

Debenham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Monday 17th February 2025, Dove Cottage, Debenham

Present: Cllr Winrow-Giffin (Chair), Cllr Barlow (Vice Chairperson), Cllr Sweet, Cllr Cockerton, Cllr Grimshaw.

District Councillor Davis and County Councillor Hicks, Peter Grogan (Temporary Clerk), Brian Mansfield (RFO) and 12 members of the public

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/25/234 To Receive and consider apologies for absence: Cllr Helm, Cllr Collins, Cllr Robbins apologies approved as legitimate absences. Cllr Phipps – no apology received.

DPC/25/235 To receive members declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda: Cllr Sweet declared an interest in item 25/246 (1) regarding expenses.

DPC/25/236 Public Participation:

Debenham PC was pleased to hear from David Findlay, Chair of Ufford Parish Council representing the Deben Climate Centre Group (DCCG) - <https://www.facebook.com/WoodbridgeClimateActionCentre/>. David was making a representation to support a bid for continued funding - see Agenda item 25/246/3. He was supported by a dozen or so volunteers in the meeting room. A summary report with several charts and photographs were circulated highlighting the work of the DCCG. A copy of the report will be made available on the Debenham PC website in due course.

It was clear from the report that Debenham was at the centre of many of the concerns of the DCCG around pollution of the river Deben principally due to a combination of sewage discharges from Anglian Water and agricultural chemical runoff from fields. This created issues with high levels of E-Coli (bacteria) and ammonia from the sewage and phosphates and nitrates from the agricultural runoff. He was particularly concerned that there were no legal limits applied to East Anglia Water on E-Coli.

David explained the locations of the testing sites, the methods of measurement, the levels recorded over the past year and the impacts on the Deben and associated leisure activities including wild swimming. This was all illustrated in a series of maps and graphs.

The presentation concluded by David highlighting some of the positive changes made by Anglian Water to reduce phosphate levels and thanking the Debenham Parish Council for its support in 2024/25. He hoped that the financial support for the purchase of testing equipment and consumables would continue in 2025/26.

DPC/25/237 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors

a) Cllr Davis (District) addressed the meeting.

Her report had been circulated earlier but she wished to expand on a couple of points.

First, the footpath issue by the Barleyfields housing development, Highways had constructed a temporary path in February and lights to allow pedestrians to walk safely into the village. The permanent path will not be implemented until all licences have been agreed and may not be built until the summer holidays. This was supported by Cllr Hicks (County).

Secondly, the District waste collection team is looking at changing the collection times at Cross Green but there had been issues with limited resources to make any changes to date.

b) **Cllr Hicks (County)** addressed the meeting.

Barleyfields: Cllr Hicks supported Cllr Davis statements regarding the provision of the lighting and the temporary footpath.

Devolution: Cllr Hicks confirmed there are to be no elections in May 2025 they will be held next year. The Government needs Suffolk Authorities to submit their business cases by August 2025. The Government will decide on which model will be implemented.

The County Council budget: of £803 million will be allocated in the coming weeks with 77p in the pound needed to fund Adult's and Children's Social Care. This leaves only 23p for all the other services. The pressures are increasing, the number of children needing services has risen from 5,000 to 9,000 over the past year. The County Council has voted to apply the full 4.99% rise allowed without a referendum.

Infrastructure Projects: Electricity pylons. Despite representations from the CC, National Grid is insisting on placing these pylons onshore and not delaying the project to facilitate offshore cables. Solar Farms are becoming increasingly likely in the area due to proximity to the National Grid infrastructure. The announcement on Tuesday revealed connections for the proposed solar farm and battery storage facility near Eye would be made at the existing substation in Yaxley. Consultation is expected to begin in March 2025, with an application expected to be submitted by summer 2026. If approved there would be a 30yr lease and then the land would be returned to agriculture.

DPC/25/238 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th December 2024.

Cllr Davis (District) asked that the minutes be amended for accuracy on page 4 to state that the training provided was "for" not "included" road safety. The amendment was agreed and the paper copy amended and signed.

The minutes were then agreed

Proposed by Cllr Barlow and seconded by Cllr Grimshaw and were approved unanimously.

