

Debenham Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Debenham Parish Council held on Monday, July 17th 2023, at 7:30 pm, at Dove Cottage, High Street, Debenham.

Present: Cllrs F Winrow-Giffin (Chair), Cllr K Barlow (Vice-Chair), Cllr G Helm, Cllr L Cockerton, Cllr S Phipps, Cllr A Grant-Adamson, Cllr M Hammond, C Mrs D Bedwell (Clerk), District Cllr Teresa Davis, and twelve members of the public. *Cllr J Sweet was in attendance as a member of the public (whilst governance matters were being verified with the National Association of Local Councils Legal Advisor) and did not take part in any of the considerations, votes, or resolutions.*

DPC/23/98: To consider apologies for absence: Apologies had been received (and were approved) from Cllrs K Grimshaw and M Carpenter. Cllr C Allison's absence was noted.

DPC/23/99: Declarations of interest with regards to items on the agenda: Cllr F Winrow-Giffin declared a pecuniary interest in grass-cutting contract matters.

DPC/23/100: Public participation section: A spokesperson for a group of allotment tenants explained how the group had been brought together by their collective agreement against the allotment rule of not having bees at the allotments, which had given the group the impetus to move forward with various ideas and proposals. The Group had already forwarded a list of recommendations for the review of the allotment rules, at the invitation of the Parish Council, and would like to continue being involved in the process to look at ways of supporting the Parish Council in terms of administration and monitoring of plot maintenance.

A second allotment spokesperson continued with a brief talk about bees. The Chair thanked both spokespeople and remaining tenants in the public gallery and suggested that an informal meeting to consider the various recommendations could be held in September with a couple of allotment representatives and members of the Allotment Committee.

A Trustee from the Debenham Village Hall and Playing Fields Trust gave a brief report on the details of the application for funding being considered later in the meeting.

Another member of the public announced that the launch of the Story Trail the previous Friday had been very well received. Volunteers at the "Meet-up" event on Mondays were planning to offer additional activities, such as lego, from the beginning of the school holidays and were hoping to welcome families and children.

A member of the public who had reported an issue with a footpath in October 2022 was disappointed that they had not received more updates than the one received in February 2023. The Clerk informed the member of the public that an interim email had been sent explaining that the matter had been reported to SCC Rights Of Way but that action was not expected soon due to the timings of the maintenance schedule. A Councillor suggested the email may have ended up in the spam box.

DPC/23/101: Reports

- a) District Councillor's report: Cllr T Davis's report had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr Davis informed members that she had been approached by a member of the public asking the Parish Council to consider lowering the speed limit on one of Debenham's roads.

Cllr Davis had also made enquiries about the “Asset of Community Value” position with the Angel Inn, as it had been taken off the market. Although the deadline for sale was the 4th of April 2024, at which point the owner should inform MSDC if it was not sold, the actual ACV listing remained in place until February 2026. That was, unless it was sold, in which case the listing would automatically be removed and the Parish Council would have to re-apply to have it reinstated.

Cllr F Winrow-Giffin raised the point that if the owner was not actively trying to sell it, it could potentially place it in breach of the ACV conditions.

At this point in the meeting Councillors approved a motion to bring forward item DPC/23/110 e) Allotments. The item was considered in this order but the minute is under the allocated agenda numerical order.

- b) County Councillor’s report: Cllr M Hick’s apologies had been noted. A report had been circulated to members.

DPC/23/102: Clerk Brief: As the meeting agenda was quite lengthy, the Clerk had circulated to Councillors the topic for this month’s brief, which was the recommended Councilor-Officer protocol in line with the Civility and Respect pledge. Members were asked to take some time to read it and come back with any queries should they have any.

DPC/23/103: To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on June 19th 2023: It was resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held.

