

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th January 2014 in the Village Hall

Present

Cllrs A. Clarke, S. Cousins, M. Goldstaub (Chair), T. Moss, C. Munford, P. Nolan, the Clerk, MSDC/ SCC Cllr P Otton, Sue Herne – Emergency Planning Officer and eleven residents.

Before opening the meeting the Chairman wished everyone present a Happy New Year

1 – Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Harbutt and the Police

2 – Declarations of Interest

None

3 – Emergency Planning

The Chairman welcomed Sue Herne to the meeting to talk about the importance of Emergency Planning. Sue is part of a small joint emergency planning unit which acts across Suffolk as a central contact point between local authorities and the emergency services. They offer expert advice and ongoing support to communities on how to prepare an emergency plan and how to act when an emergency occurs. They also carry out training sessions and can give help and guidance on the purchase of any equipment that may be required.

Suffolk is a very safe place to live, however sudden floods; freak weather conditions; animal diseases and power cuts are just some of the dangerous incidents that can take communities by surprise. An emergency plan works by recognising the risks; identifying vulnerable people and property and by locating individuals and resources that may help in these situations.

Twenty three villages/towns across Suffolk already have a plan in place; six others are working on one and thirteen are about to start one. It would require a small team of approximately 4 – 6 volunteers to write and implement a plan for Drinkstone.

In reply to a question from the Chairman, Sue confirmed that costs of producing a plan are low and that there is no charge for the training sessions.

The Chairman thanked Sue for attending and it was agreed that this item should be brought forward for further consideration.

4 – Cllr Otton's Report

Suffolk County Council

- Fire Service - Strikes have taken place over the Christmas/New Year period, but fortunately has not affected any emergency incidents.
- Highways - The Highways Agency are proposing to install average speed cameras on the A12 around the Capel St Mary and East Bergholt junctions. There are also discussions ongoing to implement a 60 mph limit across the Orwell Bridge.
- Heritage - Plans to have a single centre heritage/archive centre in Suffolk have been put on hold. It is now possible to access Ancestry.com free from any library.
- Education - All properties involved in educating children "out of school" have been registered and inspected. Cllr Otton has asked the Council to take action to stamp out bullying.

- Greenest County Awards - The Council has launched a 2014 award scheme for people and buildings that have achieved excellent environmental standards. Cllr Otton said she thought the new Drinkstone Village Hall would be a good candidate.

Mid Suffolk District Council

- Drinkstone Issues - Cllr Otton said she was pleased that the application for a Local Development Certificate for the business in Tostock Road has been withdrawn. She stated that she was disappointed that David Pizzey had not been prepared to issue an emergency planning Tree Preservation Order on the woodland off Chapel Lane.
- Planning Enforcement - A new lead officer has been appointed to take over the Enforcement Team; however there is still a considerable backlog in cases.
- Council Tax - The Council is still waiting for final figures from the Government which is delaying the final budget recommendations for 2014/15
- Customer Services - The contract with BT runs out later this year and the services will revert to being run in-house.
- Community Achievement Awards - Nominations are open for the 2014 awards scheme
- Suffolk Digital Cinema Network - A bid has been put in to the British Film Institute to help employ a part-time co-ordinator.

The Chairman stated that she was very disappointed that Mid Suffolk has now decided that they will not now be paying the promised £201 grant to the Parish to cover the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. A letter was received from Barry Hunter (MSDC Finance Director) on the 24th December to say that they have recalculated and reviewed the data and will now only be giving Drinkstone a £25 grant. Cllr Otton said she was unaware that the figures had been changed and she would be investigating further.

5 – Police Report

The Chairman read an emailed report from CPO Annelly Miles

- There have been no crimes recorded in the village for the month of December
- There have been reports from other areas of suspicious doorstep selling. Police remind residents to check the identity of any person offering services/maintenance checks; particularly if they are unplanned visits. If you are in any doubt call 101 and the police will assist in verifying the person.
- The Dog Trust has started a huge campaign to chip dogs. New roaming teams will be offering free micro-chipping across the UK to comply with the Governments ruling that all dogs must be chipped. The Dog Trust is interested in attending any community events so that they can reach as many dogs and owners as possible.
- The Safer Neighbourhood Team is carrying out free catalytic converter marking sessions on two dates in January. There is no need to book and any car, van or 4 x 4 will be marked; unfortunately they are not able to mark lorries. The dates are 11th Jan between 10am and 4pm at Taylor Commercial Ltd, Haughley Services and 29th Jan between 10am and 4pm at Fast Test Ltd, Unit 22 Claydon Business Park.

6 – Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd December were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

7 – Matters Arising

- A further letter has been received from John Simpson (Highways) about the flooding in Gedding Road. He recommends that the Floods Department are contacted to see if they can resolve the issue. The information has been passed on to the Flood Team.
- Patrick Scrivens has visited the new footpath in Cherry Tree Rise and has confirmed that the path is too narrow to install barriers. The only solution is to put up either a barrier at the curb side or to

install a rumble strip – this comes under the Highway Department and they have promised to see what can be done.

