

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th November 2013 in the Village Hall

Present

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

1 – Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from the Police

2 – Declarations of Interest

None

3 – Cllr Otton's Reports

Suffolk County Council

- The Fire Service will be holding another fire safety seminar at Thurston New Green Community Centre on Wednesday 27th November.
- Congratulations to the village Community Speedwatch Team who received an award from the Police for their dedication of time and service to the scheme. The Police very much appreciate the work that the volunteers do.
- £3000 from the locality budget has been agreed towards improving the outdoor play facilities at Rattlesden School.
- The Policy Development Panel is looking at extending the 20 mph zones in villages. Cllr Otton has suggested zoning the areas around Beyton and Thurston schools and would be happy to consider any sites in Drinkstone.
- Consultation is taking place on the Bury area schools reorganisation.

Mid Suffolk District Council

- The new licensing laws concerning scrap metal dealing have now been agreed giving local authorities greater licensing powers.
- Some villages are experiencing problems with their bottle bank contracts. The effected Councils are considering a joint contract to resolve the issues.
- There have been eight claims in Mid Suffolk against the “bedroom tax”. Of these five were upheld and three were rejected.
- MSDC has agreed to use some Government funding to help those with mortgage difficulties.
- MSDC has agreed to take part in a buy back scheme whereby the Council will buy back former Council houses to put them back on the rent register.
- It has been decided that the Council Tax Support Grant to parishes will be reduced by 25% in the next financial year. All parishes have received a letter with this information. The tax will continue to reduce by 25% over the next three years until 2017 when the grant will be phased out altogether.

Cllr Otton concluded with saying that she was delighted to have been asked to unveil the Arthur Pryke memorial embroidery at the village hall on Saturday 2nd November.

4 – Police Report

The Clerk read a written report compiled by PCSO Collette Denny

- One crime was reported in the village last month. A tyre was stolen from underneath a vehicle.
- Fuel thefts from motor vehicles are on the increase. Larger vehicles like vans, where the ground clearance is higher than a car are more at risk. In most reported cases fuel lines have been disconnected and the fuel then siphoned from the tank. Police advise that such vehicles should be parked in a well lit area or locked away.
- As the festive time approaches Police are reminding everyone of the national property database. It only takes a few minutes to register on www.immobilise.com where you can register all your equipment e.g. laptops, phones, bicycles etc. You stand a better chance of getting stolen property back if it has been registered, as all recovered items are checked against the list.
- The Police also have a high tech messaging service. The service provides the latest news about crime in your area and tips on crime prevention. To register for this service follow the links from www.suffolk.police.uk

5 – Open Forum

- The faulty drain outside the Old Rectory has still not been unblocked and surface water is running over the road. There is also a problem in Gedding Road where water is flowing from a property across the road and down to the river. The Clerk agreed to contact the Highways and ask them to look at both areas as soon as possible.
- The hedges are overgrown at the junction between Woolpit Road and Drinkstone Road, Woolpit. The Clerk agreed to contact the owner of the land to ask for some hedge clearance to be carried out.

6 – Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th October were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

7 – Matters Arising

- The road in Cross Street has been repaired.
- Patrick Scrivens has been out to look at the new footpath at Cherry Tree Rise. He agrees that the developers made an excellent new path. He says that it is illegal for skate boarders to use public footpaths. He suggests that the PC puts up an appropriate notice or gets the police to have a word with the offenders. The PC discussed the various options and it was agreed that the Clerk would seek further advice from the County Council regarding the placing of barriers at the end of the path.

8 – Playing Field and Adjacent Land

The Clerk reported that she had been in touch with two local estate agents over the last month and both had been very reluctant to put a value on the “cheese wedge” piece of land beside the playing field. It appears to be hard to value because of its limitations. The new residents have moved into plot 114 Cherry Tree Rise and they have indicated that they may be interested in purchasing the land. The Parish Council once again discussed the various options and were in agreement that because of the costs involved in maintaining the land the best option would be to sell it. The Clerk

has asked the interested purchasers to put in an offer for consideration once they have settled in to their new home.

In the meantime an email has been received from a resident suggesting that if the land is sold then the money received should be put towards improvements on the playing field e.g. a mini skate park or a sheltered area to sit in. Councillors discussed the various suggestions but felt that the existing equipment is right for the kind of children that use it. A decision on what to spend the money from any sale of the land will be made once the sale has been completed. Mid Suffolk DC has already said that grants will be reduced over the coming years so all expenditure will have to be tightly monitored.

