

Debenham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Monday 17th March 2025, Dove Cottage, Debenham

Present: Cllr Winrow-Giffin (Chair), Cllr Collins, Cllr Helm, Cllr Sweet, Cllr Cockerton, Cllr Grimshaw. Temporary Clerk Peter Grogan and New Clerk & RFO Brian Mansfield

District Councillor Davis and 3 members of the public. NOTE: County Councillor Hicks joined the meeting at about 8:00pm

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.*

Cllr Winrow-Giffin apologised to the meeting, for the delay in opening Dove Cottage, due to the locks being changed and a breakdown in communication over the allocation of new keys.

DPC/25/260 To Receive and consider apologies for absence: Cllr Barlow, Cllr Robbins and Cllr Phipps. All apologies approved as legitimate absences.

DPC/25/261 To receive members declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda: Cllr Grimshaw declared an interest in Planning Application DC/24/05559. Cllr Sweet declared an interest in item 25/269 (1) regarding expenses.

DPC/25/262 Public Participation:

A member of the public highlighted the work of the group “Helping Hands in Debenham” which had been operating for some 5 years, initially in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. He went on to say that the group was now closing down but specific clients would continue to get support from dedicated individuals as required. The mobile phone sponsored by the Parish Council, which had received over 1,000 calls had broken but no new phone or funding would now be required.

The Parish Council expressed its thanks to the Helping Hands Group for its dedication over the past 5 years.

A second member of the public raised concern that a Field Maple on Henniker Road had been cut down. The resident had made enquiries of both the County and District Councils and they had not sanctioned it. The County acknowledged they had trimmed the tree in 2023. District Cllr Davis said she would check with the District Council. Without some evidence of the perpetrator there is little the Parish Council or anyone else can do.

DPC/25/263 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors

- a) **District Cllr Davis (District) addressed the meeting.** Her report had been circulated earlier but she wished to highlight a couple of points. **First:** In order to help reduce the incidence of trips and falls there will be a “slipper swap” at the Leisure Centre between 1:30 and 4:30 tomorrow the 18th March to include the opportunity to change the ferrule on any walking stick. **Second:** There will be a mobile technology workshop at Stoke By Nayland golf club tomorrow morning. **Lastly:** To discuss the potential footpath behind the Barleyfields housing development (this is addressed later in the agenda).
- b) **County Cllr Hicks (County) who arrived at 8:00pm addressed the meeting.** His report had been circulated earlier but he wished to emphasise the following. **First:** Devolution was moving forward at a pace, Suffolk was one of 6 lead authorities, proposals had been put forward for 1/2/3 Unitary Authorities, the Government would decide which option would be adopted by Christmas 2025. The position of Town and Parish Councils had not yet been clarified, some larger Towns wish to take on more responsibility but Parishes, with limited resources, feel they can not take on more work. **Second:** The budget had been agreed, significantly the Culture budget had been allocated grants much more widely to some 33 local organisations. **Lastly:** The Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) had been submitted, Cllr Hicks emphasised that a strong case would be needed to approve a 20MPH limit on what is a B road going through the village.



Questions: In answer to questions from Parish Cllrs he explained that the Mayor is an elected post who could come from a political party or be an independent from industry or a pressure group. Mayors would be allocated money to choose infrastructure projects rather than the projects being driven by Central Government.

DPC/25/264 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17th February 2024.

The date of the meeting needed amendment on the evening's agenda. The minutes for the 17th February were reviewed and proposed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr Sweet and seconded by Cllr Grimshaw and were approved. Cllr Helm and Cllr Collins abstained as they were not present at the meeting.

DPC/25/265 Action Plan of Outstanding Matters:

- a) Internal Audit: The Clerk proposed to bring a range of policies and other documents for review and sign off at the April meeting.
- b) The Neighbourhood plan: an action plan was required.

ACTION: The Clerk agreed to prepare a check list of outstanding matters including those required for the audit for the next meeting.

