

Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 17th April 2023 at 7.30pm, Battisford Cricket Club

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

1. Apologies for Absence

S Scarff (councillor); had sent his apologies for absence due to being on vacation, and this was accepted.

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying

Cllr Betchley – non-pecuniary interest in respect of Oaks Meadow (item 15)

3. Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 13 March 2023

Minutes for Monday 13 March 2023 were reviewed and it was agreed that they be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting by the chairman.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes

- (i) The clerk confirmed that the dog bin had been moved to the entrance to Oaks Meadow and that MSDC were emptying it.
- (ii) The clerk has posted the new cemetery regulations and fees on the website and on the cemetery notice board.

Other matters are covered elsewhere

6. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor had sent her report, and this is attached as appendix 1. Cllr Oakes also provided an update on action taken by the enforcement officer at the county council in respect of the disruption caused by the builders at the Chatsworth View site on Bildeston Road.

7. District Councillor's Report

The District Councillor explained that, as an election had been called, political issues could not be mentioned during the leadup to it and in the absence of other news no district report had been written.

8. Parish Council Chairman's Report

The chair reported that Cllr Scarff had chosen not to stand as a councillor for the coming year. All agreed that, while they wished him well and agreed his long service warranted a well-earned rest/retirement, his constant support and knowledge would be sadly missed.

As no other residents had stood for election, the chair noted that the council would comprise only four councillors for the coming term (the number for a quorum is three). Consequently the ability to get things done may be less than it was before and plans should take this into account.

With the departure of one of the bank signatories it will be important to set up the new bank account promptly, and to this end the chair asked if the other three councillors would be willing to be signatories to the new bank. All agreed and Cllr Ottewell and the clerk will move this forward as quickly as possible.



9. Planning

a. Applications received for consideration:

- i. *DC/23/01594 Jacks Farm Cottage, Jockeys Lane: erection of two storey link extension*

Councillors noted this was much improved on the previous version. It was noted that the earlier extension, constructed in the 1980s, had been thatched, but that this thatch was to be removed to facilitate solar panels but as this was made clear in the application any issues regarding listed buildings would be taken up by Mid Suffolk District Council.

Councillors instructed the clerk to record that they had no objection to the application.

- ii. *DC/23/01338 Land North of Bildeston Road: variation of conditions*

Councillors had no objection to the application.

10. Finance

a. Accounts review to date

The clerk reported the Current Account balance as of 31 March 2023 was £35,907.39 and the savings account balance was £1,922.90. Interest of £5.06 was added to the savings account on 3 April.

The Budget analysis and financial summary were reviewed, and these were accepted.

b. Asset Statement Review

The clerk reported that there had been no changes to the asset register over the year and it remained as shown on the website. Councillors approved this review and the chairman and clerk signed the updated register.

c. Section 137 expenditure review

The clerk reminded councillors of the provisions of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The limit for such expenditure by Combs Parish Council was £4,903 and the amount spent in the year ending March 2023 was £318.18 (donations to CAB and local church bells Christmas appeal).

d. Payments received

Burial ground income	£2,050.00
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e. Payments to hand

(i) Npower for streetlights (direct debit): £191.64. This was approved by all councillors (*Parish Councils Act 1957, S.3; Highways Act 1980 s.301*)

(ii) Bicycle Belles donation request. A resident is organising the popular annual cycle ride, as the church has ceased to support it. To ensure insurance is in place, he has joined a cycling club that include such cover in its membership cost of £88. Battisford Parish Council has agreed to meet half this cost, and Combs Parish Councillors had offered to pay £44.00. Approved by all councillors. Cheque number 22317 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s.137*)

(iii) Oaks Meadow insurance £145.60. Approved by all councillors. Cheque number 22318 was written and signed (*Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10*)

(iv) SALC membership renewal £327.67. Approved by all councillors. Cheque number 22319 was written and signed (*Local Government Act 1972 s.133*)

Action: Clerk to post cheques

f. Certificate of Exemption

The clerk was able to report that expenditure and income for the year ending March 2023 was within the threshold beyond which an external audit was required. Councillors authorised the chairman and clerk to complete the certificate and send it to the external auditors.

