

Minutes of a meeting of Debenham Parish Council held on Monday February 16th 2009, at 7.30 p.m. in Dove Cottage.

Present: Cllr R Walters (in the chair), G Baxter, R Blackwell, L Cockerton, S Dalison, F Winrow-Giffin, K Voller, temporary clerk Mrs C Williamson, PSCO Emma Cowell and two members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence : Cllr J Farthing, V Payne, County Cllr E Alcock, District Cllr K Guthrie, member of public M Durie

2. Reports

1 Police report: this had been received earlier and was circulated (attachment 1, see forward). PCSO Cowell also advised the meeting of recent crimes and arrests made. She also said that they were hoping to offer a third evening at the youth club, which runs on Wednesdays and Thursdays at present. Funding of £2500 would be required for staffing for one year. This is to be discussed further by the parish council.'

2 District Councillor's report: none received

3 County Councillor's report: none received

3. Open Parish Council Meeting

4. Declarations of interest with regard to items on the agenda and additions to register: Cllr Blackwell, Item 8.

5. Vacancies for councillors: to consider co-option. Mr Durie was still interested but it was decided that although he had attended a full meeting as required to qualify for consideration, this should wait until he could next attend.

6. 8.47 p.m. Suspension of standing orders: *Meeting open for 10 minutes to allow members of the public to speak :* Neither had any comments

8.48 p.m. Standing orders resumed

7. Minutes of Previous Meetings:

January 19th: these had been distributed beforehand. Cllr Walters proposed, all who had been present in favour, that the minutes be adopted as a true and correct record, Cllr Winrow-Giffin to sign.

January 26th these had been distributed beforehand. Cllr Walters proposed, all who had been present in favour, that the minutes be adopted as a true and correct record.

February 9th these had been distributed beforehand. Cllr Winrow-Giffin requested that the first sentence of Minute 3.3.1 should read: 'Mr and Mrs Stott of Cherry Tree Cottage asked for reassurance that the pub car park and/or garages would not be used for storage of building supplies for construction of the proposed dwellings etc. This was agreed. Cllr Walters then proposed, all who had been present in favour, that the minutes be adopted as a true and correct record, Cllr Winrow-Giffin to sign.

8. Debenham Leisure Centre:

8.1 Update on NALC findings as follows:

8.1.1 On Friday 13th February SALC had explained by email that NALC considered that we may be acting *ultra vires* – beyond our powers – in donating funds to DLC as they consider a charity is not a voluntary organisation for the purpose of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. However MSDC considered that we could

donate under Section 19f which states that a council can provide assistance for facilities, equipment, buildings and supplies of any kind, rendering the NALC argument irrelevant. With two conflicting opinions, SALC had sought to find out whether we would be covered legally if our donation was challenged. NALC's response was not conclusive as to whether councillors would be held personally responsible. It was agreed that a proper, valid opinion should be obtained from NALC as soon as possible as we were working to a time limit: their answer should be valid for every parish council in a similar situation.

8.1.2 In the meantime, it would be possible to donate under Section 137 – from April 1st we could donate a maximum of £10375.05 (1687 electors x £6.15) but some of this would be required for other charitable causes. The amount per elector for the current year is £5.86. Cllr Walters proposed, seconded by Cllr Winrow-Giffin, that by the meeting on 9th March we should know how much we could donate from the remainder of this year's S137 allowance, although this was not originally in the 2008/9 budget. This was agreed (one abstention – Cllr Blackwell).

8.2. **Final ratification of proposed conditions** : the amended version had been circulated and sent to Mr Hughes for information – no response had been received so far. Cllr Voller, seconded by Cllr Winrow-Giffin, proposed that the conditions, subject to any further information from NALC, be ratified. This was agreed (one abstention – Cllr Blackwell).

8.3. **Any further information:** none

9. Friends of Sir Robert Hitcham School: an explanatory letter, a diagram and accounts for 2007/8 were received. Mrs Burley, attending the meeting as a member of the public, was thanked for supplying all the information. Cllr Winrow-Giffin proposed, seconded by Cllr Baxter, that a donation of £1000 be made, all in favour.