DPC/25/266 Planning to consider planning applications for recommendations to MSDC:

- a) **DC/25/00688 – Flood protection Kiln Cottage– No objections**
- b) **DC/24/05559 – Flood attenuation embankment Bakers Lane**

Discussion of the works including the 2.5 m dam and 2 attenuation ponds was part of the work being proposed by Helen Dangerfield on the Flood Consultancy Board. This would be fully explained at a meeting being proposed for the 31st March or 1st or 2nd April including site visits. Given the limited information available it was felt more time was needed.

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

ACTION: Clerk to ascertain the closing date for objections and see if it was possible to have an extension.

- c) **DC/24/02590 – Discharge Conditions Old Hall Farm – No objections**
- d) **DC/23/5310 – Discharge Conditions - 5 Gracechurch Street – No objections**

DPC/25/267 Planning to note planning decisions:

- a) **APP/W3520/W/24/3346173 – The Angel - Appeal Dismissed**
- b) **APP/W3520/W/24/3346173 – The Angel - award of costs - Appeal Dismissed**

DPC/25/268: Barleyfields, Aspall Road report on footpath, fencing and associated work. District Cllr Davis confirmed that the permanent footpath would not be completed until the school summer holidays. Further discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

DPC/25/269 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 Grimshaw, Seconded Cllr Collins ; Approved unanimously.

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

- i) **Council Accounts:** the RFO thanked Cllr Sweet for the preparation of the Payments paperwork. He reported that all accounts were up to date and reconciled to bank statements. Total balances £234k in savings accounts and £7k in the current account. Woodlands accounts have just over £8k.
- ii) There is currently £91k in the CIL reserve and spending is on track.

- iii) The Dove cottage WiFi was due for renewal 8/3/25, the Clerk had obtained the following quotes, BT £45pm, EE £33pm (3 free months), Talk Talk £31pm. The Council asked the Clerk to get more quotes

ACTION: Clerk to obtain more broadband quotes.

- iv) **The Audit** – The following should be noted, the audit will begin when the Bank Statements come in at the end of March, at the April meeting a lot of policies and documents such as the Asset register will need approval, there is also another change to Model Financial Regulations. SALC have been appointed as the Internal Auditor and the week of 9th June has been booked.
- v) **Banking Administration:** Mandate changes have gone through, and Cllr Sweet has received debit cards for Current and Deposit accounts. The new Clerk also needs to be put on the bank mandate.

3) To approve Terms of Reference for the Employment Appeals Committee: Deferred to future meeting

- 4) **Parish Council Bier:** Cllr Collins reported that he was now in a position to collect the Bier from the Museum at Bressingham and take it to storage on his premises.

ACTION: Clerk to update the Asset Register and the Insurers with the location of the Bier when it is moved

- 5) **Review of channels on SLACK:** The new Clerk will be added as an Administrator on the SLACK system alongside Cllr Helm. They will discuss how best to administer, archive the current channels and advise Cllrs on how best to access the information they contain. It was also requested that the date format be changed from the USA to UK format.

6) Debenham Day 2025: Defer to future meeting

- 7) **To Review Parish Council Website:** Following review it has been concluded that there is only one website with slightly different search criteria which influence the page on the site to which a viewer is directed. No further action is required.

- 8) **To Review all existing Committees and Working Groups:** This should be completed before May, the Clerk circulated an undated list of the Committees and Working Groups with their representatives. This was clearly out of date as some Cllrs had left the Council. There was a need for a new list identifying if the groups were all still necessary and if there were any vacancies which could be filled after May.

ACTION: Clerk to prepare a new list identifying vacancies

Committees, Working Groups and Representative's reports:

DPC/25/270: Debenham Neighbourhood Plan Review: In view of the new housing requirement for the Parish being raised by 350 over the next 20 years the plan needs a review at a dedicated meeting.

DPC/25/271: Allotments: All was going well, all plots were filled, a problem plot had been tidied up. An expense claim from a volunteer for petrol etc will need to be approved on production of an invoice.

