

Minutes of a meeting of the Debenham Parish Council held on Monday, 21st August 2017 at 7:30pm at Dove Cottage, Debenham.

Present: Cllr S Palframan (Chairman), Cllr F Winrow-Giffin (Vice-Chair), Cllr R Blackwell, Cllr S Phipps, Cllr L Cockerton, Cllr A Cushion, Cllr M Loveridge, Cllr J Feeney-Howells, Cllr E Bowman, Cllr S Dobson, Cllr M Hammond, District Cllr K Guthrie, County Cllr M Hicks, Mrs D Bedwell (Clerk) and six members of the public.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received (and were approved) from Cllrs G Helm and J Baldwin. The resignation of Cllr A Jones, which was omitted from the previous month's minutes, was also noted.
- 2. To consider co-option onto the council:** Following due deliberation, Mrs S Dobson and Mr M Hammond were co-opted onto the council.
- 3. Declarations of interest with regard to items on the agenda and additions to register:** Cllr M Loveridge declared a non-pecuniary interest on item 7.1 and Cllr F Winrow-Giffin declared a pecuniary interest on grass cutting contract matters.
- 4. Reports**
 - 4.1 District Councillor's report: Cllr K Guthrie gave members a verbal report. There was a brief discussion regarding the ongoing changes within Mid Suffolk District Council and the change of use planning application for the Cherry Tree Inn.
 - 4.2 County Councillor's report: Cllr M Hicks' report had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting and was added to later in the meeting by Cllr Hicks.
- 5. 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 gallery at this point.
- 6. To approve the following minutes:** Ordinary meeting held 17th July 2017: It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting held. The confidential section was deferred for later in the meeting.
- 7. Finance:**
 - 7.1 To consider application for funding from the Debenham Leisure Centre: Cllr A Cushion remarked that he would have preferred the event to be called "Families on wheels" so that it sounded more inclusive, rather than "Women on wheels" and suggested recommending a change of name to the organisers the following year. Cllr J Feeney-Howells explained that it was intended to encourage more ladies specifically to cycle. It was resolved to approve the funding of £80.00 towards this event.
 - 7.2 To consider the purchase of boards advertising the Clerk's presence in the village: It had previously been agreed that the purchase of two boards at a maximum of £80 each was approved, however quotes were still pending therefore an order was yet to be placed.
 - 7.3 To consider and approve accounts for payment and note receipts and bank balances: It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment, as follows:

Payments:

a) D Bedwell (clerk salary)	£1,086.17
b) HMRC (Clerk's tax and NI)	£506.06

c) NEST (clerk's pension)	£17.98
d) D Bedwell (Clerk's expenses)	£254.06
e) Vanilla bakehouse (Sundries for APM and meeting venue)	£185.00
f) Startafresh (wc cleaning)	£715.66
g) B J Woods (Website editing)	£100.00
h) The Earthwood Tree Co. (Tree works-Cross Green, High street)	£200.00
i) DPCC (Dove cottage-venue hire)	£18.75
j) Able Group (Wasps nest at the Recreation Ground)	£100.80
k) WJ Page Electrical (Hand drier, PIR light-wc's)	£312.04
l) Debenham Library FDT (grant funding)	£500.00
m) Mrs G Sillett (Street Warden 16.07.17 to 18.07.17)	£1,138.78
n) R Giffin (grass cutting contract)	£1,565.00
o) Mr T Clements (Emergency Plan-tabards/boxes)	£140.63

Receipts:

a) Reservation plot 30	£125.00
b) Renovate lettering (memorial)	£55.00
c) Internment	£70.00
d) Additional inscription (memorial)	£55.00
e) Debenham Players (return of funding)	£2,250.00

7.4 Accounts for year ended 31 March 2017- To consider and approve any amendments needed: No amendments were needed.

7.5 To receive the Internal Auditor's report and note recommendations: The Internal Auditor's report had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting and its contents and recommendations were noted. The Clerk was praised for her work towards the year end accounts and resulting audit report.

8. Planning matters

8.1 Applications received for recommendation to MSDC:

- 8.1.1 DC/17/03458 22 Cross Green- Change of usage from D1 to mixed use, A1 retail with holistic and wellbeing therapies/treatments: It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- 8.1.2 DC/17/03553 Fern Cottage, 17 Gracechurch Street- Listed Building Consent-conversion and alterations to existing integral double garage to form additional living accommodation: Deferred to the Confidential section initially. It was later resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application but to note concern for parking provision - Recommendation for additional parking to be made available for off-road parking.
- 8.1.3 DC/17/04036, 04037 Cherry Tree Inn, 1 Cherry Tree Lane- Change of use from Class A3/A4 public house including internal and minor external alterations to 3no Class C3 dwelling houses: It was resolved that the Debenham Parish Council was totally against and, furthermore, strongly disagreed with this planning application.

Members expressed their extreme disappointment with the current state of affairs with regards to this development and the application for change of use which, if approved, represented the end of the iconic Cherry Tree Inn in Debenham.

