

Debenham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Monday 14th April 2025, Dove Cottage, Debenham

Present: Cllr Winrow-Giffin (Chair), Cllr Barlow (Vice-Chair), Cllr Collins, Cllr Sweet, Cllr Cockerton. Parish Clerk/RFO Brian Mansfield

District Councillor Davis and 7 members of the public. NOTE: County Councillor Hicks joined the meeting at about 7:20pm

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/25/285 To Receive and consider apologies for absence: Cllr Grimshaw and Cllr Helm (apologies approved as legitimate absences). Cllr Phipps (no apology received)

DPC/25/286 To receive members declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda: Cllr Sweet, Cllr Barlow and Cllr Winrow-Giffin declared an interest in item 25/294 (1) regarding expenses. Cllr Sweet also declared an interest in DPC/25/00721 and DPC/25/00730 – Applications being Withdrawn.

DPC/25/287 Public Participation:

Representatives from the Allotments voiced support for Lucy Robbins to continue help run the Allotments. All Plots are rented out and there is a Waiting List of 3 people so far. The Parish Council expressed its thanks for everyone's hard work.

A member of the public requested more detail on the exact location of the TRO and presented two letters from neighbours on this topic to the Parish Clerk. The TRO is on the Agenda to be discussed under DPC/25/305/3

After closing the Public Participation session, the Chair requested two items on the Agenda were brought forward for discussion:

- DPC/25/305/3 TRO – further details would become available as the process moves forward and there will definitely be a Public Consultation before any action is taken. The Parish Council will be settling an invoice for upfront costs and County Cllr Matthew Hicks would provide more information once he arrives at the meeting.
- DPC/25/298 Allotments – the Parish Council agreed to allow Lucy Robbins to continue as a consultee for the Allotments. The Parish Council have a statutory responsibility for the Allotments, so the Parish Clerk will set out a framework for working together including the Parish Council Allotment Committee.

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

ACTION: Clerk to draft a framework document for approval by the Parish Council Allotment Committee.

DPC/25/288 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors

- a) **District Cllr Davis addressed the meeting.** Her report had been circulated earlier but she wished to highlight Sports funding applications amount of £250k opens on 28-Apr-25.



Questions: Cllr Winrow-Giffin asked if District Cllr Davis could look into a foot bridge repair (Low Road to Saxton Close) – a parishioner had reported a gap in the wooden planks which is a hazard. The District Councillor agreed to look into this matter.

Also, Cllr Collins asked who was responsible for repairing a fence in Gardeners Road (near the Garages). Plastic barriers had been installed. At this point County Cllr Hicks arrived (7:20pm) and agreed this was a Highways matter and he would visit the site after the meeting.

County Cllr Hicks addressed the meeting. His report had been circulated earlier but he wished to emphasise the following. 1) Devolution discussions continue with one unitary for Suffolk still the favoured option. 2) 200 new specialist SEND places for Suffolk. 3) National Grid pylons – the Council continues to oppose pylons in final round of consultations.

Questions: Following the Public Participation session, the TRO topic was raised with County Cllr Hicks. It was agreed that a mini-map would prove useful to highlight areas where double-yellow lines / parking might be located. Also, consideration for areas that need wheel-chair access improvements and the new 20mph limit zones. The TRO process can take 18 months (or more depending on appeals) – the Police are due to report, then a Public Consultation will commence with the process ending with a final Court Order making the TRO legal.

ACTION: County Cllr Hicks to provide a mini-map.

Questions: Cllr Collins raised the matter of the Environment Agency withdrawing maintenance of the river erosion boards. County Cllr Hicks confirmed Highways had awarded a contract for works to be completed on Aspell Road to protect the pavements (work due over the summer). But the erosion boards were the responsibility of the Environment Agency and they have taken the view to cease maintenance sighting budget constraints. Riparian responsibilities remain with property owners.

DPC/25/289 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17th March 2025.

The Minutes were agreed.

