

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 7th July 2014 in Drinkstone Village Hall

Present

Cllrs Clarke (Chairman), S. Cousins, C. Harbutt, C. Munford, T. Moss, P. Nolan, the Clerk, SCC/MSDC Cllr P. Otton and eleven 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

- Cllr Otton has held a meeting with John Simpson to discuss several outstanding highways issues. She was told that Park Road would be repaired later in the summer; it was reported that some work had been done but not very well. Cllr Otton agreed to investigate whether further work was planned for this location. The cabinet has issued each Councillor with an additional £7000 towards their individual highways budget and an additional £400,000 towards projects to improve flood risk areas.
- Penalty Notices can now be issued to parents whose children are absent from school without prior authorisation. A new Penalty Code of Conduct had been agreed by the Council – a fine of £60 can be issued to parents whose children are absent without permission. Head Teachers will still have the discretion to approve or reject requests for absence from school.
- Felsham has put forward a proposal to buy a Speed Activated Sign and has asked other local parishes to chip in with the costs (as these are very high). So far only Thurston and Drinkstone have asked for further details.
- Proposals for a new purpose built record office in Ipswich have been approved. The design will now be drawn up and a bid made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding the transport arrangements for children transferring schools in September. It is understood that for sixth form students arriving by train a shuttle bus will be available to take them to the new sixth form centre in Beyton.

Mid Suffolk District Council

- The Council has put in a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency to build new council houses. It is understood that these will be subject to market level rent and become available to tenants to buy after a certain period of tenancy.
- The joint Council has commissioned a review of operating two headquarters (one in Needham and one in Hadleigh). The recent reorganisation has resulted in a lot of unused office space.
- There were problems in issuing the twin bin calendars this year and many residents did not receive one. Various methods of distribution are being looked to ensure that every household receives one next year.

4 – Police Report

The Clerk read a report written by CPO Annelly Miles:-

- No crimes were recorded in the village for the month of June
- The Police have been successful in arresting and charging a man from Tilbury in Essex in relation to 15 recent burglaries in the Suffolk area.
- Thurston once again won the Annual Police Quiz which was held on 4th July; next year the quiz will be opened up to partner agencies such as Community Speedwatch and Neighbourhood Watch groups.

- From Monday 14th July, Police Community Support Office Collette Denny will be moving to Needham Market. Her replacement will be Ryan Bunting who has already served as a PCSO in Stowmarket and Debenham.
- At the Police Priority Meeting which was held on 3rd July, the Police set targets for reducing anti-social behaviour and improving security in and around schools. The next priority meeting will be held on 2nd October at Mid Suffolk District offices.

5 – Open Forum

- One resident raised concerns over the issue of the proposed changes to the operation conditions at Rattlesden Gliding Club (as minuted June 2014). It is understood that neighbouring residents in Rattlesden and Felsham are unhappy about the proposals and Cllr Otton confirmed that approximately 30 residents had raised issues at the last Rattlesden PC meeting. As a result of this the consultation period has been extended and the matter will be referred to the planning committee. Cllr Otton said she felt sure that the flight operations would be closely monitored should the proposals be accepted. Another resident stated that he felt that the helicopters from Wattisham were much more of a nuisance than the gliders and light aircraft operating out of Rattlesden.
- It was noted that although the verges have been cut the grass around the road signs have been left and the signs are becoming obstructed again.
- A resident asked if a decision on the cheese wedge had been made following the recent village survey results. The Chairman confirmed that this would be discussed under item 9 of the agenda when the Councillors present would be given the opportunity to express their views.
- It was suggested by another resident that the open forum is moved further down the agenda giving residents more opportunity to comment on issues. Cllr Otton stated that this was the normal format of Parish Council meetings and some Councils limit the amount of time residents may ask questions. It was pointed out that for major issues the meeting can always be adjourned at any time for public comment and re-opened; but this does delay proceedings.
- A resident asked why the PC had asked Gipping Homes to share the cost of clearing the hedge between the playing field and the development. He stated that the hedge belonged to the Cherry Tree pub and had always been cleared by the pub landlord. Since the pub closure it has been left uncut and has made its way over onto the Cricket. Councillors discussed the issue and agreed to investigate further by checking the plans to establish where the border lies and to ask Gipping Homes for a site meeting to resolve the issue.

6 – Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd June 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

7 – Matters Arising

- A note about bonfires and keeping off farmers crops was published in the parish magazine
- The pot holes in Beyton Road and Cross Street have been reported
- The footpaths on the cutting schedule and the grass verges have been cut over the last few weeks.

8 – Parish Council Vacancies

Councillor

The Council is now free to co-opt a new member following expiry of the statutory notice asking if residents wanted an election. The Clerk apologised for not sending an advertisement to the parish magazine for the July/August edition. It was agreed that an advert would be placed in the September edition which would give everyone interested the opportunity to apply. The Chairman pointed out that there is no hurry as we have no meeting in August and the Council is quorate. Applications should be made direct to the Chairman – Adrian Clarke

Parish Clerk

There have been three applications for the post of Parish Clerk. One from an existing Clerk from Westhorpe; one from a young lady from Woolpit and a very late inquiry from a new resident in the village. The Chairman had

interviewed the young lady from Woolpit and said he was impressed with her keenness and attitude. She is aptly qualified and is eager to learn and attend training courses. After a short discussion it was agreed to appoint Kirsteen Friel on a six month trial period. The Clerk said she would minute and action point the July meeting and then gradually hand over things so that Kirsteen will be ready for her first meeting in September.

