

**Minutes of a meeting of the Debenham Parish Council held on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 7:30pm at Dove Cottage, Debenham.**

**Present:** Cllr S Palframan (Chairman), Cllr F Winrow-Giffin (Vice-chairman), Cllr R Blackwell, Cllr S Phipps, Cllr L Cockerton, Cllr J Baldwin, Cllr A Cushion, Cllr S Dobson, Cllr M Hammond, Mrs D Bedwell (Clerk), District Cllr K Guthrie, County Cllr M Hicks and two members of the public.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received from Cllr G Helm, Cllr M Loveridge and Cllr J Feeney-Howells, which were approved. Cllr E Bowman's absence was noted.
- 2. Declarations of interest with regards to items on the agenda and additions to register:** Cllr F Winrow-Giffin declared a pecuniary interest on any grass cutting contract matters; Cllr J Baldwin declared a pecuniary interest on her allotment plot.
- 3. Reports**
  - 3.1 District Councillor's report: Cllr K Guthrie's report had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting and was presented by Cllr Guthrie.
  - 3.2 County Councillor's report: Cllr M Hick's report had also been circulated to members ahead of the meeting.
- 4. Suspension of standing orders: *Meeting open for 5 minutes to allow members of the public to speak:*** Meeting open: There were no comments from the public present.
- 5. To approve the following minutes:** Ordinary meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017: Subject to the addition of the new style accounts report, it was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting held.

**6. Neighbourhood Plan**

- 6.1 To consider AECOM report and agree response: Members welcomed the report's findings and discussed in some detail issues such as the suitability of the SHELLAA sites, the distribution of projected new housing over the next thirty years, the intrinsic relationship between infrastructure requirements /needs and the growth of Debenham as a core village, as well as the five-year land supply crisis and potential for the submission of hostile planning applications by developers. It was resolved to approve the following under this item:  
The recommended number of houses to be built over the next 30 years; The AECOM recommendations and wording for inclusion on the Neighbourhood Plan; Matters to be discussed at a meeting with MSDC (to be scheduled); The preparation of a robust evidence based case for the defence of a lower number of houses; The appeal against the loss of the Cherry Tree pub (case going to Planning Committee) and a request for further clarification from the developers as to which site would be chosen for development first.
- 6.2 To consider and approve the wording on the NP for strategic sites: A report was circulated by Cllr S Palframan which, subject to some minor changes, was approved by members.
- 6.3 To consider draft responses to the emerging joint Local Plan consultation: Cllr R Blackwell had compiled the Parish Council's response and copies of the relevant sections were circulated at the meeting. Members were asked to submit any further amendments to Cllr R Blackwell no later than

the last week of October, as the deadline for the consultation was November 10<sup>th</sup>. Cllr F Winrow-Giffin urged members and parishioners to also submit their own individual views

6.4 Meetings with developers-update: Cllrs M Hammond and S Palframan, as well as Mr E Alcock had met with developers on September 5<sup>th</sup> and a further meeting with remaining Parish councillors had been agreed to take place on October 12<sup>th</sup>. However, this meeting had been cancelled and the developers would be carrying out a wider resident's survey type exercise at a later date.

It appeared there had been some misunderstanding by members of the public with regards to the purpose of the previous meetings with developers, although reference to those had been made in the Parish Magazine and previous meeting minutes. In order to shed clarity on this matter, it was agreed that a press statement should be released giving parishioners a better understanding of the process being undertaken.

It was noted that the way the Chairman and Parish Clerk had been treated by some members of the public over this matter had been disappointing and it was hoped that this situation would not be repeated.

Cllr S Palframan to prepare statement for inclusion on the Parish Magazine and Debenham website.

## **7. Finance and Administration:**

7.1 To consider and approve accounts for payment and note receipts and bank balances: The accounts for payment, bank reconciliations and bank balances were approved by members. A listing of the relevant figures is attached and forms part of these minutes.

7.2 To consider application for funding from the Debenham Leisure Centre towards the fireworks event: It was resolved to grant fund the event by five hundred pounds.

7.3 To consider application for funding from the Debenham First Responders towards the replacement of equipment: It was resolved to grant fund the application by six hundred pounds and to also make the Debenham First Responders aware that should additional funding be needed towards the essential life-saving equipment needed, a further application would be welcomed by the Parish Council.

