

# Debenham Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Dove Cottage, Debenham**

**Present:** Cllr Barlow (Deputy Chairperson), Cllr Sweet, Cllr Cockerton, Cllr Grimshaw, Cllr Collins, Cllr Robbins.

District Councillor Davis and County Councillor Hicks, Peter Grogan (Temporary Clerk), Brian Mansfield (RFO) and 6 members of the public

**Chairpersons Announcement** – *Welcome to this meeting of Debenham Parish Council, The Council, members of the public and the press my 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/25/211 To Receive and consider apologies for absence:** Cllr Winrow-Griffin (Chairperson), Cllr Helm apologies approved as legitimate absences. Cllr Phipps – no apology received.

**DPC/25/212 To receive members declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda:** Cllr Sweet, and Cllr Collins declared an interest in item 25/211 regarding expenses.

### **DPC/25/213 Public Participation:**

- a) A member of the public told the meeting she had invited the local MP to visit Debenham to address the Parish Council and residents about local issues. The MP had responded saying they hoped to set up a surgery in the village but, as yet, no dates had been proposed. The resident hoped any such visit would be well attended and asked that the Council give the proposed visit its full support.
- b) The same member of the public expressed concern that the proposed trimming of hedges passed at the last meeting need to be done quickly, to avoid disturbing nesting birds. Cllr Barlow assured the resident that contractors were due to commence work in the next few weeks.
- c) The same member of the public also raised concern over the maintenance of the riverbanks flowing through the village, were these the responsibility of residents, highways, resident?  
A discussion followed including comments from Cllr Hicks (County), Cllr Davis (District), Parish Councillors and residents. It concluded that it was complicated, and each section of riverbank was subject to laws, bylaws, regulations, riparian rights etc and no definitive answer applied to all cases. Any cases where flooding was evident needed to be reported to Cllr Hicks who would forward to the appropriate agency.
- d) A member of the public highlighted the issue of the parking problems around the Co-op and adjacent businesses. He has been in conversation with PC Hassler who had offered to assist in compiling a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to alleviate the problem. The resident highlighted that he had attempted to contact the Parish Council on this matter by email but had received no response. Cllr Hicks (County) confirmed that many of the issues highlighted were already subject to a TRO under consideration by the Highways but this may take 18 months to be implemented. Cllr Barlow assured the resident that any future correspondence would be dealt with effectively.
- e) A member of the public wanted to raise the issue of the problems faced by residents of the Old Pig sheds and adjacent properties as the refuse / recycling lorries cannot get access to their lane due to parked cars restricting the entrance. It was noted some of the residents are elderly or vulnerable. The resident was frustrated as his issue was being passed between County / District and Parish Councils and no one was dealing with it. It was suggested that as the problem only came about to the change in collection times and that if the lorries came earlier this could resolve the issue

### **DPC/25/214 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors**

- a) **County Cllr Davis (District) addressed the meeting.**

Her report had been circulated earlier but she wished to expand on a couple of points.



First, the footpath issue by the Barleyfields housing development, Highways will be constructing a temporary path in February, involving minimum construction, to allow pedestrians to walk into the village. The permanent path will not be implemented until all licences have been agreed and may not be built until the summer holidays. This was supported by Cllr Hicks (County).

Secondly, road sweeper is currently clearing gulleys and gutters around the village to ease the flow of water into drains.

Lastly, the District has provided 2 new bins in the play area.

b) **County Cllr Hicks (County)** addressed the meeting.

Regarding the Barleyfields housing development, UK power networks are to install power to the lamp posts in the next few days.

Devolution, the Government needs Suffolk Authorities to submit their business cases by August 2025. The Government will decide on which model will be implemented, this could be one, two or three Unitary Authorities with populations between 500,000 and a million. Elections will be postponed allowing for decision making process to proceed unhindered. Models for such authorities exist already, such as Cumbria. There is no obvious impact on Parish Councils.

The County Council budget of £308 million will be allocated in the coming weeks with 77p in the pound needed to fund Adult's and Children's Social Care. This leaves only 23p for all the other services.

**DPC/25/215 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

*Proposed by Cllr Collins and seconded by Cllr Sweet and were approved unanimously.*

**DPC/25/216 Action Plan of Outstanding Matters:** To be deferred to a future meeting.

**DPC/25/217 Planning to consider planning applications for recommendations to MSDC:**

- a) **DC/24/25320 – 2 High Street** – This has pre-approval to be returned to a dwelling house.
- b) **DC/24/05590 – 39 Chancery Lane** – The Parish Council has no objection to renewal of lime-based render.
- c) **AP/24/00067 – The Angel 5 High Street** – There is to be a meeting to discuss this on 4<sup>th</sup> February at 10am in the Leisure Centre.

**DPC/25/218 Planning to note planning decisions:**

- a) **DC/24/04463 – 2 High Street, - Approved**
- b) **DC/24/05001 – 33 Chancery Lane, - Approved**
- c) **DC/24/000924 – 28 High Street – Refused**

**DPC/25/219 Barley Fields, Aspell Road:** A letter was sent to the developer by the District Council concerning the fencing, this matter needs to be followed up.

**DPC/24/220 Trees and Shrubbery at Market Bridge and rear of parking spaces opposite URC, Chancery Lane:** To be deferred until a later meeting.

