

# DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013 in the Village Hall

Before formally opening the meeting Cllr Goldstaub (Chairman) said how nice it was to be back in the village hall. The new hall is a tremendous success and has a spacious and welcoming feel to it. She expressed her thanks to the village hall committee and their team for all the hard work that had gone into the project.

### Present

Cllrs A. Clarke, S. Cousins, M. Goldstaub (Chair), C. Harbutt, 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 – Declaration of Interest

None

### 3 – Cllr Otton’s Report

#### Suffolk County Council

- Cllr Otton said that she had been delighted to attend both the opening of the new village hall and the handing over of the first keys to the new residents of the housing association properties on the Cherry Tree Rise Development.
- A fire safety seminar was held in Rattlesden on the 13<sup>th</sup> August. Cllr Otton apologised for the misunderstanding over who the seminar was aimed at. Initially, it was proposed to be especially for thatched properties, but it covered all types of dwellings. However, the residents that did attend said that it was a very useful exercise and the fire service is happy to repeat it. The fire service will carry out a free inspection for elderly residents if they have any concerns over fire safety.
- Free testing sessions on electric blankets will be carried out at Stowmarket Fire Station on the 20<sup>th</sup> September and the 11<sup>th</sup> October; both between 1 – 3 pm.
- Cllr Otton passed on the outstanding highways issues to the Highways Department and is pleased that they have responded; the 30 mph roundel in Rattlesden Road has been repainted.

#### Mid Suffolk District Council

- The Council has approved two new procedures which will help local communities to develop strong and resilient communities for the future. The first is a “Community Right to Bid” – this is where a community can ask for a building or piece of land to be put on a register so that it cannot be sold until that community has been given the right to purchase it for community use. The second is a “Community Right to Challenge” – this is for a community group to express interest in taking over the running of a council service.

### 4 – Police Report

The Clerk read a written report from the Police

- One crime was recorded in August. A rear patio door was smashed and entry gained to a property on 6<sup>th</sup> August. Thieves made an untidy search and stole IT equipment and jewellery. Investigations are continuing.

- There have been a couple in incidences of intruders being disturbed in private gardens. Police believe that these people are on the look out for expensive garden equipment and are looking for unlocked sheds or unstored equipment – any suspicious activity should be reported.
- Suffolk Trading Standards are highlighting their Lorry Watch scheme. The scheme is intended to prevent environmental damage to some of Suffolk's most delicate settlements and to empower residents to stop the damage some HGV's are causing to communities. Full details can be found on the SCC website.
- Verity Lane has been appointed the new Crime Reduction Officer. The vacant post of Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator has been advertised.

## **5 – Open Forum**

- The Chairman suggested that the public should be included on the discussion to divert footpath 11 (off Cross Street). Mid Suffolk has received a formal application to divert footpath 11 and has asked for the Parish Council's comments. Councillors agreed that in principle there are no objections to the proposals. Cllr Munford pointed out that a sturdy footbridge will need to be installed to take walkers across the ditch and into the field. None of the residents present raised any objections.
- Some further thought has been given to the possible existence of a footpath from Hessett to Drinkstone (coming out at Whitefield Farm). No evidence has been found that a footpath has ever existed and several long standing residents had been questioned for their knowledge. It is known that possibly farm workers used it in the past and currently it used by gamekeepers. Cllr Harbutt said she thought that at one time a ruined house stood in the area. In view of the fact that the area is used heavily for game shooting it was agreed that there is probably no mileage in pursuing the introduction of a permissory path.
- A resident complained about the number of uncut hedges which are obstructing the highway. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would put a notice in the Parish Magazine to remind people to cut their hedge for the safety of all road users.
- There have been a number of complaints over the summer months about the state of the footpaths. It was noted that a resident had sent a complaint to the Parish Magazine. After discussion it was agreed that the Chairman and Cllr Munford would compile a short article on footpaths for the next Parish Magazine.
- A resident reported a faulty drain outside The Rectory. The Clerk agreed to ask the Highway Department to jet out the drain.
- A resident asked for the Highways to make improvements to the road surface in Cross Street. The recent warm weather has further deteriorated the surface and access down the lane is difficult in some areas.

## **6 – Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

## **7 – Matters Arising**

- The Highway Department has responded to the request to replace signs and to paint the roundel in Rattlesden Road. A resident has sent a thank you for getting the work done.
- A letter of thanks was sent to the Church for their hospitality over the last three years
- The pot hole in Deadmans Lane has been repaired.
- The rabbit holes on the Cricket have been filled in but a report has been received that more damage has occurred. Cllr Cousins reported that she had spoken to Mr Leonard (Pest Control) and he recommends that to eradicate the problem the rabbits have to be gassed. This would cost no more than £150. After a short discussion it was proposed by Cllr Goldstaub and seconded by Cllr Cousins

that this should be undertaken in November. This should get rid of the problem and prevent it worsening next year.