Action: Clerk to send to auditors

g. Annual Governance Statement

The clerk had circulated the draft of this and all councillors agreed that the clerk be authorised to post it on the village website and submit it to auditors.

Action: Clerk to post on website

h. CIL Expenditure return:

This was agreed by all councillors as an accurate summary of the income and expenditure in respect of CIL. The clerk was authorised to post this on the website.

Action: Clerk to post on website

i. Adoption of General Reserves Policy:

As suggested by auditors, the clerk had drawn up a draft general reserves policy, which had been circulated for review. Councillors agreed that this be adopted and posted on the website. It was noted that the monthly finance report provides an update on general reserves but this will be labeled more clearly in future.

Action: Clerk to post on website

11. Newsletter

Cllr Ottewell asked that all items be with her by 22nd May ready for printing and distribution over the following weekend.

12. Design Statement

The chairman will raise this at the June meeting once the new council is ensconced.

13. Litter Pick

The chairman reported a very successful exercise, with over 25 bags of litter collected. The clerk will write to Mr Portway thanking him for the use of the Tannery car park.

14. Cemetery

The possibility of works to improve the cemetery will be discussed at the June meeting.

15. Oaks Meadow

Cllr Betchley reported that other support had been found to help with the cost of constructing a parking area and the amount sought from Combs Parish Council was in the region of £4,500. All were supportive of this notion and Cllr Betchley was asked to invite the committee to submit a formal request for support.

16. Correspondence/Any Other Business

- The clerk had received and circulated an email from the Street Naming and Numbers department of MSDC Building Control, inviting councillors to suggest a name for the road to be built on the new development on Bildeston Road. Cllr Scarff had suggested 'Hubbards Close', after Vic Hubbard, the village milkman who used to own the field. All councillors agreed with this suggestion and the clerk will respond.

17. Date and time of next meeting –Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 7.30pm in Battisford and District Cricket Club. This will be the Annual General Meeting and will be preceded by the parish meeting at 7:00pm

The Meeting closed at 9.00 pm

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Appendix 1

County Council report – April 2023

98% of pupils receive a place at one of their preferred secondary schools on National Offer Day

98% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred schools and 93% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 8,083 applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to transfer to in September 2023. This is approximately 300 more applications than received last year.

Families who applied online can log on to the Admissions Portal from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email to confirm this offer. Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application by second class post today (1 March 2023).

Once school places have been confirmed, parents and carers need to consider how their child will get to and from school. If their child is eligible for Suffolk County Council funded school travel, they will receive an email by the end of March 2023 with details of how to opt-in.

Further information on secondary school admissions can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Fees waived for communities to celebrate His Majesty the King's Coronation

To mark the celebration of His Majesty the King's Coronation, Suffolk County Council has waived fees associated with applications to close roads for street parties and other local authority led public events.

Events will be taking place across the country, between 6 and 8 May 2023. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours. Many of Suffolk's residents will also be giving up their time as volunteers to bring people together as part of The Big Help Out. For all events planned over the weekend, which is being referred to as The Coronation Big Lunch, Suffolk County Council will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures for events.

Similarly, to the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, if you are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or if you would like to apply as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park, you can view more information at www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation

State-of-the-art emergency services hub opens in Stowmarket

A new police and fire station off Needham Road, Stowmarket, has now opened – providing the facilities needed to enable efficient, effective, and environmentally responsible emergency services for Suffolk.

Collaborative working remains a priority for Suffolk's emergency services, who recognise that this provides excellent value for money and further benefits for the county's communities.

Stowmarket's new station, situated on the A1120 junction with the B1113 Needham Road, is the latest in a programme of joint blue light hubs across Suffolk. However, it is the first new build, as the other 12 combined fire and police facilities comprise of existing sites which have been extended or refurbished.

The building has a range of green credentials, including photovoltaic panels to convert the sun's rays into electricity, an air source heat pump system, 14 electric vehicle charging points, and insulation informed by thermal modelling to ensure this is of the highest standard and reflects the needs of the hub's users.

