

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 12th December 2022 at 7.30pm, Battisford Cricket Club**

Present: T Kitson (chair); S Ottewell (vice chair); S Scarff (councillor); T Betchley (councillor); A Tomlinson (councillor); K Oakes (county councillor); J Matthiessen (district councillor); T Bamber (clerk),.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no absences.

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying

Cllr Betchley – non-pecuniary interest in respect of Oaks Meadow (item 13)

3. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 14 November 2022

Minutes for Monday 14 November 2022 were reviewed and it was agreed that they be signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by the vice chairman.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes

- (i) The clerk had been unable to find a good example of a village map. Cllr Matthiessen recommended he speak with the clerk of Great Finborough.
- (ii) With regard to an application for an ANPR speed indicator in Moats Tye, Cllr Oakes advised that the clerk should submit the application to Suffolk Roadsafe, with a copy to her so that she could then write supporting the application..

Action: clerk to apply for ANPR SID

6. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor had sent her report, and this is attached as appendix 1.

7. District Councillor's Report

The District Councillor had sent his report, and this is attached as appendix 2.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

Nothing to report that is not addressed elsewhere.

9. Planning

a.

- i. **DC/22/050834 Battisford & District Cricket Club:** erection of side extension: Councillors were in support of this application.
- ii. **DC/22/05948 Moats Tye Livery:** Application for waiver of condition regarding illumination: Councillors had no objection to this application.



- b. Decisions received from MSDC
 - i. **DC/22/05059** Moats Tye Livery- erection of lean-to extension: Granted. Noted

10. Finance

- a. **Accounts review to date** – The clerk reported the Current Account balance as of 2 December 2022 was £49,248.49 and the savings account balance was £1,922.90.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed and accepted.

- b. **Payments received**

None received

- c. **Payments to hand**

- i. Npower for streetlights (direct debit): £359.25. This was approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 S.301*)
- ii. A Bamber – Christmas tree festival costs £68.18 / stationery expenses - £9.50. Total £77.68. This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22307 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.111/s.137*)
- iii. Hartleys Garden Services Ltd (cemetery grass cutting): £175.00. This was approved by all councillors and cheque no. 22308 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.214(2)*)

- d. **Donation request from CAB:**

Following the agreement last month (Correspondence) Councillors approved the issue of a cheque payable to Citizens' Advice Bureau in the sum of £250. Cheque no. 22309 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.137*).

- e. **Barclif Donation Request**

A request for £150 had been received from the Battisford Village Hall Management Committee. This was agreed by councillors and cheque no. 22310 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972, s.133*)

- f. **Change of Bank**

Cllr Ottewell reported that, following a review of potentially suitable banks, she and the chair had concluded that the most appropriate was Unity Trust Bank. Councillors agreed that this be taken forward with a view to committing once the Spring Precept had been credited to the existing bank account.

11. Budget for Y/E March 2024

Cllr Kitson had circulated a draft budget for review. The proposal, dependent on there being no significant changes to the tax base figures put forward by Mid Suffolk District Council, was for a budgeted expenditure of £19,677.90, with precept income unchanged at £9,000.

Councillors agreed that the surplus that had accrued over previous good years could be utilised in part to offset the shortfall between expected income and expected expenditure.

Provided the final tax base is confirmed unchanged, councillors AGREED that the precept and budgets as proposed be formalised at the next meeting in January.

Action: clerk to prepare budget and precept papers for formal approval in January

12. Cemetery

a) Memorial request:

The clerk had circulated a request for a memorial that contained religious symbols and expressions. Councillors considered that these were not inflammatory and that the memorial should be accepted.

Action: Clerk to respond to stonemason

b) Cemetery fees:

Cllr Betchley presented data that he and the clerk had reviewed, showing the cost of burial in various local cemeteries. It would seem that fees for other cemeteries had increased considerably since the last review of fees for Combs. By way of example, a resident of Stowmarket would find it cheaper to pay for burial as a non-resident in Combs than as a resident in their own cemetery.

Councillors agreed that the fees should be increased, if for no other reason than to discourage non-residents from selecting Combs on the basis of cost alone. There was no reason to change the fees for residents, however it was appreciated that some long-term residents of Combs Ford might still be under the impression that they lived in the parish of Combs and councillors therefore AGREED that:

- (i) Fees for non-residents be increased to £1000 in total;
- (ii) The council has the right to exercise discretion in the application of fees where it considers it appropriate, and;
- (iii) The clerk is to monitor the cost of burials in other local cemeteries to ensure fees remain consistent.

Action: Clerk to implement changes to regulations and promulgate

13. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Betchley reported that the need for a maintenance contract mentioned last month would not now arise until 2024. However there was still a need for training of a volunteer, costing £370. Councillors agreed that this cost should be met and that the clerk should arrange for payment next month.

