

Copdock & Washbrook Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 1st August 2023, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Old London Road, Copdock

Present: Cllr L Butters, Cllr M Green, Cllr P Herd, Cllr A Ward (Vice-Chair)

In Attendance: District Cllr D Busby
Mrs S Frankis, Locum Parish Clerk & RFO
9 members of the public

The meeting was chaired by Cllr A Ward.

The meeting was the first meeting of the Council to be broadcast using the new Zoom format. Cllr Ward encouraged anyone viewing the meeting online to provide feedback to the Council, via the Council's Facebook page.

2410/2324 To RECEIVE and APPROVE Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mellish for his absence due to a personal commitment. The Council unanimously resolved to accept the apologies.

The Council noted the absence of Cllr S Downes.

2411/2324 To RECEIVE any Declarations of Interest

Cllr Ward declared an interest as the treasurer of the Village Hall.

Cllr Butters declared an interest as a neighbour to the property Maycroft.

2412/2324 To APPROVE any Requests for Dispensations

None were received.

The meeting was adjourned.

PUBLIC FORUM:

2413/2324 To RECEIVE Comments from Residents of the Parish on Current Agenda Items

A member of the public referred to page 36, 'the highways aspirations drawing', of the Copdock and Washbrook draft Neighbourhood Plan and the issues he had within it; the Council confirmed the draft plan the member of the public was referring to is currently being reviewed in order to capture the comments received during the latest consultation event. The Council confirmed the drawing referred to is due to be withdrawn as part of the modifications and amendments process.

A member of the public asked, that having looked at the draft Plan and the map showing the core of the village, why there were areas outlined in 'red'; Cllr Butters advised the red line depicts the settlement boundaries however the document the residents present were referring to is now out of date, as per the response to the previous member of the public.

A member of the public commented on the draft Plan and in particular 'environment and habitat'; he was asked if he had made his comments at the most recent consultation stage. As he hadn't taken this opportunity to make his comments, the Council asked him to capture the point he wished to make and to forward it to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, for consideration.

A member of the public advised he had reported the state of the footpath, near to Gladwells, to Suffolk County Council via their online reporting tool.

2414/2324 To RECEIVE the Reports from the County and District Councillors

A report had been received from County Cllr Hudson and circulated to the Council prior to the meeting.

Cllr D Busby advised that the proper authorities are aware of the traveller site at the far end of the Old London Road.

He advised he had spoken with the owner of the Best Western hotel, who is keen to engage the community with the refugees at the hotel.

ACTION: Cllr Busby is to send an email of introduction between the hotel owner and the Parish Council / Cllr Butters.

Cllr Herd asked if there was an update on the status of the BMSDC Joint Local Plan, and if there is a facility in place for the public to track any progress. Cllr Busby advised the first part of the Plan has completed all of the consultation stages; the second part of the Plan is expected to commence in the autumn. The BMSDC Joint Local Plan web page holds all of the information, status and updates.

ACTION: A link to the BMSDC JLP is to be published on the Parish Council website and Facebook page.

The meeting was reconvened.

2415/2324 To RECEIVE and CONFIRM the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th July 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2023, having been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting, were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting; the minutes were duly signed by Cllr Ward.

2416/2324 To CONSIDER Matters Arising from the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th July 2023

Re. minute number 2406/2324: D-Day 80, 6th June 2024

Cllr Butters asked if this could be included as an agenda item at the October 2023 meeting; the Council agreed to the suggestion.

Re. minute number 2408/2324: Matters Raised by Members (abandoned shopping trolleys)

Cllr Butters has spoken with members of the representative group who have confirmed the Community Safety Officer is liaising with Tesco supermarket; it is considered Tesco needs to take some responsibility for the abandoned shopping trolleys around the village. Having followed the process and actions in place, Cllr Butters advised she is satisfied that the process is progressing. She confirmed Cllr Herd's suggestion of providing 'shoppers' for the refugees at the hotel to use had been put forward.

1 member of the public joined the meeting via Zoom.

2417/2324 To AGREE to Co-opt a New Member to the Parish Council

An application for co-option to the Parish Council has been received. The Parish Council process is to invite the applicant to meet with the Council. Those councillors who will meet with the applicant will be agreed off-line.

ACTION: The Council will arrange to meet with the applicant; the co-option is expected to be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.

2418/2324 To RECEIVE the Locum Clerk's / RFO Report

The report of the Locum Clerk had been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting.