In addition, the station's location will enable easy access to the A14, the local road network, and in and around Stowmarket, one of Suffolk's largest market towns, helping to ensure a swift response to whatever emergencies may arise.

Suffolk-based business Concertus designed the new station, which Morgan Sindall began constructing in July 2021. The project was made possible by funding of £1.24m from central government and a £431k contribution from Mid Suffolk District Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Space has been provided within the station to accommodate the Salvation Army charity, which continues to provide welfare support to response staff during major incidents.

The hub may also be used in future by the East of England Ambulance Service as a drop-in facility for their crews, enabling truly joined up working for Suffolk's three emergency services.

Children's expert brought in to strengthen council's focus on real-life experiences of children with special educational needs

An independent special advisor has been commissioned to further strengthen reform of special educational needs and disabilities services (SEND) at Suffolk County Council.

Well-respected senior leader in children's services, consultant Anthony Douglas CBE, will work with SEND system leaders and the SEND networks to support the reforms already underway. He will draw on his years of experience to focus on how services are impacting upon the everyday experience of children and young people with SEND.

In chief executive and director roles for the last 20 years, Anthony Douglas has supported children and young people with SEND and their families, across health, care, and education. He also carried out a major inquiry in 2020 within a local authority about inclusive education practices in schools and colleges. He works with organisations internationally about the service developments needed for children with special needs of all types, with a view to improving those services. Anthony has chaired the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership since 2019.

Further support for Homes for Ukraine Sponsors

Suffolk County Council will provide additional financial support for Homes for Ukraine Sponsors who are hosting Ukrainian guests, up to a value of £900.

From April, Sponsors who have hosted guests for a minimum of six months, will receive an additional £150 each month from the council.

This is in addition to the £350 monthly thank you payment Sponsors receive from the UK Government, whilst their guests are staying with them.

The Government's monthly payment rises to £500 after their guests have been in the UK for 12 months, at which point the council's additional payment will stop.

All sponsors who currently host guests that arrived under the Homes For Ukraine Scheme will receive an email from Suffolk County Council asking them if they wish to opt in to the offer of a top up.

Payments will begin from April 2023, paid one month in arrears.

New exhibition opens at Sutton Hoo telling the story of royal Anglo-Saxon Rendlesham

Rendlesham Revealed: The Heart of a Kingdom AD 400-800 is a new exhibition opening on Thursday 23 March 2023 at the National Trust's Sutton Hoo, in Suffolk.

The exhibition takes visitors on a 400-year journey to reveal how the Anglo-Saxon royal settlement at Rendlesham grew and developed and celebrates the many volunteers from the local community who uncovered the long-lost archaeological remains.

This story is brought to life with over 150 archaeological finds from the settlement, ranging from food remains to gold jewellery, many of which have never been on public display before.

Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service is curating the exhibition to celebrate "Rendlesham Revealed", a community archaeology project funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Over 400 volunteers from the local community have been involved in uncovering Rendlesham's past, including young adults from the Suffolk Family Carers and Suffolk Mind, and local school children from Rendlesham, Eyke and Wickham Market primary schools. Volunteering has had a positive impact on many of those who took part.

The exhibition opens at Sutton Hoo on 23 March 2023 and will run until 29 October 2023. Entry to the temporary exhibition will be included in the normal admission charge to Sutton Hoo, which is free for National Trust members.

Smaller displays will also be on show at Norwich Castle and the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and Museum in 2024.

To find out more about the Rendlesham Revealed project visit: heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham

Suffolk County Council secures £7.9 million for active travel schemes across county

Suffolk County Council has been awarded £7.9 million to boost active schemes across the county.

The money has come from Active Travel England (ATE) and will be spent on seven projects encouraging cycling and walking through measures such as cycle lanes, shared-use paths and improved crossing points on roads.

The money from Active Transport England will fund schemes promoting walk and cycling across Suffolk.

They include two mini-Holland schemes totalling more than £5m for Woodbridge, £1.3m for Grange Road in Felixstowe, and £1.2m for the route between Ipswich Hospital and the University of Suffolk.