9 – The Cheese Wedge

An email has been received from the original residents who were interested in purchasing the cheese wedge. They have said that although the village survey didn't go their way, they (along with a couple of their neighbours) are still interested in purchasing or renting the land at a later date. They say it was never their intention to drastically change the landscape; they were keen to extend their garden; retain some privacy and reduce the overgrown hedge. If the PC decided to keep the land they are keen to be involved in the clearance. The Councillors noted the comments made and a short discussion was held on the survey results. The PC was unanimous in voting to retain the cheese wedge in compliance with the wishes of 64% of the village surveys which were returned. However, it was agreed that this decision is not binding as there are various other factors to take into account. The Chairman suggested that the PC take it in stages and not rush into any decisions. It was agreed that for the time being the land will not be registered with the charity commission (as is the rest of the Cricket) but will remain a separate entity under the direct control of the PC. This way the PC can keep an eye on the ground to ensure that it is actually being used and the costs of keeping it clear do not run out of control. The eleven families who volunteered to clear the land at no cost are still willing to do so. It was agreed to leave any clean up of the site until the end of the nesting season and a clearance programme will be on the September agenda.

10 – Notice Board

The quotes for the new notice board have been circulated and Cllr Otton has agreed to make a contribution from her locality budget towards the costs. A short discussion was held on the various options and it was agreed by majority that the quote from Harry Stebbing @ £1191 (excluding VAT) was the best value. They make their boards from English Oak and they plant a new oak tree for every board that is sold. The Clerk is to place order and the Chairman said volunteers would be needed to erect the new board when it arrived.

11 – Cricket

1. Play Equipment – The mound slide continues to cause problems because of rabbits attacking the mound and the ramp area. The ramp has been back filled several times but continues to be scraped out by the rabbits. Cllr Cousins had received an advanced copy of the playground safety report and no serious defects were found by the inspector. It was highlighted in the report that there is some erosion to the mound; the ramp needs cleaning because of the algae; some reseeded needs to be done and the timbers of the ramp need monitoring. Cllr Nolan agreed to investigate some mesh netting or rubber matting to install around the ramp to deter the rabbits. Cllr Nolan also said he had inspected the goal area and thought that some re-seeding with sports grass would protect the ground better than the current surface. The playground report will be circulated to all Councillors and discussed at the next meeting.
2. Playground Inspections – The Clerk had distributed a draft of the new weekly playground inspection report. There are now enough volunteers to get this up and running again following Edna and Sheila stepping down from the role. Cllr Cousins suggested that the wording in the first paragraph is changed to “this is an important inspection”. The Clerk agreed to make the change and distribute the new rota.
3. Rabbits – Peter Blemings of Gipping Homes has been in touch to say he has visited the site to look at the hedge along the boundary between the Cricket and the new houses. He has suggested that his men clear the area and that the PC contributes towards the cost. The hedge and brambles are so overgrown it is difficult to determine where the border actually lies. Bearing in mind the comments made by the resident in “open forum” it was agreed that the best option would be to study the original plans and go back to Peter Blemings to ask for a site meeting to discuss the issue.

12 – Finance

Cllr Cousins reported that the external audit report for the year ending 31st March 2014 had been approved and returned by BDO.

The current account stands @ £2736.76; deposit account 1 @ £2653.92; deposit account 2 @ £5.27 and VAT owing is £65.97, giving a total balance of £5461.92

The separate allotment account stands at £604.80; with a wayleave cheque of £55.05 to be paid in.

The following invoices were approved for payment: - SALC (Chairman's Course) - £117.60; Clerks Salary (Apr – Jun) - £252.90 and Old Parsonage Garden Services (Grass cutting) - £62.50

13 – Footpaths

Patrick Scrivens has been in touch to say he has received complaints about footpath 2 which runs from the church to Deadmans Lane. It is not on the current cutting schedule and Cllr Munford confirmed that it is many years since this path was cut. Patrick is only willing to add the path to the cutting schedule if another path is forfeited. A map of the cutting schedule had been distributed to Councillors before the meeting. After a short discussion it was agreed that the Peggs Farm path could be deleted as the land owner always keeps this nicely cut. The Clerk is to inform Patrick of the change with the proviso that the paths can be changed back at a later date if necessary

14 – Planning

No new planning applications this month.

The following applications have been approved by MSDC

0491/14 – Listed building consent to renovation work at High Barn, Chapel Lane

1257/14 – Erection of stable block, hay barn and storage following demolition of old building at Whitefield House, Park Road

15 – Correspondence

Parish Liaison Handouts

Clerks and Councils Direct

The Local Councillor

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:42pm

Date of next meeting Monday 1st September 2014

The above minutes will be verified at that meeting