When the Debenham Parish Council had submitted their positive comments re application nos. 2780/10 and 2781/10, it had done so in the clear understanding that it was conditional to the reinstatement of the Cherry Tree Inn once the developer was financially able to do so.

As the dwellings within the site were being sold and conditions were being discharged, questions started to be raised with regards to lack of progress when it came to the Cherry Tree. It was hoped that this would be a priority respected not only by the developer, who would have been very aware of the importance of this amenity to the local community, but also by the Planning Authority.

Members found it very disappointing that the MSDC Enforcement Team was not more proactive when concerns started to be raised about this as far back as 2015.

Some of the reasons listed by members for the refusal of this application are as follows:

- a) The Cherry Tree Inn is imbedded in the history of Debenham and in the minds of residents and visitors alike. It is the only public house left in the village of Debenham, a key service centre, that can accommodate families and large gatherings.
- b) The provision of another four-bedroom dwelling does not meet the needs identified on the draft Debenham Neighbourhood Plan
- c) Some of the comments contained within the application and marketing campaign are erroneous and may colour the judgement of a planning officer less familiar with the setting, ie: Debenham is a key service centre, not a *“small village with a small population”*; *“The inherent problem of the site is its location”* - The Parish Council strongly questions these and other comments and would like to request that the content of the said marketing campaign is also challenged by the planning officer.
- d) The planning application is inherently against MSDC’s own Local Plan, when you consider the loss of employment opportunity, loss of commercial premises with suitable car parking facilities and possible effects on other businesses locally.
- e) The property has not been up for sale for the minimum required period of two years.
- f) The building is Grade II listed and in a Conservation Area; However, the cellar has been filled in with concrete, which renders it unusable. This is clearly not in accordance with approved plans and the cost of bringing it back to a workable state makes it financially prohibitive for a future publican or landlord.

A considerable number of comments had also been received from members of the public, who were equally against this planning application and whom must be represented by this Parish Council.

- 8.1.4 DC/17/04073 Coach House, Priory Lane- Alterations to fenestration during refurbishment: It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.

8.2 To note Approvals/Refusals: DC/17/03919 20 Henniker Road- Discharge of conditions application 5027/16 Condition 3- (soft landscaping)- Details accepted and condition satisfied.

8.3 Planning Correspondence: A considerable number of telephone calls and e-mails had been received from members of the public regarding the former flint wall on Chancery Lane – It was clarified that the whole structure, including the “footings” had had to be removed in order for the new structure to be built. However, some flint would be used in the construction of the replacement wall, which was in accordance with the planning permission given previously.

Comments had also been received regarding the sign erected on the site naming it “*Market Pightle*”, which was incorrect and not what had been recommended to MSDC for the formal naming of the development.

9. Clerk’s slot:

9.1 Action list: The new style Action List was well received by members and a further suggestion was made that *conditional formatting* was used, so that members could update it themselves (Cllr J Feeney-Howells agreed to prepare a draft document for the Clerk to trial). It appeared that an Excel document would also be best to use with *Slack*.

It was reported that a skip in front of the Chip Shop did not have lights on at night, which could be dangerous. The Clerk was asked to contact the skip company.

9.2 Training- Suffolk Code of Conduct: Deferred.

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

10.1 Allotments: To consider recommendations from the allotment committee following the meeting held 7.08.2017: It was resolved to approve the recommendations from the Allotment Committee, including the price increase for the 2018/2019 allotments rents (£0.02p per sq m).

10.2 Cemetery:

10.2.1 To receive report from Cllr L Cockerton and consider whether there is a need to carry out a topple test: It was agreed that as the stone was loose, it should be laid down for health and safety reasons. It was also agreed that the Cemetery Committee should ensure that the relevant process was observed, including the informing of any relatives.

10.1.1 To consider the installation of a new light to illuminate the St Mary’s Church East window during evening services: As the cost would be incurred by the “Friends of St Mary’s Church”, it was resolved to support this proposal.

10.1.2 To note Cemetery Committee next meeting date of September 12th: The meeting date was noted and the start time agreed for 10.00am.

10.3 Website: There were no further news to report.

10.4 Play areas: Following a brief discussion, it was resolved to return the remaining swings and chains and order new cheaper replacement ones from an alternative supplier. The existence of some discarded fencing in the ditch near the Upper Gardeners Road play area was reported-Cllr A Cushion volunteered to have a look and see whether he might be able to remove it.

With regards to a number of activities recently being carried out on the grass verge near Lock Close, it was agreed that these were merely normal activities that children would carry out in the open when playing and that the Parish Council would not intervene unless it became an issue. It

was also noted that the Parish Council was not responsible for this grass verge area.

