

## Debenham Parish Council

### Minutes of a meeting of the Debenham Parish Council held on Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 7:30 pm, at Dove Cottage, High Street, Debenham.

**Present:** Cllr R Blackwell (Chairman), Cllr M Hammond, Cllr J Sweet, Cllr F Winrow-Giffin, Cllr L Cockerton, Cllr K Barlow, Cllr K Grimshaw, Mrs D Bedwell (Clerk), and three members of the public.

**DPC/23/17: To consider apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received (and were approved) from Cllrs K Fisher, G Helm, S Phipps, and D Seccombe. Apologies had also been received from District Cllr K Guthrie.

**DPC/23/18: Declarations of interest with regards to items on the agenda and additions to register:** Cllr F Winrow-Giffin declared a pecuniary interest on grass cutting contract matters, and non-pecuniary on item 21. Cllr R Blackwell declared a non-pecuniary interest on item 21, and pecuniary on the relevant item 24 (Cllr expenses). Cllr K Barlow also declared a pecuniary interest on the relevant item of Councillor expenses under agenda item 24.

**DPC/23/19: Public participation section:** A member of the public, who also happened to be a co-ordinating volunteer of the Meet-up Group on Mondays at Dove Cottage, provided a brief report on a recent visit from a Mid Suffolk District Council Communities Officer. The visit had been very positive and the feedback received had been excellent, with a suggestion that Debenham could be used as a case study.

A brief report was also received on the details pertaining to agenda item 21, and the reasons underpinning the need for a new revised valuation of the Angel. There was some information provided on the status of the Community Group and what the planned course of action was, including the successful application to join the Plunkett Foundation.

It was resolved by members to bring agenda item 21 forward at this point, but the resolution continues to be documented in the original order.

#### **DPC/23/20: Reports**

- a) District Councillor's report: Apologies received.
- b) County Councillor's report: A report had been circulated to members, and was added to by Cllr Matthew Hicks, who was in attendance. Members put forward a number of Highways' related questions, and these were answered. They included the cost of Traffic Regulation Orders and funding available, the moving of the speed limit sign near the Aspoll Road development, the repainting of yellow and white lines, the resurfacing of areas which had been outstanding for a number of years, and other topics which had been discussed at a recent meeting with a SCC Highways Engineer.

**DPC/23/21: To consider funding application from the "Save The Angel Community Group":** Following due consideration of all the points presented by the Group's representative, the responses to questions put forward by members, and the content of the application documentation, it was resolved to support the application in full, to the tune of £2,650.00.

**DPC/23/22: To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** It was resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held. It was also resolved to note an amendment to the January minute approval, which included a statement clarifying Cllr M Hammond’s position as declaring a non-pecuniary interest and abstaining from agenda item DPC/22/159.

**DPC/23/23: Planning matters**

- a) **Application: DC/23/00247 and DC/23/00248 6 Chancery Lane** - Erection of garden room/lobby (following removal of existing open lean-to store); listed building consent: It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- b) **Decision: DC/22/05971 Agricultural Building Adjacent Hill House Barn, Thorpe Lane** - Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwellinghouse's (Use Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q - Conversion of barn to form 3No dwellings: Planning permission refused- Noted.
- c) **Decision: DC/22/05801 Land East of Aspall Road- Discharge of Conditions** Application for DC/21/02982 - Condition 17 (Construction Surface Water Management Plan) and Condition 25 (Construction Management Plan): Discharged- Noted.
- d) **Consultation: Wetheringsett Neighbourhood Plan Reg 16** (deadline 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023): Noted, no comments to be submitted at this stage.
- e) **DC/22/05802 Land East of Aspall Road-** To note any recent communications and update: A brief update was provided by the Clerk, which included confirmation that the 30-mile sign would be moved in due course.
- f) **Debenham Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Exercise** - To note response received from Mid Suffolk District Council and consider any further action: Cllr M Hammond informed members of a succinct response received from MSDC following the recent enquiry from the Parish Council. Further data was being sought in order to complete the Parish Council’s review, but an initial recommendation suggested that no major changes should be affected until central government had reviewed the National Planning Policy Framework, and any new Housing Targets were established.