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

DPC/25/290 Action Plan of Outstanding Matters:

Resolved items (to note)

1. Internal Audit – Policies and Procedures sign-off (covered below under DPC/25/295)
2. Dove Cottage Wifi – Vodafone broadband installed on 8th April 2025
3. Potholes in Ipswich Road – remedial work completed

Ongoing items (in progress)

1. Barleyfields Footpath – work expected during Summer Holidays (**District Cllr Davis**)
2. Barleyfields Hedging / Fencing at Recreation Ground/Cemetery Boundary. **Clerk has written a letter to Denbury Homes raising this matter. Reply awaited. Parish Councillors asked for a strongly worded letter to be sent as follow-up.**
3. Barleyfields Soil pile removal. **Clerk has written a letter to Denbury Homes raising this matter. District Cllr Davis confirmed the soil pile had been removed. (Resolved)**
4. Audit – update Asset Register and sign-off. **RFO to action at the May 2025 Parish Council meeting.**
5. Audit – circulate Year End Accounts 14 days ahead of May 2025 meeting. **RFO to action ahead of the May 2025 Parish Council meeting.**
6. Audit – update AGAR documentation for sign-off at May meeting. **RFO to action at the May 2025 Parish Council meeting.**

DPC/25/291 Planning to consider planning applications for recommendations to MSDC:

- a) DC/25/01590 – Refurbishment following Flood Kiln Cottage – **Support**

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

- b) APP/W3520/W/25/3361654 – Conversion and Extension 28 High Street - **previous decision unchanged**

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

ACTION: Clerk to submit response by letter.

DPC/25/292 Planning – consultation period ended, awaiting decision by MSDC:

- a) DC/25/01079 and DC/25/01080 – The Coach House – **Support**

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

- b) DC/25/00466 – Debenham Bowls Club – **Support**

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

- c) DC/25/00721 and DC/25/00730 – 1 Water Lane – **Applications Withdrawn**

- d) Community Right to Bid – The Angel – **Noted**

DPC/25/293 Planning – Decisions to Note:

- a) DC/24/05559 – Land North of Bakers Lane – **Application Withdrawn**

- b) DC/24/05392 – Old Hall Farm Barn – **Application Granted**

DPC/25/294 Finance and Administration

- 1) **To consider accounts for payment and note receipts, bank balances and reconciliations.** The list of payments for approval is attached.

Proposed: Cllr Sweet, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved unanimously.

- 2) **Report on Parish Council RFO:**

- i) Council Accounts: the RFO reported that all accounts were up to date and reconciled (in Rialtas) to bank statements as at 31st March 2025. Total balances £231k in savings account and £6k in the current account. Woodlands accounts (x2) balance is £8k. Total of £245k.
- ii) CIL Funding: There is currently £91k in the CIL reserve and £12k will be received this month. The CIL Annual Return will be prepared and submitted to MSDC.

ACTION: RFO to prepare CIL Annual Return for approval

- iii) Insurance renewal: cover requires renewal on 1st June 2025 – current provider Clear Councils.

ACTION: RFO to review Insurance providers and supply quotes at the May 2025 meeting.

- iv) External Hard Drive: RFO requested approval to purchase this device to back-up data from the Clerk and RFO laptops. Stored data would be password protected. Price range from Amazon was £40 to £100 for 1TB storage. Seagate 1TB at £51.99 was suggested by RFO.

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

ACTION: RFO to purchase External Hard Drive and reclaim via expenses.



- v) Public Conveniences: Cllr Sweet worked with a local resident to clear the blockage - £40 expense to be approved (compared to external quote of £200 plus VAT). The Parish Council thanked Cllr Sweet for his support and cost saving.

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Collins, Approved Unanimously

- vi) Biodiversity Funding: Cllr Barlow requested approval for up to £1,000 for support materials and professional costs for public consultation plans / maps / printing. Forms part of the Neighbourhood Plan update.

Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Sweet, Approved Unanimously

- vii) Funding Request from Debenham Sports and Leisure – the Parish Council agreed to contribute £500 for the repairs out of the Grants / Donation Budget (2025-26 total budget is £6k for the year). This is in-line with similar historic contributions. District Cllr Davis confirmed that Parish CIL money could be used for this project, even though its private land (with public use). The RFO commented that the Parish CIL balance looks healthy, but there are projects under discussion that will utilise CIL including Neighbourhood Plan Consultant Fees (if funding isn't available).

