

## Debenham Parish Council

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025, Dove Cottage, Debenham**

**Present:** Cllr Barlow (Vice-Chair), Cllr Collins, Cllr Sweet, Cllr Cockerton, Cllr Helm, Cllr Grimshaw and Parish Clerk/RFO Brian Mansfield

District Councillor Davis and 11 members of the public.

**Chair's 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/25/314 Election of Chair:** The Chair stood down and the Vice-Chair asked for nominations. The Parish Clerk confirmed Cllr Winrow-Giffin wished to stand again for Chair.

***Proposed Cllr Sweet, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Majority (5 In Favour – 1 Abstention)***

**DPC/25/315 Election of Vice-Chair:** Cllr Barlow wished to step down as Vice-Chair but remain a Parish Councillor. Nominations were requested and Cllr Sweet stepped forward for consideration.

***Proposed Cllr Sweet, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved Unanimously***

Cllr Sweet (as the new Vice-Chair) took over from Cllr Barlow as Chair of the Meeting at 7:04pm.

**DPC/25/316 To Receive and consider apologies for absence:** Cllr Winrow-Giffin and County Cllr Hicks (apologies approved as legitimate absences). Cllr Phipps (no apology received)

**DPC/25/317 To receive members declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda:** Cllr Sweet and Cllr Barlow declared an interest in item DPC/25/326 (1) regarding expenses. Cllr Grimshaw declared an interest in DPC/25/323(1) Planning Application.

**DPC/25/318 Public Participation:**

- 1) A representative from the Debenham PCC wished to update the Parish Council on the fund-raising efforts to date and supply more background to the CIL Funding Request (covered later in the Agenda under DPC/25/326(2.vii). The new heating and lighting upgrades will cost approximately £90k. Fund raising so far includes £500 from DPC in April, £12k from residents, and £20k committed by the Church. £14,500 from DPC CIL would help support the improvement of the infrastructure of this historic community facility
- 2) A member of the public raised the matter of the tree removal on the corner of Henniker Road. Reply received from Suffolk CC confirming they had not authorised this. Still not aware of exactly how this happened. The second point focused on the Emergency Plan for the Village and ways to communicate in an Emergency from a central hub (Leisure Centre). EP is covered later in the Agenda under item DPC/25/336.
- 3) A member of the public mentioned the excellent work carried out on the biodiversity survey (recently published) for Debenham, which recommends no further cutting of the hedges in Chancery Lane. The Parish Council had commenced some hedge works and he asked that any future work to be reconsidered for this area in the centre of the village

**ACTION:** Clerk to add this item to the next meeting Agenda for 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**DPC/25/319 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 the Planning Consultation had now ended, the River Recovery event was well attended including some Parish Councillors and Helen Dangerfield is speaking on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at the Community Centre. District Cllr Davis left the meeting at this point.
- b) **County Cllr Hicks could not attend the meeting.** His annual report was presented at the Annual Parish meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and a copy can be viewed on the Parish Council website.

**DPC/25/320 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025.**

The Minutes were agreed.

***Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Collins, Approved Unanimously***

**DPC/25/321 Action Plan of Outstanding Matters (Resolved)**

1. Allotments – new management framework in place.
2. Planning Consultation Survey – Complete online survey and letter sent opposing changes.

**DPC/25/322: Action Plan of Outstanding Matters (Ongoing)**

1. Barleyfields Footpath (District Cllr Davis) - work expected during Summer Holidays 2025.
2. Barleyfields Hedging / Fencing at Recreation Ground/Cemetery Boundary (Clerk) – no response from Denbury Homes to the original letter on this topic. The Clerk suggested sending a map with the next strongly worded letter to highlight the specific area and avoid misunderstanding.
3. TRO – provide mini map of proposals (County Cllr Hicks) – Defer to next meeting
4. Parish Council Bier – update on relocation (Clerk / Cllr Collins). Both Cllr Collins and the Parish Clerk have reached out by telephone/email – no response received. Clerk agreed to continue efforts to contact the Bressingham Museum.
5. Debenham PCC – letter of support for heating system upgrades (Clerk). The Clerk agreed to prepare this letter and include the decision from DPC/25/326(2.vii).
6. Chat Bench – update (Cllr Collins). Cllr Collins had circulated details for a new bench – the Clerk will add this to the next Agenda to approve costs.
7. Lime Trees at URC – to receive written credentials and confirmation of Public Liability Insurance for tree expert (District Cllr Davis) – update email received from District Cllr Davis on 14-May-25. Defer to next meeting.
8. Foot Bridge Repairs (Low Road to Saxton Close) – update (District Cllr Davis) – Defer to next meeting.
9. Fence Repairs (Gardeners Road near garages) – update (County Cllr Hicks) – Defer to next meeting.

