

Copdock & Washbrook Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 5th September 2023, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Old London Road, Copdock

Present: Cllr L Butters, Cllr S Downey, Cllr M Green, Cllr D Tyrrell, Cllr A Ward (Vice-Chair)

In Attendance: Mrs S Frankis, Parish Clerk & RFO
4 members of the public

The meeting was chaired by Cllr A Ward.

2434/2324 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.
Apologies were received District Cllr Busby.

2435/2324 To AGREE Appointment of Parish Clerk and RFO

Cllr Ward advised that Mrs Susan Frankis has been appointed as the new Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Copdock and Washbrook Parish Council. The Council welcomed Mrs Frankis.

2436/2324 To AGREE to Delegate the Power to Grant Dispensation Requests to the Parish Clerk

The Council unanimously agreed to delegate the power to grant Dispensation Requests to the Parish Clerk.

2437/2324 To RECEIVE any Declarations of Interest

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

2438/2324 To APPROVE any Requests for Dispensations

None were received.

The meeting was adjourned.

PUBLIC FORUM:

2439/2324 To RECEIVE Comments from Residents of the Parish on Current Agenda Items

A member of the public raised on-going concerns that the bench installed near to her property is attracting unwanted attention and asked for it to be removed; she has experienced verbal abuse and is now feeling unsafe.

Cllr Butters advised that she has spoken to Mr I Rafferty, BDC Community Safety Officer and will ask him to provide an update report to the Council for the next meeting.

ACTION: Cllr Butters is to ask Mr I Rafferty, BDC Community Safety Officer to provide an update report to the Council.

The Clerk advised that she has raised the matter with the Police Community Support Officer.

A member of the public addressed the meeting, raising concerns about traffic, parking conditions and speeding vehicles affecting the village. He offered to assist the Council to find a solution to the problems.

Cllr Ward thanked the member of the public for his offer of help; he advised that Cllr Butters has recently contacted statutory parties to invite them to re-open dialogue about road safety on the Old London Road in Copdock, how the road can be improved and fits in with SCC priorities, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and funding availability. Discussions had started in early 2020 but were stopped due to the pandemic.

Cllr Butters suggested that Mr I Rafferty, BDC Community Safety Officer be contacted with regards to parking issues in The Street.

Cllr Ward offered to speak further to the member of the public off-line.

2440/2324 To RECEIVE 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. A copy of the report is published on the Parish Council website.

The Council agreed to ask Cllr Hudson to attend the next Parish Council meeting to discuss the SCC gravel pit application; it was agreed he could attend remotely.

Cllr Ward advised the Council has received news that District Cllr Busby is in poor health. In his likely absence from his role as district councillor, his colleagues from Sproughton and Capel St. Mary will be taking on some of his duties. The Parish Council's thoughts are with Cllr Busby and we wish him all the very best.

The meeting was reconvened.

2441/2324 To RECEIVE and CONFIRM the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st August 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st August 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.

2442/2324 To CONSIDER Matters Arising from the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st August 2023

Re. minute number 2414/2324: District Cllr Busby had sent an email of introduction between the owner of the Copdock hotel and Cllr Butters. Cllr Butters advised the owner of the hotel has recently purchased 20 no. shoppers (trolleys) for use by the hotel residents, has purchased hi-vis tabards for the residents to wear and has arranged for residents to take their cycling proficiency tests.

Re. minute number 2414/2324: a link to the BMSDC JLP is to be published on the Parish Council website and Facebook page; this remains outstanding.

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

One member of the public left the meeting.

Re. minute number 2421/2324: Cllr Herd (as was) has subsequently asked that his position be made clear by saying that although he would have been keen to support the Church, he wouldn't have agreed to award any funds, as a parish council does not have the legal power to do so. Cllr Herd would not want to take any actions that jeopardised himself.

Re. minute number 2427/2324: the Council agreed to include the locations of where the noticeboards are that minutes will be displayed on the notice.

