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**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Annual Meeting
Monday 20th June 2022 at 7.30pm, Battisford Cricket Club**

Present: T Kitson (Vice Chairman); S Ottewell (councillor); S Scarff (councillor); T Betchley (councillor); K Oakes (County Councillor); J Matthissen (District Councillor) (arrived 8:15); T Bamber (Clerk), and two members of the public.

As the chairman had previously resigned, Vice Chair Tony Kitson took the chair.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no absences.

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying

Cllr Ottewell in respect of item 9 (a) (iv) and 10 (c) (v)

Cllr Scarff in respect of item 10 (c) (iii)

Cllr Betchley in respect of Oaks Meadow (item 13)

3. Public Forum

As Mr and Mrs Cole were present in respect of planning item 9 (a) (i) – White House Farm- this was then discussed. For consistency the matter is recorded in section 9.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 10 May 2022

Minutes for Tuesday 10 May 2022 were reviewed and it was agreed that they be signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by the acting chairman.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes

The clerk is yet to circulate a draft publication scheme.

Action: Clerk to circulate model publication scheme

6. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor had sent her report and it is attached as appendix 1. In response to a question regarding quiet lanes Cllr Oakes reported that the ones with which she was familiar were well used and generally considered a success.

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 8:15 pm, is recorded here for agenda consistency.

The district councillor's report had been circulated previously. This is attached as appendix 2.

In addition, Cllr Matthissen was able to report that the application for 'moving on pods' at 1-3 Prospect Cottages had been refused.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

Cllr Kitson reported that Ian Walker had confirmed to him that his decision to resign, to focus on his health, was final. To full agreement, Cllr Kitson praised the passion of Mr. Walker and his commitment to the council and its work, and expressed the wish that the council would continue to follow that example.

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Considering the current low number of councillors, Cllr Kitson confirmed that he would be willing to act as chair until the Autumn, when matters might be reviewed.

Cllr Kitson led the council in expressing his appreciation of the excellent work done by Cllr Ottewell in publishing the newsletter.

9. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

i. DC/22/02419 – White House Farm, Moats Tye – erection of one dwelling

Following discussion, the Council had no objection to this application but, because of the recent number of opportunist applications in the area, they will be looking closely at the detailed application, when that is lodged. Mr & Mrs Cole, the applicants, explained that they intended to live in the new house when built, and sell White House Farm, so there was no risk of any trees being removed or of any building style unsympathetic to the area being attempted.

ii. DC/22/02476 - The Barn, Holyoak Farm, Church Road – change of use

All councillors agreed to support this application.

iii. DC/22/00777 – Snowdrop Cottage, Park Road – further amendments

This application had already been granted by the planning office, following their inability to extend the deadline further.

iv. DC/22/02766 - 14 Model Farm – rear French doors

All councillors agreed to support this application.

Action: Clerk to post Councillors' views on planning website

b. Decisions received from MSDC

- i. DC/54/05626 Land West of the Tannery – approval of reserved matters
- ii. DC/21/06308 Land at the Tannery – Discharge of conditions
- iii. DC/22/01019 Land North of Bildeston Road – approval of reserved matters
- iv. DC/22/01611 2 Oak Thatch, Park Road – rear extension - approved

All noted

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – The clerk reported the Current Account balance as of 2 June 2022 was £46,241.77 and the savings account balance was £1,922.90.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.



The clerk reported that the contract with Npower for streetlights had now expired. At present the firm is not offering new contracts and the agreement they had made to raise only one standing charge irrespective of the number of 'MPAN's had ceased with the expiry of the contract. The representative had suggested that the out of contract charges for unmetered supply (as this is) are less than they would be under contract. The clerk will make further enquiries.

Action: Clerk to investigate electricity charges

b. Payments received

(i) (none)

c. Payments to hand

- i. Npower for streetlights (direct debit): £185.22. This was approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. SALC: (a) Internal Audit - £298.80 and (b) New Councillor training £561.60, total £860.40. This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22289 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.111*)
- iii. S Scarff: costs associated with festivities during lighting of Jubilee beacon £411.50. This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22290 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.145(1)(a)*)
- iv. Hall hire – Battisford & District Cricket Club. As the club had requested payment by BACS and this would be effectively impossible using the council's bank account, it was agreed that the clerk pay this from his own bank and that he be reimbursed the cost (£100). This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22294, payable to A Bamber, was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.111*)
- v. S Ottewell – newsletter printing £198.00 and jubilee event posters £8.40 total £206.40. This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22292 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.111*).
- vi. Mid Suffolk District Council – dog & litter bin emptying £558.80. This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22293 was written and signed (*Litter Act 1983, s5,6*).
- vii. Combs & Battisford Fete donation to costs £426.00 (item 12 below). This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22295 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.145(1)(a)*)
- viii. Oaks Meadow Committee donation to Midsummer event £150.00 (item 13 below). This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22296 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.145(1)(a)*)