**DPC/24/221 Finance and Administration**

- 1) **Report on payment of £800 to Leisure Centre following Storm Babet:** £800 has been received from the District Council, a payment of £800 needs to be made to the Leisure Centre.
- 2) **To consider accounts for payment and note receipts, bank balances and reconciliations.** The list of payments for approval is attached.

*Proposed: Cllr Robbins, Seconded Cllr Sweet; Approved unanimously.*

3) **Report on Parish Council Finance Working Group:**

- a. **Council Accounts:** the RFO reported that all accounts were up to date and reconciled to bank statements. However, the report extended to 7 pages due to the large number of cost centres, therefore the RFO has worked on consolidating these, and it has been reduced to 4 pages. He expects further simplification going forward. The RFO is preparing a crib-sheet to show the revised system will work including cross referencing to the budget and precept preparations for future years. The New,

recommended, Financial Regulations from SALC are under review and the RFO is writing new procedure for online payments and ear marked reserves (EMRs).

- b. **Proposal for 2025/26 Budget:** Following review of last year's budget, income and expenditure to date, and known variations the RFO proposed a budget for 2025/26 of **£112,322**

*Proposed: Cllr Sweet, Seconded Cllr Grimshaw; Approved unanimously*

- c. **Proposal for Precept application 2025/26:** Following review of the proposed budget and known income from other sources the RFO proposed a precept of **£91,166**.

*Proposed: Cllr Sweet, Seconded Cllr Grimshaw; Approved unanimously*

- d. **RFO update on RIALTAS system** – see item DPC/24/221 3 (a)

- e. **Additions to Asset Register:** Noted

- f. **Additions to Insurance Policy:** Noted

- g. **Report on CIL funding Balances** – The RFO needed more time to review the figures and will report to a future meeting.

- 4) **To approve Terms of Reference for the Employment Committee:** Deferred to future meeting

- 5) **Parish Council Bier:** Nothing further to report, Cllr Collins repeated he will provide storage free of charge when the Bier is moved.

- 6) **Confirmation of dates for Annual Parish Council (APC) and Annual Parish Meeting (APM):** The APC will be on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, the APM will be on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May.

## Committees, Working Groups and Representative's reports:

**DPC/25/222: Debenham Neighbourhood Plan Review:** No update

**DPC/25/223: Allotments:** Cllr Robbins reported that all the 54 plots had been let to some 40 tenants (some are multiple plots). Some deposits had not been charged due the poor state of the plots and there are 10 plots where they appear neglected, Cllr Robbins is trying to determine if there are mitigating circumstances and giving tenants time to rectify the situation. £1,588.66 in rent has been collected this year and in a full year this could increase to £2,000. With regard to the Community plot it was proposed that the shed and other materials be sold and the money used to support the allotment funds. A reserve of £800 was suggested as a sale price for the shed.

*Proposed: Cllr Sweet, Seconded Cllr Barlow ; Approved unanimously*

**DPC/25/224: Recreation Ground:** Cllr Sweet reported that the final stage of works had been completed with the installation of a set of goal posts and 2 additional rubbish bins at a cost of £1,200. There were no further plans to create any further screen between the adult gym and the footpath.

**DPC/25/225: Emergency Plan:** To be deferred to a future meeting as it needs a new restart.

**DPC/25/226: Flood Storm Babet**

- 1) **Training:** There was a detailed discussion about the responsibilities and liabilities regarding the proposal that volunteers from the village could do various tasks around the village including the de-silting of the river and adjacent channels. Councillors wanted clarification on a range of matters surrounding the provision of the training course and the tasks it covered.

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Cllr Davis (District) advised that training was available if the Parish Council supported the initiative by proposing volunteers via the website. This training included and road safety awareness.

- a. **Costs:** It was stressed that there would be no cost to the Parish Council or the volunteers and this would be paid for by the County Council.
- b. **Insurance:** It was stressed that there would be no liability incurred by the Parish Council or the volunteers and this would be paid for by the County Council.
- c. **Training Course:** it was made clear that the County Council would implement the training
- d. **Leadership responsibility:** Cllr Davis stated that she would be responsible for directing the team of volunteers in a work schedule approved by the Parish Council.

Given all these assurances it was proposed that the Parish Council support the initiative

**Proposed: Cllr Robbins, Seconded Cllr Barlow ; Approved vote 4 to 1**

**DPC/25/227: Dog bin emptying:** Defer to future meeting.

**DPC/25/228: Highways:**

- 1) **Concerns over highways and parking issues affecting missed rubbish collections at Cross Green:** see previous agenda item **DPC/25/213 (e)**. Contact to be made with MSDC to investigate timings of collections.
- 2) **Parking at High Street / Cross Green pavement:** Following some discussion it was proposed that a letter be sent to all residents in the affected area to park responsibly (suitable wording to be drafted)

**Proposed: Cllr Collins, Seconded Cllr Grimshaw ; Approved unanimously**


**DPC/25/229: Correspondence Received:** None to consider

**DPC/25/230: Councillor reports for future agenda:** Traffic Regulation Orders for the village

**DPC/25/231: Date of Next Meeting** – Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7pm at Dove Cottage.

**DPC/25/232 – Exclusion of the Public** – All public, the temporary Clerk and RFO left the meeting at 8:50pm

**DPC/25/233 – Employment Committee Report -**

Signed  ..... Chairman Date *17/2/25* .....

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