ACTION: The Clerk is to re-draft the notice for display on the noticeboards.

Re. minute number 2428/2324: The signed renewal Licence from Achilles hasn't been received.

ACTION: The Clerk is to chase for the signed renewal Licence from Achilles.

Cllr Ward advised that he has spoken with Achilles who are keen to encourage children from the village to join their football clubs.

2443/2324 Neighbourhood Plan, to RECEIVE Updates and AGREE Actions as Required

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group met on 23rd August 2023.

The Plan is at the point where the Consultant can be asked to confirm acceptance of his updated document, incorporating the latest consultation comments, amendments and retractions.

The Council unanimously agreed to instruct the Consultant to draft the final document for a last consideration before going forward with the referendum.

ACTION: Cllr Butters is to instruct the Consultant to prepare the final document and to ask Alison Farmer about an updated Landscape Appraisal.

2444/2324 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

i. To Approve the Schedule of Payments for September 2023

Payments were approved as listed below.

No.	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Total
P45	Express Matting Services	Grass matting	2,833.00	566.60	3,399.60
P46	Tesco Mobile	Clerk's mobile phone	10.48	2.10	12.58
P47	Mrs S Frankis	Postage	9.65	0.00	9.54
P48	Mrs S Frankis	Postage	7.15	0.00	7.15
P49	SALC	Councillor training	120.00	24.00	144.00
P50	Mrs S Frankis	Locum clerk July 2023	500.00	0.00	500.00
P51	Bowls Club	Return payment	274.00	0.00	274.00
P52	Birketts LLP	Legal fees, Maycroft bus shelter	921.00	184.20	1,105.20
P53	Strudwick Codes	Web host	35.00	0.00	35.00
P54	Moser Groundcare	Grass cutting	1,490.00	298.00	1,788.00
P55	Mrs S Frankis	Postage	1.50	0.00	1.50
P56	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External audit	315.00	63.00	378.00
P57	Babergh District Council	May 2023 election costs	154.26	0.00	154.26
P58	Mrs S Frankis	Locum Clerk August 2023	688.00	0.00	688.00

ii. To AGREE the August 2023 Budget and Finance Report, including the Bank Balance

The August 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 £126,452.15.

iii. To AGREE the HMRC VAT 126 Reclaim

The Council unanimously agreed the VAT 126 reclaim of £2,571.98.

- iv. To AGREE to Apply for a Barclaycard Cashback Credit Card
The Council unanimously agreed to apply for a Barclaycard Cashback credit card for use by the Parish Clerk to purchase incidentals; the credit limit will be set at £500 and a monthly direct debit will be set up to pay the balance in full. An internal check will be made by verifying the purchases and statements as part of the monthly Payment Schedule by Councillors.

- v. To AGREE the Membership of the Finance Working Group and to AGREE a Meeting Date
The members of the Finance Working Group will be Cllrs Downey and Ward, together with the Parish Clerk.

- vi. To AGREE to use 'clerk@copdockandwashbrook.org' email address by the Clerk
The Council unanimously agreed to change the Clerk's email address to 'clerk@copdockandwashbrook.org'.

- vii. To AGREE to Transfer the Existing Tesco Mobile Telephone Contract to an Alternative Contract offered by Tesco Mobile
The Council unanimously agreed to transfer the Clerk's Tesco mobile telephone contract from the current SIM only contract of 4GB, 1000 minutes and 5000 texts costing £12.58 a month (inc. VAT) to a new SIM only contract of 12GB with unlimited minutes and texts for £9.00 a month (inc. VAT).

