

Coddenham

Parish Council



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CODDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES 7.30pm, Tuesday 18th October 2018

In Attendance: Cllr. Burton, (Chair), Cllr. Burgess, Cllr. Fawdry, Cllr. Fowler, Cllr. Keeble, Cllr. Lock, Cllr. Peacock, Cllr. Soanes, and Mr Whitehouse, (Clerk), and approx. 30 members of the public.

Item 1, To **RECEIVE** and **APPROVE** apologies for absence. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Darell-Brown, Cllr. Hardy, Cllr. West and Cllr Hicks.

Item 2, To **RECEIVE** any Requests for Dispensation on Declarations of Interest. No declarations were received.

Item 3, To **CONSIDER** comments from residents of the Parish on current agenda items. Item 11, Safety Matters at the Coddenham Bridge: A Parishioner described the difficulties in negotiating the approach to the Bridge and reported that there had been another accident within the last few hours. Item 10: A Parishioner asked whether the overhanging trees on Lower Road could be cut back. The Chair advised that the owners of the trees were responsible for their maintenance and that the County Council had powers to enforce safety matters on the public highway.

In recognition of the interest shown by many of the Parishioners present at the meeting, the Chairman brought forward Item 8.

Item 8, To **CONSIDER** a proposal to respond to the County Council's consultation on Changes to the School Catchment Areas. Cllr Burgess introduced the report, describing the difficulties which would arise from cancelling the catchment areas. Councillors and Parishioners commented on matters relating to school transport provision and different school holidays for families with children at two different schools. A Parishioner suggested that Debenham High School be approached to engage in a coordinated response to the proposals and that a Freedom of Information request to the County Council on the costs of the proposals could inform the basis of a response. She also commented that there was no primary school within walking distance of the Village and therefore the children in Coddenham attended multiple primary schools. The Chairman then moved the proposal, "that Coddenham Parish Council should respond to the SCC consultation on the proposal to abolish school catchment areas, opposing this proposal". Cllr Burgess proposed and Cllrs Soanes, Fawdry and Keeble seconded the proposal, which was **CARRIED** unanimously. Cllr Burges agreed to draft a response for the Clerk to forward to the County Council.

Item 4, To **RECEIVE** a report from Cllr Passmore. Cllr Passmore addressed various matters in his report and added comments on the proposals for new housing provision in the District, the proposed District Council boundary changes which will bring Coddenham and Claydon together and the difficulties in progressing with the merger between Babergh and Mid-Suffolk district councils. Cllr Passmore was concerned that further reductions in funding would mean a greater reliance on the charities and volunteers for

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services which were historically provided by councils. Cllr Soanes described a recent difficulty she had experienced in trying to report a minor crime though the 101-telephone line, when she was advised to make the report via email or text. Cllr Passmore agreed that this was not acceptable and asked Cllr Soanes to provide further details. Cllr Fowler asked whether the Police would be making use of the Unexplained Wealth Act. Cllr Passmore advised that this had been used but that more use of this provision would be welcome. Cllr Peacock asked whether a notice under Sect 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act could be sent to the owners of the Dukes Head. Cllr Passmore advised that he thought this had been done but that he would check on progress. The Report was **Received**.

Item 5, To **RECEIVE** and **CONFIRM** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 26th July 2018, deferred from last meeting. Council confirmed that the minutes were a true record of proceedings and the copy was signed by the Chairman.

Item 6, To **RECEIVE** and **CONFIRM** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th September 2018. Council confirmed that the minutes were a true record of proceedings and the copy was signed by the Chairman.

Item 7, To **CONSIDER** Matters Arising from previous minutes of the Parish Council Meetings. Cllr Peacock asked for a progress report on the use of timesheets. The Chairman asked the Clerk to raise this as an agenda item for a future meeting.

Item 9, To **RECEIVE** a report on the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy. The Clerk presented a report on the requirement to submit a return to the District Infrastructure Team on the receipts and expenditures of the Parish element of the Community Infrastructure Levy, related to the previous financial year's accounts. Cllrs Fowler and Peacock challenged the report on grounds of inaccuracy as the figures did not include expenditure on the Outdoor Gymnasium and the Picnic Bench, as agreed by Council. The Clerk advised that the report related to the year 2017/18 during which no expenditure was incurred. Cllr Peacock insisted that the Council had resolved to take funds from the CIL to pay for the items. The Clerk advised that, although comments on the use of the CIL funds had been made during discussions which resulted in the Council resolving to postpone the decision to purchase the Gymnasium, no resolution to use CIL funds had been agreed. The Chairman concurred and asked that the matter be settled by an item on the next agenda to determine expenditure of the CIL funds. **Agreed**. The Report was **Received**.

Item 10, To **CONSIDER** Quotes for the Maintenance of Trees in the Parish. The Clerk presented a report detailing quotes for the removal of three trees in the recreation ground and an annual tree survey on five sites in the parish. Cllr Fowler asked for the details of each of the tendering companies. The Clerk advised that it was customary to withhold the details of tendering companies from the report until a decision had been taken. The Clerk advised that one contractor had offered to prepare a Tree Management Policy for the Council to consider for adoption. Council noted that they were not bound to accept the lowest quote and considered whether there were reasons not to do so. In the absence of any reason to accept a higher quote, Cllr Lock suggested that all three work items should be considered together and proposed that tender number two should be offered all three contracts. **Agreed**. The Clerk advised Council that Allen Forestry would be offered the contract.