## **8 – Parish Council Vacancy**

No one has contacted the Clerk regarding filling the Parish Council vacancy. The post has been re-advertised in the September Parish Magazine.

## **9 – Finance**

The current account stands @ £2147.17; deposit account 1 @ £2652.32; deposit account 2 @ £5.27; VAT owing @ £61.60 – giving a total balance of £4866.36

The separate allotment account stands @ £711.77 (The July figure was overstated by £18.62).

£51.38 has recently been banked into the account (wayleave payment).

The following invoices were agreed and paid from the current account: - £156.25 Old Parsonage Garden Services (grass cutting June/July); £217.25 Community Action Suffolk (Housing Needs Survey fees); £20 S. Rose (6 bags topsoil); £7.20 S. Cousins (postage stamps).

The following invoices were approved from the allotment account £82.45 Anglian Water (Gedding Road); £32.59 Anglian Water (Rattlesden Road).

The insurance renewal for the coming year has been received and the cost is £387.97. Cllr Cousins said she would like all Councillors to review the renewal document before it is paid and it was placed in the correspondence file.

The playground inspection has been delayed because Mid Suffolk has combined the inspections with Babergh. This means that the inspection is now overdue. The yearly inspection is to be carried out in September. Councillors agreed that this was not ideal as inspections should be carried out before the school holidays. It was agreed that next year if the Council decides to carry out late inspections an alternative should be considered. In the meantime the playground will be visually checked on a weekly basis.

The Clerk left the meeting room while Councillors discussed her salary. Councillors agreed to a 1% increase in salary – this is in line with the National Association of Local Councils national pay scheme. The hourly rate increases to £8.43.

## **10 – Planning**

### Recent Applications

**2090/13** – Erection of single storey and two storey side extensions at 1 Farm Close, Drinkstone. Councillors raised no objections to the proposal although it was noted that not all elevations were available to view on the website.

### MSDC Decisions

**1739/13** – Cherry Tree Development. Proposal – Non material amendment to windows and doors to plots 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108 and 109. Approved

**1973/16** – 2 Green Close, Drinkstone. Proposal - Non material amendment to 2783/12, ground floor window moved from northwest to southwest elevation. Approved

**3780/12** – Cherry Tree Development. Proposal – Variation to working hours and landscaping – Approved

## **11 – Housing Needs Survey and Affordable Homes**

The full report of the Housing Needs Survey has now been received. A copy of the survey has been printed and placed in the correspondence file. There are some points that need clarifying so it was agreed to ask Sunila Osbourne to attend a future meeting to discuss some of these issues.

Cllr Goldstaub reported that she had attended the recent opening of the affordable homes on the Cherry Tree Rise development and that she was surprised to learn that the tenants had already been allocated. It is not known whether the new tenants have local links and it is also not known what policy the housing department use for implementing the tenancies. It would appear that a number of people with local links

may have missed out. It was agreed to ask Anne Bennet (Mid Suffolk Enabling Officer) to attend a future meeting together with Sunila to discuss these and other issues.

### **12 – Footpaths**

Most of the outstanding footpath issues had already been discussed. Cllr Munford said she was delighted with the new footpath through the Cherry Tree site.

### **13 – Playing Field.**

The Clerk reported that she had received a telephone call from Sam Clarke who is buying plot 114 on the Cherry Tree Rise development. He is very interested in possibly purchasing part or all of the “cheese wedge” which backs onto his new property. Councillors considered the various options including; legal costs; valuation; other possible purchasers; access; cost of maintenance and leasing. It was agreed that at this stage the first step is to get a firm valuation before any decision can be reached. The Chairman agreed to pass to the Clerk details of a surveyor who may carry out a free valuation.

### **14 – Correspondence**

- Copy of letter from Suffolk Highways to Tim Passmore re the Road Signs
- SCC – Acknowledgement from Suffolk Transport re School Bus Stop
- Drinkstone War Memorial Institute – Conditions of Hire
- SSAFA – Support for Forces and their Families
- SALC – The Local Councillor
- Drinkstone Housing Needs Survey
- Insurance Renewal
- Fire Safety Leaflets

### **15 – Other Urgent Business**

Cllr Harbutt reported that someone has set up a business repairing cars in Tostock Lane. This has been causing problems with local residents. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask planning enforcement to check the business out.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:25pm

**Date of next meeting – Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013  
(These minutes will be verified at the next meeting)**