Action: payment to be made next month

14. PIIP

(a) The Plan:

The chair presented a completed draft of the infrastructure plan incorporating all the issues that had been discussed and all councillors agreed it was exactly what was needed. The chair will finalise the document and then send it to the clerk for loading onto the website and distribution to all who may be interested.

(b) Cricket Club Application

Councillors reviewed the application from the cricket club for CIL funds to help improve shower facilities. All agreed

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that this request be met and the clerk was instructed to inform the club that the sum of £8,000 would be made available once work was commenced.

Action: Clerk to write to cricket club

15. Meeting Dates 2023

Following the clerk's earlier failure to consider the impact of the May elections as well as the coronation on meetings a new list of proposed dates had been circulated This was agreed by all councillors.

Action: Clerk to provide details to cricket club and post on website.

16. Correspondence/Any Other Business

A street light in Bildeston Road (lamp 22) had failed.

Action: clerk to arrange repair

17. Date and time of next meeting –Monday 9th January 2023 at 7.30pm in Battisford and District Cricket Club.

The Meeting closed at 9.14 pm

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Appendix 1

County Council report – December 2022

£2.5m saved on energy costs as LED streetlight project nears completion

A project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs nears completion. It has saved more than £2.5 million pounds so far.

The change to LED streetlights supports Suffolk County Council's aim to reduce carbon, light pollution, and bring down ongoing maintenance costs for the council, all whilst providing the best value to residents.

It was expected that the council would reduce costs by around 76%, however, the target was exceeded, with 77.64% savings made to date.

In June 2021, Bouygues Energies and Services were announced as the partner to deliver the project to upgrade 43,400 Suffolk streetlights with new, reduced energy LED lanterns. The total number of upgraded streetlights is currently at 40,692 excluding any of the Ipswich Borough Council, or Town/Parish council owned streetlights. There are approximately 1,700 upgrades outstanding, which includes any remaining heritage lantern upgrades. It is hoped that around 1200 of the remaining lanterns will be completed by the end of the year.

Prior to the commencement of the project, Suffolk Highways contacted towns and parishes to provide them with the opportunity to have their parish-council owned street-lighting upgraded at the same time. All heritage-style lanterns are also being upgraded as part of the project.

The upgrade of the lighting system will include a further rollout of SCC's central management system which will allow lights to be switched on or off and dim individual or groups of lights.

This smart technology will increase the control the council has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs. The system will also automatically flag any lights that are not working which reduces the need for night-time inspections.

Suffolk County Council launch All Age Carers' Strategy

Suffolk County Council has launched its All-Age Carers' Strategy at today's Health and Wellbeing Board.

The strategy which has been developed with young carers and adult carers across Suffolk aims to support carers across Suffolk in their roles and will lead to the development of an action plan in the coming months.

This will help SCC to provide carers with the right kind of quality support at the right time, in the right place, and in the right way.

Many carers do not identify themselves as carers for approaching two years - they are reluctant to do so - therefore a key goal within this strategy is to reduce this timeframe and help them access the support they need. The five key priorities are:

1. Early identification of carers
2. Improved information and advice
3. Young carers to have the same priority as adult carers
4. Systems and services that work for and support all carers

5. Improved health and well-being for carer

An action plan will be developed in the coming months which will provide more detail how the priorities will be delivered and raise the profile of carers in Suffolk.

Statement following chancellor announcing a devolution deal for Suffolk

By Leader of the Council, Matthew Hicks.

"We welcome the Chancellor's announcement that the Government has committed to agreeing a truly historic deal for Suffolk – the first county deal of its kind in the country. This deal will be a significant step on our county's journey towards devolution and more control over our future.

"If agreed, this provisional deal would deliver decades of significant additional investment into local priorities that will improve the lives and outcomes of Suffolk's residents; secure greater decision-making powers around transport, infrastructure and skills; and give us the powers we need to achieve our net zero ambitions and create the Greenest County.

"The powers and funding on offer have changed since we made our initial bid in August 2021. The Government is actively progressing only the most ambitious devolution deals but, in return, is seeking greater changes to the way local government is led. Therefore, in exchange for the greatest freedoms and funding, we are now minded to pursue a model whereby the Leader of Suffolk County Council is directly elected by the people of Suffolk. This proposed change would not add any new levels of bureaucracy nor create any new offices.

"In keeping with Suffolk's collaborative way of working, we have developed this deal in partnership with our district and borough colleagues, the Police and Crime Commissioner and our MPs. It will now be taken forward to public consultation with Suffolk's communities and businesses."

Thousands of more new trees for Suffolk

It was announced on November 23rd that 7,526 trees will be planted across the county this winter by Suffolk's councils.

Suffolk County Council successfully submitted a joint bid on behalf of itself, Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council and West Suffolk Council.

£138,219 will come into the county as one of 100 grants under the government's Local Authority Treescapes Fund, directly contributing to achieving the country's ambitious tree planting targets. The funding is for the planting of the trees and three years' maintenance.