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Item 11, To **CONSIDER** a proposal regarding Safety Matters at the Coddenham Bridge. Cllr Fowler introduced the report explaining that, in addition to the need for new signage the reduction of the hedge would be helpful in reducing the risk. Cllr Soanes agreed that this was an important element. Cllr Burton asked whether a reversal of the priorities could help. Cllr Lock felt that reducing the hedge was the most effective way of dealing with the issue. Cllr Burton noted that the three most serious accidents involved traffic from the direction of the A140 entering the village. Cllr Keeble commented that traffic lights would be the answer but recognised that the expense was prohibitive. The Chair put the proposal that the Highways Working Group be tasked to prepare a report on the County Highways proposals and costs for additional signage at the Coddenham Bridge. **Carried** with one abstention.

Item 12, To **RECEIVE** a Report on Alternative Placements for the Speed Indicator Device. Cllr Keeble introduced the report on behalf of himself and Cllr Hardy, commenting that the general impression from discussions with villagers was that the average speed of traffic had reduced since the device had been installed. He and Cllr Hardy had prepared a submission for the site at the top of the High Street near the barns and they believed the this may be suitable if the trees were cut back to keep the sign clear and visible. Awaiting a formal response from County. They had also visited the Church Road site which they felt did not meet the current regulations but may be suitable if the hedge was reduced along the open field. Cllr Burgess reminded Council of the possibility that the Day Foundation might fund the purchase of a second SID if the sites are accepted by the County.

Item 13, To **CONSIDER** Planning Applications and to **NOTE** Planning Decisions, including those received after publication of this agenda. Cllr Fowler noted the refusal of the Dukes Head application and Cllr Peacock suggested that Council should consider what pressures might be brought to encourage the District Council regarding this site. The Chairman suggested that Cllr Peacock prepare a report for a future Council meeting. Agreed.

No further planning applications had been received and Council **noted** the remaining planning decision reported.

Item 14, To **RECEIVE** the Clerk's report. The Clerk presented his report and responded to questions from councillors. The Clerk was asked to write to the contractors advising them of the positive feedback from the Churchyard Management Group. Cllr Peacock asked whether the Clerk had checked that the Football Club had received planning permission for the advertising signposts. The Clerk reported that he had been assured by the Club's Chairman that they had taken advice from the Planning Authority. Cllr Soanes advised that the Planning authority had advised the Club on the new, temporary structures. Cllr Peacock advised that these were still subject to planning law. The Clerk was asked to request written confirmation of the advice given by the Planning Authority. The Clerk's report was **Received**

Item 15, To **RECEIVE** the RFO's report. The RFO advised that he had received an email from Cllr Peacock disagreeing with the report's assertion that the FBWG found all the submitted documents to be in order. The RFO advised Council that following Cllr Peacock's questions on several matters, he had specifically asked whether he had answered everything to the Cllr's satisfaction and that no corrections had been made to any of the papers. The Chairman requested that the Clerk appends a copy of Cllr Peacock's email to the minutes of the meeting.

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Dear Peter,

Please take this email as a dissenting report in connection with that part of your above item 1st paragraph, in which you record, in part, in respect of the finance details presented at the meeting the following:

“All were found to be on order.”

I not recall either being asked the question and I do not wish to be associated with your statement with which I disagree. You will know that I raised several issues of concern including how the VAT underpayment is / has been dealt with, and especially in relation to CIL and the adult play equipment invoice the payment of which was split over two financial years with a substantial amount of the capital cost and VAT (albeit that element to be reclaimed,) over and above the generous donations being taken from general reserves. This non-donation element totalled £1,531 capital cost plus £1,549.20 VAT. This amount was I recall, as did others at the working group, was to be taken from the CIL account which it clearly has not. (Incidentally, correct me if my memory is failing, but another tranche of the CIL monies was to have been used for the acquisition of the new picnic table which it has not.) The question still remains unanswered, where is there any council authority for this GR payment?

I request that this be raised at the next meeting and noted in the minutes as a dissenting report.

You will note that I have not felt able to send this email to two councillors who presently I understand rely on proxy email recipients.

Thank you,

John Peacock
15th. October 2018

The RFO presented 12 appendices to his report, detailing the 1st and 2nd quarter receipts and payments, a copy of the current budget, bank statements for both Council's accounts to the end of the second quarter, a bank reconciliation for the Current account, a list of current Direct Debit mandates, VAT Lists and Returns and full Receipts and Payments lists for the 1st and 2nd quarters, as previously copied to Council. Cllr Soanes inspected the bank reconciliation against the bank statements and **Certified** them as reconciled.

The RFO reported that the VAT account had been corrected, as per advice from HMRC, to include the £416.46 under-reported in last year's returns and advised Councillors that he had the VAT record to hand for inspection if required. Cllr Fowler asked for direction on the resolution to pay this amount and from which budget heading. The Chair advised that VAT is not subject to Council's agreement as it must be paid and that it is generally paid from the reserves in line with all other VAT payments authorised by the Council's bank signatories. The RFO was asked to ensure that the HMRC printout on all future returns was included in his quarterly reports. Cllr Fowler proposed that Council accept the RFO's suggestion that he attends the Finance Training Course on October 30th and that Council agrees to pay the fee of £75. **Agreed**. The RFO raised the matter of an outstanding debt of £7.50 for an allotment which has not been used this year. Council **Agreed** that the debt be written off. The RFO's report was **Received**

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Item 16, To **RECEIVE** questions from Councillors and agenda items for the next meeting. Cllr Peacock, to produce a report on the Parish Council's position regarding the future of the Dukes Head public house.

Item 17, To **CONFIRM** the date of the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Tuesday 27th November was confirmed as the date of the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.