

# **DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013 in All Saints Church

The Chairman opened the meeting and wished everyone present a Happy New Year.

### **Present**

Cllrs A. Clarke, M. Goldstaub (Chair), A. Johnson, C. Munford, P. Nolan, the Clerk, SCC/MSDC Cllr P. Otton, PCSO Sian Uttley and eight members of the public.

### **1 – Apologies for Absence**

An apology was received from Cllr Cousins

### **2 – Declarations of Interest**

None

### **3 – Cllr Otton's Reports**

#### Suffolk County Council

- Flooding – The recent bad weather has caused a lot of local flooding; the usual places have been subject to the worse disruption. Some local villages have now set up emergency planning schemes and Cllr Otton said she would be funding some of the equipment from her locality budget.
- Schools – The future plans for Rattlesden Primary School have now been submitted. There are concerns over the size of the site and the extra parking that will be required. The latest SATS test results have been disappointing and the portfolio holder for schools will be asked to investigate.
- Community Speed Watch – The Police have agreed that the volunteers can revert back to a two-man operation; although the police have said that their preferred option is still to use three volunteers.
- Highways – The Highways contract has been awarded to Balfour Beatty; further details will follow on how this will operate.
- Cllr Otton said she would be following up the issues raised by Mr Roscoe regarding the road signage in Rattlesden Road.

#### Mid Suffolk District Council

- Cllr Derrick Haley will continue as Leader of MSDC until the AGM in May
- Changes in Council Tax and Housing Benefits will come into effect from April. Anyone with any concerns should ring 08456 066090. Discounts will be removed from second homes and the length of time a house can remain empty and not pay tax will be reduced. An information bus will be on ASDA car park, Stowmarket on 2<sup>nd</sup> February with experts on board to answer any inquiries.
- Cllr Otton has asked the Executive Committee to consider a minimum living wage for certain employees.
- All Councils in Suffolk have agreed to pool their business rates; which means that money will stay in the County instead of being sent to Central Government for redistribution.

### **4 – Police Report**

- There were no crimes recorded in the village over the festive period. In other areas, thefts from outbuildings and vehicles tend to be the main target of crime recorded. Over the Christmas holidays patrols were increased to cover schools and businesses which were closed for the holidays.
- Some new equipment has been purchased for the local Community Speed Watch Teams – the teams are valued and have proved to be an integral part to keeping the local neighbourhood safe.

- The move to the Fire Station in Elmswell has been completed. The new address is Elmswell Fire Station, School Road, Elmswell IP30 9EE. Telephone: 101
- Some monitoring will be undertaken in the New Year to help solve the traffic problems around Beyton School. Vehicles which park inconsiderately will be given safety notices and should the matter continue fixed penalty notices may be issued.
- A road safety competition will be launched with key stage 1 and 2 pupils at the beginning of term and prizes of bike lights and high viz bands will be awarded to the winners.
- Sian announced that she is leaving the Safer Neighbourhood Team at the end of the month as she has been accepted for training in the Police Force. The Chairman thanked her and wished her the best of luck in her new career.

## **5 – Open Forum**

The Chairman opened the meeting to the floor for questions

- A general discussion was held on the state of the village roads following all the recent bad weather. There are still problems with water draining away into the gulleys in Gedding Road and The Street; there are some large pot holes at the Park Road/ Tostock Road junction and excess water has flowed from Drinkstone Lake across the road and part of the roadside has caved in. A detailed report will be sent to the Highway Authority asking them to look at all these problems as soon as possible. It is thought that the potholes may have been caused by the number of heavy lorries which have increased recently. The lake appears to be very full and has overflowed; the Clerk agreed to contact Mr Thurlow to check that the weir is working correctly.
- It was reported that there has been further activity on the old Rookery Farm site. Additional engineering works and a new/revamped large store/shed has been erected. The Planning Enforcement Officer recently visited the site and said that no infringements had occurred however, it was agreed to ask them to revisit to ensure that this is still the case.
- A resident stated that she was very much opposed to the application by Gipping Homes to extend the working hours on the Cherry Tree site. She reported that the developers are already abusing the conditions by starting work before 8am. She felt that 10 hours (from 8am to 6pm) is more than enough disruption to the nearby homes. The Chairman said that these matters would be considered by the Parish Council under the planning and thanked the resident for highlighting the problems.
- Cllr Clarke reported that he had a group of volunteers who were available to clean the ditch out at the Gedding Road allotments. The hedge needs to be trimmed back and the ditch opened out to improve drainage as it is very overgrown. The work needs to be done as soon as possible. It was agreed that this work could be done and also that new slips could be obtained if necessary to fill in any gaps. Cllr Clarke said he would also ask the Tree Wardens to look at an old chestnut tree on the site which was in need of pruning/pollarding back.