10. Other donation requests: how to consider them in the future

Cllr Voller suggested that conditions should be set for future donation requests. Cllr Walters proposed, seconded by Cllr Voller that he (Cllr Walters) would draw up a list of conditions for consideration at the March 9 meeting, all in favour. It was agreed that donations should be considered twice a year – to be decided later.

11. Freedom of Information Act Form: model publication scheme. This had been completed by the temporary clerk. Adoption was required to be minuted. It was agreed that as much information as possible should be held on the website and that all charges listed for hard copies should be subject to a minimum charge of £5.00. Councillor Walters proposed, all in favour, that the form should be adopted in principle.

12. Dates for Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting: these were agreed as follows: Annual Parish Council Meeting: May 18th and Annual Parish Meeting: April 27th. The Finance, Employment and Planning meeting scheduled for April 13th would not take place as it is Easter Monday.

13. Grasscutting contracts: three tenders had been received and the details were collated for comparison. It was agreed that firm assurance would be required from Impact Landscaping: if they were contracted for this year, the work would be carried out as specified and that the temporary clerk would be advised if there were any problems, also they should fulfil last year's agreement to buy back the laurel bushes and do the hedge cutting. It was agreed that they be requested to cut the church and cemetery hedges before the nesting season after which the tenders would be reconsidered.

14. Update on new banking arrangements: The temporary clerk reported that Barclays had still not completed the formalities for the parish council account and until this was done, she did not want to submit the signed forms for the woodland accounts in case this caused confusion. Further information had been promised for this Wednesday.

15. Accounts for payment (to 10th February 2009): Cllr Walters proposed, seconded by Cllr Winrow-Giffin, all in favour, that the following accounts be paid:

1. C. Williamson fees 18.1.09 to 14.2.09, 97 hours	£1179.52
2. C. Williamson expenses (£45.60, petrol, £27.30 stationery and Websters photo£27.30)	£72.90
3. Anglian Water – payment not received so paid direct by C Williamson	£47.94
4. D. Bedwell fees (19/02/09 to 15/02/09)	£498.56
5. D. Bedwell expenses (paper, petrol, postage)	£77.55
6. Mid Suffolk District Council-Non domestic rates-cemetery	£138.60
7. Debenham Church (01/10/08 to 31/12/08)	£157.50
8. Cllr Farthing Expenses (Webster’s Anniversary Gift)	£32.92
9. Itgen January Invoice (re-issue under B J Woods-previous cheque cancelled)	£100.00
10. Itgen DPC /022 February	£100.00
11. Postal re-direction charge	£49.80
12. B & G Services	£500.39
13. M. Sillet 1, 87 hours 19.1.09 – 13.2.09(Invoice not yet received)	£609.00
14. BT Direct Debit	£64.50

Cllr Walters would discuss the last item with Nikki Rush.

16. Payments Received

1. Edna Heycock Burial fee	£244.95
2. Bank Interest (January 2009)	£68.30

9.11 p.m. It was agreed that the meeting be suspended for five minutes while the cheques and invoices were signed

17. Clerk’s Report: none needed for this meeting.

11. Reports from Working Groups:

1. Play Areas

Spiked Fence: Gate in railings – estimate: none received yet

Re-instatement of Fence, Lower Gardeners Road Play Area: copies of past minutes to be recirculated and temporary clerk to make investigations with Allianz Insurance

2. Cemetery –

condition of urn garden: better since the cut in January but still requiring further work

review of charges: agreed to place March 9th agenda.

Cllr Baxter brought the state of the approach to the cemetery drive to the council’s attention. It became very icy during the recent bad weather and a member of the public had slipped and broken her wrist on the slope outside the main gates. As it was on a steep incline, perhaps steps or a handrail should be considered.

3. Website: the website report was received (attachment 2) including details of sponsorship available. Agreed that the schools should be contacted about sponsorship.

4. Trees and Greens: nothing to report

5. Public Lavatories: contract for plumber, electricity contract: nothing to report

6. Street Lights: Cllr Winrow-Giffin had received requests for two new ones and would provide details for the March 16 meeting

7. Woodland: Cllr Voller reported that a useful morning had recently been spent on the woodland with volunteers. Repairs were needed to the safety mesh on the bridge.