Action: Clerk to send cheques

d. Budget Review / Update:

The Chair noted that, since the budget had been adopted in January, costs had risen steeply and the council had agreed to support the jubilee celebrations and Oaks Meadow. Furthermore, the cost of printing had increased, as had the number of pages in the newsletter.

The previous year's budget had effectively brought forward a surplus of nearly £5,000 (£2,888 underspend and £2,040 extra income) and so it was proposed that the budget be reviewed in light of this and current circumstances.

The clerk had put forward a draft new budget (attached as appendix 3), with a total planned expenditure of £17,542 (previously £14,142). The increase in this new budget would still be less than the amount of the surplus brought forward, and the council AGREED to adopt this new budget.

Action: Clerk to update budget

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11. Jubilee Event

The Chair, on behalf of the Council, thanked Cllr Scarff and Mrs Scarff for their splendid work in arranging and preparing the celebrations and refreshments for the lighting of the beacon, and he also thanked all councillors for their work on the night. From all accounts, the evening had been very well received and an estimated 300 people had attended.

12. Combs and Battisford Fete

The clerk had circulated a request for support from the fete committee. It was AGREED that a contribution of £426.00, being the cost of the toilets and the insurance, be made (see item 10 (c) (vii) above).

Action: Clerk to send cheque

13. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Betchley provided an update on the Oaks Meadow project. There is to be an open day at the meadow on Midsummer Day to which all the nearby villages had been invited. In response to their request for help it was proposed that the council donate £150 towards the costs of the day, and this was AGREED (see item 10 (c) (viii) above). Following a further discussion councillors agreed that any further support for the project should be consequent upon the presentation of a clear budget identifying specific costs.

Action: Clerk to send cheque

14. Scotches Corner

The clerk had circulated a letter from neighbours regarding antisocial behaviour in the vicinity of the jubilee bench (at the junction of Park Road, Tannery Road and Poplar Hill). It was suggested that the source of the disturbances was residents at the nearby supported housing units. However, it would seem that not all nearby residents had experienced issues in this regard and the council asked the clerk to contact the affected people to request a diary of incidents so that a dialogue with the charity involved could be more effective.

Action: Clerk to contact residents

15. PIIP Priorities

The Chair referred to the sterling work done by Cllr Walker prior to his departure and suggested that the next step might be to have an informal meeting in a social environment where priorities could be discussed. This was agreed by councillors and Cllr Kitson will contact councillors with proposed dates and locations.

Action: Chair to convene informal meeting

16. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- The clerk had received an application for an unconventional shaped memorial stone to be erected in the cemetery. After a discussion it was unanimously agreed that the current style of the cemetery be maintained. The clerk was asked to decline the request.
- A resident had written expressing concern about cars parking on the grass triangle at the junction of Moats Tye and Little London. It was pointed out that the land belongs to the county council (Highways) and past experience had suggested they would not be prepared to try to control any parking. The Clerk was nevertheless instructed to report the problem to Highways and update the resident.

17. Date and time of next meeting –Monday 11th July at 7.30pm in Battisford and District Cricket Club.

The Meeting closed at 9.21 pm



Appendix 1

County Council report June 2022

Council on course to plant 200,000 trees

Additionally, on May 11th it was announced that Suffolk County Council had planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years (at an average of 272 per day).

Much of this was possible thanks to £400,000 of the council's own Suffolk 2020 Fund, to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county.

In one year, 198,547 average adult trees could absorb the equivalent CO2 emitted by:

- 8,845,898 miles travelled in a typical petrol car
- 903 typical household gas boilers running for a year
- 199 Suffolk residents each year.

The planting includes 12 miles of new mixed native species hedgerows across 15 county farm holdings, delivering new wildlife habitat, ecological corridors and enhanced landscapes.

