

Copdock & Washbrook Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 7th January 2025, 7.01pm

at the Village Hall, Old London Road, Copdock

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

In Attendance: Mrs S Frankis, Parish Clerk & RFO

District Cllr, Dave Busby

District Cllr, John Whyman

The meeting was chaired by Cllr A Ward.

Cllr Ward opened the meeting by formally noting the sad news that Mr K Armes had unexpectedly passed away. The Council recognised and very much valued all that Mr Armes had done during his tenure as a parish councillor, including in the role of Chair to the Council. The Council's thoughts are with his family and friends at this time.

District Cllr Busby echoed the sentiments of the Parish Council.

2758/2425 APOLOGIES: to RECEIVE and APPROVE Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

2759/2425 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: to RECEIVE any Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

2760/2425 DISPENSATIONS: to APPROVE any Requests for Dispensations

No requests for dispensations were received.

The meeting was adjourned.

2761/2425

(i) To RECEIVE Reports from the County and District Councillors

Cllr Ward asked what the next steps will be following the recent publication of the Government White Paper which proposes a reorganisation of Local Government and the creation of Mayoral Strategic Authorities and Unitary Councils to replace the current structure of district and council councils.

Cllr Busby advised that Suffolk County Council will be holding an extraordinary meeting of full council on Thursday, 9th January 2025, to be followed by an extraordinary meeting of Cabinet to debate and then decide on whether or not to put Suffolk forward for the government's new devolution and reorganisation programme.

Cllr Busby advised that most of the district, borough and county councils appear to be focussing on the devolution aspect of the White Paper however the proposed reorganisation/reform of local government could lead to a unitary county council; the district and borough councils appear to be against this option and would prefer for there to be two or three county councils.

The Suffolk County Council meetings on Thursday will likely resolve to put Suffolk forward as a priority for the Government's reorganisation program; if this application proceeds, the May 2025 County Council elections will not go ahead.

Cllr L Butters arrived at the meeting.

He considered that the White Paper proposals appear to be diverting power away from local councils to a unitary council, but that parish and town councils will be expected to take on more roles.

Cllrs Busby and Whyman referred to the recent communication published by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council regarding the decision to undertake a new Joint Local Plan (JLP), following the Government's review of the National Planning Policy Framework.

In December 2024, the Government announced new housing requirements for every district and borough council in the country meaning a housing requirement in Babergh of 775 homes a year (up 86%). Part One of the BMSDC JLP was adopted in November 2023, containing annual housing requirements based on the Government's previous housing formula; BMSDC considers there is no option but to formally review their JLP. In the meantime, Part One of the JLP remains very much in place and will continue to carry statutory weight when planning decisions are made alongside Neighbourhood Plans and national policy. Thus demonstrating the importance of the Copdock & Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan being adopted, and an up-to-date record of parish aspirations and needs being recorded.

Cllr Whyman asked that the meeting recorded the work undertaken by Cllr Busby in bringing forward the proposed Bentley Core Historic Conservation Area.

A written report had been received from Cllr Whyman prior to the meeting and circulated to the Council.

No report had been received from County Cllr Hudson.

(ii) To RECEIVE Comments from Residents of the Parish on Current Agenda Items

No comments were received.

The meeting was reconvened.

2762/2425 MINUTES: to RECEIVE and CONFIRM the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd December 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2024, 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.

2763 MATTERS ARISING: to CONSIDER Matters Arising from the Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd December 2024

Re. minute number 2744/2425

ACTION: Cllr Busby is to forward a brief summary of the matters discussed at his meeting with Cllr Stringer to Cllr A Ward and the Chair of Bentley Parish Council.

This remains outstanding.

ACTION: Cllr Busby is to clarify which site along the A12 was referred to in his discussion with Cllr Stringer.

2764/2425 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(i) SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS: to Approve the Schedule of Payments for January 2025

Payments were approved as listed below.

