

Debenham Parish Council

DRAFT - Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Monday 9th December 2024, Dove Cottage, Debenham

Present: Cllr Winrow Giffin (Chairperson), Cllr Sweet, Cllr Helm, Cllr Cockerton, Cllr Grimshaw, Cllr Collins, Cllr Robbins, Cllr Phipps.

District Councillor Davis and County Councillor Hicks (arrived later), Peter Grogan (Temporary Clerk), Brian Mansfield (RFO) and 10 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/24/184 To Receive and consider apologies for absence: Cllr K Barlow (Vice Chairman), apology approved as legitimate absence.

DPC/24/185 To receive members declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda: Cllr Sweet, declared an interest in item 24/162 (c) expenses. Cllr Winrow-Giffin grass cutting.

DPC/24/186 Public Participation:

- a) A member of the public expressed concern that the minutes of the last meeting and the one before had only been published as DRAFT and were yet to be posted to the website. The Chair assured the meeting that the meetings had been approved but that due to the absence of a permanent clerk the process of final publication had been delayed.
- b) District Cllr Davis represented several members of the public had attended to highlight the fact that they would like to volunteer to help with minor works to clear silt and make repairs around the village following the flooding.
Cllr Davis said she had written an email to the Council asking them to begin the process of training volunteers. The Chair expressed concern that the email had not been received although Cllr Davis reported she had sent it on 29th November, so no action had been taken to date. It was agreed that this matter would be included on the next agenda in January.
Dates would need to be agreed with the Environment Agency and County Council for the training requested.
- c) A member of the public highlighted the issue of the wider catchment area, if Debenham clears silt, and the water flows away, where does it go? Does it cause further issues downstream? This will need investigating with relevant authorities.
- d) A member of the public wanted to correct a minute from the last meeting, DPC/24/169: St Mary's Churchyard, where it stated a donation would be made to the Church. He stated that no donation had been made following the clearance of the logs.
The Chair made it clear that the minutes were correct, given the information available at the time, but that the Council would investigate the events and clarify what had occurred.

DPC/24/187 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors

- a) County Cllr Hicks was delayed, he arrived later and addressed the meeting. His report had been sent prior to the meeting but he wished to summarise his report.
The next Council meeting would cover the Budget, he was keen that residents took the opportunity to make their views known on the consultation available on the County website. The report also included coverage of Education where the DOE said, whilst Suffolk was doing well, there were areas that needed improvement.

- b) District Cllr Davis addressed the meeting. Her report had been sent prior to the meeting but she wished to highlight: a) that there were still business grants available; b) her surgeries being held on Mondays between 10:00 -12:00; c) the work being done by Feel Good Suffolk, helping people get more active, to stop smoking and to lose weight; d) the Warm Home Discount scheme, available on-line; e) the review of Fees and Charges; f) the new recycling schedules and g) the Cabinet meeting next week to discuss the budget. It was confirmed that the Volunteer training from Dept of Environment and the County would be on the January meeting Agenda.

DPC/24/188 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th November 2024.

Proposed by Cllr Collins and seconded by Cllr Phipps and were approved. Cllr Helm abstained.

DPC/24/189 Action Plan of Outstanding Matters: Nothing further to report.

DPC/24/190 Planning to consider planning applications for recommendations to MSDC: None received

DPC/24/191 Planning to note planning decisions: N02 High Street — REFUSED

DPC/24/192 Barley Fields, Aspall Road:

- 1) Report on timescale for completion of footway on Aspall Road: After some discussion concerning the footway it was decided to write to the County Council and District Council to affirm the Parish Council's frustration about:
 - a. The non-compliance with planning from the outset — houses occupied no path built
 - b. The delay in construction since the issue was raised
 - c. The danger to pedestrians who must walk in the road
 - d. The objection to potential proposals for an alternative route through Parish Council land
 - e. The completion of fencing around the perimeter of the housing developmentBoth County Cllr Hicks and District Cllr Davis confirmed they were doing all they can with the Env Agency, Natural England and Planning Enforcement to obtain the necessary licences and permits to complete the footway.
- 2) Report on pedestrian use of Recreation Ground / Cemetery through boundary hedging / fencing to access Barley Fields: - See DPC/24/192 (1) (d&e)
- 3) Request to developer to complete fencing at Recreation Ground / Cemetery: See DPC/24/192 (1) (e)

DPC/24/193 Trees and Shrubbery at Market Bridge and rear of parking spaces opposite URC, Chancery Lane.

