

Debenham Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Debenham Parish Council held on Monday, 19th of February 2024, at 7:30 pm, Dove Cottage, High Street, Debenham.

Present: Cllrs F Winrow-Giffin (Chair), K Barlow (Vice-chair), J Baldwin, L Cockerton, A Finnissy, L Robbins, J Sweet, G Helm, K Barlow, Ian Collins, Mrs D Bedwell (Parish Clerk), District Cllr T Davis, and ten members of the public (two of which were Landex representatives for planning application DC/24/00341).

DPC/24/21: To consider apologies for absence: Apologies were received (and approved) from Cllr S Phipps.

DPC/24/22: Declarations of interest with regard to items on the agenda: Cllr F Winrow-Giffin declared a pecuniary interest in grass-cutting contract matters; Cllr L Robbins and Cllr I Collins declared a non-pecuniary interest on item 27b); Cllr K Grimshaw declared a non-pecuniary interest on agenda item 27a).

DPC/24/23: Presentation from Community Action Suffolk on Affordable Community-Led Housing: A comprehensive presentation was received on the subject and questions were asked by Councillors. Further details would be sent by the organisation for members to consider in due course.

DPC/24/24: Public participation section: A member of the public spoke about the damage caused by storm Babet and the recent floods and expressed concern that apparently, it would take some eighteen months for the local authority to prepare a report. They hoped the various authorities were considering what mitigating measures needed to be put into place soon, particularly as some properties had flooded for a second time.

Another member of the public stated that the Environment Agency had carried out several visits to Cherry Tree and Little London Hill and that although they were aware of the silt that needed to be cleared, they only appeared to be clearing the pipes.

The storms had also damaged pavements and river embankments, and the debris had been piled up on the side rather than repairs effected. The Parish Council was urged to prepare an action plan following Cllr M Hicks's announcement that there would be government funding available, as these would be oversubscribed.

Concerns were also raised about the Low Road planning proposals and potential resulting HGV movements, which would affect not just Low Road, but also the area near the Primary School, Gracechurch Street, and even Gardeners Road, depending on how the vehicles approached the site.

Another member of the public reiterated the Debenham Neighbourhood plan condition that access to development on either of the Low Road sites should be from Ipswich Road, and that there were questions on how "temporary" the proposed access would be.

A member of the public asked the Landex representatives why the temporary access had not been featured on the original plans, but the response was not known.

Members of the Council also asked Landex representatives about the HGV movements during building works, and the reply was that 18-tonne vans (8-wheels) would be used instead of the larger HGV's, movements would initially take place daily for several weeks and would be reduced to 1/2 weekly after that. Members were also informed that an adjoining field was being leased for the storage of materials.

A member of the public raised further concerns that the creation of a new access would lead to the loss of hedgerows and would impact biodiversity.

District Cllr T Davis informed the meeting that she had requested that this application be considered by the MSDC Planning Committee, and a provisional date for the meeting had been set for March 13th 2024. Further confirmation to be received from MSDC Planning.

DPC/24/25: Reports

- a) District Councillor's report: District Councillor T Davis's report had been circulated to members and was further added to at the meeting. Information was also exchanged about the Emergency Plan, a recent funding application and the Barley Fields development speed signage.
- b) County Councillor's report: County Cllr M Hick's report had been circulated. His apologies were also noted.

DPC/24/26: To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on January 15th and February 5th: It was resolved to approve both sets of minutes as accurate records of the meetings held.

DPC/24/27: Planning matters

- a) **Application: DC/24/00341 - Land Off Low Road** - Strengthening works to bridge/culvert and use as a temporary works access to site compound for adjacent residential development approved under DC/20/02129: Following some debate, it was resolved to recommend the refusal of this planning application, based on the following reasons: Other statutory consultees, such as the Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council Highways, as well as a considerable number of members of the public, had already registered their objections to the application; The Debenham Neighbourhood Plan clearly stipulated that access to the site must be from Ipswich Road; The proposed new access would have a detrimental impact on local resources, bio-diversity, traffic flow, and neighbouring residents; The existing infrastructure on Low Road was unsuitable for the type of vehicle being proposed to be used for the delivery of materials, which would cause further surface damage and pose health and safety risks; Recent storms had demonstrated how much more significant the risk of flooding was in the area, and the revised flood data should inform the application; Finally, there was no clear definition of what "temporary" actually meant.
- b) **Application: DC/24/00290 and DC/24/00292 - 72 High Street** - Applications for erection of a single-storey flat roof rear extension (following demolition of existing flat roof addition and shower room), blocking up of external window and relocation of boiler; for Listed Building Consent - Erection of a single storey flat roof rear extension (following demolition of existing flat roof addition and shower room), associated internal alterations, blocking up of external window and relocation of boiler: It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- c) **Decision: DC/23/05310 5 Gracechurch Street** - Erection of single-storey rear extension including conversion of part of existing garage to form w.c./utility room and erection of summer house: Noted.
- d) **Decision: DC/23/05945 56 High Street** - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/22/01072 - Condition 9 (Hall Window): Granted: Noted.