- The residents of 4 Cherry Tree Rise have indicated that they are prepared to increase their offer for the “cheese wedge”. They are going to consult an independent valuer before making another bid.

8 – Playing Field and Adjacent Land

Mrs Haill reported that she had gathered together a list of 11 families (all with teenage children) who would be willing to help clear and maintain the “cheese wedge”. A plan needs to be drawn up of what needs to be done to clear the area and what use can be made of it once it’s cleared. The area has been uncared for and some of the trees are not in good condition. Mrs Haill said she felt strongly against the land being sold off. Mr Haill has submitted a quote for installing a skate board strip on the Cricket and he estimates that this will cost £655 for a strip measuring 25 metres by 1 metre. This will link to the existing basketball court. Measurements have been taken and there is plenty of room for the strip as well as the existing football pitch. The parents are very keen for the teenage children in the village to have somewhere to play as they have outgrown the play equipment. The parents are also prepared to fund raise to pay for the installation of the strip.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Haill and said that the proposals would be looked at very carefully and weighed up against the other proposal of selling the land. At one stage it looked like selling the land was the only option as no one had come up with a use for it. The Chairman suggested that once a formal plan is produced and an increased offer is received to buy the land the answer to resolving the issue may be to ballot the village so that a fair decision is reached.

9 – Woodland Off Chapel Lane

The Parish Council and a number of residents expressed dismay that the woodland off Chapel Lane which used to belong to Mrs Hazel has been cut down by contractors. The Parish Council had asked David Pizzey (Tree Officer MSDC) to place an emergency TPO on the site, however he had refused saying that the land had no amenity value. This was strongly rejected by those present as the land is abundant with wildlife and is adjacent to three listed buildings. It is unclear what the Trustees plans for the site are as no planning application has been submitted. It is thought that the Estate Agent dealing with the land has been asked to maximise the assets. One resident has called in several professional conservation experts but it seems too late for anything to be done to stop the work. Cllr Otton said that a similar thing had happened in Felsham and a delightful copse had been destroyed. The Chairman reminded those present that Drinkstone is still a village in countryside and as such, development of any kind is very restricted.

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Mid Suffolk about David Pizzey’s refusal to grant the emergency TPO and the Chairman agreed to contact The Rev Farrell (one of the Trustee’s) and let her know that there is widespread disquiet amongst residents about the way the clearance of the site has been handled.

10 – Open Forum

- A resident reported that the pond is overflowing from the garden of Drinkstone House which is causing problems in Gedding Road. The Clerk agreed to bring this to the attention of the flood team at SCC
- The problem with the flooding in Tostock Lane is due to a drain being tarmaced over by contractors. The Highways have been informed and are looking into it.

11 – Finance

The current account stand at £2444.42; deposit account 1 at £2653.04; deposit account 2 at £5.27 and VAT owing of £100.68 giving a total balance of £5203.41

The separate allotment account stands at £618.05

The following invoices were approved for payment £120 – Mr Leonard, Pest Control Services and £202.32 – Clerks Fees (Oct- Dec).

A further discussion was held on the fact that the parish grant from Mid Suffolk has now been reduced from £201 to £25. Councillors agreed that the letter from Barry Hunter was confusing and did not really go into detail of how/why the figures were reached. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Mr Hunter and ask for clarification and a reassurance that the figures are correct.

Mid Suffolk has provided a tax base figure of £253.09 for band D properties which would equate to a 1.6% increase on a band D property for 2014/15 – increasing the council tax for from £12.77 to £13.02 per month. These figures are based on Cllr Cousins trimmed budget of £3320. The original budget of £3340 would equate to a 2.6% increase on a band D property for 2014/15 – increasing the tax from £12.77 to £13.09 per month for a band D property.

It was proposed by Cllr Goldstaub and seconded by Cllr Nolan that the final decision on the precept is postponed until a reply is received from Barry Hunter and if the figures are correct then the second option of the £3340 precept will be submitted.

12 – Planning

MSDC Decisions and Notices

- 3017/13 - Revised design for former Cherry Tree Public House (plot 107) Cherry Tree Rise – Approved
- 2846/13 – Replacement window and associated work to Kopsey Cottage, Rattlesden Road (Listed Building) – Approved
- 2456/13 – Alteration and repairs to the round house of Drinkstone Post Mill (Listed Building) – Approved
- 3172/13 – Lawful Development Certificated for business in Tostock Road – This application has been withdrawn

13 – Correspondence

SCC – Letter from John Simpson re the drainage in Gedding Road

MSDC – Withdrawal Notification of 3172/13 (Business in Tostock Rd)

UK Power Network – Notification of Proposed Reinforcement Work in Rattlesden Rd

SALC – The Local Councillor

St Eds BC/Forest Heath – Update on Strategic Environmental Assessment

Email from Mrs Bolden re an additional dog bin in Woolpit Rd – Councillors were not in favour with the suggestion of the PC funding another dog bin in Woolpit Road.

14 Other Business

Cllr Cousins reported that she had not seen the November correspondence file – the Clerk agreed to get it to her asap

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:43 pm

These minutes will be verified at the next meeting

Date of next meeting Monday 3rd February 2014