The council worked with many partners to make the tree planting a success, including The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Warden Network, county farm tenants, landowners, local authorities and communities, and contractor Giles Landscapes.

All the trees have been registered as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and contribute to the continuing Suffolk-wide ambition of Creating the Greenest County.

Suffolk celebrates as 185 Platinum Jubilee events approved

Communities across Suffolk are preparing to celebrate Her Majesty, The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, as Suffolk County Council, as of May 12th, approved applications for 185 events.

Thousands of residents across the county will come together with neighbours and attend celebration events between Thursday 2 and Sunday 5 June, to mark Her Majesty, The Queen's 70 years of service.

Originally, fees were waived for events taking place on Sunday 5 June only - which is being referred to nationally as the 'Big Jubilee Lunch', however due to the unprecedented demand for events taking place across the rest of the weekend, Suffolk County Council also waived fees for events taking place on Thursday 2, Friday 3 and Saturday 4 June.

The waived fees are associated with costs related to road closure applications and traffic management, such as signs and barriers.

The approved celebrations are made up of smaller street party style events in roads and cul-de-sacs; held by residents and community groups, and bigger events organised by town, parish, borough and district councils.

Suffolk's schools step up for Walk to School week

For this year's Walk to School Week (16-20 May), Suffolk County Council is supporting schools to take part in its Keep Moving Suffolk Walking Challenge.

Following the success of last year's challenge, almost 100 primary schools across Suffolk have signed up to receive a pack of free resources from the council, which aims to encourage 25,000 children, parents and staff to get active by walking to school.

The resources include a poster and daily reward stickers for each class, as well as an activity log for children to complete on their journeys to and from school, giving them fun daily activities to do and a printable certificate to recognise the achievements of children who walk to school during the week.

Suffolk County Council leader vows to get the job done as he sets out ambitious vision for Suffolk

On May 19th, Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, outlined the council's priorities at the Annual General Meeting.

Supporting people's health and wellbeing, strengthening the economy, protecting and enhancing our environment and providing value for money are at the heart of the council's new ambitions.

Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

"Suffolk is bursting with ambition, with a county council led by an administration which time and again delivers for the people of Suffolk. Working together we will overcome those challenges we face and build a bright future for Suffolk and its people.

"Let's get on with the job and make our ambitions a reality."

Councillor Hicks began his speech by paying tribute to Her Majesty the Queen on her Platinum Jubilee, before acknowledging Russia's illegal war on Ukraine and the collective response from Suffolk residents, with the message that people are safe, supported and welcome here.

He then spoke in detail of the council's four ambitions. These include:

- Promoting and supporting the health and wellbeing of Suffolk people

Councillor Hicks said:

"It represents the greatest part of our current £625M budget, however money alone doesn't make the difference in these areas, it is the way we work together with partners which delivers real substantial change for people."

He outlined his commitment SEND improvement, acknowledged the ongoing work to integrate health and social care systems under the two Integrated Care Systems and the successes of Cassius, the council's digital care service.

- Strengthening our local economy

Councillor Hicks said:

"Our local Suffolk economy is the life blood of this county and its people. We are committed to working with local businesses, business organisations like the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, and others to ensure that the Suffolk Economy is best placed to fulfil its potential - so that everyone benefits."

He referenced the ongoing construction of the Gull Wing Bridge in Lowestoft, the council's new housing Joint Venture Partnership with Lovells, where some council land will be used for providing 3,000 new houses. He acknowledged the new Freeport at Felixstowe and Harwich and the importance of improving the major networks which connect the port to the rest of the country, citing projects to improve roads between the Seven Hills Junction and Melton, the A11 Fiveways roundabout and planned works to improve the interchange at Copdock. Finally, he made reference to Sizewell C and confirmed that should the plan to build a new reactor on the Suffolk coast be approved, Suffolk would stand to benefit from £200m of investment to mitigate impact.

- Protecting and enhancing our environment

Councillor Hicks said:

"This administration is committed to protecting our natural environment and assets. We are ambitious for the future, to ensure generations to come, get to enjoy the benefits of this greenest of counties."

He confirmed the council has invested £12.8M on decarbonising council owned building and assets, marked the installation of over 100 electric car charging points across Suffolk, celebrated the council planting almost 200,000 trees and announced ongoing work to upgrade and build new Household waste and recycling centres in Stowmarket, Haverhill and Foxhall.