The trees are to be planted in non-woodland areas, including those that have been neglected in the past, ecologically damaged or affected by tree diseases like ash dieback.

Winter Gritting

Column by Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding.

Despite experiencing what feels like the mildest winters we have had in very long time; our highways teams have been carefully planning our winter gritting operation for months to ensure we are prepared for whatever the weather throws our way.

On Sunday evening, 36 gritters including the public-named Father Gritmas, Gritty Gritty Bang Bang and Spread Sheeran went on their first run of the season, a county-wide treatment of priority 1 roads which took place as the road surface temperatures were forecast to drop below 0°C.

The gritting treatment of our roads in Suffolk is vital to ensure people can continue to travel and do so safely during the wintry weather. During the 2021/2022 winter season, Suffolk used around 9,388 tonnes of salt to treat a total distance of 129,367 miles – which equates to travelling the circumference of Earth over five times! Suffolk Highways currently has a stock of around 24,000 tonnes of salt across the county for the season ahead and is well prepared for any further drop in temperatures.

Our highway teams are responsible for gritting 36 Priority 1 (P1) routes, which amounts to around 1,259 miles, including all A and B roads, roads to fire stations, hospitals, main bus routes and rail stations. They also have 34 Priority 2 (P2) routes, which amounts to around 843 miles of the network, this includes other bus routes, roads leading to rural villages and access to schools. The P1 routes are completed when road surface temperatures are forecast to drop below 1°C and P2 routes are carried out when the forecast predicts there to be a longer period of hazardous conditions.

This entire operation is one which requires extremely careful pre-planning and running throughout, every single decision to grit or not is based upon forecasted road surface temperatures, whilst also considering the impact of other factors, such as wind and heavy rain.

But gritting the priority network isn't all that the teams do to prepare our county for wintry weather; Suffolk Highways has also refilled the 2,100 grit bins across the county at registered locations, such as the bottom of hills, or on junctions of minor roads. Grit bins are owned by parish and town councils and to ensure that the contents of grit bins are used to make roads safer, our communities are encouraged to monitor how and where the grit is used and if more is required to contact Suffolk Highways.

Suffolk's residents can also do their part to support us with our gritting efforts by parking considerately and leaving enough room so that our vehicles can grit the road – if we can't fit, we can't grit!

Anyone who would like to know when and where we are gritting over the coming months, all gritting activities will be posted to Suffolk Highways' Twitter and Facebook accounts – so I encourage you to give us a follow and keep abreast of all our teams movements this winter season.

To find out more about which roads are gritted, how we deal with the network in the event of snow, or grit bins, please visit: www.suffolk.gov.uk/gritting.

Appendix 2 – District Councillor's Report

District Councillor's Report: Onehouse Ward - December 2022

Water quality and planning	At the last Council meeting we discussed a motion regarding water quality and the prevalence of wastewater discharges into our rivers and waterways. The motion recommended that this issue will be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and that planning officers will request more information than the standard responses from the water authority.
Winter Warmth grant scheme	Various communities have received grants to extend their coffee mornings and meetings to provide opportunities to socialise in a warm building. As the grant budget has been used up I have asked that more is provided from the large projected 2022/23 underspend by MSDC. Please get in touch if your organisation has the capacity to help in this way.

End of term 2019-2023 report	<p>Mid Suffolk's end of term report has been published on the website https://www.babergh.gov.uk/the-council/performance/what-have-we-done-for-you-report</p> <p>This time it features projects completed and some staff members rather than pictures of Conservative cabinet members on every page, nor will there be a hard copy to every home.</p>
Standards of social housing	<p>Following the tragic death of a toddler in Rochdale, Mid Suffolk and Babergh are undergoing a full diagnostic review of Building Services. This picked up the need to increase our input into resolving issues around mould and damp. We have acted on these recommendations. More officers are now able to deliver damp and mould treatment and council has employed a Damp Specialist Surveyor</p>
County Deal for Suffolk	<p>The Chancellor announced a new county deal for Suffolk, which hopes to deliver decades of significant investment for the area. The model is based on having a directly elected Leader for Suffolk County Council (who will not be a mayor) and the current leader/cabinet model will continue. We are still unsure exactly what this will mean for us as a District. Only the council leaders across Suffolk were involved in the negotiations.</p>
Exemplar Housing scheme proposal	<p>The council has put forward proposals for an exemplar housing scheme in Elmswell. The Green and Liberal Democrat Group have called in the decision to go ahead with the scheme because we believe the decision-making process was flawed and not all information was brought before the Cabinet, notably the quite long-standing issue of extra primary school capacity within Elmswell. This means that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will discuss this and may make recommendations for the Cabinet to reconsider. The engagement event was well attended by residents, but it was a shame that no Cabinet members attended to hear the comments from the residents.</p>
Locality Funding	<p>I have now allocated all the funds for 2022/23</p>

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