- viii. To AGREE Grant Request Received from St. Peter's Church, Copdock
This matter was first discussed at the August 2023 meeting, without a decision being made. The Parish Council has received a grant request from the Church for funding assistance towards their project to install toilet facilities and to make other improvements. The total cost of the project is in excess of £200k, with £160k having already been raised. The Council was asked for a grant of £8k.
The ability of parish councils to support church projects of this nature is a contested one legally as the LGA 1894 and 1972 appearing to provide conflicting guidance. The Clerk advised the Council that NALC's position on the matter remains one of advising that councils do not have the power to award grants to churches by virtue of the LGA 1894.
Having looked into the matter carefully, the Council noted that other parish councils have supported similar projects notwithstanding NALC's advice and none have yet been challenged in law. The Council took the view that there is no clear, definitive and unambiguous legal position regarding the powers of parish councils to fund church projects (rather there are a number of differing views, but not an unambiguous legal judgement) and given the significant amenity, beneficial ownership and value to the Parish of these activities, a continuation of historic practice would be acceptable until such point a clear and definitive legal determination is made. The Council further noted that legislation is currently progressing through Parliament which will remove any ambiguity in future and will clarify in law that parish councils can in future support requests of this nature.
In deciding to unanimously support the request, the Council made it clear that it was doing so in recognition of the significant benefit to the local community that the Church provides through all manner of different activities rather than making any statement about preferring or supporting an activity that was religious in nature.
The Clerk was asked to formerly review annually if a final legal determination has been made concerning the LGA 1894 provisions and/or if any other relevant change in the advice of NALC has been made, commencing March 2024.
The Council will then resolve, after the presentation of the advice, whether it wishes to continue to allow the Church to apply for funding in the future.

2445/2324 To RECEIVE the Parish Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report had been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting.

The Clerk advised that all overdue allotment rent had been received. One allotment holder had received notice to vacate their plot; as soon as the Notice period has ended, the Clerk will notify Mr R English of the vacancy.

Following the Clerk's response to the Ministry of Justice's call for requests to be submitted for the Community Payback Scheme to help out as part of their Autumn Clean project, Cllrs Butters and Ward had met with a Scheme co-ordinator. Projects will now be considered for teams of eight to undertake.

Cllr Ward asked for an item to agree the engagement of a professional to undertake the refurbishment of the Book Exchange BT Box, to be included on the October agenda.

2446/2324 To AGREE to Co-opt a New Member to the Parish Council

Due to the recent resignation of Cllr Peter Herd, the Parish Council declared a vacancy. The Council thanked Mr Herd for his contribution to the Council. The Clerk advised that Babergh District Council has been notified of the vacancy.

The Council voted unanimously to co-opt Ms Deborah Tyrrell as a member to the Council. Cllr Tyrrell duly signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

ACTION: The Clerk is to notify Babergh District Council that Ms Tyrrell has been co-opted to the Parish Council.

2447/2324 Planning Applications and Decisions

To CONSIDER and AGREE a Response to:

Application DC/23/03570

Proposal: application for retention of shipping container and affixed adjoining lean to structure (with adjoining proposed cladding, fencing and hedging) and regularisation of position of approved and build garage structure and landscaping front of property.

Location: The Myth, Elm Lane, Copdock IP8 3GN

The Parish Council is aware that the Babergh District Council Planning Enforcement has a 'live' case associated with this site; the Parish Council has no comments to submit.

Application DC/23/03746

Proposal: application for erection of rear garage/garden room including new block paved driveway.

Location: Fairwinds, Folly Lane, Copdock IP8 3JQ

The Council unanimously agreed not to object to the proposal but to include comments that the proposal could result in noise and light disturbance to neighbouring properties from associated vehicular movements.

Application: DC/23/03809

Proposal: application for change of use from dwelling house (C3) to Sui Generis for use as part of a wedding venue allocation.

Location: Hall Farm, Church Lane, Copdock IP8 3JZ

The Council unanimously agreed to submit a comment of no objection.

Application: SCC/0105/22B

Proposal: reconsultation for application for extraction, processing and sale of sand and gravel, processing of inert waste materials and concrete batching with associated plant and related sales, associated access works, phased restoration using inert recovered materials and aftercare plan.

Location: Brockley, Wood Lane off A12, Belstead IP8 3JS

The Council unanimously agreed to submit a recommendation of 'Objection', with reasons.