8. Street Furniture: update on recent requests: no firm progress yet. No new ones received.

9. Risk Assessment: requirements of 2007-8 audit and review for 2009/10. Cllr Walters will send existing details to the temporary clerk. These are normally reviewed in July.

18. Review of Action List: to be considered at March 16 meeting

19. Planning matters if any: 0327/09: scoping opinion sought. Details had been printed off the MSDC website and were passed to Cllr Walters. As the deadline is March 4th it was agreed that if anyone had any comments, they should forward them to the temporary clerk by February 27th, she would then collate and forward them to the planning department.

20. Correspondence received to 15.2.09 (does not include invoices, bank statements, inter-parish council mail)

A variety of leaflets and posters had been received this month, which were passed to Cllr Cockerton to put on the noticeboard.

Keep Us Local leaflets re unitary authorities - a third option
Suffolk Preservation Society programme of events
Old Parsonage Garden Services re quoting for grasscutting
MSDC Discovery Project Newsletter plus leaflets
Impact Landscaping: letter re termination of contract
Citizens Advice Bureau letter posters and leaflets
MSDC Cultural and Community Services: Risk Assessment request + poster for walking festival, 19.5.09
British Red Cross - home from hospital service - via email
Age Concern - Food 'n Friends Clubs details and request for hosts
SNT - fourth update, January 2009 (via email, K Guthrie)
MSDC re late payment of rates for cemetery
Royal Mail postal redirection service - offer to renew
MSDC re FP 37,38, Bridleways 38, 39: diversion order completed
CGM landscaping services details of service offered
Digital Copiers Ltd Statement
QPSMR Ltd re special offers for parish action plans
MHMRC request for payment due in 19 Jan 2009
Stowmarket Town Council Towncrier and tourism leaflets
MSDC: leaflets and posters re Walking Festival
Impact Landscaping tender for grasscutting contract 2009/10
MSDC invitation to Parish Liaison meeting, March 30th
Botanica leaflet re plants, trees for sale
Commonwealth War Graves Commission re payment for maintenance of war grave
SALC: magazines, The Local Councillor
SALC leaflets: eplanning course, networking for clerks, Royal Garden parties, Adventure Playgrounds
MSDC Planning: appl. 0327/09 land adjacent to Mendlesham Industrial Estate
- environmental scoping opinion request

MSDC final reminder re grasscutting
NHS Suffolk re application for consent to dispense - Dr P Thomas
Spinal Injuries Association email re fundraising 15 May 2009

21. Correspondence sent (does not include procedural mail eg between Clerk, RFO and Council)
Sent post to 14.2.09 (does not include inter-parish council mail)

MSDC	Precept request – recorded delivery
D Hughes, DLC	Response to letter dated 8.1.09
Resource Centre	Minutes for last six months
Debenham Post Office	Minutes for last six months
S Bradbrook	MSDC risk assessment + 2 saes
Odell	Approval for stall on market green 10.4.09

22. Chair's urgent business: any items not on this agenda but of such urgency as to merit, in the Chair's opinion, immediate action.

22.1 **Approval and acceptance of the revised annual return and external auditor's report for 2007/8** is required to be minuted and the temporary clerk requested this. Cllr Walters proposed that this be done and all were in favour.

23. Suspension of standing orders: *meeting open for ten minutes to allow the public to speak:* no comments received.

24. Employment matters: none.

25. Any other business: information exchange only

Cllr Winrow-Giffin asked that details of any **potholes in roads or paths as a result of the recent bad weather** should be forwarded to the temporary clerk so that she could advise MSDC/SCC. It was reported that there was one outside the police station and one outside the Co-operative store.

Cllr Cockerton asked that **Mr Sillett's** rate of pay should be a future agenda item.

26. Date of next meeting: March 9th (Finance, Employment and Planning), March 16th: Ordinary

27. Temporary exclusion of press and public: *That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Public and Press be excluded from the Meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed concerning legal issues; potentially sensitive personnel content.*

There being no further business to be transacted, the meeting finished at 9.45 p.m.

.....Chair.....Date