The Locum Clerk advised that allotment rent reminders have been sent out but there were a number of allotment holders whose rent remained outstanding; regrettably it leaves the Locum Clerk no alternative but to issue final notices to those allotment holders.

The Locum Clerk advised that at the September meeting, the Council will need to set a meeting date for the Finance Working Group to start drafting the 2024/25 budget and precept. With this in mind, she suggested that councillors may like to start thinking about expenditure items and/or projects that would require funding from the precept; once the precept demand is submitted to Babergh District Council at the end of January 2024, amendments won't be possible.

2419/2324 Planning Applications and Decisions

To CONSIDER and AGREE a Response to:

Application DC/23/02267 and DC/23/02268

Proposal: application for LBC and HA– erection of side porch extension (following demolition of existing)

Coles Green Farm, Chattisham Road, Copdock and Washbrook IP8 3HB

The Council unanimously agreed not to object to the proposals but to include comments regarding ecology and lighting.

Application DC/23/01979

Proposal: HA – erection of garage with studio over (following demolition of existing garage)

Elm Cottages, Old London Road, Copdock and Washbrook IP8 3JD

The council unanimously agreed not to object to the proposal but to include comments regarding arboriculture and ecology.

Planning Authority Decisions

DC/23/01910: Maycroft, Old London Road, Copdock and Washbrook IP8 3JF – GRANTED

DC/23/02415: Charlottes, Copdock and Washbrook IP8 3HZ – REFUSED

2420/2324 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

a. **To Approve the Schedule of Payments for August 2023**

Payments were approved as listed below.

No.	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Total
P41	Viking Office UK	Printer ink and stationery	23.99	4.80	28.79
P42	Viking Office UK	Printer ink and stationery	114.00	22.80	136.80
P43	Mr M Green	Zoom Licence	119.90	23.98	143.88
P44	Strudwick Codes	Web host & management	35.00	0.00	35.00

b. **To AGREE the July 2023 Budget and Finance Report, including the Bank Balance**

The July 2023 Budget and Finance Report and the Cash Book had been circulated to the Council and were agreed. Cllr Green verified the bank balance of £129,798.71.

Cllr Ward noted that the Bowls Club may have inadvertently paid rent of £274.00 to the Parish Council and suggested they may have forgotten to cancel their standing order; if the surmision is correct, the payment will be returned to the Bowls Club.

Cllr Ward referred to the Neighbourhood Plan Reserve funds and asked if further liabilities will be due from the consultant.

ACTION: Cllr Butters is to ask the Consultant to provide an estimate of further likely costs.

c. **To AGREE to Vire £898.86 from the 2023/24 Precept Budget Heading ‘General Reserves’ to 2023/24 Precept Budget Heading ‘Coronation Events’**

The Council unanimously agreed to vire £898.86 from the 2023/24 precept budget heading ‘General Reserves’ to 2023/24 precept budget heading ‘Coronation Events’.

d. **Playing Field Grass Matting: to AGREE CIL Expenditure**

The Council unanimously agreed to accept the quote received from Express Matting Services Ltd of £3,594.00 inclusive of VAT and delivery, and to fund the purchase from the Parish Council’s CIL Funds.

2421/2324 To AGREE Grant Request Received from St. Peter’s Church, Copdock

The Council acknowledged NALC’s continued advice that parish councils do not currently have the legal power to award grants to churches but noted that many councils do so; none have been challenged in law, to date.

Council further noted that legislation is currently progressing through Parliament to permit this type of support in future. Cllr Herd proposed a potential work around which Councillors agreed to review offline before coming to a decision at the September meeting.

District Cllr Busby and one member of the public left the meeting.

2422/2324 Infrastructure Developments: Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group met with the consultant yesterday evening to discuss where the Plan is at following the consultation phase and how to progress it on to the next stage.

Councillors reaffirmed that a core and shared goal of the Plan is to preserve the character of the village by preventing it being overwhelmed by large scale development that the community doesn't want. The consultant stressed again that the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) by itself cannot stop BMSDC allocating sites as part of its revised Part 2 Joint Local Plan. The direction of travel regarding their own modifications may be making that less likely in the short / medium term but things can and always change quickly in the world of planning. This said, he advised that the wording of the policies in the Plan gives the best possible mechanism for resisting any such allocations / proposals. The strongest feature of such defence is the landscape appraisal which applies in particular to the previous LA008 site. Regarding the Old London Road discussion, all present reaffirmed a shared objective to make the road safer. How this can best be achieved, what is realistically possible etc is less clear and it was generally agreed that the NP should not be so hard and fast about any specific projects or plans. After discussion, it was agreed that all councillors would review the Consultant's Summary of consultation comments and his resulting proposed modifications, and that Cllr Herd would draft and circulate a slimmed down section around highways and the Old London Road.

