

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4th March 2013 in All Saints' Church

Present

Cllrs A. Clarke, S. Cousins, M. Goldstaub (Chair), C. Harbutt, C. Munford, P. Nolan, the Clerk, SCC/MSDC Cllr P. Otton, Patrick Taylor and five residents.

1 – Drinkstone Mills Conservation Area

The Chairman welcomed Patrick Taylor, a Conservation Architect from Mid Suffolk District Council to the meeting. Mr Taylor has recently completed a re-appraisal of the Drinkstone Mills Conservation Area; which was first completed in 1990. There are 31 of these conservation areas across the Mid Suffolk area and they are all undergoing a review programme. The purpose of the reviews is to safeguard these historical sites and to adopt the documents as supplements to the District Planning Policy; which will guide future planners.

A 20 page document has been produced and it looks at all aspects relating to the Mills including the history; surroundings; archaeological significance; quality of the buildings; materials; upkeep; vegetation and the overall setting. The document is currently open for consultation until the 31st March. The document can be viewed online of the Mid Suffolk planning pages under the heading "Draft Appraisals". The Clerk also has a number of spare copies for residents/interested parties to borrow. After the deadline the document and report on the consultation will be presented to the Environment Policy Panel and providing there are no problems will be adopted as part of MSDC's Planning Policy.

2 – Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from Cllr Johnson

3 – Declarations of Interest

None

4 – Cllr Otton's Reports

Suffolk County Council

- Budgets – Both County and District Councils have agreed a zero increase in Council Tax
- Schools – Further meetings have been held about the future structure of the schools in Stowmarket and Stowupland.
- Highways – The Council is now proposing to award the Highways contract to May Gurney and WSP UK.
- Flooding – A joint meeting has been held between the Council and the various agencies to discuss the flooding at Beyton.
- Locality Funding – A grant of £500 has been requested from the Locality Budget towards the restoration of the World War 1 commemorative embroidery. Once restored it is planned to hang the framed embroidery in the new Drinkstone Village Hall.

Mid Suffolk District Council

- Sheltered Housing – The Council is keen for people to be made more aware of the sheltered housing opportunities in the area.
- Planning – Phil Isbell has indicated that he may be available to attend the April PC meeting to discuss the changes in planning procedures.

The Chairman reported that Mid Suffolk had sent a very confusing letter about the changes to the Tax Base and the way Parish Council Tax is calculated. In order for the impact on Parish Councils to be minimised the District has decided to pass on a grant from Government to compensate for the increase in the Tax Base. The District put forward three proposals for Parish Councils to consider. A deadline of six days was also set for a response; which left little time for full consultation. SALC were very unhelpful with coming up with any advice. A small PC sub-committee looked at the options available and after consultation with other members decided to take advantage of the grant on offer but to compensate the increase to residents by lowering the original precept request. This will result in the Parish Tax showing an increase of 2.74% on the Council Tax bills. Cllr Otton agreed that the letter had been confusing and that most Parish Councils had had difficulty in reaching a quick decision on the options put forward to them.

5 - Police Report

No report from the Police available this month

It was reported that there had been a burglary in the village at a property in Woolpit Road and there were also two more attempted burglaries at around the same time.

6 – Open Forum

- It was reported that the sewer pipe which flows over land farmed by Mr Ollet had burst again. Councillors expressed concern as this matter had been brought to the attention of Anglian Water last year when the Cherry Tree planning application was under discussion. AW had assured that the pipe was adequate to take the existing village waste plus 15 extra houses. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact AW again and Cllr Otton sent an immediate email to her AW contact from her mobile phone.
- There were two reports of inconsiderate parking and driving by the various vehicles en route to the Cherry Tree site. It was agreed that the Clerk would report the matter to Gipping Homes.
- The road in Cross Street is sinking again and the Clerk agreed to report the matter to Highways.
- The school bus is still picking the school children up at the entrance to the Cherry Tree site. SCC had promised to look at this issue once the building work started but nothing has been done. The Clerk agreed to find the letter from SCC Transport and ask them to look at it again.

