

DEBENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting (DRAFT)

Monday June 17th 2024 7:00pm

1. Chairpersons announcement

“Welcome to this meeting of Debenham Parish Council. The Council, members of the public and the press may record / film this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Parish Clerk. Please switch all mobile phones to silent. May I remind all those present to be courteous and not to have private conversations whilst the meeting is in progress.”

DPC/24/91: To Consider Apologies for Absence

Chair – Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Cllr Baldwin, Cllr Collins, Cllr Cockerton, Cllr Finnisey, Cllr Grimshaw, Cllr Helm, Cllr Phipps, Cllr Robbins, Cllr Sweet.

Temporary Clerk Mr Peter Grogan, Newly appointed Clerk Claire Usher

Apologies: Cllr Barlow, due to ill health. **Apology approved**

DPC/24/92: Declarations of Interest relating to items on the Agenda

Cllr Cockerton declared an interest in item 24/99. Cllr Sweet declared he had interests in 24/100, having expenses for approval, and 24/101. b) allotments. Cllr Winrow-Giffin – Grass Cutting.

DPC/24/93: Public Participation Section

A member of the public asked that there could be more published concerning the work of the committees and working groups concerning their activities, plans and achievements.

A member of the public read out a letter in support of item 24/97 Debenham High School Summer Fete (Steel Band funding request).

DPC/24/94: County Cllr and District Cllr reports

County Cllr Hicks did not attend and did not send a report for consideration.

District Cllr Davis had submitted a written report and also reported in person highlighting the imminent National Election which also affected local political

activities. She advised on the need for a Method statement, to detect cables etc, prior to further consideration of the posts in Sackville Street to prevent lorry parking on the corner. Cllr Davies also provided contact details in Highways to assist in gaining the necessary approvals.

DPC/24/95: To approve minutes of PC meeting May 20th 2024

There were no observations or comments on the minutes and they were approved.

Proposed – Cllr Baldwin

Seconded - Cllr Sweet

In Favour Unanimous - APPROVED

DPC/24/96: To consider a funding request from Sir Robert Hitcham Summer Sizzler.

After discussion of the limited funds available in the current financial year and the commitments already outstanding it was proposed to provide a grant of £300

Proposed – Cllr Winrow-Giffin

Seconded - Cllr Finnisey

In Favour Unanimous – APPROVED

DPC/24/97: To consider a funding request from Friends of Debenham High School Summer Fete.

After discussion concerning financial commitments in the current year and reflecting on the grant approved in DPC 24/96 it was proposed to approve a grant of £300.

Proposed – Cllr Winrow-Griffin

Seconded - Cllr Finnissey

In Favour Unanimous – APPROVED

DPC/24/98: To consider a proposal for a Community led flood recovery action in the village.

Cllr Robbins proposed a plan for a Cleansing day for Debenham led by Debenham Green Team and Councillor Davis and has volunteered to work together to plan it. We would like the Parish Council to support and be part of the exercise. The Section 19 report will look at the overarching elements of the flooding of Debenham. The Cleansing day will look at the smaller things that people would like to do something about. We will be asking residents to identify what they want to happen and sign up to volunteer. Teresa can find out what we can and can't do and what help she can get from MSDC and others. Once we have the wish list and some volunteers, we can arrange the specific day or number of days for the work to be carried out.

She emphasised that no funding would be required. The Section 19 report from the County Council would cover all the major problems but a small contingent of

volunteers could rectify smaller issues. It was suggested that the day be advertised on the web-site and in the Co-op to collect ideas for things that needed attention.

Proposed – Cllr Robbbins

Seconded - Cllr Helm

In Favour Unanimous – APPROVED

DPC/24/99: Planning Matters

a) Application DC/24/02469 – Tree Works (various)

Proposed – Cllr Baldwin

Seconded - Cllr Helm

In Favour 9 – APPROVED

Abstention 1 - Cllr Cockerton abstained having declared an interest.

b) Decision DC/24/01786 – 15 Moores Close

Approved - Noted

DPC/24/83: Finance and Administration

a) **To approve accounts for payment and note receipts and bank balances / reconciliations.**

The list of payments had been circulated. The requests for grants approved in this agenda withstanding.