10.5 Trees and Greens:

- 10.5.1 To consider replacement tree for Cross Green (in place of the one currently stored): The tree was currently being looked after by Cllr S Phipps, who was hoping to plant it at the end of November.
- 10.5.2 To consider replacement tree for Market Green: It was resolved that the green had benefitted from the additional open space left by the missing tree and that it would not be replaced for the time being. Cllr S Phipps would attempt to remove the remaining stump at a later date.
- 10.5.3 Low Road -tree overhanging highway-to receive update: A brief update had been received and the conclusion was that SCC Highways would not be carrying out any maintenance works as it was not deemed to be an issue. It was suggested that the Parish Council financed the cutting back of the branches overhanging the highways and a quote would be sought for consideration.
- 10.5.4 To review the Village Greens Policy (as per Cllr J Feeney-Howells request): As a Trees and Greens meeting was due to take place soon (12th September), it was agreed that this matter could be initially discussed at that meeting. The Clerk reminded members that she would be on leave during the previous week but as this would be a working group meeting, the Clerk's input and attendance would not be needed. The Clerk added that she would, however, still prepare the Cemetery Committee agenda for the same date although she would be on leave.
- 10.5.5 To note date of next Greens and Boundary issues meeting: 12th September-7.30pm.

- 10.6 Highways: The response receive from Highways had been circulated to members. It was disappointing to note that some much needed maintenance was still outstanding, even though the reasons for this had been explained to members by County Cllr M Hicks. Discussion ensued as to whether the Parish Council should cut back the overgrowth on Aspall Road, as the children would soon be starting the school term. The Clerk explained to members that unless the necessary permissions and licenses were in place, the Parish Council was not permitted to work near or on the Highway. It was agreed that permission would be sought for the parish council contractor to carry out some maintenance works.

The Clerk reported that Mr K Voller had asked for a more detailed response to his previous letter regarding highways matters. It was agreed that a response containing the points raised during the meeting at which this letter had been discussed should be sent to Mr K Voller.

- 10.7 Woodland: Water abstraction project: To receive update and approve relevant applications forms and any associated expenditure: A brief discussion ensued, including concerns for the welfare of the fish in the lake, the fact that Mr Martin Durie had not been aware of the proposals (which was contrary to what had been reported to the parish council) and various questions about the project itself. It was agreed that the application with the EA should continue as agreed and that enquiries would be made regarding what could be done to ensure the welfare of the fish in the lakes.
- 10.8 Street furniture / public toilets: To consider quote for the installation of an access gate at the entrance to the public conveniences: The quote from Mr N Moyce was considered and approved.
- 10.9 Neighbourhood Plan: To receive update: A detailed report was received from Cllrs S Palframan and M Hammond.

10.10 Emergency Plan: To receive update: Cllr A Cushion reported that the latest version circulated to members was the final draft, which members agreed to approve as the final document. Cllr A Cushion and all other parties involved in this process were thanked by the Council for all their hard work.

10.11 Litter and waste matters: The next village litter pick event was due to take place on September 30th and Cllr R Blackwell would stand-in for Cllr M Loveridge as he would be away. The new bin at the end of The Butts had been installed and appeared to be working well. This bin would not be added to the bin emptying contract and would be emptied by volunteers.

11. Suspension of Standing Orders - Meeting open to the Public for 5 minutes: Some of the comments received from the public gallery were as follows:

- The overgrown brambles on Aspoll Road were getting quite dangerous, as they forced pedestrians onto the Highway
- The existing trees on the village green is sufficient and there was no need to replace the one that had fallen recently, as agreed earlier in the meeting
- Some parishioners had come to express their views about the Cherry Tree Inn application and members of the council and succeeded in listing those views
- Still on the Cherry tree Inn application, the marketing strategy, section 3, the prices listed had not been revised and were, therefore, false
- District Cllr K Guthrie appealed for witnesses of an incident that had taken place recently, where a car had been hit and the other car involved had left the scene

12. To note correspondence including: All correspondence circulated to members ahead of the meeting or included on the agenda for consideration.

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: In response to a communication from the Parish Magazine editor to the Council, the Chairman asked those councillors who were happy for their photograph to be included on the next issue to make arrangements to send it in directly.

14. To receive reports from councillors / requests for additions to the next agenda: Cllr S Phipps handed the spare parish shed keys to the Clerk.

Cllr L Cockerton asked that Cllr A Jones' resignation was noted, as it had not been minuted.

Cllr M Loveridge gave his apologies for the September pc meeting.

Cllr F Winrow-Giffin asked if the Parish Council would make representation at the Planning Committee meeting due to take place on the following day. It was agreed that the Clerk would attend and that additional hours could be claimed if necessary.

It was reported that an area adjacent to and on the approach to the cemetery had been cleared of growth including small trees and that an access appeared to be in the initial stages of being created even though an application for the same did not appear to have been submitted. It was also reported that a small number of hedging plants had been planted within the cemetery boundary without permission from the parish council. It was agreed that this would need to be looked into and the matter would be included on the next agenda for consideration. It was noted that it was unacceptable that parish council land was tampered with in any way without permission and that if this was the case,

those responsible should be sent communication to the effect.

15. Date of next meeting: September 18th 2017.

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. To consider correspondence received from residents on various matters

17. Meeting with Developers-To receive report from Cllr S Palframan

18. Employment matters

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 10.45pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____