

13. Quiet Lanes

Cllr Walker noted the decision last month to take no further action at present but in light of apparently problem-free introduction of quiet lanes elsewhere he suggested that the notion be kept on a 'back burner'.

14. Cycle Paths

The Chairman had nothing further to report at present.

15. Oaks Meadow

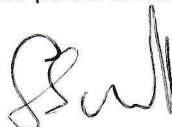
In the absence of Cllr Betchley a report of the AGM had been circulated and the chairman supplemented this by mentioning that apple trees were to be planted over the coming weekend..

16. Festival of Suffolk

The chairman reported that the Oaks Meadow Project will be arranging a medicine wheel in the meadow for the festival.

17. Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The clerk has registered the involvement of the parish council and the chairman is liaising with the parochial church council, who may also become involved.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. Smith' or similar, located at the bottom of the page.

18. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- The chairman reported that the bells had been removed from St Mary's church and had been taken, courtesy of Mr Henwood, to Loughborough for refurbishment.
- Cllr Walker invited councillors to review the draft PIIP paper with a view to prioritising items.
- Councillors agreed that the next newsletter would not be until February or March.
- Councillors were invited to keep an eye out for potential new councillors, in case the councillors currently on leave of absence were to choose not to return.

19. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 10th January at 7.30pm in Battisford and District Cricket Club.

The Meeting closed at 9.35 pm

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S. Carl' or similar, with a small dot at the end.

December 2021 Town and Parish Newsletter

Government funding boost for Suffolk community schemes

On November 5th, two Suffolk schemes received Government funding totalling more than £940,000

Enabling Self-Employment in Suffolk and the Suffolk Road to Net Zero business support programme are among 477 schemes across the country to receive backing from the Community Renewal Fund.

This is a £200 million pot set up by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities aimed at boosting skills training for the unemployed and investing in businesses developing low-carbon technology.

The two Suffolk schemes, which are both being led by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and which were put forward by Suffolk County Council, receive a total of £945,974.

Enabling Self-Employment, which receives £412,208, delivers self-employment support across Suffolk, particularly amongst disadvantaged communities in East Suffolk.

Building on the established programme of Business Start-Up support in Norfolk and Suffolk, it works with employed and unemployed people – including those who were on furlough or who are under-employed and economically vulnerable – from deprived groups and communities.

Suffolk Road to Net Zero receives £533,766.

This is a scheme offering grants to support businesses in developing low-carbon projects and which contribute to the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan’s key theme of reducing industrial and commercial emissions, informs a model for place-based Net Zero strategies, and generates benefits for nature-based solutions.

Suffolk County Council investing £12.8m to decarbonise its buildings

It was announced on November 9th that properties, including fire stations and libraries, will receive investment as the council continues to drive its ambition to be Net Zero by 2030.

Suffolk County Council will be committing £12.8m towards reducing the carbon produced by buildings in its corporate estate.

Cabinet members today (9 November 2021) approved a report to commit to this investment, as well as implementing the SCC Energy Management Strategy, as recommended by the Climate Emergency Policy Development Panel.

Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council, explains:

“The report that we have approved today outlines an implementation plan for how we approach reducing the carbon emitted by the hundreds of buildings we own. It is a considerable milestone in our journey to Net Zero.

“The detail of the plan can now be developed and our corporate property team will work with central government, partners, industry experts and our own in-house professionals. They will now develop more detailed plans to ensure we are delivering effective projects with a clear focus on value for money.

“We know that significant, urgent investment is needed to fund carbon reduction projects within our estate and this multi-million pound investment is an indication of our commitment.”

The council already has a history of providing dedicated investment to improve the energy efficiency of its buildings and services, which has led to reductions in carbon emissions in recent years. Previous projects have included replacing fossil fuel boilers with bio-mass units, installing solar panels and solar hot water systems, rainwater harvesting and updating lighting.

This latest investment will also work towards reducing energy consumption across the council’s buildings to mitigate the effects of increasing energy prices and associated costs.

Through the Energy Management Strategy, the council will target how it can be ‘smarter’ with its buildings by reducing electricity consumption, reviewing the heating and cooling of its buildings, continuing its LED lighting rollout, replacing older fossil fuel boilers and generating its own energy.

Suffolk’s Greenest County Awards Winners Announced

On November 12th, Suffolk celebrated the people and organisations making the biggest environmental difference in the county.

As COP26 comes to a close, Suffolk celebrates the people and organisations making the biggest environmental difference in the county. An innovative food recycling company, a nature reserve and the county's Tree Warden Network are among those collecting awards at The Hold in Ipswich today (Friday 12 November 2021).

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment, said:

“Once again, our Greenest County Award winners demonstrate that Suffolk has some of the most innovative, passionate and forward thinking people and organisations in the UK. We hope these stories inspire everyone to think hard about how they can help, as they not only address the climate emergency here in Suffolk, but set a standard for all organisations and industry, leading the way to a greener country and more sustainable world.”

Full details of the winners can be found [here](#):

Share your thoughts on prioritising future County Council Services as part of planning the 2022/23 budget

On November 19th a public consultation was launched to find out where people place their priorities and thoughts on how council funds its services.

Following the Chancellor's recent Spending Review and Autumn Budget, Suffolk County Council will have the option to raise Council Tax by 2% and the Adult Social Care Precept by 2%. With local authorities continuing to respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, global supply chain issues and climate change, Suffolk County Council is asking residents for their thoughts on helping the council prioritise its funding towards services in the coming financial year alongside meeting the continuing costs of statutory care services.