DPC/23/104: Planning matters

- a) **Decision:** DC/23/02223 74 High Street - Application for Listed Building Consent - Remove existing non-functioning cooking range from the fireplace, Remove existing gypsum plaster from chimney alcove and replace with lime plaster and limewash finish. Replace the hearth with traditional handmade clay tiles, Removal of the cement base. Install a new flue liner and wood-burning stove: Consent granted- Noted.

A new application had been received (DC/23/03314 - 18 Andrews Close) but as members had had no time to view the various documents, it was resolved to send comments to the Clerk so that a decision could be reached under delegated powers.

DPC/23/105: Finance and Administration

- a) To approve accounts for payment and note receipts and bank balances/reconciliations: All the invoices, bank statements and monthly reconciliations had been circulated to members. Following due consideration, it was resolved to approve the accounts for payments and receipts.

Payments:	£
Salaries, HMRC, pensions	2,032.51
Clerk expenses	143.80
Website Editor	120.00
Public Conveniences Cleaning	946.40
Grass Cutting Contractor	1886.00
DPCC- Dove Cottage hire charges “Monday Meet Up” June	120.00
DPCC- Dove Cottage hire charges “Monday Meet Up” July	200.00
Mr J Dean-Allotment community plot funding	1,079.15

E-ON - Telephone kiosk	64.56
Pest Control Solutions- Street Warden	1,333.00
Pest Control Solutions- guttering installation	331.58
Pest Control Solutions – Disability rail and door at wc.s, new bin installation	115.00
Lovewell Blake- Payroll	60.00
E-ON telephone kiosk	-58.85
Wave- Water charges-allotments	17.32
Tuddenham Press- Insulation (printing)	74.40
Rialtas accountancy software annual licence	185.86
G Sillet- Final balance (former warden)	798.43
Cllr J Sweet- Stationery expenses (play areas)	55.00
Total:	9,439.60
Receipts:	
Allotment rent	22.45
Total:	22.45
Balances:	
PC Current account	9,595.70
PC Deposit account	208,395.14
Woodland Deposit account	7,307.49
Woodland Current account	1,380.26
Total:	226,678.59

- b) Council Action List: The action list had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting and was noted. Cllr S Phipps reported that the village sign refurbishment had been completed and the sign had been reinstated on the previous Saturday, with the help of two other residents.

DPC/23/106: To consider a request from the “Little Pig Bakery” to hold pop-up events in Debenham: Following some debate, it was agreed to write back to the applicant explaining that the Parish Council was minded to refuse permission for the time being (reasons detailed in the communication) unless the applicant could put forward a case that merited further consideration.

DPC/23/107: To consider a funding application from the “Debenham Sports and Leisure” (DVH&PFT) for solar panels: Cllr F Winrow-Giffin expressed some concern that the application had been received very close to the meeting date and members may not have had enough time to read it. For this reason, Cllr F Winrow-Giffin suggested deferring the application to a later date, particularly as some of the deadlines for funding already secured were not until 2024.

Cllr M Hammond disputed that if members were able to, they should consider the application as one of the Trustees was in attendance and able to answer any questions. Furthermore, one of the reasons why the application had been received late was due to the Trustee helping Cllr S Phipps to erect the village sign on the previous Saturday. Cllr M Hammond formally moved a proposal to consider the application.

Cllr G Helm added that there was routinely late information being received by the Clerk which was circulated over the weekend and sometimes even on meeting day. If there were to be a change, then it should be by way

of a clear deadline several days ahead of a meeting.

Cllr A Grant-Adamson voiced some apprehension at having a deadline date which was too long before a meeting due to the potential for some organisations to miss out on the opportunity, or for the Clerk not to be able to use her discretion if something of an urgent nature came up. Such a change would also require an amendment to the Council's existing Standing Orders.

Cllr M Hammond's proposal was seconded and a vote ensued, which resulted in the motion passing.