Proposed – Cllr Grimshaw

Seconded – Cllr Helm

In Favour - 9 - Approved

Abstentions – 1 Cllr Sweet abstained having declared an interest.

Matters Arising: The Council discussed several matters pertaining to expenses incurred by the Parish Council.

1. VAT, this needed to be addressed as 2 years had yet to be reclaimed

ACTION – New Clerk to investigate reclaiming VAT

2. Wi-Fi, whilst the current arrangement of the PC paying the bill for Dove Cottage Wi-Fi was seen as appropriate, it was suggested that a cheaper plan be sought to bring costs down.

ACTION – New Clerk to investigate a cheaper W-Fi plan.

3. Electricity, there was some uncertainty if the bills were monthly or quarterly and access to the EON account was not available.

ACTION – New Clerk to investigate access to EON account.

b) Council Action List

The Action list had been circulated.

c) Records Retention Policy

The draft policy had been circulated to all Councillors.

ACTION : Please could all Cllrs read and review the document and send comments to the Clerk for consideration and approval at the next meeting.

d) Finance Working Group

It was suggested that a Finance working group be formed to consider the financial risks and issues outside the Council and identify items requiring decisions at Council meetings. The group required some Cllrs with financial backgrounds to be involved.

The following Cllrs volunteered for the group: Cllr Grimshaw, Cllr Sweet, Cllr Cockerton and Cllr Finnisey.

e) To consider funding of a shredder and skip at the Allotments

There was a discussion concerning the need to provide a clear up at the allotments which would require a larger shredder and possibly a skip. There is £1,000 in Ear Marked Reserves for such a project. It was noted that the Skip would need careful management and security to avoid misuse. This needed further investigation.

Proposed Cllr Robbins

Seconded Cllr Sweet

In Favour - Unanimous – Approved.

ACTION: Cllr Robbins to investigate costs and come back to the Council for approval of the funding in the region of £500.

f) To consider funding of start-up package for new Clerk to include MS 365 and stationery.

There was a discussion about the options around obtaining an extension to the MS exchange package to include the MS 365 Office suite and extend this to Cllrs and the new Clerk. The start up package would have a provisional budget of £1,000.

ACTION: Cllr Baldwin the new Clerk to investigate the most effective and efficient licencing package.

Proposed – Cllr Finnisey

Seconded - Cllr Winrow-Giffin

In favour – Unanimous – APPROVED

DPC/24/100 Committees, Working Groups and representatives (reports and actions)

- a) **Debenham Neighbourhood Plan Review:** report had been circulated, there would be a meeting next Wednesday Cllrs Barlow and Finnisey to report again at next Council meeting.
- b) **Allotments:** Cllr Robbins reported that the allotment inspection had taken place, that letters had been sent to all plot holders along with the revised rules and a special note on bee keeping. It was noted that the email address list was incomplete and some letters had to be delivered by post or by hand. It was also noted that some plot holders did not have tenancy agreements. When letting new plots in a poor condition it had been decided to waive the deposit due but not the yearly rent. Lastly it was noted that ne plot had a great deal of trade waste, however assurances were given that this was not asbestos as had been originally suspected.

The Chair expressed a vote of thanks to Cllr Robbins for the work put in to the allotment Working Group to bring greater order to the administration.

- c) **Highways:** Update guidance to Warden on spraying herbicide on the high street and surrounding areas.

There was a discussion concerning the Warden spraying the plants growing on the high street and surrounding area. These plants include hollyhocks and other attractive flowering plants among the weeds. Options were discussed including, further training for the Warden, alternative treatments to herbicides and “no spray before May”. In conclusion it was decided that Cllr Sweet and Cllr Robbins would have a conversation with the Warden to discuss the most effective and efficient way forward to both clear the weeds whilst preserving some of the Hollyhocks on the Cross Green. To inform the warden no spray before May on the High Street please and to use MSDC approved herbicide after May.

ACTION: Cllrs Sweet and Baldwin to have discussion with the Warden.

d) Eco / Green Projects:

Rewilding Top Field – Cllr Sweet reported that a further visit from the County Council Bio-Diversity officer and the Forestry Commission identified 6 exclusion areas to let the fauna and flora to develop and allow a fuller investigation of the potential for the area. A fuller development would require deer and rabbit proof fencing but most of the expense would be covered by grants. Cllr Sweet will update the Council on any further developments.