- Providing value for money

Councillor Hicks said:

“None of the aspirations I’ve mentioned before would be achievable without sound financial management and providing real value for money for our residents. Providing value for money means investing in services which matter most.”

Councillor Hicks highlighted Suffolk’s achievement of being selected by Government to negotiate a County Deal, which involves the transfer of power in areas such as transport, education, skills, housing and planning. He also mentioned the £20million investment in highways and the successful programme to upgrade all 46,000 streetlights to LED.

The speech closed with Councillor Hicks’ continued commitment to tackling poverty in Suffolk. He said:

“This administration will work with front line organisations drawing on their first-hand experience of poverty to do what we can to mitigate the effects. This administration recognises and accepts there is a real issue with the cost of living and I urge anyone who is struggling to make ends meet, struggling to pay bills or to afford necessities like food to contact the Suffolk Advice and Support Service helpline on **0800 068 3131**.”

Suffolk residents encouraged to use their Quiet Lanes

People in Suffolk are being encouraged to explore more of the beautiful countryside on their doorstep through the growing Quiet Lanes initiative.

Quiet Lanes is a nationally recognised designation for narrow, rural roads which can be shared with walkers, horse riders, cyclists and other road users.

The scheme aims to encourage everyone using the lanes to travel with caution, so everyone can enjoy the rural lanes with greater safety.

Launched in 2020 it is a county-wide project overseen by a volunteer steering group supported by Suffolk County Council’s 2020 Fund, the East Suffolk Community Partnerships and the East Suffolk Greenprint Forum.

Since its launch nearly 200 parish councils have engaged and there are now more than 350 lanes designated in Suffolk, covering approximately 400 kilometres (248 miles) of country road.

All Quiet Lanes are marked with green signs at either end, which clearly show the hierarchy of right of way for people using the road.

Residents can use the interactive map on [the Quiet Lanes Suffolk website](#) to find out where the nearest lanes are to them.

“Quiet Lanes has been the perfect example of people working together to achieve something significant,” said volunteer Tim Beach of Suffolk Quiet Lanes.

“Without the hard work of the volunteers and the willingness of Parish Councils to work together to link up the lane network and hold public consultation, we wouldn’t have been able to achieve anywhere near the amount of Quiet Lanes that have now been designated across Suffolk, in such a short space of time.”

The council set up a Policy Development Panel to investigate how to cut Suffolk County Council’s carbon and harmful emissions on a spend to save basis, with the aim to make Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.

Now in its second phase, work is being done to explore six focus areas, including Transport and Air Quality to which the Quiet Lanes initiative contributes through improvement to natural environmental quality.

Visit [Quiet Lanes Suffolk](#) to access over 350 Suffolk country roads designated as Quiet Lanes for recreation.

Suffolk Archives invites people to donate Platinum Jubilee souvenirs for 'memory box'

As the county prepares to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Suffolk Archives is inviting the public to contribute souvenirs from their celebrations.

From Monday 6 June, people can donate items such as photographs, postcards, programmes, invitations and leaflets from local events.

After past royal events, the public has donated a variety of physical and digital items. With the Platinum Jubilee being a rare event in British history, this is an opportunity for local people to help build on the Archives' existing 900-year records, providing valuable research content for future generations.

For more information and to submit digital content [visit the Suffolk archives website](#)

Email any questions to suffolk.remembers@suffolk.gov.uk or call 01473 296666.

Appendix 2 – District Councillor's Report

District Councillor's Report: Onehouse Ward Parish Councils June 2022

Annual Council meeting	The Annual Council meeting was held on 26 th May. The Conservative and Independent has control through the casting vote of the Chair. The newly elected Chair is Cllr James Caston, with Cllr Ekpenyong as Vice-Chair. There were few changes to the committee positions for this final year of this administration.
Needham Lake Visitor Centre	The new visitor centre and café at Needham Lake, The Duck and Teapot opened officially on 17 th May and were rather surprised at the number of visitors over the first weekend. They have now taken steps to manage larger numbers.
Cost of Living crisis	MSDC Cabinet have approved a 5 point action plan to try to help residents through the cost of living crisis. The aim of the plan is to try to ensure that those in need are able to access Government help and other organisations, and to maintain good physical and mental health,
Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Hub.	Plans for a new hub in Stowmarket were approved by Cabinet last week. The master plan incorporates two parcels of land at Chilton Fields and Stowmarket High School. Two all weather pitches, a mini running track and a new sports pavilion are included in the proposal.
Residents' survey	Babergh and Mid Suffolk are carrying out their annual survey of residents. Hopefully this will enable the Councils to understand more about residents' and communities resilience and to help improve customer service. Up to 8,000 households from the 2 districts will be randomly selected and invited to take part.
Large scale energy and infrastructure projects	Babergh and Mid Suffolk communities are currently seeing an unprecedented level of proposed large scale energy infrastructure. There was an information session for town and parish councils. MSDC cabinet have agreed the Council's official response to the public consultation on the Anglia Green overhead power cables to Bramford. Any member of the public or group is also able to respond to the consultation. https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/east-anglia-green-our-proposals-mid-suffolk-and-babergh-north-substation
Locality Grant scheme 2022/23	The next round of Locality Grants is now open. See https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/communities/grants-and-funding/locality-awards-guidance/ . Please contact me with ideas in the first instance.