**DPC/25/323 Planning to consider planning applications for recommendations to MSDC:**

- 1) **DC/25/02091** Proposal: Full Planning Application - Construction of a flood attenuation embankment and three new permanent water bodies. Location: Field to the South of Poplar Hall, Off Bakers Lane, Winston Green, IP14 6BT. **The Parish Council has no objection.**

***Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Cockerton, Approved Majority (5 In Favour – 1 Abstention)***

**DPC/25/324 Planning – consultation period ended, awaiting decision by MSDC:**

- 1) None

**DPC/25/325 Planning – Decisions to Note:**

- 1) **DC/25/00466 - Full Planning Application Granted** - Debenham Bowls Club, Debenham Community Centre, Gracechurch Street

- 2) **DC/25/01080 - Listed Building Consent Granted:** The Coach House, Crows Hall Road  
 3) **DC/25/01079 – Planning Permission Granted:** The Coach House, Crows Hall Road

**DPC/25/326 Finance**

- 1) **To consider accounts for payment and note receipts, bank balances and reconciliations.** The list of payments for approval is attached. Cllr Grimshaw and Cllr Sweet has checked the Payments Schedule prepared by the RFO.

***Proposed: Cllr Helm, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved unanimously.***

2) **Finance Working Group:**

- i. Report including accounts to end April 2025 – **The RFO reported that the Rialtas accounting system had been updated to 30-April-25 – no reconciliation items when compared to the Bank Statements. Balances were as follows:**

- Current Account	£21,383
- Deposit Account	£254,899
- Woodlands Current Account	£1,084
- Woodlands Deposit Account	£7,653
	<b>Total £285,019</b>

- ii. CIL Funding report update – **The RFO reported a carried forward balance as at 31-Mar-25 of £91,679. April CIL receipt of £12,714 brings the total to £104,393. The first TRO invoice has been paid, so costs of £9k need to be deducted from the CIL balance.**
- iii. Consider proposal to update Grant / CIL Funding Request Forms and amend limits – **The RFO read out the proposal paper previously circulated to Parish Councillors. These changes would create a Grant Funding Request Form for amounts up to £500 (sourced from the Grant/Donation budget agreed each year) and a new CIL Funding Request Form for larger amounts (with a 3-year waiting period between successful applications).**

**ACTION: RFO to update the two existing Funding Forms and amend the Funding Policy document (consider special action required around an emergency).**

- iv. Grant Funding Request from Be Well Fest 2025 - £750 in aid of MNDA Suffolk  
**The Parish Council agreed to £500 (in-line with similar/historic requests).**  
***Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Helm, Approved unanimously.***
- v. Grant Funding Request from Friends of Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School - £750 to support Summer Sizzler event  
**The Parish Council agreed to £500 (in-line with similar/historic requests).**  
***Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Helm, Approved unanimously.***
- vi. CIL Funding Request from Debenham Sports and Leisure - £1,050 for Car Park exit repairs  
**The Parish Council agreed to the full amount of £1,050**  
***Proposed Cllr Cockerton, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved unanimously.***
- vii. CIL Funding Request from Debenham PCC - £14,500 for new heating system  
**The Parish Council agreed to the full amount of £14,500**  
***Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Grimshaw, Approved unanimously.***
- viii. Approve updates to Asset Register 2025  
***Proposed Cllr Helm, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved unanimously.***
- ix. Approve and sign CIL Annual Return to 31-Mar-25

***Proposed Cllr Helm, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved unanimously.***

- x. Audit – approve AGAR Accounting Statements for 2024-25  
***Proposed Cllr Helm, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved unanimously.***
- xi. Audit – approve AGAR Annual Governance Statement for 2024-25  
***Proposed Cllr Helm, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved unanimously.***
- xii. Audit – approve commencement date for Notice of Public Rights for 2024-25  
***Proposed Cllr Helm, Seconded Cllr Barlow, Approved unanimously.***
- xiii. Insurance cover renews on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025 – **The RFO noted rising Insurance costs over recent years:**
- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>2021/22</b> | <b>£2,177</b>  |
| <b>2022/23</b> | <b>£2,408</b>  |
| <b>2023/24</b> | <b>£2,376</b>  |
| <b>2024/25</b> | <b>£2,567</b>  |
| <b>2025/26</b> | <b>£2,937 (renewal quote from Clear Councils – existing provider).</b> |
- The RFO had requested a quote through Community Action Suffolk. Using the existing providers policy schedule and the new Asset Register 2025, the cost for 2025-26 would be £1,842. A saving of almost £1,100. There is an option to lock in a fixed price for 3 years (LTU Long Term Undertaking) which would reduce the annual cost to £1,756. Cllr Cockerton asked the RFO to ensure the cover was like for like.