DPC/25/239 Action Plan of Outstanding Matters: To be deferred to a future meeting and the new Clerk.

DPC/25/240 Planning to consider planning applications for recommendations to MSDC:

- a) **DC/24/05524 – Bellwell Farm**– Erection of single storey extension - No objections

Proposed – Cllr Sweet, Seconded Cllr Barlow, passed Unanimously

DPC/25/241 Planning to note planning decisions:

- a) **DC/24/01220 – 2 Aspall Road** – Erection of rear sunroom – Refused
b) **DC/24/05320 – 2 High Street** – Change of use from commercial to residential use – Formal Approval required.

DPC/25/242 Barley Fields, Aspall Road: A further letter is needed to the developer by the District Council concerning the fencing, this matter needs to be followed up.

DPC/24/243 Trees and Shrubbery at Market Bridge and rear of parking spaces opposite URC, Chancery Lane: A quote has been received from the Council's preferred contractor for £4,000 plus VAT. As this work must be completed before the spring it was proposed that there be a vote to approve the work.

Proposed by Cllr Sweet and seconded by Cllr Barlow and were approved unanimously.

DPC/24/244 Lime Trees at URC: A quote has been received from the Council's preferred contractor for £1,800 plus VAT. As this work must be completed before the spring it was proposed that there be a vote to approve the work.

Proposed by Cllr Sweet and seconded by Cllr Barlow and were approved unanimously.

DPC/24/245 Litter Pick: The Council was notified that a litter pick had been organised by the Green Team for the 22nd of March between 9:00am and 12:30pm in collaboration with Mid Suffolk DC – Noted.



DPC/24/246 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 Barlow, Seconded Cllr Grimshaw; Approved unanimously.

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

- a. **Council Accounts:** the RFO reported that all 4 accounts were up to date and reconciled to bank statements. Total balances £237k in savings accounts and £6k in the current account. The CIL accounts also balanced and reconciled from 2020 to 2024 with no issues, there is currently £91k in the CIL reserve, an additional £12,700 is expected in April 2025. The budget cost centres have been rationalised to 81.
- b. **Precept:** The precept application had been acknowledged by the County Council.
- c. **Financial Regulations 2024:** the new financial regulations format from NALC needs to be considered by the Council for adoption.
- d. **Things to do:** VAT reclaim, review of savings accounts liabilities and interest rates, potential use of the SALC payroll service.

The Parish Council wished to express their appreciation to the RFO for all the work put in over the past month to bring the Council Finances into order following several months without a Clerk / RFO.

- 3) **To consider funding for the Green Team for DCCG consumables:** Following the report presented by the DCCG in the public forum it was proposed that the PC donate £500.

Proposed: Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow; Approved unanimously.

- 4) **To consider funding for Debenham Primary School:** The Primary School requested funding of £178.50 for SAT textbooks in Maths and English. The Council considered the request but deemed that such funding is a statutory function for the County Education Directorate and was not appropriate for discretionary funding from the PC. There was concern that if such a request were agreed it might set a precedent for other such requests. The Council suggested that the school might apply to the Robert Hitcham Trust. It was proposed the request be denied.

Proposed: Cllr Grimshaw, Seconded Cllr Barlow; Approved unanimously.

- 5) **To approve Terms of Reference for the Appeals Group:** Deferred to future meeting

- 6) **Parish Council Bier:** Cllr Cockerton reported that the Museum at Bressingham was going to talk to other local museums to try and find a new home for the Bier. They will continue to store it until a new home can be found.

- 7) **Review of channels on SLACK:** Defer until appointment of new Clerk

- 8) **Confirmation of RFO appointment:** Annual Audit requirement - RFO appointment was confirmed.

Proposed: Cllr Winrow Giffin, Seconded Cllr Barlow; Approved unanimously.

- 9) **Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2024/25 –** It was proposed SALC be again invited to be the Internal Auditor

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

- 10) **Additional Appointment to The Complaints Group:** Cllr Grimshaw volunteered and was co-opted.