Although the last two years have proved to be an extraordinary time, the county council continues to aim to provide the best possible outcomes for local people through a multitude of frontline services that support residents, businesses, and the county at large.

With rising costs and increasing service demand year on year, the finances at our disposal have to be carefully planned and considered for us to continue to achieve a balanced budget each year in extremely challenging circumstances.

Suffolk County Council's priorities this year are to:

- promote and support the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk
- strengthen our local economy
- protect and enhance our environment
- provide value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer

With careful financial management and planning, the county council has already saved hundreds of millions of pounds during the last decade, whilst being innovative in the delivery of many of its services. Many challenges remain in the light of the recent pandemic, and the continuing difficult financial position that many local authorities have faced for a number of years.

Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council, says:

"Local public services continue to face many financial challenges as we look to recover from COVID, address rising energy costs and invest our limited resources and money in the priority areas of service to protect our most vulnerable residents.

"As part of the annual budgeting process, it is important to hear your thoughts on the services we deliver, to understand which ones you believe should be prioritised, and how we may look to fund future spending in these areas.

"Did you know that around 75p of every £1 Suffolk County Council spends goes towards supporting those who need it most through Adult Care, Children's Services, and Public Health?

"The remaining 25p in every £1 is then used to cover the cost of the many other vital services we provide, including Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, road maintenance, footpaths, waste services, libraries and addressing the

challenges surrounding climate change, to name just a handful. Year on year we are seeing particular challenges in continuing to provide adult care and children's services within budget. Adult care alone costs around £271m each year.

"We are absolutely committed to providing the best services for all residents, but like all councils we do not have unlimited funds. This means that if residents want us to spend more money on certain services, we have to spend less in other areas in order to continue to balance our budget now and in the future.

"I want to understand more about the areas you want us to focus on with the budget that we have left over after covering our statutory care duties. Whilst this may be limited, we continue to use every penny wisely to bring many benefits to Suffolk. As part of this engagement, we want to find out where people place their priorities and how they feel about the way in which we fund these services.

"Thank you for your participation in this important aspect of planning our annual budget."

Councillor Rout continues:

"I'm encouraged by the fact that the Chancellor has recognised the excellent work carried out by local authorities in the last year announcing new grant funding of £4.8billion for local authorities over the next three years. We wait to see in the coming months, how much comes to Suffolk."

A proposed budget will be presented at the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2022 and the final budget will be discussed at Full Council on 17 February 2022.

[More information about the council's finances and the consultation can be found at \[suffolk.gov.uk/budget2022\]\(https://suffolk.gov.uk/budget2022\)](https://suffolk.gov.uk/budget2022)

The consultation closes on Monday 20 December 2021.

Appendix 2 – District Councillor's Report

District Councillor's Report: Onehouse Ward Parish Council December 2021

Council tax for 2022/23	The details of the tax base numbers have been sent to all parishes. The tax base is the amount of equivalent Band D homes that council tax will be paid on. This is not an exact number as it includes the calculation for those that receive subsidies or reliefs.
Cancelled District Council Meeting	The full Council meeting for November was cancelled due to "lack of business". We wished to raise issues on the impact of Covid on residents and what support the Council could provide residents as well as how to improve house-building standards in terms of environmental performance, particularly in relation to COP26. Additionally, our Group wished to ask questions on parking in Stowmarket, social housing, and the efficiency of council decision-making.
Joint Local Plan	Further to the pause of the examination of Joint Local Plan, the Council have written to the Planning Inspectors to advise of the work they will be doing. The inspectors have suggested the plan goes forward in part, with housing land allocations remaining 'paused.' The Council is meeting to discuss this with the Inspectors online on Thursday 16 th December at 10am and this will be broadcast via YouTube.
Five-year housing land supply	MSDC has published the draft statements on the position of the Five-Year Housing Land Supply for consultation. Councils have to show Government they have a minimum of available land to meet five years' worth of house-building targets. The position shows that Mid Suffolk has a supply of 9.54 years compared to 7.76 previously.
Budgets	On 1 st November, MSDC Cabinet approved over £5 million of spend on a variety of projects from assistance with fuel poverty to skills training for young people to greater resource for neighbourhood plans. This funding comprises the cumulatively unspent £4 million from recent years' budgets and current underspends.
Planning process peer review	MSDC has organised the peer review of its planning committee processes, supported by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), to check a number of aspects of the decision making process. The review team has been meeting with a range of stakeholders during the week to find out about their experiences before reporting back to the council with its findings and recommendations.
Warmer Homes initiative	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have secured over £248,000 in funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to ensure privately rented properties in Suffolk meet minimum energy standards, ensuring warmer homes.
Electric Taxis – mixed news	MSDC's licencing team have now licensed the first EV taxi in the district. It is disappointing that the Conservative administration rejected Green councillors proposals to encourage the change to EV taxis, and we have called this decision in to Scrutiny committee for review.
Virtual High Street	MSDC's virtual high street has a Christmas campaign to try to encourage more users of the service. A number of businesses in Needham Market, Stowmarket and Eye have joined the scheme are offering festive deals to try to encourage us to 'shop local'. More information can be found at http://www.virtualhighstreet.uk/ .
Needham Lake visitor centre	An online poll to choose the name for the new visitor centre at Needham Lake concluded last month and the name 'Duck & Teapot' was announced at the topping-out ceremony. The visitor centre and café will be a big boost to the district's most popular tourist attraction and is due to open in early 2022.
Planning Applications	I have an exceptional number of live applications in Onehouse ward, and will try to update each parish this evening, where I have news.