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Collins, Approved Unanimously

- viii) Funding Request from Debenham PCC - the Parish Council agreed to contribute £500 in-line with the similar historic contributions. Cllr Winrow-Giffin mentioned that the Church Commissioner had a funding pot of £130m, 3% of which is to support carbon-neutral projects. This could be a useful source of funding for this project. The Parish Council agreed a letter of support might prove useful for Debenham PCC in securing additional funding.

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

ACTION: Clerk to write a letter of support to Debenham PCC

- 3) **To approve Terms of Reference for the Employment Appeals Committee:** Defer until May 2025 meeting, but this action must be taken.
- 4) To formally note appointment of Brian Mansfield as Parish Clerk, effective 3rd March 2025 – approved.

Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously

- 5) To Formally accept resignation of Cllr Robbins, effective 24th March 2025 – **Noted**
- 6) **Parish Council Bier:** Cllr Collins reported that

ACTION: Clerk to contact the Museum at Bressingham to obtain dimensions (width) of the Parish Council Bier. Once collected by Cllr Collins the Clerk will update the Asset Register and the Insurers with the location of the Bier.

- 7) **Review of channels on SLACK:** Clerk requested that any tidy-up work is completed after the Year End Audit (to include Archive Channels, renaming and adding extra Channels). Work to be scheduled for early July 2025.
- 8) **Debenham Day 2025:** Cllr Barlow commented that with the difficulties with road closures, a potential location could be the Recreation Ground. Generators for electricity and toilets would need hiring, but the venue supports families and entertainment would be provided. Funding sources within the

community would be approached. The RFO mentioned the 2025-26 Budget had £1,000 reserved for supporting the Deb Day event.

- 9) **To Review all existing Committees and Working Groups:** the Clerk circulated a list of the Committees and Working Groups with their representatives. Collate Parish Councillor feedback and update the website in May along with all the newly adopted Policies / Procedures.

DPC/25/295: To review and approve the following Council Policies, Procedures and Forms:

1. Anti Harrassment and Bullying policy
2. Clerk Delegation Scheme
3. Code of Conduct (LGA)
4. Community engagement Policy
5. Complaints Policy
6. Data Protection Policy
7. Electronic communications Policy
8. Environmental Policy
9. Equality and Diversity Policy
10. Financial Regulations
11. Financial Risk Assessment
12. FOI model publication Scheme
13. Funding Policy
14. GDPR consent form Emergency Plan
15. GDPR consent form general
16. GDPR privacy notice
17. General Reserves Policy
18. Health and Safety Policy
19. Millenium Gates Policy
20. Operation Menai Bridge
21. Pre-planning application meetings with Developers Policy
22. Procurement Thresholds
23. Safeguarding Policy
24. Standing Orders
25. Statement of internal controls
26. Terms of reference - internal audit
27. Debenham Parish Council - Funding Form under £750
28. Debenham Parish Council - Funding Form over £750

All documents approved and adopted by the Parish Council as at 14th April 2025

Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Collins, Approved Unanimously

ACTION: Grievance and Complaints Policy needs to be adopted at the May 2025 meeting

DPC/25/296: The Parish Council wishes to acknowledge and thank the Debenham Green Team and Residents for their efforts with the recent Litter Picks

Committees, Working Groups and Representative's reports:

DPC/25/297: Debenham Neighbourhood Plan Review: Cllr Barlow confirmed a NP meeting was held and the next important step is to appoint a Consultant. The Clerk confirmed 5 Consultants had been approached by email with the NP Brief. Feedback will be collated after Easter. District Cllr Davis mentioned that Government funding might be available (if a new funding window is opened) – she will alert the Clerk when details become available. Joint ventures attract increased funding, so Debenham might achieve this in association with Kenton and Winston.

DPC/25/298: Allotments: Covered earlier in the meeting.



DPC/25/299: Recreation Ground: Cllr Sweet obtained a couple of quotes for two Goal Posts for a cost of £1,190. A further search online revealed a set of similar Goal Posts in Gillingham for £140. Cllr Sweet has collected these items ready for installation. The Parish Council wished to express thanks to Cllr Sweet for taking time to collect these items and for the significant cost saving.