- 11) Debenham Day 2025:** The discussion included the option to hold the day on the Recreation Ground as opposed to on the high street as this avoided the disruption and cost of a road closure. The event broke even last year. The event needs a comprehensive plan, budget and a date. It was proposed to agree the event in principle pending further investigation and reports.

Proposed: Cllr Winrow Giffin, Seconded Cllr Sweet; Approved unanimously

Committees, Working Groups and Representative's reports:

DPC/25/247: Debenham Neighbourhood Plan Review:

DPC/25/248: Allotments: A report has been posted detailing the success in reinvigorating the allotments.

The PC wishes to express their gratitude to Cllrs Robbins and Sweet in achieving so much over the past year.

DPC/25/249: Recreation Ground: Cllr Sweet reported that the final stage of works had not yet been completed as it was too wet and muddy for the installation of the goal posts. The 2 additional rubbish bins had been purchased by Cllr Sweet on Ebay at a cost of £37.50 saving the PC over £1,000.

DPC/25/250: Emergency Plan: To be deferred to a future meeting as it needs a new restart, Jane Baldwin has reported to the Council on her work to date.

DPC/25/251: Flood Storm Babet

- 1) Training:** There was as yet no start date for the road safety training. It was clarified that the volunteers will NOT be trained in or be required to clear silt from the river, streams or drainage ditches. There are some 30 volunteers drawn from the residents of Debenham.

The Rivers Trust: Helen Dangerfield, Director of the Rivers Trust was now supporting the work and some £500k had been made available for work across the Deben catchment including attenuation pools and river course management. <https://theriverstrust.org/about-us>

The PC confirmed its support for the training approved at the January meeting

- 2) Environment Agency Section 19 report on flooding –** No date has been set for a meeting
- 3) Report on flood at the Cemetery:** A report has been received from the County Council, suggesting remedial actions as no fault is yet found with the new development. There is a recommendation for a new drain to alleviate the flooding. Cllrs have no record of the area ever flooding prior the new development at Barleyfields and the soil tip close to the cemetery. The PC agreed to have a watching brief to see what happens when the soil has been removed.

DPC/25/252 Dog bin emptying: Cllr Sweet reported he had received two lists, one from MSDC and one from the contractor. There are 2 bins that do not appear on either list. Cllr Sweet suggested adding the 2 bins to the contractors list rather than MDSC contract which could save over £1,000. Cllr Sweet agreed to revisit the lists and review.

DPC/25/253: Highways:

- 1) Concerns over highways and parking issues affecting missed rubbish collections at Cross Green:** MSDC has investigated timings of collections and will try to make them earlier. MSDC currently had issues with lack of staff on the collection teams.
- 2) Parking at High Street / Cross Green pavement:** A letter has been drafted and will be sent to all residents in the affected area to park responsibly.
Overall Debenham suffers from a lot of irresponsible parking which is not being policed. Cllr Davis (District) is to write to the Parking Enforcement team to ask for more warden visits to Debenham.
- 3) Report on Traffic Regulation Order:** Defer – this is dependent on a long consultation exercise to be carried out by the County Council.
- 4) To consider White Gates & speed restriction signs on roads at main village entry points:** after some discussion about how and where they might be positioned the PC agreed in principle to have the project planned and costed

Proposed: Cllr Barlow, Seconded Cllr Winrow Giffin; Approved unanimously

DPC/25/254: Correspondence Received:

- a) There had been a request for £5,000 for a “Debenham Shed” but there had been no follow up to allow for further consideration at the meeting.
- b) Cllr Sweet was concern that were now 2 Debenham websites which looked very similar but were not identical. There was a need to review the website in light of the potential Gov.UK domains for Parish Councils. It was agreed to discuss at a future meeting.


DPC/25/255: Councillor reports for future agenda: Possible permanent Christmas Tree for the village

DPC/25/256: Date of Next Meeting – Monday 17th March 2025 at 7pm at Dove Cottage.

DPC/25/257 – Exclusion of the Public – All public, the temporary Clerk and RFO left the meeting at 8:50pm

DPC/25/258 – Parishioner Correspondence:

DPC/25/259 – Employment Committee Report:

Signed: 

.....Chairman

Date 17/3/25