Application: DC/23/03394

Proposal: application for erection of single storey rear extension to form kitchen and study:
conversion and extension to existing garage to form sitting room and studio and replacement of existing front porch.

Location: 4 Fen Farm Cottages, Hollow Road, Washbrook IP8 3HE

The Council unanimously agreed to submit a comment of no objection.

Planning Authority Decisions

DC/21/01850: Elm View, Old London Road – amendments to windows/doors/openings – GRANTED

DC/22/03656: The Gables, Folly Lane – minor alteration to kitchen, dining and utility arrangement, amendments to fenestration, and addition of hard landscaping to new rear access door – GRANTED

DC/23/02267 and DC/23/02268: Coles Green Farm, Chattisham Road – erection of side porch extension (following removal of existing) – GRANTED

2448/2324 Playing Field Deed of Easement

Cllr Ward proposed drawing a line under any further activity in pursuing a Deed of Easement; the process of the matter is being held up by issues not of the Council's making but of Birketts solicitors. The Council unanimously agreed to draft an Access Agreement and to invite the Village Hall, the Bowls Club, the Cricket Club, the Tennis Club, the Playing Field Trustees and the Parish Council to sign the Agreement.

ACTION: Cllr Ward is to draft an Access Agreement.

Cllr Butters left the meeting.

One member of the public left the meeting.

2449/2324 Play Areas

i. Fen View Update

Cllr Ward advised the new installations are complete. The Clerk advised the grant funding has been requested and released by Babergh District Council.

A rumour has circulated that the new play equipment has already been vandalised. The Council considered how best to get the message out to the community to take responsibility by reporting any incidents of vandalism to the police, and to ask if anyone would be prepared to monitor the site on a regular basis on behalf of the Parish and Parish Council.

ii. To RECEIVE the Play Area Reports and to AGREE Actions

The annual safety inspection reports had been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting. Cllr Ward asked if a summary of action points could be included in the report.

ACTION: The Clerk is to ask the author of the Play Inspection Reports to provide a summary of action points.

2450/2324 PRoW / Suffolk County Council Grass Cutting / Footpaths

Cllr Ward advised that all grass cutting had been completed except for the footpath that exits on to the Old London Road by the riding centre; this is due to the contractors machinery failing which is presently being repaired.

2451/2324 Parish Council Asset Register and Risk Assessment

Cllr Ward advised that Cllr Mellish has checked the Asset Register, which led him to undertake a risk assessment at the same time.

ACTION: The Clerk is to forward a risk assessment template to Cllr Mellish, for him to complete.

2452/2324 To AGREE to Purchase a Replacement Printer for use by the Clerk

The Council unanimously agreed to set a budget of £120 to purchase a new office printer.

2453/2324 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 3rd October 2023, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Copdock.

2454/2324 Matters Raised by Members

Cllr Green referenced the general feeling in the village of experiences of anti-social behaviour, which need to be collectively resolved.

Cllr Downey asked for any comments to go forward to County Cllr Hudson.

Cllr Downey advised that Councillor's emails will be moved away from 'Stack' to 'Office 365'.

2455/2324 Items for the Next Agenda

No matters were out forward.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.18pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

2439/2324 To RECEIVE Comments from Residents of the Parish on Current Agenda Items

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ACTION: Cllr Butters is to ask Mr I Rafferty, BDC Community Safety Officer to provide an update report to the Council.

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Re. minute number 2414/2324

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

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ACTION: The Clerk is to re-draft the notice for display on the noticeboards.

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ACTION: The Clerk is to chase for the signed renewal Licence from Achilles.

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ACTION: Cllr Butters is to instruct the Consultant to prepare the final document and to ask Alison Farmer about an updated Landscape Appraisal.

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Mrs S Frankis, Parish Clerk & RFO to Copdock and Washbrook Parish Council

Email: clerk@copdockandwashbrook.org

Website: www.copdockandwashbrook.org