John Matthissen

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Appendix 3 – Proposed new budget

Proposed 2022 Budget update as at June 2022

(original Adopted December 2021 and Jan 2022)

CATEGORY	Total for 2021/2	Budget 2021/22	Original budget	proposed	Comment
1 Audit Fees	£ 532.80	£ 500.00	£ 550.00	£ 550.00	unchanged
2 Barclif/media	£ 696.40	£ 550.00	£ 600.00	£ 900.00	newsletter size and printing costs increasing
3 Broadband for Village Hall	£ -	£ 150.00	£ -	£ -	unchanged
4 Burial Grounds Maintenance - Combs Cemetery	£ 815.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,000.00	unchanged
5 Burial Grounds Maintenance - St Mary's Churchyard	£ 995.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,500.00	unchanged
6 Bus Shelter	£ 868.61	£ 500.00	£ -	£ -	unchanged
7 Clerk's Expenses - Petrol/Stationery	£ 15.84	£ 100.00	£ 100.00	£ 100.00	unchanged
8 Clerk's Overtime	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	unchanged
9 Clerk's Salary & Expenses	£ 5,062.00	£ 5,062.00	£ 5,062.00	£ 5,062.00	unchanged
10 Community Projects	£ 1,256.60	£ 600.00	£ -	£ 1,500.00	for Oaks Meadow etc. (small items not from CIL)
11 Councillors' Expenses	£ -	£ 50.00	£ 50.00	£ 50.00	unchanged
12 Dog Bins Maintenance	£ 558.80	£ 580.00	£ 580.00	£ 580.00	unchanged
13 Donations - Section 137	£ 250.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	unchanged
14 Election Expenses	£ -	£ 200.00	£ 200.00	£ 200.00	unchanged
15 Hire of Hall	£ 140.00	£ 300.00	£ 300.00	£ 300.00	unchanged
16 Insurance	£ 282.87	£ 300.00	£ 300.00	£ 300.00	unchanged
17 Miscellaneous	£ 581.73	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	unchanged
18 Street Lights-Energy	£ 782.61	£ 1,200.00	£ 800.00	£ 2,400.00	prices rising; out of contract (none available at present)
19 Street Lights-Maintenance	£ -	£ 500.00	£ -	£ -	unchanged
20 Subscriptions & Fees	£ 375.36	£ 400.00	£ 400.00	£ 400.00	unchanged
21 Training	£ 90.00	£ 700.00	£ 700.00	£ 700.00	unchanged
					identifies change from previous
Cost totals	£13,303.62	£ 16,192.00	£ 14,142.00	£ 17,542.00	

Receipts	Total for 2021/2	Budget 2020/21	agreed budget 2021/2
22 Reclaimed VAT	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 500.00
23 Deposit Account Interest	£ 1.92	£ -	£ -
24 Burial Ground Income	£ 6,875.00	£ 4,500.00	£ 4,500.00
25 Miscellaneous	£ 164.00	£ -	£ -
26 Donations	£ -	£ -	£ -
27 Precept	£ 9,000.00	£ 9,000.00	£ 9,000.00
28 CIL (outside budget)		£ -	£ -
Income Totals:	£16,040.92	£ 14,000.00	£ 14,000.00

Balancing:

2021/2 budgeted expenditure	16,192.00	
actual	13,303.62	
surplus/deficit carried forward		2,888.38
2021/2 budgeted income	14,000.00	
actual	16,040.92	
surplus/deficit carried forward		2,040.92
amount brought forward		4,929.30