

Draft until signed

**Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 10 March 2014 at 7.30pm, Battisford Community Centre**

Present: Cllr I. Clark, Cllr J. Crooks; Cllr D. Eade; Cllr S. Scarff.

Also present: County Cllr Truelove; District Cllr Godden; Mrs H. Andrade, Clerk; PCSO Brown.

1. **Apologies** – Councillors Durrant, Henson and Reynard had sent their apologies.

2. **Declarations of Interest** – There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Public Forum** – There were no members of the public attending.

4. **Community Police Team, County Councillor and District Councillor Reports**

Reports were received from the Community Police Team, County Councillor Truelove and District Councillor Godden. In addition PCSO Brown reported that the speed signs should be put up soon, but he had been out monitoring speeding in the village and will try to do so as much as possible. He would feedback results to the parish council. In addition to Cllr Truelove's report, she had followed up the inadequate signing at Prospect Place, and now better signs had been provided. Cllr Truelove also enquired about the request from her Locality Budget for Neighbourhood Watch signs. Cllr Henson was absent so it was agreed that Cllr Clark would email him to find out if the grant was still needed.

5. **Approve Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 10 February 2014**

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

6. **Matters arising from previous minutes**

A formal description of what was available from Buxnet was needed for the Combs Website. Cllr Clark hadn't had chance to read the information received from Cllr Henson at the last meeting, as soon as he has he will forward it on to everyone. Nothing had been done so far about the Community Governance Review questionnaire.

12. **Community Governance Review**

Cllr Clark was still working on the response to MSDC. Each item has to be addressed specifically. As soon as it is complete Cllr Clark would circulate to parish councillors for comment. As soon as the submission from the parish council has been written and agreed, it will go on the village website and people will be asked for their opinions.

16. **Street Lights**

Cllr Clark had followed up on the testing of the concrete pillars. He had contacted Pearce and Kemp who had told him that there was no way of physically testing a concrete column, although they can be inspected. The columns have been inspected and there were no immediate signs for concern, but Pearce and Kemp recommended they be removed and replaced as soon as possible. They have estimated that it would cost £1500 per column, so an increase in precept would be required next year if plans were made to go ahead with replacing the columns. In the meantime measures have been taken to ensure there are no immediate problems, other parishes would be asked for information about their experiences and a second quote would be found.

17. **Meadow View**

A view was expressed at the last meeting, asking if keeping Meadow View on the agenda was a waste of time, so it was agreed that the parish councillors would agree on a strategy. Cllr Scarff reported that the number of cars outside Meadow View had increased again, and the owners would be back soon. After discussion it was agreed that the parish council should continue to pursue this. Cllr Clark would find the letter Cllr Godden had sent to MSDC and refer to it when writing to the Corporate Manager at MSDC.

18. **Road Safety Issues**

The speed signs should have been in place by now, but due to the flooding problems in the county the engineers haven't had time yet.

a. Signs in Combs

Cllr Scarff asked why there were no road signs for Combs. There is nothing to indicate where Combs is. He asked if it would be possible to install signs. Cllr Truelove offered to ask Highways about this.

Other signs in the village need to be replaced; particularly the Mill Lane sign and the sign to Jacks Lane that had not been replaced. The clerk was asked to report these signs to Highways. In addition some of the 30mph signs are faded, the clerk was also asked to report these and to chase up the footpath signs reported previously, as nothing had been done about those.

15. Burial Grounds

a. Combs Cemetery

Cllr Clark was going to ask parish councillors to approve the new regulations at this meeting, but unfortunately the regulations were not available until too late to be discussed at this meeting. There were two reasons for the amendments to the regulations; the first being allowing larger memorials to give families greater choice. Some memorials had already been permitted which were larger than the regulation size, so Cllr Clark proposed that the regulations be relaxed a little. The other reason for the change was as green burials were becoming more popular, a new guide was needed for the green area. Double burials would now be allowed and planting of trees on certain graves at the discretion of the parish council. Cllr Clark requested that the new regulations be approved at the next meeting.

In addition Cllr Clark requested that the parish councillors consider what should be done about the graves with surrounds. Regulations state that kerbs and surrounds are not allowed, but some people have done so anyway. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Cemetery fees had been revised, with a 20% increase. Cllr Clark proposed that the new fees be issued to funeral directors and should take effect from 1 April 2014. This was seconded by Cllr Crooks and all councillors were in favour.

- b. **St Mary's Churchyard** –Cllr Clark had met with the new Vicar, Chris Childs, prior to that Ann Cole, the Church Warden had been in touch to request that the stones in the Churchyard be topple tested again. This is covered in the contract with Stowmarket Town Council; service on request, so Cllr Clark will ask Stowmarket Town Council to do the testing, and if possible before Easter. Rev Childs is considering options for improving access at the Church. Cllr Clark said that he would wait for more information to be available on what was to be done, before discussing with the parish councillors their obligations to help with the improvements.

11. Finance

a. Current balance

Reports were circulated; and discussed.

- b. **Payments received** – £148.00 Cemetery Fees, £200.00 Village Website and 2p interest.

c. Approve payment of invoices received

- i. SLCC Membership - £58.00. The cost of membership would be shared between Battisford and Combs Parish Councils; Cllr Clark proposed this be paid, this was seconded by Cllr Scarff all councillors were in favour, chq 233 was written and signed.
- d. Agree and adopt budget for 2014
Cllr Clark had amended the budget to allow for more income from burial fees. The extra potential income had been allocated to community projects. Cllr Clark proposed the budget be approved, Cllr Eade seconded this, and all councillors were in favour.

In addition David Windle had asked Cllr Clark if he should continue to cut the grass etc. in the cemetery next year, his fees would remain the same as last year. All councillors agreed that he should continue to do the work in the cemetery.

7. Reports from Councillors

- a. **Visits** – Cllr Clark had been unable to attend the Community Planning Workshop.
b. **Matters raised for information and attention** – none.

8. Report from Parish Clerk – There was nothing to report.

9. Correspondence Received

- a. **Post** b. **Emails** Correspondence was noted and discussed.

10. Planning

- a. **Consider applications received** - No applications had been received.
- b. **Decisions made by MSDC** - No decisions had been received.

13. Councillor Training

Cllr Clark had contacted Cllr Knock, Chair of Battsford Parish Council about the possibility of a shared training course, but only one Battsford councillor had shown interest. Therefore Cllr Clark suggested that training would be given to those in Combs who wanted it and the budget would be spent to the best effect on those who felt that they needed training.

14. Vulnerable People in Combs

No response had been received to the request for a list of vulnerable people in the village, but it was agreed that a list was still needed of those who needed help when there was bad weather etc. Cllr Clark suggested that there were two possible approaches. An informal process, where minimum records were kept, as have to be careful about data protection, but where everyone makes sure that they are aware of who needs help. Or a more formal approach like the Good Neighbour Scheme. This will be discussed next time, in the meantime, Cllr Clark would find out if Suffolk ACRE was still running a Good Neighbour Scheme and he knew that Wetherden had a scheme so he would ask people there for information about it. It was suggested that volunteers would be needed from the village to run the scheme and it shouldn't be just a parish council project. Cllr Eade suggested that Combs Green would be a good place to pilot the scheme.

19. Any other items for inclusion on the next agenda

There were none.

20. Date of next meeting

Monday 14 April 2014, at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.