

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 2 February 2015 at 8.00pm in Drinkstone Village Hall

Present: Cllr Adrian Clarke (Chairman), Cllr Sue Cousins, Cllr Christine Harbutt, Cllr Cora Munford, Cllr Tim Moss and Cllr Paul Nolan

In Attendance: County and District Cllr Penny Otton
Three members of the public
(Acting) Parish Clerk: Doug Reed

1 Apologies for Absence
None.

2 Declarations of Interest
None.

The meeting was adjourned for reports from external bodies and for public comment and questions:

3 District and County Councillor
Cllr Otton was not available when this agenda item was taken. She arrived late following her attendance at the meeting of another parish council. Her report (attached as an appendix to these minutes) was read out and duly noted. There were no matters arising.

4 Suffolk Constabulary
Neither PC 421 Annelly Miles nor PCSO 3225 Ryan Brunning was able to attend the meeting. Both had sent their apologies. The Suffolk Constabulary report (attached as an appendix to these minutes) was read out and duly noted. There had been no crimes reported in the period since the last Council meeting.

5 Public Discussion
Several matters were raised relating to roads, ditches and water problems throughout the village but no new areas of concern were identified. The Chairman reiterated that watercourses adjacent to properties were the responsibility of the owners of those properties. As such, the Parish Council had no powers to invoke or actions it might take but could only seek to report problems elsewhere and, if needed, function as a 'go between'. It was also emphasised that the geography of the area combined with the recent poor weather, with roads often lower than fields, meant that currently there tended to be problems across the village.

Meeting resumed:

6 Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting
It was agreed that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 5 January, be signed as a true record.

7 Matters Arising
None.

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8 Council Vacancies

8.1 Parish Clerk

A possible candidate had come forward to the Council but had suggested a starting salary significantly in excess of spinal column point (SCP) 15 of the national salary scale applicable to parish clerks. SCP 15 would be the normal starting position for any new post-holder. In the circumstances, it was felt that there was no way forward other than to decline the approach.

8.2 Parish Councillor Co-option

Two residents had responded to the vacancy for a councillor and offered themselves for co-option, one of whom was at the meeting. Accordingly, he was asked to leave while deliberations took place. Each person offered a range of skills and experience but, after an amount of discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Nolan, seconded by Cllr Munford, that Mr Barry Evans be co-opted to serve until the current term of office ended in May. The proposal was carried unanimously.

9 Playing Field

9.1 Dog Fouling

Further to on-going concerns, not least those expressed in the village newsletter, the Council confirmed that it was looking into all available options to deal with dog fouling. In so doing, it had to be mindful of solutions which were not only capable of being policed but also cost-effective. It was pointed out that any expensive way forward would necessarily impact upon the precept and, in turn, the council tax. Several councillors not only noted that most dog owners were responsible but also that the issue seemed greater on footpaths in the village. To deal more robustly with the problem, such as through Dog Control Orders, the Council would need to operate within the parameters of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and this would involve working through the larger public authorities in the county. In the circumstances, it was agreed that more punitive action would not be appropriate at the present time but that the process for tackling the situation more substantially would be documented for future reference and that the extent of the problem would be kept under on-going review.

9.2 'The Cheese Wedge'

The working party to deal with the remaining waste had been delayed by the poor weather. It was noted that, when work was possible, the laurel needed to be cut back and that similar attention might be needed with regard to the holly bush.

10 Finance

10.1 Financial Report

Cllr Cousins reported on the current position with the Council finances, as below:

Current account (Santander UK)	£1,828.47
Deposit account I (Santander UK)	£2,657.17
Deposit account II (Santander UK)	£5.27
Sub-total:	£4,490.91
VAT owing	£312.99
Total:	£4,803.90

Allotments

Current account (Lloyds Bank)	£604.77
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It was noted that the cheque for the noticeboard, in the sum of £1,429.20, had now been cashed. It was resolved that outstanding invoices be paid, as below:

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- ◆ Drinkstone War Memorial Institute: £220.00 (11 meetings @ £20.00);
- ◆ Mr D Reed: £41.52 (Acting Parish Clerk - January); and
- ◆ Drinkstone History Group: £10.00 (Website).

10.2 Donations (Section 137 Discretionary Expenditure)

Given budget constraints, and after some debate, it was agreed that the Council should support a single charity as opposed to offering only small amounts to two or more organisations. It was proposed by Cllr Harbutt, seconded by Cllr Nolan, that Council support Suffolk Community First Responders in the sum of £40.00. The proposal was carried. Cllr Cousins agreed to identify the appropriate recipient location for that body.

10.3 Village Hall: Defibrillator

It was reported that correspondence had been received offering Drinkstone the opportunity to have a free defibrillator located at the Village Hall. However, it was noted that the correspondence was addressed not to the Parish Council but to the Village Hall Committee. Moreover, while the equipment was potentially free of charge, there were costs involved in the provision of a 'box' to enable its installation. Due to the obvious confusion over the intended correct recipients for the offer and the fact that costs had not been provided, it was felt that the Council could take no action at the present time.

10.4 Other Financial Matters

Cllr Cousins reported that Lloyds Bank had confirmed acceptance of the changes to signatories for the current account it held on behalf of the Council. It was also reported that she was to attend, at a cost of £25.00, a briefing on external audit requirements being held at the Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

11 Planning

11.1 Applications

2697/14 and 2698/14 both related to Home Farm, The Street - application, including Listed Building Consent, was to (1) replace two previously bricked-up windows to front elevation; and insert windows to match existing with leaded panes; (2) fit front doors to existing porch to front door and infill side; and (3) extend brick and flint garden wall to match existing in height and design replacing timber fencing. The Council had no objection.

11.2 MSDC Decisions

3540/14 Little Meadow House, Cross Street - permission for the erection of a single storey extension to and conversion of existing garage to form detached annex had been granted.

12 Highways

12.1 Roads and Ditches

The situation with roads and ditches in the village was reviewed and updates provided on outstanding issues. The Chairman noted that salt/grit had been supplied by the County Council which had also undertaken a programme of pothole repairs. Further, it was reported that gulleys and drains had been jet-washed although the flyover area remained a recurring problem. Cllr Nolan reported that some rubbish/debris had accumulated at the junction of Deadman's Lane and Woolpit Green which would need some attention. In Park Road some hedges had been cut but not up to Tostock Road. Cllr Harbutt offered to ask for further work to be carried out. Cllr Munford confirmed that the ditches in Cross

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Street continued to suffer given that no progress had been forthcoming, and the that the problems extended to Lane End Cottage. Cllr Clarke would check the position with the Suffolk County Council Highways Engineer responsible for Drinkstone.

12.2 Speeding

Following issues raised at the last meeting the Chairman had contacted Suffolk Constabulary about carrying out speed checks within the village. He reported, with regret, that he had not been met with a positive response but would continue to seek action.

13 Parish Noticeboard

The Chairman reported that the new noticeboard had been delivered but that, unfortunately, its installation had been delayed due to the recent bad weather. However, it would be put in place as soon as it was reasonably possible to do so.

14 Footpaths

It was confirmed that four fingerposts denoting footpaths needed replacing - one each in Woolpit Road and Park Road, and two in Hill Farm Lane. Cllr Munford offered to contact Suffolk County Council to seek remedial action.

15 Correspondence

It was noted that three items of correspondence had been received but nothing demanding the particular attention of the Council. However, publicity material supplied by Age UK Suffolk would be posted in the new noticeboard when the latter had been able to be installed.

16 Other Business of an Urgent Nature

None.

17 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 2 March at 8.00pm in Drinkstone Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.29pm.