

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5th December 2011 in All Saints Church, Drinkstone

Present – Cllrs A. Clarke, S. Cousins, M. Goldstaub (Chair), A. Johnson, C. Munford, P. Nolan, the Clerk, MSDC/SCC Cllr P. Otton, PCSO Sian Uttley, Sunila Osbourne (Suffolk ACRE), Anne Bennett (MSDC) and five members of the public.

1 – Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from Cllr Lyn Hannant

2 - Declarations of Interest

None

3 – Cllr Ottos Reports

Suffolk County Council

- Schools Review There is still a lot of confusion over the plans to reorganise the area schools from a three-tier to a two-tier system. A number of meetings have been held and it is apparent that there are a lot of unanswered questions over the future of the local education system. One idea is for Beyton School to become a campus of Thurston Community College; with teachers moving from site to site, not the pupils. The Council has proposed that Rattlesden School will not need extra classroom space despite taking extra pupils. Access and parking arrangements are also an issue at most primary schools. The consultation closes on the 9th December and the proposals will be put before the Cabinet in the New Year.

Mid Suffolk District Council

- The new joint heads of service have been appointed for MSDC/Babergh Councils
- A joint Tenants Board has been set up and members will be travelling around the two districts aiming to increase tenant involvement. A contractor has recently been withdrawn from house maintenance repairs because of shoddy workmanship.
- Elections for a new Police Commissioner will take place in November 2012.
- A public inquiry will be held on the future of the Forge Caravan Site, Combs Lane, Stowmarket on the 13th December.
- The Scrutiny Committee has reviewed the performance of the planning enforcement team. There are a number of outstanding unresolved issues which need to be sorted.
- The Chairman asked Cllr Otton for further advice on the Councils standards with regard to the latest building regulations, especially in relation to affordable homes and environmental considerations. A resident has questioned the draft proposals of Gipping Homes and suggested that a higher standard could be achieved.

4 – Police Report

PCSO Sian Uttley presented a short report

- No crimes for the month of November
- The next neighbourhood team meeting will be held at Elmswell Police Station on Monday 23rd January at 7pm

- The Police are planning to hold crime prevention evenings in the New Year. People will be able to obtain useful information; bring along property for post coding (i.e. new bicycles) etc. There will also be items for sale such as alarms, locks security pens. Councillors agreed that this would be worthwhile as long as adequate publicity is given prior to the event.

Councillor Goldstaub closed the meeting and welcomed Sunila Osbourne (Suffolk ACRE) and Anne Bennett (MSDC Enabling Officer) to present a talk on developing affordable housing in rural areas.

The Affordable Housing Scheme had been set up because of concerns that people had been gradually forced out of the area where they had grown up; due to the increasing costs of housing. The scheme involves undertaking a Housing Needs Survey within the parish which will then identify anyone that needs housing and what type of housing is required. Once a need has been established a joint team of interested parties locate a site within a village and negotiates with land owners on the purchase of the land so that the building scheme can go ahead. These sites are often “exception sites” and would not normally be released for housing. Ms Bennett reported that there are currently 1800 people on the Mid Suffolk housing list and of these 22 had identified a connection with Drinkstone.

Councillors agreed that it was a scheme worth future consideration although it would not relate to the four new affordable homes to be built on the Cherry Tree site, as this is a long standing agreement and will be developed by Gipping Homes in connection with a local Housing Association. A selection of brochures and further information was handed over to the Parish Council for future reference and Cllr Goldstaub thanked the ladies for their informative presentation.

5 – New Land/Cherry Tree site

- There have only been two responses to the appeal for ideas on what to do with the strip of land adjacent to the playing field. The first was to sell the land and use the money for village projects and the second was to turn the site into a mountain bike track. Councillors agreed that the mountain bike track would be costly and the site is too small. There would also be insurance/safety implications to take into account. The original idea of extending the football pitch is a non-starter; this might have seemed a good idea twenty years ago but there is now no demand. It was agreed to leave the consultation open for a further month.
- A further suggestion for naming the new road had been put forward – Cherry Tree Rise. A final decision will be made in the New Year.
- Two emails had been received from parishioners following the last meeting expressing concerns over the number of trees that had been taken out and the sustainability of the new housing scheme. Gipping Homes has confirmed that the clearance is now complete; only necessary trees have been taken down, with the full approval of MSDC Tree Officer. The clearance needed to be done to prevent overcrowding and before the birds start to nest again. Gipping Homes has also confirmed its commitment to sustainable homes and the most practical and effective resources will be incorporated into the new homes.
- The Clerk distributed maps received from UK Power Network. These show where the cabling will need to be routed across the Cricket, to enable a sufficient power supply to be diverted to the new site. The representative from UK Power has explained that a trenching tool will bury the cable 1 metre deep and has assured that the site will be reinstated to the