**DPC/23/24: Finance and Administration**

- a) To approve accounts for payment and note receipts and bank balances/reconciliations: 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	194.48
Street Warden	1,083.33
Website Editor	120.00
Public Conveniences Cleaning	946.40
Cllr Expenses (keys and sundries for Meet-up)	44.99
Cllr Expenses (parking)	7.90
Eastern Arboricultural- Tree surgery (Gardeners Rd)	500.00

DPCC-Warm Hub venue hire-January	120.00
DPCC- Meeting venue hire and storage	400.00
J Walton- Parish mag subscription	15.73
SCC-SID post installation	190.00
ICO- Annual fee	40.00
E-ON Public conveniences	181.11
E-ON telephone kiosk	53.26
BT Dove Cottage WIFI	45.81
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5,995.52</b>
<b>Receipts:</b>	
Various allotment rents	36.56
MSDC Bike Repair funding	1,375.00
MSDC- Street cleansing grant	2,192.13
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,603.69</b>
<b>Balances:</b>	
PC Current account	11,622.19
PC Deposit account	191,433.61
Woodland Deposit account	7,283.25
Woodland Current account	1,266.26
<b>Total:</b>	<b>211,605.31</b>

- b) To receive and approve the External Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 March 2022: Deferred as not yet received.
- c) "Slack" – Internal communication system considerations: Deferred due to Cllr G Helm's absence.
- d) Council Action List: The action list had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting and was noted, without further amendments.
- e) Barclays bank mandate minuting requirement: Cllr R Blackwell informed members of the need to review the list of bank signatories and remove any which were no longer valid, and to continue listing the Parish Clerk as Parish Council contact (with the ability to access online banking under the current permission scheme). This process required a formal minute reference which would be used by Barclays Bank to affect the necessary changes. The changes were formally approved by members.

**DPC/23/25: Committees, working groups and representatives** - To receive reports and consider recommendations / agree on actions:

- a) Community Green Energy: A brief report was received from Cllr R Blackwell. The groups referred to at the previous meeting had recently been formed, except for the one dedicated to wind turbines, which had been set aside for the time being. Communication continued with Mid Suffolk District Council, more recently about a loft insulation bulk buying scheme, which if combined with SCC's home insulation funding could potentially provide a solution for some of the issues in Debenham. A recent survey carried out in the village to establish an energy baseline indicated that 72% of the

properties surveyed, which had an energy certificate, were classed as “D” or less. There was also a portion of the parish which had no certificate at all.

Cllr R Blackwell had also approached several local farmers and landowners to discuss the various schemes the project had consulted upon, and responses received so far had been positive.

- b) Highways: The Clerk and Cllr R Blackwell reported on the meeting they had held with a SCC Engineer to discuss a number of issues which may eventually form part of a Traffic Regulation Order. The process was likely to take some 18 months, but work had begun and would continue in earnest.
- c) Allotments - To note meeting details (27.02.23 at 7.30pm): The date for the next meeting was noted by members.
- d) Cemetery - Considerations regarding infill planting: Cllr J Sweet asked members to consider some infill planting in the gap between the Cemetery and the new Aspoll development. Cllr M Hammond referred to one of the Debenham Neighbourhood Plan Policies, which recommended increased perimeter planting in such cases, and that the developer should be asked to carry out the said planting. However, if the developer was not minded to do so, then the Parish Council should. It was agreed to write to the developer and ask for the additional infill planting in the area in question. Clerk to action.
- e) Street furniture - Village sign and Coronation plaque: Deferred due to Cllr S Phipps’ absence.
- f) Play areas: The Clerk requested that the update was provided during the confidential section, and this was approved by members.

**DPC/23/26: To note correspondence** (all correspondence is circulated to members ahead of the meeting or included on the agenda for consideration): All correspondence had been circulated to members and no further action was needed.

**DPC/23/27: 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 J Sweet asked about plans for the King’s Coronation in May 2023 and Cllr R Blackwell informed him that St Mary’s Church was in the process of organising an event. The Clerk had made enquiries with the Def Fest organisers and the group had decided to take a well-deserved year off and return in 2024. Members were not aware of any other arrangements.

**DPC/23/28: Date of next meeting:** March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023: Noted.

**DPC/23/29: 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 any remaining member of the public.*

**DPC/23/30: To consider a number of confidential matters pertaining to existing contracts** (legal privilege): The Clerk provided a detailed update about the installation of the new Gardeners Road play area, ongoing issues with the public conveniences cleaning contract, and about a letter received from one of the contractors. As a result of one of the considerations, the Parish Council would be advertising for the tender of the street cleansing contract (specification to be circulated to members for final approval prior to issue).

*Cllr F Winrow-Giffin left the room at this point on order for the remaining contract to be discussed, due to a declaration of pecuniary interest.*

The Clerk provided members with an update pertaining to this contract, which had a different starting date and was yet to be finalised.

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 9:15pm.

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