

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 7th October 2013 in the Village Hall

Present

Cllrs A. Clarke, S. Cousins, M. Goldstaub (Chair), C. Harbutt, C. Munford, the Clerk, SCC/MSDC Cllr P. Otton, PCSO Collette Denny, Sunila Osbourne (Community Action Suffolk), Ian Tippett (MSDC/Babergh) and seven residents.

1 – Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from Cllr Nolan

2 - Declarations of Interest

None

3 - Welcome to New Councillor

The Chairman invited Tim Moss to join the Parish Council as a co-opted member. This fills the vacancy that was created earlier this year. The Chairman welcomed Tim to the Parish Council and thanked him for joining the team. Cllr Moss will be required to fill in the necessary documents that are required by the District Monitoring Officer.

4 – Housing Needs Survey and Affordable Homes

Earlier this year a Housing Needs Survey was carried out in the village. The survey was delivered to every house in the village and Sunila Osbourne compiled the report. The Parish Council welcomed Sunila to the meeting to clarify her findings.

Housing Needs Summary.

Sunila said she was pleased with the return rate of 44%; which is a very positive response. Of those forms returned 81% were in favour of some kind of affordable housing scheme in the village. In total 4 households were identified as having an immediate housing need. Sunila also checked the Mid Suffolk Gateway to Homes List and identified a further 6 households claiming to have a connection to Drinkstone. This gives a total of 10 households with a current requirement for an affordable home in Drinkstone. Sunila's recommendation from the statistics is that a further five to six homes of various sizes would meet the current demand.

Affordable Homes

Ian Tippett (MSDC/Babergh) had also been invited to the meeting to clarify the process for implementing an affordable housing scheme and to throw some light on the way houses are allocated. The Local Authority has done away with the old points system and now operates a choice based lettings scheme as required by Central Government. All properties that become available are advertised and prospective tenants have to bid for the homes they are interested in. In addition to this there are generally two types of development; an open market development (open to anyone interested) or an exception site (only open to people with strong links and local connections). If the Parish Council decides to follow the recommendations from the Housing Needs Survey and build a further 5 to 6 homes, this would be an exclusive development only for people with local connections.

Cherry Tree Rise

Councillors expressed dismay that none of the houses recently allocated by Orbit Homes on the Cherry Tree Rise development had gone to local people. The Parish Council had been lead to believe from the outset of the planning application that this would be the case. As Drinkstone is a village in the countryside with restricted development; the Parish Council has always regarded the development as an "exception site"; which would mean any affordable homes should have been allocated to local people. Ian Tippett said that the planning application would identify whether the development was regarded as an exception site and he agreed to make some further inquiries with the Planning Department.

In general the Parish Council feels let down by the system and considers that local people may have been overlooked in this case. It was agreed that some further research was required before any decisions are reached. Cllr Clarke suggested that it would be useful to find out from Mid Suffolk if any restrictions can be placed on existing stock to limit the tenancies to people with local connections. The item will continue to be discussed at future meetings. There being no further questions Sunila Osbourne and Ian Tippett left the meeting.

5 – Cllr Ottons Reports

Suffolk County Council

- SCC has confirmed that the cost of the work to redirect footpath 11 will be the responsibility of the landowner.
- Both the County and District Councils have opposed the proposals to toll the A14 in the Cambridge area. Cllr Otton said she did remind the Council that much of the road is in need of repair.
- The pupil premium has been increased at both Beyton and Thurston schools for the coming year. The money will ensure that families in need do not miss out on free school meals and special events. It is important that this expenditure is closely monitored.
- There has been considerable discussion between SCC and BT over how to roll-out high speed broadband. Representatives from both sides attended a meeting last week to discuss the implementation and Cllr Otton passed copies of the minutes to the Clerk for circulation. The Council want assurances that rural areas are not left behind in the upgrade. A local resident has also high-lighted this point. Cllr Otton agreed to supply a roll-out map which gives an idea of when to Drinkstone is likely to be upgraded.
- Helen Wilson (Thurston Head Teacher) recently attended a Beyton PC meeting to explain some of her ideas for the Six Form College in Beyton. She is in talks with Abbeycroft Leisure about the possibility of the public using the sports facilities on the site and she is also looking at the idea of setting up a Post Office/Shop.
- Penny has handed out certificates and medals at Thurston Library to youngsters who completed the summer reading challenge and next year she is hoping to launch a short story competition for older children.

Mid Suffolk District Council

- New laws have been introduced covering the handling of scrap metal. The Council has agreed to administer the licensing and to work together with trading standards over site inspections.
- Cllr Otton has asked the Council to consider drawing up a policy on wind and solar energy farms. She is concerned about the need to protect valuable/productive farmland.
- MSDC has recently taken on 12 new apprentices under their work experience scheme.

6 – Police Report by Collette Denny (PCSO)

One crime was recorded in the village for the month of September. A quantity of straw bales was stolen from fields off Woolpit Road. The crime remains undetected although house to house inquiries have been made.

Police advise that with the winter fast approaching it is very likely that oil theft will increase. Residents are advised to be vigilant and check their tanks regularly.