current standard. Rights of Way will be notified and a footpath closure will have to be enforced when the work is in progress. Advance notice will be given prior to the work commencing. A wayleave agreement needs to be signed before the work can proceed. All of this depends upon Dr and Mrs Ridsdill-Smith granting permission for the cables to be brought across their field from the mains supply. Mrs Ridsdill-Smith informed the meeting that she has arranged a meeting with two UK Power representatives on the 14th December to discuss their proposals. Councillors agreed in principle that they had no objections to the work on the Cricket; but would wait for the outcome of the meeting on the 14th before returning the wayleave agreement.

6 – Open Forum

The Chairman opened the meeting to the floor for questions.

A resident from Gedding Road expressed concern over the amount of front garden that she would be losing when the entrance to the new development is commenced. Councillors agreed that the detail on the draft plan does not specify how much of the front garden will be affected, although it is known to be a condition of the planning permission that the site entrance is to be improved. The detail will come in the planning application and then residents will have the opportunity to make their views known.

7 – Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th November 2011 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

8 – Matters Arising

- Cllr Munford had put an article in the parish magazine about the route of the footpath through the new site and onto the Cricket.
- The missing footpath signs and the damaged road sign have been reported to SCC

9 – Finance

The current account stands at £934.78; deposit account at £3623.25, giving a total balance of £4558.03. The village hall account stands at £5121.25 and the allotment account at £462.91 (including £25.65 VAT refund).

A VAT refund of £116.50 has been received from HM Customs and Revenue

The following invoices were approved for payment – Old Parsonage Garden Services £62.50; Nigel George (Solicitor Fees) £294.00 and Drinkstone Allotments £25.65 (VAT refund).

Cllr Cousins handed out a spreadsheet with a breakdown of Parish Council expenditure for the current year and a forecast of the expected requirements for the coming year 2012/13. A short discussion was held on ways to save money and suggestions of what needs to be budgeted for next year. It was agreed to give the matter further consideration and to put on next months agenda when a final decision on the precept requirements for 12/13 will be made.

10 – Planning

New Planning Applications

3650/11 – Elm Tree Cottage, Gedding Road, Drinkstone. Proposal – Replacement of two external doors. **No objections**

3882/11 – Meade Cottage, Beyton Road, Drinkstone. Proposal – Continued use of former agricultural land for keeping horses and erection of stables. Alterations to existing vehicular access and construction of new driveway, parking and turning area – **No objections**

MSDC Decisions

3601/11 – Woodend, Rattlesden Road, Drinkstone. Works to Ash Tree – **Approved**

3263/11 – Abilene Lodge, Gedding Road, Drinkstone. Installation of air source heat pump – **Approved**

11 – Schools Review

The booklet outlining the proposals for the Thurston area school reorganisation has been circulated to Councillors. It was agreed that it would be difficult to send a response as a Council as individuals are affected in different ways. It was therefore agreed that if Councillors wished to respond they should do so individually.

12 – Correspondence

SCC – Budget Consultation

SALC – Course Information and Public Transport Survey

SALC – Newsletter of the Year Competition

MSDC/Babergh DC – Newsletter

Suffolk Age Concern – News and Services

Information Leaflets on Affordable Housing Scheme

13 - Other Business

- Cllr Munford reported that a 4x4 vehicle had been seen and heard driving around the Cricket in the evenings. No one had managed to get a vehicle registration number; the Police have been informed.
- Cllr Goldstaub reported that following the passing of the Localism Bill on the 15th November the Parish Council would need to review its standing orders to ensure that it complies with the principles set out in the Nolan Report covering the Code of Conduct. The standing orders were last reviewed four years ago when they were translated into a friendlier format.
- Cllr Cousins reported that the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Church Council were keen to be involved in a joint celebration for the Queens Jubilee. This will be on the agenda for January.
- The Village Hall Committee has asked if the PC can suggest a place to relocate the recycling bins when the building work begins on the new hall. Councillors agreed that apart from the Cricket there was no other space available and no one thought it was a good idea to use the playing field because of access and safety reasons.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:37pm

The Chairman wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Date of next meeting – Monday 9th January 2012