Green Team Nature Reserve – Cllr Baldwin is promoting the reserve and is discussing its potential at the Monday Meet-up for holiday activities, interest is building. Cllr Baldwin will consult the Council if any further assistance or funding is required.

e) Festivities and Local Events:

Road Closure for Street Party for Debenham Day – In the absence of Cllr Barlow Cllr Winrow-Giffin summarised the current situation, whilst the road closure fee had been waived £600 would be needed for signage. £500 had been received from Aspalls and a further £200 from another local business.

Funding for the Street Party - Money was still needed to fund the attendance of St John's Ambulance. It was proposed that the Council set a reserve of £1,500 to support the event

Proposed – Cllr Winrow-Giffin

Seconded – Cllr Collins

In favour – 9 – APPROVED

Abstention Cllr Helm

Commission of a Sustainable Remembrance Wreath: Deferred to next meeting pending more information

f) Play Areas: Update on projects and Funding.

Cllr Sweet reported that whilst work was on-going it would not be completed by the end of the summer. The cost of £15,784 for the additional features of the Swing and super-Combo were being funded by a combination of the County and the National Lottery.

With regard to resurfacing of to prevent muddy areas developing including the Zip-Wire it might be possible to utilise CIL monies for this purpose. With regard to access to the CIL monies the drawdown date has been extended to 12th January 2025.

- g) Public Conveniences: Cllr Sweet reported that a loft hatch had now been installed allowing access to the utilities in the roof space. An inspection by an electrician has advised replacement of the main circuit board which is out of date. Electrical works to follow include a disability pull switch / alarm in the disabled toilet and a hand drier.

There was a discussion about what may be required from a refurbished toilet block, this included options for self-locking doors, baby and adult changing areas, single unisex toilet facility. Going forward there needs to be a fully costed option appraisal for the building to consider its future use that avoids daily opening and closing and also a contract for cleaning. The Council could invest the £8,000 reserved budget and potentially further CIL grant into the building

In the interim it was proposed by Cllr Sweet that there be a trial whereby the Gents toilet is shut and signs are put up to that effect. The tiled floor be replaced, the ceiling painted and the door is replaced.

Proposed - Cllr Sweet

Seconded - Cllr Collins

In favour – Unanimous - APPROVED

- h) **Cemetery** – it was reported that overhanging trees in the cemetery were scratching passing hearses from the Funeral Director. A quote for £600 had been received to trim the trees. It was proposed the trees be trimmed.

Proposed – Cllr Baldwin

Seconded – Cllr Finnisey

In favour – Unanimous – **APPROVED**

- i) It was also noted that the sloping path through the cemetery Millenium Gates needed resurfacing It was suggested that the path be made safe for those with mobility aids. It was agreed that the company preparing the surfaces for the playground would be asked to give a quote to resurface the path.

It was also noted that the grass cutting contractor had reported having to negotiate around:

- a) items left on graves many of which were very old and had been moved away from their original sites.

- b) standing water in one corner of the cemetery, there may be a drainage issue.
- j) **Woodland** – it was reported that the Woodland path from the cemetery to the lake is breaking up but Cllr Robbins was aware that there were plans to resurface the path during the summer.
- k) **Butts Footpath** – Cllr Winrow-Giffin reported that the footpath at Butts toward Mount Pleasant was not the required width and was overgrown. There had been several complaints in the last month this is a well-used Public Footpath. It was agreed the Chair would write to the Rights of Way department to ask for the matter to be investigated.

DPC/24/102 To note any further correspondence

All further correspondence had been circulated

DPC/24/103 To receive reports from Councillors / requests for addition to a future agenda

1. Cllr Robbins asked for the allotment skip and shredder approval be an item on the next agenda.

ACTION: Clerk to add this to agenda for next meeting.

DPC/24/104 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 15th July 2023 in Dove Cottage at 7:00pm

DPC/ 24/89 Exclusion of Press and Public

At this point all public including the temporary clerk and the newly appointed clerk left the meeting

Meeting Closed at approx 21:30pm

Peter Grogan
Temporary Clerk
9 April 2026