DPC/24/28: Finance and Administration

- a) To approve accounts for payment and note receipts and bank balances/reconciliations: It was resolved to approve the accounts for payments, receipts, and reconciliations. The payment of one account was withheld pending further enquiries with the source (to be actioned by Cllr G Helm and A Finnissy ahead of the March meeting). It was noted that grant funding from MSDC and SCC had been made available to cover this invoice. However, the Parish Council had a duty to ensure its accuracy before accepting

this funding or making the corresponding payment. The bank statements were also noted.

Payments:	February
	£
Salaries, HMRC, pensions	2,219.94
Clerk expenses	224.30
Website Editor	120.00
Public Conveniences	1,290.00
Pest Control Solutions (Street Warden)	1,374.20
DPCC – Warm Hub venue hire, annual council meetings and storage	715.00
R Blackwell -SID maintenance and repositioning (3 months)	30.00
SALC – On-site councillor training	645.36
Haward Horological – Parish clock repair	2,222.00
ICCM- Corporate membership	24.00
Debenham Green Team – Funding for water monitoring project	500.00
East of England Co-op – Emergency funding	21.50
Lovewell Blake - Payroll	60.00
Clerk – Emergency funding reimbursement	50.00
E-ON (Telephone kiosk)	41.06
BT Group (Dove Cottage Wi-Fi)	37.99
Total:	9,525.25
Woodland:	
Durie Partners - Maintenance	460.00
S Robbins- Consumables	23.99
Total:	483.99
Receipts:	
Misc. allotments	155.13
Burial fees	375.00
Debenham Emergency Fund donations	100.00
MSDC grant funding	2,000.00
MSDC street cleansing grant	2,404.42
Total:	5,034.55
Woodland Receipts – Calendar sales	950.00
Balances on 18th February 2024	
PC Current account	9,218.08
PD Deposit account	198,405.31
Woodland Deposit account	7,352.58
Woodland Current account	990.26
Total:	215,966.23

- b) Bank Mandate - To agree additional online signatories: It was resolved to remove Cllr F Winrow-Giffin from the list of signatories (at her request) and add Cllrs K Grimshaw and A Finnissy.
- c) Council Action List: The action list had been circulated. There were no further updates from members but the Clerk informed Council that the overgrowth on Chancery Lane would be addressed by the

Warden. They would also be reinstating the street sign which had been displaced by the storm.

- d) To consider alternative arrangements for venue hire for DPC-related activities: Deferred to the next meeting.
- e) Review of the Parish Council Notice Board use: Cllr F Winrow-Giffin expressed her disappointment after finding out recently that Cllr J Sweet had been challenged, in a somewhat aggressive manner, by a member of the public when updating the Parish Council's noticeboard.

A recent increase in the number of projects the Parish Council was involved with, combined with its statutory obligations to display certain documents meant that there was a growing need to utilise more sections of the board. In addition, several local groups may also wish to share their news and updates, and the Parish Council needed to be fair with the allocation of the remaining panels.

A number of suggestions on how to improve its use included the addition of notices about who the noticeboard keyholders were, the dates of all Council meetings, increased font and different colour paper for longer text documents, dates on all notices to ensure they were current, making reports eye-catching and attractive, and the introduction of QR codes with links to websites.

It was also agreed that only named Parish Councillors (Cllrs J Sweet and K Barlow) and the Clerk should be able to access the Notice Board and that any keys shared historically with third parties should be retrieved.

- f) To agree new arrangements for the Parish Clock Winding Contract: The Clerk had provided members with details of the change in the contract for clock winding, which was approved by members.
- g) To agree nominations for the Buckingham Palace Garden Party: It was resolved to nominate Cllr J Baldwin.

DPC/24/29: Committees, working groups and representatives -To receive reports and consider recommendations / agree on actions:

- a) **Committees and Working Groups memberships** - Opportunity for Councillors absent from previous meetings to join; and to consider adding a new Council Representative position for Community Transport: There were no further appointments.
- b) **Emergency Plan Review** - To receive a report on the stakeholder meeting held on 26.01.24 and receive an update on the Emergency Plan review (Cllr JB): A brief report was received from Cllr J Baldwin, who had already provided the Council with written reports earlier in the month. Several meetings were being organised in specific areas of the village, with Suffolk County Council in attendance, and data was being gathered by the DVH&PFT Chair of Trustees. There was also further engagement planned with the local schools and other stakeholders.
- c) **Debenham Neighbourhood Plan Review** - To agree membership of Working Group: Following some debate, it was agreed that all Councillors should be members of the Working Group. A note of caution was received from the Clerk that if a meeting was called, not all Councillors should attend, as it would be deemed to be a full Council meeting, rather than a Working Group or Committee.