7 – Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th February were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record

8 – Matters Arising

- A letter was sent to Highways about the various road problems and some of the pot holes have been repaired.
- The Cricket hedge has been taken up and the healthy looking plants transferred for holding on the Rattlesden Road allotments. Peter Norman has confirmed that he is happy for them to be replanted elsewhere in the village. Some will be used at the new village hall and some will be used to augment the allotment hedges.
- The Housing Needs Survey has been printed and distribution is almost complete.
- Peter Blemings has emailed to say that because of issues over the wayleave fees Gipping Homes have amended the demand with UK Power Network. The number of heat pumps has been reduced and therefore the capacity required can now come from the existing service in Gedding Road. Councillors expressed concern about this statement and it was agreed that the Clerk would ask Mr Blemings for further clarification on the changes.

9 – Finance

A letter of thanks has been received from the Citizens Advice for the £50 donation.

The current account stands at £1559.53; deposit account 1 at £2651.26; deposit account 2 at £5.27 and VAT owing is £29.80 giving a total balance of £4245.86

The separate allotment account stands at £587.70

£6 for 2 Jubilee Mugs is waiting to be banked and there are still 12 mugs unsold.

The following invoices were approved for payment: - £21.96 postage stamps; £3.90 envelopes; £6.00 printing paper and £200.16 Clerks fees (Jan – Mar)

Cllr Cousins reported that she had been in touch with Anglian Water and changed the tariff for the Gedding Road water account. Both sites are now on the “solo” tariff. The outstanding bills of £5.50 (RR) and £27.50 (GR) were approved for payment from the allotment account.

10 – Planning

0446/13 – Erection of single storey rear extension at Arncliffe, Gedding Road.

This application has only just been received and Councillors had not had time to look at the details. It was agreed that they would look at the application online and let the Clerk know if they had any problems with the proposals.

11 – Footpaths

- An email has been received from a parishioner about the state of footpath 21 which runs from Rattlesden Road (next to Highacre) and the Gedding Road. The vehicles from Morley Farms use the track to gain access to the fields and they have churned it up so badly that it has become practically impassable. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the Farm and asked if something can be done to make access easier.
- Patrick Scrivens has arranged for some work to be done to make footpath 13 more accessible. This is the path which runs from Gedding Road into Chapel Lane. The ditch has been partially dug out and the old stone bridge has been replaced by a new sleeper bridge. Cllr Clarke reported that it was a great improvement and that the water flow was improved.
- Cllr Munford reported that some people are still throwing their dog bags into the hedge and not using the dog bins.

12 – Allotments

- Some of the hedging from the Cricket will be used to fill in the Chapel Lane hedge and this will complete the clear up. There may not be enough time to prune the Chestnut tree before the spring.
- After a short discussion it was agreed that allotment rents would remain unchanged. Cllr Clarke confirmed that he was drafting a letter to go out with the allotment invoices at the beginning of April.

13 – Correspondence

Mid Suffolk CAB – Thank you letter

Walking Festival Brochure 2013

SCC – Warm Homes – Health People Fund

Suffolk ACRE – Cheaper Energy Together

Babergh/Mid Suffolk – Proposals for Integrated Staffing Structure

Clerks and Councils Direct

14 – Other Business

- Cllr Goldstaub requested that the Clerks Fees are reviewed at the next meeting
- Cllr Munford reported that the overgrown hedge had been cut back at the bridge in The Street and the area was looking much better.
- Cllr Cousins reported that the church now has to pay a contractor to cut the grass in the churchyard. Previously this work had been done by the probationers at no cost. The Church Parochial Council may approach the Parish Council for help with the expenditure. It was agreed that this would be considered once a formal request was received.
- Cllr Goldstaub reported that while out delivering Housing Surveys she had observed a suspicious black pick-up truck in Hill Farm Lane. Having given the driver directions the vehicle then drove off; she reminded people to remain vigilant especially in isolated areas.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:15pm

Date of next meeting Monday 8th April