**ACTION: RFO to confirm like for like insurance cover ahead of the renewal date of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025.**

- xiv. To approve the list of Standing Orders / Direct Debits / Direct Bank Payments etc. These include Salaries, HMRC and Pensions, various Contractors and Sundries. Clerk and Councillor expenses. Subscriptions to Microsoft, NSALG, SALC, Rialtas and Slack. Electricity for Public Conveniences and Telephone Kiosk. Water Rates to Allotments, Cemetery and Public Conveniences. Dove Cottage Wifi connection and venue storage fee.  
***Proposed Cllr Grimshaw, Seconded Cllr Sweet, Approved unanimously.***

#### **DPC/25/327 Administration**

- 1) Employment Appeals Working Group – to approve Terms of Reference – **Cllr Sweet circulated the new document and Parish Councillors agreed to adopt it.**  
***Proposed Cllr Sweet, Seconded Cllr Helm, Approved unanimously.***
- 2) To review channels on Slack – **The Clerk and Cllr Cockerton asked for this action to be taken later in the year, to keep files fully accessible for now. Agreed.**
- 3) To receive update on planning for Debenham Day 2025 – **Cllr Barlow confirmed the date will be Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025 (between 2pm and 8pm) at the Recreation Ground. Donations received from Debenham Antiques and Aspalls (thank you!). Music and Electric generators will be the largest costs. Ad poster being produced for wider circulation. Further planning is ongoing with local institutions. Clerk agreed to add this to the Parish Magazine submission tomorrow.**
- 4) To review all existing Committees and Working Groups – **The Clerk requested that Parish Councillors review and supply updates ahead of approval at the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 meeting.**
- 5) Update on Parish Council Facebook page – **The Clerk thanked Cllr Helm for sorting out Admin access and confirmed important updates would be shared to the Parish Council Facebook page going forwards.**

**DPC/25/328:** To review and approve the following Council Policies, Procedures and Forms:

1. Grievance Policy

**Committees, Working Groups and Representatives Reports**

**DPC/25/329:** Debenham Neighbourhood Plan – The Clerk has approached 4 Consultants, 1 is too busy, 1 has responded fully, 1 is finalising their response and 1 has not replied. Agreed to bring all submissions received to the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 Parish Council meeting.

**DPC/25/330:** Allotments – The Clerk has visited the Allotments with Lucy Robbins and Vicky Blick. The new Management Framework is in place and the Yearly Report (APM) is on the Parish Council website.

**DPC/25/331:** Recreation Ground – inclusion of small gate to help with grass cutting – Cllr Sweet mentioned the fence around gym area restricts grass cutting, so adding a small gate will allow full access. Cost of around £120 – Parish Council approved the expenditure.

*Proposed Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Collins, Approved Majority (5 In Favour – 1 Abstention).*

**DPC/25/332:** Cemetery – update on proposed footpath at the junction of the new development land/Hoppit Wood/Cemetery – District Cllr Davis email dated 14<sup>th</sup> May-25 had been circulated to Parish Councillors. Cllr Sweet shared the email and has spoken to the Hoppit Wood Group. Cllr Collins and Cllr Sweet had been to inspect the area in person and take photos. The Parish Council felt it was not their responsibility to help build a connecting path/bridge between two areas of private land with an adopted road nearby which adds safety issues to any new access.

**DPC/25/333:** Debenham Sports and Leisure – Cllr Helm mentioned management changes, music and boxing events are proving successful and the Deben Lounge is a great improvement.

**DPC/25/334:** URC Memorial Garden – discuss potential use as community green space – Cllr Sweet put forward an idea to improve the area and create another green space in the community. It would need steps and handrails to aid access. Cllr Collins and Cllr Sweet will inspect the area and report back.

**DPC/25/335:** Public Conveniences – update – nothing to report.

**DPC/25/336:** Emergency Plan Report – The Clerk and Cllr Sweet are attending a meeting on 23 May 2025 with Ben Wilding (Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit). An Environment Agency representative will be attending - feedback will follow.