Members discussed whether the revision of the plan should be an addendum to the original or would

require full consultation. Speaking from the public gallery, Cllr T Davis advised that if the Plan was to carry weight in terms of planning decisions, it would require full consultation, as the recently approved MSDC Local Plan had superseded its older policies.

Cllr J Baldwin informed members that the former Councillor who had written the Plan policies had indicated that they would be willing to offer their support. It was also understood that various professionals at MSDC would be able to advise the Parish Council, as well as specialist services who had been used in the past.

It was agreed to carry out a full review of the Neighbourhood Plan, and the process would start as soon as possible.

d) **Play Areas update:**

- Recreation Ground Project: An update was received from Cllr J Sweet on how the project was progressing. Cllr J Sweet and the Clerk had held a site meeting with representatives from MSDC, who had praised the CIL bid for £74,000 and encouraged further additions to the scheme. The CIL bid would be considered in the next “round”, which was expected to be in March.
- To consider repainting the Recreation car park lines and agree budget (Cllr JB): Following consideration of the quotes received, it was resolved to approve one for £525.00.

e) **Cemetery** - To consider recommendations from the Committee regarding Policy and fees review: It was resolved to approve the Committee’s recommendations for the policy and fees review, with a proviso that the fees were reviewed again in one year.

f) **Allotments** - To Consider recommendations from the Committee regarding the Allotment Rules Review: Deferred.

g) **Highways** – Consideration re Speed Indicator Device operation (6-month review): It was resolved to continue with the current arrangements.

h) **Trees and Greens** - To consider quotes for various works (Jobs 1, 2 and 3 of specification): Quotes 2 and 3 were deferred to a later meeting, as the bird nesting season was about to begin. Councillors resolved to approve one of the quotes for Job 1.

i) **Public Facilities** - To receive a presentation on proposed works and agree budget (Cllrs JS/JB): Cllrs J Baldwin and J Sweet had provided several quotes but there were still more to get. Cllr J Sweet gave a breakdown of estimated costs, and asked members to consider agreeing on a ceiling figure of £35,000 for the total project, as well as £285.00 to cover the costs of a loft hatch, so that progress could be made between meetings. Members approved both proposals. Funding of £10,000 had previously been secured by the Clerk in 2020, and a funding application for £10,000 of Community Grants would also be submitted in due course to cover most of the costs.

There was some discussion about a recent incident of vandalism and consideration given to the introduction of CCTV outside the facility.

j) **URC Ground**- To consider treatment of the southern boundary line: It was agreed that the Parish Council would not erect a fence. The Parishioner who had put forward the request may do so if they wished, providing they observed the correct boundary.

k) **Eco/Green Projects:**

- To consider setting up a Working Group to investigate sources of green energy, their potential adoption, and preparation for a public consultation for the purposes of undertaking a feasibility study (Cllr LR): Cllr L Robbins gave members a brief on how previous proposals put forward by a former Councillor had stopped abruptly and how setting up a dedicated Working Group may provide the opportunity to continue investigating potential sources of green energy and their feasibility.

This would not necessarily need to be via a specific Parish Council group; however, the Parish Council could facilitate it and have a representative within it.

Cllr K Grimshaw advised that there should be a clear separation of roles and that the Community should set such a group, with the possibility of a Councillor being appointed representative once it was set up.

Cllr J Baldwin suggested that she would be willing to act as a liaison between the group and the Parish Council.

For clarity, and taking into account the motion on the agenda, Councillors resolved against the proposal to “set a working group” but added a comment: That the Parish Council would support the formation of one and would appoint a Parish Council representative once it was formed.

Due to the lateness of the meeting, Councillors resolved to defer all the remaining items on the agenda.

- To consider inviting the Debenham Green Team to do an informative presentation to the Council (Cllr LR): Deferred.

- l) **Festivities and Local Events:** To consider holding a Well-Being gathering for parishioners affected by the floods: Deferred.

DPC/24/30: To note any further correspondence (all correspondence circulated to members ahead of the meeting or included on the agenda for consideration): Deferred.

- a) Joint Local Validation List Consultation (22.01.24 to 04.03.24)

DPC/24/31: To receive any reports from Councillors/requests for addition to a future agenda (no decision can be made unless exempt or under delegated power): Deferred.

DPC/24/32: Date of the next meeting: 18th March 2024: Noted.

DPC/23/33: 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.*

DPC/24/34: Employment Committee: To consider and approve recommendations from the Employment Committee (Stage 1): Deferred.

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

Signed:..... Date:.....

