

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 8th April 2013 in All Saints' Church

Present

Cllrs A. Clarke, S. Cousins, M. Goldstaub (Chair), C. Harbutt, A. Johnson, the Clerk, SCC/MSDC Cllr P Otton, Mr J. Free (Head of Communities MSDC) and three residents

1 – Development and Planning

The Chairman welcomed Jonathan Free, Head of Communities, Mid Suffolk DC to the meeting. Jonathan had been invited to the meeting to talk about the future of planning and development. The Government has recently introduced a National Planning Policy, a Localism Bill and Neighbourhood Plans, which stand alongside the already established Mid Suffolk Local Development Framework. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council felt in need of guidance with regard to future development in the village with so many regulations to unravel.

Jonathan said that there are no magic answers; but the planning department are there to help and advise on all matters. Some larger villages are looking at producing a Neighbourhood Plan; which will give residents a say in where future development is located in their village. However, this does take a lot of time, effort and expense – although grants can be accessed to help with the costs. The need for further local housing within small villages needs to be proven by ground swell from within and a Neighbourhood Plan can establish this. The Local Development Framework is the Core Strategy and the Policy Document for the whole of the Mid Suffolk area. Babergh are currently putting the finishing touches to their Policy Document and the two strategies will then have to be reviewed; however, there is no timescale for this. The Government is putting pressure on Local Councils to stimulate the housing market and to meet the shortfall in housing; however, any significant development is likely to be centred on areas like Stowmarket which has its own Action Plan. There is enough land available in the District to meet the housing targets for the foreseeable future; which means that small villages should not be under threat of significant development. The Local Development Framework is currently unchanged and Drinkstone's status as a village in countryside with limited development remains.

The Chairman thanked Jonathan for his advice and said it would be interesting to see if the recent Housing Needs Survey would highlight any need for additional affordable housing in the village.

2 – Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Munford, Cllr Nolan and CPO Annelly Miles.

3 – Declarations of Interest

None

4 – Police Report

The Clerk read a report from Community Police Officer Annelly Miles:-

- No crimes were recorded in the village over the last month. However, there have been rogue vehicles driving around the area offering generators and chainsaws for sale. No

criminal offences have been found but the equipment has come from Germany and will need adapting for use in this country.

- Sian Uttley's replacement has been appointed. The new Community Police Support Officer is Collette Denny. Collette previously worked as a CPSO in Stowmarket and will take up her new post on the 27th May.
- A dedicated team of officers has been allocated to tackling rural crime. They will be looking at all issues ranging from hare coursing to theft of equipment, oil and metals. Crime prevention will also be high on their list of priorities.
- Mid Suffolk Police have joined the social networking site Twitter. They will be issuing regular updates about news, events, arrests and what's happening in the area – to visit link to www.twitter.com/@midsuffpolice

5 – Cllr Otton's Reports

Suffolk County Council

- Schools – The Cabinet has now decided on the new catchment areas for Thurston, Stowmarket and Stowupland. This will mean that all students from Rattlesden will now go on to Thurston School and not split up as they are now. There is concern that the new school at Stowupland will not be sustainable because of low numbers.
- Recycling – The Suffolk Waste Partnership has produced an interesting document about what happens to our waste when we recycle it. Details are on www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk
- Fire Safety – Following the recent fire in Rattlesden Cllr Otton is hoping to set up a presentation for owners of thatched cottages. An officer from Stowmarket Fire Station has offered to come along and talk to a group of property owners. The details are yet to be finalised.
- Health – The Council is to review its strategy on health and wellbeing. They will be looking at all aspects of staying healthy and keeping fit.

Mid Suffolk District Council

- Thermal Imaging – The Council is to survey all of its buildings to see what can be done to improve energy efficiency and lower fuel bills. This may be extended to Housing Association properties.
- Joints Standards Board – Mid Suffolk, Babergh and the County Council are planning to set up a joint board to hear serious cases of breach of the code of councillors' conduct.

6 - Open Forum

No questions were asked from the floor.

7 – Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th March 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

A short discussion was held on whether the minutes should be made available to the public before they are verified. It was agreed that the Clerk could ask Councillors to let her know as soon as possible if there is a problem with the wording. Also a note will be included when the minutes are sent to the magazine and the website to say that they are draft and will not be verified until the next meeting.