## **6 – Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

## **7 – Matters Arising**

There are no matters arising as all items are on the agenda

## **8 – Parish Council**

The PC vacancy was advertised in the December magazine but no further interest has been shown. It was agreed that the Clerk would invite Ms Harbutt to the next meeting to discuss becoming a new member

## **9 – Finance**

The Current account stands at £1898.03; deposit account 1 at £2651.08; deposit account 2 at £5.27 and VAT owing is £29.80 giving a total balance of £4584.18. The separate allotment account stands at £587.70. One invoice was approved for payment £216.84 – Clerks fees for 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.

The Clerk handed out a spreadsheet detailing expenditure to date and a forecast of spending to the year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. A general discussion was then held on the requirements for the coming year 2013/14. The estimated requirement to cover all costs is £3122 – it was agreed that the rate of inflation should be added to this figure and this would be submitted to Mid Suffolk as the requirement for 2013/14.

All Councillors had reviewed the Risk Assessment as compiled by the Clerk and Cllr Cousins and it was agreed that this should be adopted and reviewed annually. The Chairman signed a copy of the Risk Assessment document.

A short discussion was held on the allotment rents and it was agreed that a close eye would be kept on this years water bills. It was noted that the unit rate has increased substantially over the last three years and most utilities are again increasing their tariffs. It was agreed that no change would be made to rents this year, but a letter compiled by Cllr Clarke and Clerk would be sent out with the rent bills asking tenants to use water wisely and to thank them for maintaining the boundaries and general care of the ground.

## **10 – Planning**

- **3780/12** - Proposal – To vary conditions 2 and 27 of planning application 0810/12 at the Cherry Tree site; altering the landscaping details and to vary the construction working hours. Councillors raised no objections to the alteration to the landscaping however they agreed that an extension to working hours was not necessary. The site is very close to a number of residential properties and it was felt that 10 hours of daily disruption from plant and machinery was adequate. A lot of children and people leave home between 7.30 and 8 am and this would add further nuisance to peoples lives.

The following applications were considered by the PC over the Christmas period and no objections were raised.

1. **3666/12** – Southernwood, Rattlesden Road. Erection of single storey rear extension and 1<sup>st</sup> floor side extension
2. **3651/12** - Hill Farm, Hill Farm Lane – Installation of steel flue to barn.
3. **3652/12** - Hill Farm, Hill Farm Lane – Installation of wood pellet fuelled boiler system and insertion of associated flue.

MSDC has approved the following applications

1. **3125/12** – Hill Farm, Hill Farm Lane – Erection of side extension with link to two existing buildings. Conversion of outbuilding to living accommodation. Demolition of old timber building
2. **3127/12** – Hill Farm. Hill Farm Lane – Alterations to internal arrangements of existing granary. Internal repairs to listed barn
3. **3128/12** – Hill Farm, Hill Farm Lane – Internal wall alterations to listed farmhouse.

## **11 – Housing Needs Survey**

It was agreed that the wording on the Suffolk ACRE sample letter which is to go to all residents should be tightened up. The Chairman and the Clerk agreed to get together to draft a more appropriate letter for Drinkstone residents and to circulate to Councillors before the next meeting.

## **12 - Cricket Hedge**

The two Tree Wardens have been consulted over moving the Cricket hedge. They agree that the hedge should be lifted before the end of February and the live specimens will be sited temporarily on the Rattlesden Road allotments until they can be transferred to the village hall. They have kindly offered to do this work and to look at how they can best be transferred when needed.

### **13 – Widows Charity**

£56.34 has been received back from National Savings and Investments which is the balance of the closed account of the Widows Charity. Further thought will be given to where this money should be donated.

### **14 – Correspondence**

East Anglia Air Ambulance – Appeal for funding  
Email from Thurston Community Council re Community Forums  
Copy of letter from Mr Roscoe to County Highways re- Signage in issues in Rattlesden Road – Clerk to acknowledge  
SALC – Sustainable Communities Act  
The Local Councillor

### **15 – Other Business**

- Cllr Clarke reported that he had been out to look at the footpath between Gedding Road and Chapel Lane which is water logged. A team of residents has volunteered to dig out the ditch in an effort to make the path passable. It was agreed before any work went ahead the Rights of Way Officer should be consulted – he did visit the site last year and advised that a boardwalk would be the solution; but was unable to offer any funding for this type of construction.
- Cllr Munford reported that the County Leader of Age Concern (Daphne Savage) has retired after over 20 years of service. A small celebration had been held to mark the event. Local co-ordinators will now be called be-frienders.
- The Chairman asked for the election of a vice-chairman to be placed on the next agenda.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:10 pm

**Date of next meeting – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013 (8pm in the Church)**