**DPC/25/337:** Flooding:

1. Report on proposed meeting arrangements with Suffolk CC & Environment Agency Flood Teams following s.19 report – **No further information received.**
2. Environment Agency future management of the river erosion boards – **The Clerk / Cllr Sweet will raise this topic at the Emergency Plan meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025.**

**DPC/25/338:** Dog Bin update on remaining contractual obligations (if any) – **Cllr Sweet is in email correspondence with the District Council – updates to follow.**

**DPC/25/339:** Update on Village Tree / Hedge works:

1. Willow Tree on Village Green and possible replacements – **Cllr Sweet stated the tree had now been removed. Possible mature tree replacement would cost around £400.**

**ACTION:** Add this item to the meeting Agenda for 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (approve costs).

**DPC/25/340:** Highways:

1. Update on parking at High Street/Cross Green pavement – **The Clerk agreed to supply Cllr Cockerton with a copy of the letter prepared by Cllr Barlow (for printing and distribution).**

2. Report on proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) – **Defer to next Meeting**
3. To consider White Gates at village entry speed signs – **Cllr Barlow agreed to gather quotes so the Parish Council could decide on next steps at the next meeting.**

**DPC/25/341: To consider correspondence received:**

1. To consider soft boundary between the Cemetery (cremation graves) and Recreation Ground (gym equipment / picnic tables) – **The Clerk has received two requests around providing a soft/informal screen in this area. Parish Councillors discussed various solutions and agreed to visit the area to take photos and propose the best solution that fits the existing infrastructure.**

**ACTION: Add this item to the meeting Agenda for 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (to agree best solution).**

2. To consider request to hold weekly fitness classes on the Recreation Ground – **Generally no objection from Parish Councillors. Cllr Sweet asked the Clerk to forward his contact details so he could check qualifications and insurance details.**
3. Update on Co-op bin removal and possible alternative solutions – **the Parish Council discussed the situation and asked the Clerk to approach the Co-op. If the Parish Council purchased two bins so Non-recycling and Recycling rubbish could be separated, would the Co-op allow this to be located at the same position as the removed bin.**

**ACTION: Clerk to write to the Co-op and offer a proposal to solve the bin situation.**

4. To consider request to update signage around the outdoor gym equipment – **Cllr Sweet has installed new signs, however the Parish Council felt they should specifically state children under 14 need to be supervised by an adult. Cllr Sweet agreed to obtain new signs.**
5. To consider email from parishioner regarding the Market Green surrounding the Market Green building – **Cllr Sweet provided a Land Registry map showing the area in question. The Parish Council asked the Clerk to contact the parishioner for more details.**

**ACTION: Clerk to contact the parishioner to obtain documentation proving her curtilage includes this surrounding area.**

6. To consider action regarding car parking on Green space at Coopersfield junction – **Cllr Sweet mentioned that writing to the resident would be a good first step. Inserting short posts or signage would be potential next steps if the problem persists. Cllr Cockerton commented that applying to Suffolk County Council to add areas as Protected Greens could be a longer-term solution. Any solution needs to be consistent across all village greens.**

**ACTION: Clerk to write to the Resident and request no parking on this green space.**

7. To consider action regarding potential fly-tipping at the rear of 38 Aspoll Road – **Cllr Collins mentioned the rubbish had been there for some time. The Parish Council agreed to writing to the 4 addresses that back onto this area and ask for removal. After 14 days, if nothing has been done the matter will be reported to Mid Suffolk District Council.**

**ACTION: Clerk to write to the four properties to request removal of the rubbish pile.**

**DPC/25/342: Councillors reports for future Agenda items – None received**

**DPC/25/343: Date of next Parish Council meeting – Monday 16 June 2025, 7pm at Dove Cottage, High Street, Debenham.**



**DPC/25/344: Exclusion of the Public** – All public left the Meeting at 8:50pm

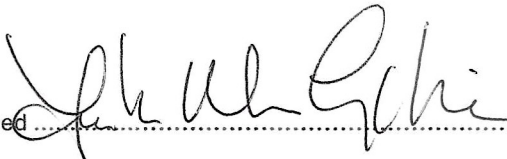
The remaining Agenda items were reordered as follows:

**DPC/25/346:** To consider SALC training session at Dove Cottage

**DPC/25/347:** To consider Parish Councillor recruitment

The Parish Clerk left the Meeting at 8:55pm

**DPC/25/345:** To consider Employment Committee Report

Signed  Chair Date 21<sup>st</sup> JULY 2025