DPC/25/300: Debenham Sports and Leisure: update from Cllr Helm at the next meeting.

DPC/25/301: Emergency Plan: the Clerk has been in contact with Ben Wilding and a meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks, when there is a gap in year-end work. Ben agreed to bring a colleague from the Environment Agency along to the meeting. Cllr Sweet asked to attend this meeting, once arranged. Cllr Winrow-Giffin will be contacting Jane Baldwin to obtain the current Emergency Plan folder.

DPC/25/302: Flooding

- 1) **Storm Babet Section 19 report:** District Cllr Davis asked for MSDC to be included in this item. Cllr Collins put forward the idea that a specific working group should be set-up to cover this.

ACTION: Clerk to add a Flooding Working Group to the list of Committees and Working Groups for approval in May.

- 2) **Report on flood at the Cemetery:** the Clerk had written to Denbury Homes around the soil pile, which has now been removed. The Parish Council agreed to monitor the situation closely and see if future flooding issues arise.

DPC/25/303 Dog bin emptying: Cllr Sweet has informed the Street Warden to include one extra dog bin in his collection schedule. Public Realm are due to confirm if the Parish Council has any ongoing contractual obligations after taking over the dog bin emptying responsibilities.

DPC/25/304: Update on Village Tree / Hedge works:

- **Lime trees (6):** District Cllr Davis to obtain written credentials of tree expert and confirm Public Liability Insurance is in place. Parish Councillors can then decide on remedial work required.
- **Willow Tree at Market Bridge:** removal towards the end on the month – logs will be left for parishioners.

DPC/25/305: Highways:

1. **Concerns over highways and parking issues affecting missed rubbish collections at Cross Green:** Collections in morning now – **(Resolved)**
2. **Parking at High Street / Cross Green pavement:** Cllr Barlow has prepared a letter for hand delivery – Parish Councillors to inform the Clerk of any action required.
3. **Report on Traffic Regulation Order:** Covered earlier in the meeting.
4. **To consider White Gates & speed restriction signs on roads at main village entry points:** Discussions are ongoing – considerations are size, cost and timing of TRO.

DPC/25/306: To consider correspondence received (correspondence circulated to members ahead of the meeting or included on the agenda for consideration):

1. River erosion boards email: Covered earlier in the meeting.
2. Chat Bench email: Cllr Barlow raised this previously. The bench on the Green needs a new base and possibly replacing (Cllr Collins to speak with Simon Bloomfield). Additionally, a small sign could be added to the bench saying "Happy to Chat Bench - Please sit here if you don't mind someone stopping to say "Hello".
3. Planning Consultation Survey email: the Parish Council agreed to put copies on the Notice Board and website, to help promote responses to this consultation. District Cllr Davis agreed

with the Parish Council's reply. The Clerk will respond to the survey and oppose the changes. This action will also be confirmed in writing.

Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Sweet, Approved Unanimously

ACTION: Clerk to respond to the survey and write a letter opposing the changes.

- 4. Area near Allotments requires weed control / tidy-up email: the Parish Councillors agreed it's not appropriate to use weed killer near the allotments. Vehicles should not access the bridleway (perhaps a sign would be helpful). The tidy up could be discussed under the new management framework, once in place.

DPC/25/307: Councillor reports for future agenda:

- Cemetery – Cllr Cockerton asked for the Foot Path message/map from District Cllr Davis to be added to next month's agenda. In preparation it was requested that the Clerk contact the Land Registry to clarify boundary lines / adopted roads on the map.

ACTION: Clerk to obtain Land Registry information ahead of the next Parish Council meeting.

DPC/25/308: Date of Next Meeting – Monday 19th May 2025 at 7pm at Dove Cottage.

(Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for Monday 12th May 2025 at 7pm at Dove Cottage)

DPC/25/309 – Exclusion of the Public – All public left the meeting at 9:08pm

DPC/25/310: to consider parishioner correspondence

DPC/25/311: Employment Committee Report

DPC/25/312: to consider SALC training session at Dove Cottage

DPC/25/313: to consider Parish Councillor recruitment

Signed  Chairman Date 19/05/25