7.4 To approve FAWG recommendations regarding the accounts for the first and second quarters 2017/2018: It was resolved to approve the accounts for the first and second quarters 2017/2018, as per FAWG recommendations.

7.5 Preparation for the 2018/2019 budget and precept, including new costs centres addition (ie Emergency Plan Contingency, Asset Purchase): A number of recommendations were made and these would be included in the draft figures. Members were asked to forward any additional requirements, particularly regarding capital expenditure, to the Clerk.

7.6 To approve FAWG's recommendations regarding the External Auditor's report: It was resolved to approve the External Auditor' report and recommendation pertaining to the previous year's Annual Return. No matters had been raised with regards to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017.

7.7 To approve Barclays bank mandate changes (due to time lapse since last resolution): It was resolved to approve the required changes to the bank mandate. Clerk to action.

7.8 Update on "Slack": A further training session had recently been attended by Cllrs S Palframan, J

Feeney-Howells, M Hammond, G Helm and the Clerk and a number of documents had already been uploaded onto the system. "Slack" to continue to be tested by members during the agreed trial period.

- 7.9 To approve FAWG's recommendation regarding the meeting dates for 2018: It was resolved to approve the meeting dates for the coming year.
- 7.10 To consider and approve Christmas arrangements for 2017, including expenditure under S145: The purchase of two Christmas trees (Clerk) and additional decorations (tree toppers- Cllrs J Baldwin and F Winrow-Giffin) was approved. It was agreed that the trees should be erected on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr A Cushion to ask Mr M Durie for assistance; Cllr J Feeney-Howells to assist with the lights and Pat testing and Cllr L Cockerton to lend ladder, as in prior years.

## **8. Planning matters**

- 8.1 Applications received for recommendation to MSDC: None received as at 11 October 2017:
- DC/17/04859 Hogs Kiss, Priory Lane-** Fell 1 no group of Sycamore trees, 1 no Cherry tree, 1 no Ash tree- It was resolved that the view of the Council remained the same with regards to comments sent following the previous planning application for this site and that should the planning application be approved, suitable replacements were put in their place.

### **8.2 To note Approvals/Refusals:**

- 8.2.1 **DC/17/03403 48 High Street-** Retrospective planning application for replacement of gallery front windows and entrance door- Planning Application **Refused**.
- 8.2.2 **DC/17/1430 10 Cross Green-** Construction of front driveway, erection of a two-bedroom holiday let following demolition of garage- Planning Permission **Granted**

- 8.3 Planning Correspondence, including update on **Cherry Tree** (application 04036/17) and **Stonham Barns** (application 3150/15): Updates were given on both planning applications and these were noted by members. The Cherry Tree application was due to be put before Committee and members of the council and public were urged to submit their comments, as they would still be considered as "late papers". District Cllr K Guthrie was asked to inform the Council of the committee meeting date so that a written representation could be prepared.

- 9. Clerk's slot, including Action List and Suffolk Code of Conduct (2014) training:** The Clerk's action list had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting and was updated. The importance of councilors adhering to the Suffolk Code of Conduct was reiterated and certain aspects were highlighted during this session. Particular importance was given to Declarations of a Pecuniary Interest and the possible consequences of either not doing so when necessary, or not abiding by the Code.

## **10. Committees and working groups:** To receive reports and consider any actions needed:

- 10.1 Cemetery: Including, disposal of cuttings at a vacant allotment plot: A number of issues would need to be further considered before a final decision could be made on this matter: Was such a practise against Allotment Rules; Were there other fire restrictions that should be observed due to the proximity to the bridleway and how did this additional cost compare with the installation of a screen/fence: The matter was deferred to the next meeting for further consideration.

It was noted that unfortunately there had been some dog fouling in the St Mary's Churchyard, which was extremely disappointing.

The tree branches overhanging the Millennium Gates and Cemetery Drive had been cut down and removed.

10.2 Website: A report had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting. Confidential matters pertaining to this report were considered during the closed session.

10.3 Play areas: It was reported that the gate post in Gardeners Road play area was loose and would need to be fixed.

10.4 Trees and Greens:

10.4.1 To consider quote for additional works to trees on Low Road: The quote received was approved by members and works were expected to be completed as soon as possible, with the assistance of some councillors and other volunteers.