NOTE: County Councillor Hicks arrived at this point – see agenda item DPC/25/263 (b)

DPC/25/272: Recreation Ground: Cllr Sweet reported he was still waiting on the installation of the goal posts. Cllr Sweet also reported he had successfully recovered £4,600 from the contractor for excess materials purchased but not used in the works to date.

The Parish Council expressed its thanks to Cllr Sweet for all his work in facilitating the works to the Recreation Ground

DPC/25/273: Emergency Plan: District Cllr Davis advised that Ben Wilding in the Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) can provide a template for an Emergency Plan for Parish Councils.



DPC/25/274: Flooding

- 1) **Storm Babet Section 19 report – Defer to future meeting.**
- 2) **Report on flood at the Cemetery:** To make progress it was agreed that more information was required.

ACTION: Cllr Sweet to talk to the Flood Teams in County and District Council to get advice on how to obtain independent technical reports etc

ACTION: Clerk to write to the developer to ascertain if/when the soil pile would be removed and if any works were planned to ensure no future flooding of the cemetery

DPC/25/275 Dog bin emptying: Cllr Sweet reported that following a review of the list only one bin was not covered by MSDC and/or the Contractor. After discussion it was proposed that ALL the dog waste bins be placed on the Contractors list and that MSDC would no longer be used,

Proposed Cllr Helm, Seconded Cllr Grimshaw, Approved Unanimously

DPC/25/276: Update on Village Tree / Hedge works:

Lime trees: Regarding the Lime Trees near the bridge a visit from the MSDC Bio-Diversity Officer has stated that the trees only need pollarding. The internal rot is not significant as long as the trees are sound.

ACTION: Cllr Sweet to contact the Bio-Diversity Officer to ask for confirmation in writing for insurance purposes

Bicycle Rack by bus shelter: Whilst discussing the hedge / tree work behind the bus shelter concern was raised over the installation of a bicycle rack by a resident on the wall as it is in a conservation area. The rack is essentially an iron bar bolted to the wall which is a party wall to his property. The rack provides a useful amenity as otherwise bicycles are left leaning against residents' walls and windows. After discussion it was agreed there would be no objections from the Parish Council.

Willow Tree at Market Bridge: This tree has died and will be removed

DPC/25/277: Report on Woodland Meeting: There is a proposal from District Councillor Davis for a path from Barleyfields to go through the cemetery, the Parish Council asked that a map be provided detailing the route the path might take in order to have an informed discussion.

ACTION: Cllr Davis to provide a map of the proposed path

DPC/25/278: Highways:

1. **Concerns over highways and parking issues affecting missed rubbish collections at Cross Green:** Defer to next meeting
2. **Parking at High Street / Cross Green pavement:** Defer to next meeting
3. **Report on Traffic Regulation Order:** County Cllr Hicks had referred to this earlier in the meeting. Cllr Sweet added that the PC should have received a costing from Highways back in December and that following his enquiry this should arrive shortly.
4. **To consider White Gates & speed restriction signs on roads at main village entry points:** Defer to next meeting

DPC/25/279: Correspondence Received:

1. Email from parishioner concerned about potholes on the Ipswich Road:

ACTION: Clerk to review Highways tool for reported potholes on Ipswich Road



DPC/25/280: Councillor reports for future agenda: Cllr Helm asked for the DS&L (Debenham Sports & Leisure) to be added to the Committee and Working Groups section for the next meeting rather than just an agenda item.

DPC/25/281: Date of Next Meeting – Monday 14th April 2025 at 7pm at Dove Cottage.

The Parish Council expressed its thanks to Peter Grogan who had been acting as temporary Minute taker during the absences of a clerk over the past 6 months.

DPC/25/282 – Exclusion of the Public – All public, the temporary Clerk and New Clerk / RFO left the meeting at 8:50pm

DPC/25/283– Parishioner Correspondence:

DPC/25/284 – Employment Committee Report:

Signed  Chairman Date 14 April 2025