

## Debenham Parish Council

**Minutes of a meeting of the Debenham Parish Council held on Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 7:30 pm, at Dove Cottage, High Street, Debenham.**

**Present:** Cllr G Helm (Chairman), Cllr R Blackwell, Cllr M Hammond, Cllr J Sweet, Cllr F Winrow-Giffin, Cllr S Phipps, Cllr L Cockerton, Cllr D Seccombe, Mrs D Bedwell (Clerk), and five members of the public.

**DPC/23/1: To consider apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received (and were approved) from Cllrs K Fisher, K Grimshaw and K Barlow.

**DPC/23/2: Declarations of interest with regards to items on the agenda and additions to register:** Cllr R Blackwell declared a pecuniary interest on item 8 (a), Cllr D Seccombe declared a non-pecuniary interest on item 7 (a), and Cllr F Winrow-Giffin declared a pecuniary interest on grass cutting contract matters..

**DPC/23/3: Public participation section:** A member of the public expressed their concern about the potential for a footpath to be created between the new Aspoll Road development and the Urn Garden at the Debenham Cemetery due to the disturbance it would cause. The Clerk explained the various stages of the planning process that the Parish Council and the Developer of the site had gone through prior to planning permission being granted. Although the Parish council had originally agreed with such access being created, by the time the application was considered for the second time, a point had been made about the possibility of an alternative access being created in an area to the top of the Cemetery, or alternatively around the Recreation Ground area rather than through the Cemetery.

The Parish Council was yet to agree the exact siting of this “crossing” point between the two sites with the Developer, but members were minded to exclude the option through the Urn Garden.

A second member of the public raised the issue of streetlights, and how some did not go off after a certain time in the evening. It was explained that the Parish Council owned 64 of the existing streetlights and would be able to instruct Suffolk County Council to turn the lights off as requested. It was agreed that a list of the said streetlights would be sent to Cllr R Blackwell to action.

**DPC/23/4: To consider the co-option of a new member:** The candidate had withdrawn their application and this matter was no longer to be considered.

### **DPC/23/5: Reports**

- a) District Councillor’s report: District Cllr K Guthrie’s report had been circulated ahead of the meeting.
- b) County Councillor’s report: A report had been circulated to all members. The Clerk was asked to request an update on the “Insulating homes funding”, and an explanation for the marked increase (from £2,500 to £12,000) on the cost of a Traffic Regulation Order.

**DPC/23/6: To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2022:** It was resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held. It was also agreed to note an amendment to the December 2022 minutes, in particular minute DPC/22/159 (Agricultural Building Adjacent Hill House Barn, Thorpe Lane), where Cllr M Hammond had declared a non-pecuniary interest and

had not taken part in the debate.

### **DPC/23/7: Planning matters**

- a) **Application: DC/22/05459 - Land At Mill Farm, Kenton Road** - Full Planning Application  
Conversion of barn to form 1No dwelling (extension for comments granted to 17.01.2023): *Cllr D Seccombe declared a non-pecuniary interest*. Following due consideration, it was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- b) **Decision: DC/22/05625 and DC/22/05624 4 Cross Green** - Application for works and for Listed Building Consent - Replacement of existing first floor timber single glazed casement window with new double glazed timber casement window: **Planning Permissions Granted: Noted.**
- c) **Decision: DC/22/05400 Cherry Tree Farm, Cherry Tree Lane** - Listed Building Consent - Re roofing and insulation of main roof, repairs/re-pointing to chimney. Replacement of 2No. doors, Insertion of 1No. window and 1No. door; Erection of courtyard wall and gate; Change colour of exterior and alterations as per Schedule of Works: **Planning Permission Granted: Noted.**
- d) **Decision: DC/22/05802 and DC/22/05799 Land East Of, Aspall Road - Discharge of Conditions**  
Application for DC/21/02982 - Condition 18 (Sustainability); And Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/21/02982 - Condition 4 (Archaeological Evaluation) and Condition 5 (Archaeological Written Investigation): Noted.
- e) **Appeal: AP/22/00051 - White Hall Barn, Stowmarket Road** - Application for Outline Planning Permission (Access to be considered) - Erection of 2no. dwellings and garages together with new vehicular access and associated hardstanding (*response deadline 17.01.2023*): Following a review of the Parish Council's previous representation in light of the MSDC's Planning Officer's recommendations, and the weight given to some planning policies, it was resolved to change the Parish Council's position to one of recommendation for refusal of the application. Clerk to submit recommendation to the Inspectorate by the deadline of January 17<sup>th</sup> 2023.
- f) **DC/22/05802 Land East of Aspall Road-** To consider a number of other matters, ie street names, footpath/pedestrian links/ footway and speed limits: Members discussed a number of issues pertaining to the new development, including the already briefly covered footway/access point between the site and the Cemetery, boundary planting, the works that appeared to have already started on the site, the use of the recreation car park by building traffic, the need to move the 30 mile speed limit, and the proposals for the naming of the roads within the development. It was agreed that Cllr R Blackwell would send the Clerk the final list of proposals for submission to the Street Naming Team.