Members debated the proposal in some detail and asked the Trustee (in the public gallery) questions about the organisation's operation and the project. The Clerk provided members with financial information relevant to the last three years of grant funding for the DVH&PFT and the currently available budgets. It was resolved to allocate funding of £5,000 this financial year, and providing the scheme progressed as planned, a further grant of £5,000 in the next financial year.

The Clerk asked members to note that there would need to be a decision made with regards to where the funding would come from, ie, CIL reserve or General Reserve, so as to not affect the remainder left in the general funding budget.

DPC/23/108: To consider a funding application from the "Roundabout Pre-School": The funding application was yet to be received, therefore the matter that deferred to a future meeting.

DPC/23/109: To consider a funding application from the "Street Fayre Group" for the Deb-Fest 2024: It was resolved to approve the funding application for £750.00 toward the Deb-Fest 2024.

DPC/23/110: Committees, working groups and representatives: To receive reports and consider recommendations / agree on actions

- a) Cemetery – To receive an update on matters considered at the previous meeting: Deferred to the next meeting.
- b) Play provision – To receive a presentation by Cllrs F Winrow-Giffin and J Sweet and consider proposals for new equipment for the Recreation Ground: A detailed presentation was received from Cllr J Sweet, which included a number of illustrative boards of what the Recreation Ground could look like once new equipment was installed. The proposals encompassed most of the items identified during the recent surveys, with larger items such as skateparks/bmx trails being placed in a later phase of the project.

Cllr J Sweet spoke about the various companies he had approached for quotes and the prices he had been given. Cllr J Sweet was also in the process of getting the parts for a broken piece of equipment and tried to ascertain what had been in place in the past. Another matter that had been raised during the surveys was the need for additional seating. Cllr J Sweet had made enquiries and had requested some prices for disability-friendly picnic tables.

Cllr M Hammond suggested that the project should be "phased out", and that there should be strong engagement with children and families throughout the process so they would have a sense of ownership, maybe even do some fundraising to support it.

Councillors thanked Cllr J Sweet for the work that had gone into the project so far and were very keen to see it progress to the next stage. The resolutions made were as follows:

- Cllr J Sweet would make enquiries about submitting a bid for capital funding from MSDC CIL funds

- The Clerk was to provide Cllr J Sweet with up-to-date figures on reserves and CIL funding held by the Parish Council
 - Two picnic tables, such as the ones described, were to be purchased under the Clerk's delegated power, so they could be available for the school holidays
 - Repairs to equipment were to be progressed under delegated powers and using the play areas maintenance budget
 - Clerk to add the wet-pour maintenance to the next agenda for consideration due to its cost
- c) Debenham Green Team – To receive Bike Repair Station update: Cllr A Grant-Adamson provided members with a brief report. Matters had progressed very well since the last meeting and the unit was being installed two days later by the MSDC Public Realm team at a modest cost of £100.
- d) Events and Festivities: To consider preparations ahead of the Tour of Britain event: Cllr T Davis provided members with an update in terms of what MSDC was doing to mark the occasion and recommended that the local business got involved with schemes such as "Taste the Tour". There was some discussion on the placement of a banner at the bottom of Gracechurch Street welcoming the Tour to Debenham, which Cllr T Davis suggested she would make enquiries about and let the Parish Council know in due course.

Cllr T Davis also suggested reporting all the known pot-holes before the event as they would likely be repaired.

- e) Allotments
- To note events of July 10th 2023 (including BBC Radio Suffolk interview and subsequent correspondence), and consider any further action
 - To receive recommendations from NSALG and BBKA on the Allotment Rules review (includes legal components)
 - To receive and consider feedback received from allotment tenants on the Allotment Rules Review
 - To consider and approve the revised Allotment Rules Document

Cllr Frankie Winrow-Giffin opened discussions with a reminder that, as the decision regarding not permitting bees at the allotments had been re-affirmed at the previous Parish Council meeting, the Parish Council would not be able to change it at this stage without a special motion (as per Council's Standing Orders). The Parish Council was minded to review the no-bees rule but it should be noted that if it was to change, there would need to be a very robust policy in place to cover issues such as having the appropriate training, mandatory membership of a Beekeepers Association, and public liability insurance, as well as the necessary signage and precautions. The Parish Council needed to have regard for other implications, such as neighbouring tenants and the proximity of a bridleway and footways.