8 – Matters Arising

- The Clerk reported that she had spoken to an Engineer from Anglian Water about the problems with the burst rising main which runs through Mr Ollett's field. The Engineer assured that the recent burst pipe had been repaired and the flow rate checked and everything is in working order. The capacity of the pipework is fine and the Engineer said that an additional 15 houses on the system will not make a lot of difference to its efficiency. The problems that have occurred recently are more likely to have been caused by either earth movement; bad weather or by heavy vehicles damaging the pipes. This type of problem is common when the pipes run across open fields. The Engineer said to get back to him if there were any further problems.
- Peter Blemings from Gipping Homes had emailed to say that following difficulties with a third party land owner they had renegotiated with UK Power Network for the electricity supply to come off Gedding Road. The reduction in air source heat pumps will still be in line with the energy efficiency measures required by the Local Authority. Additional solar panels and increased insulation have also been included. The noise level will decrease with the reduction in heat source pumps. Mr Blemings has asked the site foreman to keep an eye on the parking and driving of vehicles visiting the site. The footways and kerbs of the new entrance to the site will all be incorporated into remedial works at the end of the project and this will meet the Highways approval. There is no further news on the application to extend the working hours on the site.
- Two incident reports have been sent to Highways about the state of the road surface in Cross Street.
- A letter has been sent to County Transport about the school bus stop – no reply to date.
- A reply has been received from Morley Farms about the footpath on the track off Rattlesden Road. Mr Morley says he needs access to the fields on a daily basis to prevent the pigeons from decimating his crop of oil seed rape. He apologises for the inconvenience but says as soon as the weather improves he will see what can be done to restore the track.
- The Highways have not been in touch about the drains in Gedding Road – it is not known whether they have been out to look at them. Further wet weather is needed to see if any improvements have been made.

9 – Finance

The Clerk reported that according to the SALC website Clerks salaries are still under review for the coming year.

The current account stands at £1283.51; deposit account 1 at £2651.42; deposit account 2 at £5.27 and VAT owing is £29.80 giving a total balance of £3970.00. The separate allotment account stands at £554.70. The current account includes £56.34 refunded from the Widows Charity.

The precept was lowered to £3042 plus £268 grant from Mid Suffolk – it is unclear if and when the grant will be paid and it was agreed to look into this further.

Two invoices were approved for payment SALC - £16.80 (Payroll Services) and SALC - £216 (member fees for 2013). The Clerk agreed to pass Councillors the SALC passwords for access to the members area on their website.

Cllr Cousins reported that the form to change the bank signatories is being circulated.

10 – Planning

No planning applications this month

11 – Housing Needs Survey

Sunila Osbourne has emailed to say that to date 108 Housing Needs Survey forms have been returned. Of these, only three have indicated a need for affordable housing in the village. The data will be compiled and input during the coming weeks and a report should be available in early May.

12 – Anti Litter Campaign

Mid Suffolk DC are backing an anti-litter campaign which has been launched by Radio Suffolk. The District Council is keen for Suffolk to become one of the cleanest counties in England. Their cleansing staff has already picked up three awards for their work. They employ 10 full time staff to cover the whole of Mid Suffolk and Babergh and they are also keen to recruit local volunteers to help in the local fight against littering. The Council has also begun a programme of going into schools to teach students the importance of keeping their areas litter free. If anyone is interested in becoming a litter volunteer please contact the Parish Clerk for further details.

13 – Correspondence

Transition to Community Action Suffolk – New name for Suffolk ACRE and partners
Suffolk View
Reply from Morley Farms

14 – Other Business

- The Clerk reminded those present that there is a County Council election on the 2 May. There are five nominations for the Thedwastre South seat.
- Cllr Goldstaub said it would be nice to see the railings by the bridge in The Street painted and restored now that the brambles have been cleared away.
- It was reported that there was a pot hole in Beyton Road that needs to be repaired and in the same area the hedges still need to be trimmed back.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:16pm
These minutes will be verified at the next meeting (13th May)

Date of next meeting Monday 13th May 2013

Parish Council AGM at 7pm followed by Village AGM at 8pm