9 – Finance

The current account stands @ £2600.82; deposit account 1 @ £2652.68; deposit account 2 @ £5.27 and VAT owing is £97.88 giving a total balance of £5356.65.

The separate allotment account stands at £648.73

The following invoices were agreed for payment SALC (Payroll services) - £14.00; Old Parsonage Garden Services (Grass cutting) - £62.50; Stationery - £8.60 and Postage Stamps - £6.00

Two Anglian Water bills were approved from the allotment account £23.01 – Gedding Road and £7.67 – Rattlesden Road.

Cllr Cousins had distributed a budget forecast to the end of the year and an estimate of how much would be required for the coming year 14/15. Mid Suffolk has said that the grant for the coming year will be reduced by 25% - this year the grant was £268; next year it will be £206. Cllr Cousins and the Clerk are going to a meeting at Mid Suffolk on the 12th November to find out more about the cut-backs. Councillors considered the proposals and agreed that expenditure on such a small budget would be tight. It was agreed to look at the forecast again next month after the meeting at Mid Suffolk. It was noted that the notice board will need replacing in the near future and Cllr Cousins suggested buying a new one next year to commemorate World War I.

10 – Planning

The following planning applications were considered and approved:-

2846/13 – Proposal for listed building consent for a new window at Kopsey Cottage, Rattlesden Rd.

3017/13 – Proposal for revised design of plot 107 (old pub) at Cherry Tree Rise.

11 – Housing Needs Survey

A very comprehensive letter has been received from Ian Tippet (Housing Development Officer MSDC/Babergh) about all the issues that were raised at last month's meeting. Ian has checked with the planning department and the housing department regarding the interpretation of the terms of the planning permission and the allocation of the new affordable homes on Cherry Tree Rise. It appears that although the original planning application was contrary to planning policy and was regarded as an "exception site" it was not automatically termed a "rural exception site". A rural exception site is usually abutting the village boundary and planning permission is exclusively for affordable homes. As the Cherry Tree Rise homes were part of an open market development they were put on the Councils general needs housing list and were open for district wide nomination and not exclusively for people with links to Drinkstone.

In view of what has happened and also the reported problems with affordable homes in neighbouring villages the Parish Council is very reluctant to accept recommendation for further affordable homes in the village at the moment – there is also very likely to be a lot of homes built in the Woolpit and Elmswell area in the future. The Chairman said she would check the terms of the Housing Act 1996,

as Mid Suffolk seemed to have severed the link to local connections. Cllr Otton said that she has asked Cllr Marilyn Curran for an explanation on the housing needs issue.

12 – Allotments

Cllr Clarke reported that the work to install the automatic water feed at Gedding Road allotments is still pending. It was agreed that the allotment rents should be reviewed and will be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.

13 - Emergency Planning

Last Monday (28th October) a storm hit the village and a number of parishioners were without electricity for a number of days. Cllr Munford reported that Cross Street residents were still without their telephone line. This has highlighted the need for an emergency plan to be in place for such occurrences – it has been talked about in the past but nothing has ever been compiled. An emergency plan would include lists of vulnerable people and details of people with useful equipment like generators and chain saws. The Parish Council thanked all those who helped in the clean up following last Monday's storm especially Miles Chandler for clearing the tree debris from the Cricket. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the MSDC emergency planning co-coordinator to invite him along to give the PC some guidance in getting an emergency plan started.

14 – Correspondence

MSDC – Textile Recycling – Extra bags can be obtained free of charge from Woolpit Bread Bin, Rattlesden Community Shop and Felsham Post Office
MSDC – Town and Parish Newsletter
MSDC – Parish Precepts 2014/15
MSDC – Letter from Ian Tippet re Affordable Homes
SALC – Annual Report
Notice Board Brochure and price list
Clerks and Councils Direct

15 – Other Business

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council notice board is in very poor condition and is in need of either substantial repair or replacement. It was agreed to review the expense under the next discussion on finance and to consider approaching Cllr Otton for a contribution from the locality budget.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:07

Date of next meeting Monday 2nd December 2013

These minutes will be verified at the next meeting.