Cllr S Phipps reported that additional works would need to be considered to a number of other trees in the area, including the Oak and Ash trees near the Fire Station and that he would be working with the same contractor in the preparation of recommendations.

10.4.2 Parishioners' letter re overgrown trees near Cross Green- update: A brief report was received from Cllr S Phipps on this matter, which he had also discussed with the Clerk at a previous site meeting. The Clerk would be preparing a written response to the residents in question in due course.

10.4.3 Horse Chestnut tree on Cross Green-update: Cllr Phipps gave members a brief update but stated that further investigative work would be needed before a decision could be reached.

10.4.4 Village sign maintenance: Cllr Blackwell advised members that the Oak post holding the village sign was splitting and would need some attention. Cllr Phipps added that a replacement of the post may be a cheaper option than its repair and volunteered to look into this matter.

10.4.5 Benches around Debenham in need of maintenance: Cllr Blackwell had prepared a comprehensive and illustrated report of all the Parish Council owned benches in the village and a number of recommendations were put forward:

- Benches no. 13 and 14 to be removed.
- News article to be prepared for the December edition of the Parish Magazine inviting sponsorship of new benches.
- Woodland Group responsible for the maintenance of their benches.

10.5 Highways:

10.5.1 Footpath from "Webster's" to "Ruby and the Angel"- Cllr Blackwell, declaring a non-pecuniary interest, reported on the poor state of repair of the footway between the two points and how he had recently witnessed a near fall by way of tripping on a crack on the pavement. It was agreed that this should be reported to SCC Highways but it was noted that response/action may not be forthcoming for some time.

10.5.2 SCC Highways update re. reporting facilities: Cllr M Hicks had recently informed the council of the new system for reporting highways matters to SCC, which should be used not only by the Parish Council but also by members of the public.

10.5.3 Lock Close parking: Members agreed that this matter should be included initially, for further

consideration, at a Village Greens meeting. Date to be agreed.

10.6 Woodland: There were no further matters to report.

10.7 Street furniture / public toilets: A brief report was received from the Clerk, which included the newly installed public conveniences (ladies) access gate.

10.8 Emergency Plan: To ratify small increase in printing costs greed at the previous meeting: The small increase (to £106) was approved by members.

10.9 Litter and waste matters: The recent litter pick event had been very successful, with some forty volunteers turning up to help and 60 kilos of rubbish being collected in total. Mrs J Walton was formally thanked for all her efforts in organising the event.

**11. Suspension of Standing Orders:** Meeting open to the Public for 5 minutes: There were no comments from the public.

**12. To note any further correspondence** not already circulated to members or included on the agenda for consideration: No additional correspondence had been received.

**13. Chair's urgent business:** any items not on this agenda but of such urgency as to merit, in the Chair's opinion, immediate action: There was no Chairman's urgent business.

**14. To receive reports from councillors / requests for additions to the next agenda:** Cllr F Winrow-Giffin reported that the replacement of a lamp post in Great Back Lane remained outstanding and Cllr L Cockerton raised the matter of the outstanding replacement tree in Cross Green.

**15. Date of next meeting:** To consider changing the date of the next meeting from November 20<sup>th</sup> to November 27<sup>th</sup>: It was resolved to change the date for the November meeting to the 27<sup>th</sup>.

**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.*

**16. Rent/Lease agreements, Contracts and Tenders:** Including- To consider and approve contract specification and tender notice: The contract specification in question continued to be reviewed and a suggestion was made that a volunteer appeal was added to the next issue of the parish magazine in case there was any interest.

It was also agreed to write to the tenant in question and inform them of the Parish Council's decision in order for the required twelve month notice period to be served in good time.

**17. Employment Committee:** To agree date of next meeting and receive clerk's update: A brief update was received from the Clerk, in which she asked members to consider excluding the Friday before a parish council meeting from the days in which she had to be based in Debenham. This was proving to be extremely challenging, as any pending meeting papers were due to be circulated no later than close of play on the Friday. The lack of printing, research and filing facilities/resources made this very difficult indeed.

An Employment Committee meeting was also due to take place and members' availability was noted.

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 10.15pm.

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