Suffolk Horse Watch is advising owners to be aware of any interference with their horses. It is believed that some horses have been marked for future theft by having their tails cut or plaited. Any suspicious activity should be reported.

Police are also advising home owners to be aware of cold callers claiming to offer refunds involving Sky cards. People are told they have overpaid and are offered a refund on receipt on their bank details. Sky has confirmed that they would never approach a customer in this way. Residents are reminded never to give out personal details; legitimate businesses would never ask you to disclose information in this way.

The Mid Suffolk Community Speedwatch Team is to receive an award at the next priority task meeting (16th Oct). This is for their commitment and dedication.

7 – Open Forum

The Chairman opened the meeting to floor for questions and comment.

The residents present were in agreement with the Council over the way the local authority and Orbit Homes had handled the tenancies of the homes on the Cherry Tree Rise development. The Housing Needs Survey leaves a lot of questions unanswered. After further discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would write to Mid Suffolk; Orbit Homes and Gipping Homes to get some clarity over what went wrong. The Parish Council's confidence in the communications between the various parties has been severely tested and some explanations are required from all of them.

8 – Minutes

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

9 – Matters Arising

- A notice was placed in the parish magazine about the need to cut hedges back from the highway.
- An article on footpaths will appear in the November parish magazine. The October magazine was too full to take the item.
- The faulty drain outside The Old Rectory has been reported.
- The Highways have visited Cross Street and marked out an area of road to be repaired. They have also cut the verge at the bottom end of the lane.
- Cllr Cousins has booked the pest control expert to eradicate the rabbits on the Cricket
- Mid Suffolk is investigating the business in Tostock Road. They have served a planning contravention notice and are waiting for a response to questions about site operations.

10 – Playing Field and Adjacent Land.

- The Chairman had received an estimate from an independent surveyor about the value of the land between the Cricket and the new homes. It was agreed that the valuation was not entirely useful and that further quotes should be obtained before any decision is made on whether to sell or lease the land. The PC was in agreement that to keep the land would prove costly as it would have to be landscaped and maintained.
- The playground safety report has been received and there are no high risk issues. A copy of the full report has been printed off and put in the correspondence file.
- A complaint has been received about dog fouling on the playing field. Two Councillors and the Clerk said they had recently walked around the field and not seen any evidence of dog fouling – people are usually very good at clearing up after their dog in this location.
- A resident in one of the new Orbit Homes has complained about the lack of light coming into the back of her house due to a large tree. The PC agreed it would not be practical to spend any money on trimming the tree as it is considering selling the land. The coming leaf drop should improve the situation for the tenant. The PC has no objection to the tenant trimming off any branches that are over her side of the fence.
- A resident has reported that there have been a few near misses on the new footpath between the Cricket and the Gedding Road from children riding skate boards. It was agreed to pass the details of the incident on to Patrick Scrivens at Rights of Way and ask for his opinion on the safety aspect. CPSO Collette Denny said if an incident happens again the matter should be reported immediately and the Police would be more than happy to come out and talk to the children about road safety.

11 – Finance

The current account stands @ £3267.47 (the second half precept payment has been received); deposit account 1 @ £2652.68; deposit account 2 @ £5.27 and VAT owing is £87.54. Giving a total of £6012.96

The separate allotment account stands @ £763.77 (includes cheque for £52 received as rent for land).

The following invoices were approved for payment: - Clerks Salary (July – Sept + back pay) £154.14; Grass Cutting (August) £62.50; MSDC Annual Play Inspection Fee £62.04 and Community Action Suffolk £387.97 (Zurich Annual Insurance Premium).

Councillors confirmed that they had reviewed the insurance documents and were happy with the cover.

12 – Planning

New Planning

2456/13 – Proposal – Listed building consent for alterations and repairs to the roundhouse of Drinkstone Post Mill. Urgent repairs are required to the Post Mill to prevent further deterioration of the building; the Parish Council raised no objection to the work being carried out.

MSDC Decisions

2090/13 – Erection of single/double storey extensions at 1 Farm Close, Drinkstone – Approved

2527/13 – Erection of detached double garage at Moat Farm, Park Road – Approved

13 – Allotments

Cllr Clarke reported that £250 is the estimated the cost of the parts for installing an automatic feed to the water supply at the Gedding Road allotments. He asked the Parish Council to approve the costs and stated that he would use volunteer labour from the allotment holders to install the system. It was proposed by Cllr Goldstaub and seconded by Cllr Harbutt that the work is undertaken.

14 – Village Quiz

Cllr Cousins suggested a Parish Council Quiz team for the village quiz on the 12th October. However, several members of the Council said they had already organised teams of their own.

15 – Correspondence

- Drinkstone Playing Field – Annual Inspection Report
- Drinkstone War Memorial Institute – End of Year Accounts
- Suffolk Accident Rescue Service – Appeal for Funding
- Suffolk View
- Glasdon Brochure
- Housing for Local People
- Broadband Update – Minutes from last weeks BT/SCC meeting

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:35pm

Date of next meeting Monday 4th November 2013

These minutes will be validated at the next meeting