ACTION: All councillors are to review the Consultant's Summary of consultation comments and his proposed resulting modifications.

ACTION: Cllr Herd is to draft and circulate a slimmed down section around highways and the Old London Road.

The Council agreed to resurrect the previous engagement of stakeholders and partners with the aim of improving road safety.

ACTION: Cllr Butters is to arrange a meeting between stakeholders, partners and the Parish Council, to be held September 2023.

2423/2324 Playing Field Deed of Easement

Cllr Ward advised that progress has been made by the Cricket Club regarding the assignment of their lease with the Playing Field Trustees which, once completed, will allow them to join in with the Deed of Easement along with other parties.

2424/2324 Play Areas: Fen View Update

Cllr Ward advised that works are progressing and are expected to be completed within 2-3 weeks.

One member of the public left the meeting.

2425/2324 Bus Shelter, Maycroft, Old London Road: To RECEIVE an Update

The Council unanimously decided not to send further communications to the solicitor at this time, in order that no more of the local tax payer's money was spent on the matter. The Council retains the right to consider the matter further should it be necessary.

Three members of the public left the meeting.

2426/2324 PROW / SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL GRASS CUTTING / FOOTPATHS: to CONSIDER the Current Situation and to AGREE any Action

Following the unexpected withdrawal of Tye Contracting from their grass cutting contract, the Council unanimously agreed to appoint Moser Groundcare with immediate effect, to accept the submitted price schedule and to instruct him to undertake the 'oneoffs' immediately and to take up items numbered 1-8, on the Schedule, on a monthly basis. The matter will be reviewed at the end of the season to assess satisfaction / quality and to then decide an approach for 2024.

Cllr Ward advised he is pursuing contacts at Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council; he will keep the Council updated.

ACTION: The Locum Clerk is to stand Tye Contracting down.

2427/2324 To AGREE Number and Location of Parish Council Noticeboards

The Council unanimously agreed to reduce the number of noticeboards that the Parish Council minutes are posted on. On noticeboards where minutes won't be posted, a notice of explanation, together with a QR code / web address link to the Parish Council website will be posted.

ACTION: The Locum Clerk is to draft a notice of explanation, together with a QR code/web address link to the Parish Council website.

2428/2324 To AGREE the Renewal of the Achilles Licence

The Council unanimously agreed to offer a renewal of the Licence at the same price as the last Licence Period for £600.00. The Council unanimously agreed to extend the Licence Period by one month, as requested by the Club.

ACTION: The Locum Clerk is to prepare the draft Licence for approval before forwarding it to Achilles.

ACTION: The Council agreed to approach Achilles with the encouragement to embed themselves in the village and to ask them to offer opportunities to the local children.

Three members of the public left the meeting.

2429/2324 Parish Clerk & RFO Vacancy

The advertisement for a permanent appointment had closed yesterday; five applications had been submitted. Proper process will be followed by inviting successful candidates to attend an interview.

ACTION: The Locum Clerk is to circulate the applications to all Councillors.

ACTION: Cllr Butters is to circulate Schedule of the Criteria by which the applicants will be scored against.

2430/2324 Parish Council Fixed Asset Register

There were no updates.

2431/2324 Next Meeting: to CONFIRM the Date and Time of the Next Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on 5th September 2023, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Copdock.

2432/2324 Matters Raised by Members

The Council agreed that interviews for the permanent appointment of the Clerk & RFO would be held the week commencing 21st August 2023.

The Locum Clerk asked for a volunteer to check the assets as listed on the Insurance Renewal Schedule against the physical assets, and to update as necessary. The information will then be returned to the current insurance provider to enable them to provide a quote for renewal. The information will also be used to obtain quotes from other insurance providers.

ACTION: The Insurance Renewal Schedule is to be passed to Cllr Mellish for him to check.

2433/2324 Items for the Next Agenda

To agree the membership of the Finance Working Group and to set a meeting date.

To agree to undertake a risk assessment of the Parish Council assets, including the benches and telephone box.

One member of the public left the meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Mrs S Frankis, Locum Parish Clerk & RFO
Email: copdockparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk,
Website: www.copdockandwashbrook.org