The Clerk informed members that a meeting with a SCC Highways engineer was imminent and that a dedicated "Slack" channel would be created in order for members to list any further enquiries they would like to see put forward.

### **DPC/23/8: Finance and Administration**

- a) To approve accounts for payment and note receipts and bank balances/reconciliations, including: to ratify transaction details pertaining to the payment of funding towards the sound boards at Dove Cottage: The position regarding the payment instruction for the Dove Cottage sound boards was clarified, with funding received being presented to the Parish Council and the Parish Council effecting the full payment, rather than the funding amount agreed at a previous meeting. The

details of the respective amounts were included on the accounts payable and receipts schedule circulated to members.

It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment, and the receipts, bank balances and bank reconciliations as follows:

<b>Payments:</b>	<b>£</b>
Salaries, HMRC, pensions	2,032.51
Clerk expenses	169.83
Street Warden	1,150.29
Website Editor	120.00
Public Conveniences Cleaning	728.00
Pest control (annual total- cemetery, rec ground, allotments, greens)	945.00
Lovewell Blake (payroll)	54.00
CLlr Expenses (Christmas tree removal by Young Farmers)	20.00
CLlr Expenses (Christmas tree lights)	18.96
Lemontrade (repair – public conveniences)	31.95
DPCC-Warm Hub venue hire-December	120.00
Westrup Contracting (reed mace clearance Hoppitt lakes)	240.00
S Robbins (expenses- petrol)	23.99
Noico (Dove Cottage Sound Boards)	4,125.60
E-ON telephone kiosk	36.30
BT Dove Cottage WIFI	45.81
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10,080.64</b>
<b>Receipts:</b>	
Various allotment rents	605.14
MSDC Warm Hub funding	3,000.00
Debenham Project-cont. sound boards Dove Cottage	3,275.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6,880.14</b>
<b>Balances:</b>	
PC Current account	17,625.13
PC Deposit account	188,046.17
Woodland Deposit account	7,283.25
Woodland Current account	1,530.25
<b>Total:</b>	<b>214,485.10</b>

- b) To consider and approve the budget for 2023/2024: Following due consideration and a full review of the reports circulated by the Clerk, it was resolved to approve the budget for 2023/2024.
- c) To consider and approve the precept for 2023/2024: Following due consideration, it was resolved to approve a precept of £81,338.00 for 2023/2024. Members were mindful of the impact the cost-of-living crisis may be having on the parish and decided to cover any reasonable revenue

expenditure shortfall from general reserves. This would result on a nil percent variance when applied to the taxpayers' council tax calculations.

d) Council Action List: Deferred to the next meeting.

**DPC/23/9: To receive the Suffolk Preservation Society report on the Energy Visioning Workshops and consider the next steps to be taken:** The SPS report had been circulated to members and attendees ahead of the meeting and a further verbal report was provided by Cllr R Blackwell. It appeared that there was considerable appetite in the village for green energy and its conservation, particularly in the case of some of the older properties (hence Cllr R Blackwell's earlier enquiry about SCC's funding for home insulation).

The next stage of the process would involve the formation of small working groups, each dedicated to a single topic, i.e., insulation, solar energy, wind turbines, etc... Cllr R Blackwell was seeking authority from the Parish Council in order to be able to move forward to that stage.