Cllr M Hammond praised the Tenants' offer to engage with the Parish Council, and as the Chair had already highlighted some of the concerns around beekeeping at the allotments, the group could potentially work on proposals that mitigated the various risks.

Cllr F Winrow-Giffin advised that some people were frightened of bees swarming into their plots and that the Parish Council needed to be mindful of their duty of care to all those affected by such a decision.

Cllr S Phipps advised that although the Parish Council had agreed to a meeting with some tenants for the review of the rules, this should not be perceived as a guarantee that those who spoke the loudest would succeed in their endeavours. Cllr S Phipps had been looking forward to this type of engagement for some ten years and eagerly anticipated being part of it, and welcomed a proper discourse, provided that it was backed by science and facts. Cllr S Phipps reminded all that the Parish Council answered to all its 3000

residents, and would need to take that into account, and not just the views of a small group.

As there were a considerable number of recommendations and amendments to work through, it would not be appropriate to do so during the Parish Council meeting. Therefore it was resolved to defer the last three points to the next meeting. The first item under Allotments would be considered under the "Confidential section" of the meeting following a resolution to exclude the press and public (*Public Bodies (Admission at meetings) Act 1960*).

- f) Highways- To note any response received to the request for data on the monitoring of traffic movements during the Temporary Traffic Restrictions at Eye: A response to an inquiry put by the Clerk to Cllr M Hicks had been received just before the meeting and had yet to be circulated.

Members briefly discussed how the recent increase in the volume of traffic was affecting the parish, and how data was needed to evidence any comments made. The Clerk was asked to circulate information about the deadline for the EyeTraffic Regulation consultation to ensure Debenham would submit its formal response. A suggestion was also made that Debenham may wish to consider having its own limits made into a regulation.

- g) Public Conveniences - To note recent events and consider further action: The Clerk reported on recent incidents of vandalism at the public conveniences, and how the previous cleaner had resigned as a result. In one incident, the cleaner had been replenishing one of the toilets when she had overheard some commotion in the next room. Upon investigation, they found several High school children throwing balls of paper at the ceiling and generally making a mess. It was suggested that the High School representative could speak with the Headteacher and raise awareness about the costs of such behaviour, and the risk that if continued, it could result in the loss of the amenity. Cllr S Phipps to action.

DPC/23/111: To note any further correspondence (all correspondence is circulated to members ahead of the meeting or included on the agenda for consideration):

- a) Notification of agenda for the Deben Water Testing meeting due to be held on July 14 2023: Noted.
- b) Notification of MSDC CIL training sessions: Noted.
- c) Notification of Debenham Story Trail Week: Noted.
- d) A further item had been received by the Clerk which required the member's consideration. It pertained to the Speed Indicator Device and an offer by a former Councillor to continue moving it from site to site, downloading the data and recharging the battery for a modest cost of £10 per move. Following some debate, it was resolved to accept the kind offer of assistance for a period of six months, and for the position to be reviewed again then. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries as to what other data the device could collate.

DPC/23/112: To receive any reports from Councillors/requests for addition to a future agenda (no decision can be made unless exempt or under delegated power): There were no further reports from Councillors.

DPC/23/113: Date of next meeting: 18th September 2023 (no Parish Council meeting in August): Noted.

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.*

DPC/23/110 e): A number of statements about the Parish Council had been made by a member of the public in a wide-reaching public forum. The accuracy of all the statements had been analysed by the Parish Council. Factual evidence that challenged and negated every statement had been compiled in a letter which had been sent to the member of the public. Members agreed that no further internal action would be taken on this matter.

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 10:40 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____