- 1) To consider riparian responsibility for maintaining trees and shrubbery: The Council discussed the matter and concluded that the trees and shrubbery were on Parish Council land and that that there was a legal responsibility on the Council to maintain the hedge in consultation with residents, County Council Highways and the Department of the Environment.
- 2) To consider obtaining a quotation/s to prune / maintain both areas. It was agreed to obtain quotations.
Proposed Cllr Phipps, Seconded Cllr Sweet, Approved Unanimously

DPC/24/194 Finance and Administration

- a) Report on appointment of Debenham PC Parish Clerk: Cllr Cockerton reported that a suitably experienced applicant had been interviewed and appointed subject to references. The new Clerk will begin in January.
- b) To consider donation to Debenham First Responders: The trained First Responders provide essential basic medical assistance in an emergency whilst waiting for professionals. This includes CPR, use of the defibrillator and care of a patient suffering a fall. Training over 2 sessions had been attended by 28 people. It was agreed to donate £300.

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

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

Note: There is an income item in the figures presented of which is currently unaccounted for, RFO and Finance Cttee to investigate and confirm the source of funds.

Proposal to accept the figures presented: Cllr Helm, Seconded Cllr Sweet; Approved unanimously.

- d) Report on Parish Council Accounts to end of November — due to the new RFO still undergoing training it was decided by the Chairperson to defer this item to the RFO, Finance Sub-Committee and the January Committee meeting.
- e) To consider draft budget / precept proposals 2025/26: There was a discussion concerning the budget base form this year, potential increases from new homes, the premium placed on second homes and new expenses that might be passed down from the District Council to the Parish. As all of these were still unclear at present it was decided by the Chairperson to defer this item to the RFO, Finance Sub-Committee and the January Committee meeting.
- f) To note additions to the Asset Register: Cllr Sweet will be presenting the revised Asset register to the Finance Sub-committee for ratification and presentation to the January Council meeting.
- g) To note additions to the PC insurance policy: Cllr Sweet, Sweet will be compiling the revised asset list for the Insurance policy with the RFO and the Finance Sub-committee for presentation to the January Council meeting.
- h) To consider appointment of additional Councillor to Employment Committee: Cllr Grimshaw volunteered to join the Committee making numbers up to 4.
Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, Seconded Cllr Cockerton, Approved Unanimously
There was concern that the Employment Appeals Committee had no Terms of Reference and hence no mandate to convene. This item to be deferred to the January Council Meeting for discussion.
- i) To consider appointment of additional Councillor to emergency plan / flood group: Cllr Collins volunteered to join the group.
- j) Report on donation of wooden bench — Priory Lane: The bench, donated by a member of the public marks the high point of the 2024 flooding in the village. At the benefactor's request, it was proposed that the bench be adopted by the Parish Council. The Council will write to the resident thanking them and formally adopting the bench. The bench will need to be secured and added to the asset register and included on any maintenance schedule and H&S checks. It was noted that the bench was of very high quality, and it would be useful to know the name of the supplier. It was also suggested that an article go in the Parish Magazine advertising the presence of the new bench.

Committees, Working Groups and Representative's reports:

NOTE - Meeting dates for 2025 - 2026

20th January, 17th February, 17th March, 14th April, APM & AGM 12th May, 16th June, 21st July, Aug No meeting, 15th September, 20th October, 17th November, 8th December.

DPC/24/195: Debenham Neighbourhood Review: Cllr Barlow was absent, and the report will be deferred to the January meeting.

DPC/24/196: Allotments: Cllr Robbins reported that letters had been sent to all plot holders asking for rental payments which had prompted a very positive response. There were 3 people waiting to be assigned vacant plots

DPC/24/197: Cemetery: Cllr Sweet reported that there a tree had fallen across one of the paths during the recent storm, but it had been cleared very quickly.