Cllr F Winrow-Giffin stated that any initiative should be for the benefit of the people of Debenham. Cllr R Blackwell replied that the approach from attendees had been very clear in terms of "pounds in pocket", and for the benefit of parishioners.

Cllr R Blackwell added that, as attendees had referred to several sites where the various proposals could be considered, he had approached the relevant landowners as a matter of courtesy before the report was published more widely. The responses received from these landowners had also been very favourable. He also recommended that the groups should look beyond Debenham to surrounding villages, such as Winston and Mickfield.

Cllr M Hammond commented that as the report had been prepared independently, and faithfully recorded the findings of the various workshops, he supported Cllr R Blackwell proposal. He added that there was a wealth of knowledge within the village that the Parish Council should harness to progress projects such as this one.

Cllr D Secombe asked if the working groups would be focusing purely on energy initiatives, or whether there would be scope for other green initiatives, to which Cllr R Blackwell replied it could be a topic for a fourth working group.

Cllr M Hammond further recommended that the working groups should have clear terms of reference, statements of purpose, a listing of benefits and costs for each option, etc...And that both the District and County Councillors should be involved and included in the process.

Cllr R Blackwell's proposal was approved by members, with the actions suggested to be carried out by the groups in due course. Cllr R Blackwell would also be preparing a report for the Parish Magazine. Cllr F Winrow-Giffin asked that paper copies of the SPS report were made available in paper form in the village, to which he agreed.

**DPC/23/10: Debenham High School Chaplaincy-update:** There was no further update, and the matter would not need further consideration.

**DPC/23/11: Committees, working groups and representatives:** To receive reports and consider recommendations / agree on actions: Cllr M Hammond provided members with a brief update on the Debenham Neighborhood Plan review exercise.

Cllr D Seccombe raise the matter of signage around the Hoppit woodland and lakes, and whether the throw lines were routinely inspected/checked. Cllr S Phipps agreed to progress the enquiry with the Woodland Group. Cllr D Seccombe also raise the issue of a sunken grave, which had been reported to the Funeral director.

**DPC/23/12: To note correspondence** (all correspondence is circulated to members ahead of the meeting or included on the agenda for consideration):

- a) Notification of District Council update meeting (7/2/23 1.30pm – 3.30pm, The Mix, 127 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket IP14 1BB): Noted.
- b) Royal Market Town Group Initiative- To consider accepting free membership until June 2023, with a view for a longer-term membership at that point: Members agreed to accept the six-month free term, and for further membership to be considered at a later stage depending on how beneficial and useful it was found to be.
- c) The Police and Crime Commissioner survey on precept proposal-closing date 26.01.2023 9:00am: Noted.

**DPC/23/13: To receive any reports from Councillors/requests for addition to a future agenda** (no decision can be made unless exempt or under delegated power): Cllr L Cockerton asked about the Clerk's meeting with a SCC Highways representative and was informed this should be taking place before the February full Council meeting.

Cllr D Seccombe reported on the parking issues near Seers Medical. It appeared staff and users were parking on the grass, which caused other pedestrians to have to walk on the road. Some of the parking was across the gateway, which raised further safety concerns. Clerk to write to seers Medical and highlight the issues being reported.

Cllr J Sweet informed the Clerk that he would be checking the hand rail on Priory Lane (leading on to the allotments) with a view to repairing it, as it had been reported by a parishioner following its collapse.

**DPC/23/14: Date of next meeting:** February 20th, 2023: Noted.

**DPC/23/15: To consider the temporary exclusion of press and public:** *That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission at meetings) Act 1960 the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed:* It was resolved to exclude the remaining members of the public.

**DPC/23/16: To consider a number of confidential matters pertaining to existing contracts** (legal privilege): *Cllr F Winrow-Giffin left the room due to a declaration of pecuniary interest on one of the contracts (grass cutting).* The Clerk briefed members on the current position of all the existing contracts. Following due consideration, it was resolved to renew two of the contracts with the same terms as before (save where variances had been applied at the request of the contractor). It was understood that this would be subject to the Contractor's acceptance.

The third contract continued to present challenges due to recent developments and would be subject to a six-month probationary period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Further information was needed in order for further decisions to be made, and the Clerk would be engaging with the Council's legal advisors as necessary.

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 10:15pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_