No.	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Total
P90	Lloyds Bank	Corporate card	383.60	75.04	458.64
P91	Green's Landscape	Recreation area fencing	1190.00	0.00	1190.00
P92	Mrs S Frankis	Home broadband	15.00	0.00	15.00
P93	Copdock Village Hall	S137 Grant	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
P94	Garden Machinery Services	Servicing	180.38	36.09	216.47
P95	Parkers Pitches Ltd	Vetri-draining	310.00	62.00	372.00
P96	Tesco Mobile	Clerk's mobile telephone	7.50	1.50	7.00
P97	Allotment Society	Annual membership fee	70.00	14.00	84.00
P98	Mrs S Frankis	December Salary	848.30	0.00	848.30
P99	HMRC	PAYE	12.46	0.00	12.46
P100	Unity Trust Bank	Bank fees	7.05	0.00	7.05

(ii) BUDGET & FINANCE REPORT: to AGREE the December 2024 Budget and Finance Report, including the Bank Balance

The December 2024 Budget and Finance Report and the Cash Book had been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting and were agreed. Cllr Green verified the bank balances totalling £118,197.56.

Cllr Ward asked if the cash balances held at Unity Trust Bank are earning optimum returns, and if perhaps, some funds could be moved to a notice account thus receiving more interest.

ACTION: The Clerk is to look at savings options, with a view to the Council considering reallocating some of the cash balances held with Unity Trust Bank.

(iii) 2025/26 BUDGET & PRECEPT: to CONSIDER and AGREE the 2025/26 Budget and Precept

The Council unanimously agreed to set the 2025/26 budget at £41,052.00 and to submit a precept demand for £40,440; this will present a -0.04% movement on the Parish Council's 2024/25 precept demand.

ACTION: The Clerk is to submit the 2025/26 precept demand to Babergh District Council for £40,440.00

(iv) BUDGET HEADING VIREMENT: to AGREE to vire £35.00 from 2024/25 budget heading 'Insurance' to 'Subscriptions'

The Council unanimously agreed to vire £35.00 from 2024/25 budget heading 'Insurance' to 'Subscriptions'.

(v) SEXUAL AND GENERAL HARASSMENT POLICY: to ADOPT a Copdock & Washbrook Parish Council Sexual and General Harassment Policy

The Council unanimously to adopt the Sexual and General Harassment Policy as circulated prior to the meeting.

All Councillors confirmed they had read and understood the Policy.

(vi) INTERNAL AUDITOR: to APPOINT the 2025/26 Internal Auditor

The Council unanimously agreed to appoint Trevor Brown CPFA as the Parish Council Internal Auditor for 2025/26.

ACTION: The Clerk is to notify Trevor Brown CPFA that he has been appointed as the Parish Council Internal Auditor for 2025/26.

2765/2425 CLERK'S REPORT: to RECEIVE the Parish Clerk's Report

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

2766/2425 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND DECISIONS

The Planning Schedule for December 2024 had been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting.

- DC/24/05314
HA – erection of garage outbuilding with ancillary accommodation above.
Park House, Wenham Road, Copdock IP8 3EZ
The Council agreed to submit a comment of no objection, in principle, and to include a comment that, should the proposal be granted, a Condition be included to avoid any future change of use, such as to an Airbnb or an independent dwelling.
- DC/24/05315
HA – erection of single storey outbuilding to accommodate fish room.
Park House, Wenham Road, Copdock IP8 3EZ
The Council agreed to submit a comment of no objection, in principle, and to include a comment that. Should the proposal be granted, a Condition be included to avoid any future change of use, such as to an Airbnb or an independent dwelling.

To RECEIVE Decision Notices:

- DC/24/03517 BDC Granted
- DC/24/03518 BDC Granted

Cllr Ward referred to the email which he had shared with the Council, prior to the meeting, advising that:

- (i) Cllr Munday, Chair of Bentley Parish Council has been notified by Andrew Sierakowski, Suffolk County Council (SCC) Planning Officer that the Brockley Wood application is very unlikely to be considered by the D & R Committee at the 4th February 2025 meeting; the next meeting after that is scheduled for 4th March 2025.
- (ii) Bentley Parish Council has applied for Conservation Area status which would abut part of the proposed Brockley Wood development site.
- (iii) Copdock and Washbrook Parish Council has submitted a FOI to SCC to ask:
 - a) *how many live mineral extraction sites are there currently in operation across Suffolk?*
 - b) *how many live inert waste processing sites are currently in operation across Suffolk?*
 - c) *how many applications for both a) and b) are currently at some stage of the planning process?*
 - d) *how many officers are responsible for enforcement activity?*
 - e) *how many enforcement notices have been issued to site operators over the last 3 years?*
- (iv) Cllr Ward has asked the SCC D & R Committee Chair that both Bentley and Copdock & Washbrook Parish Council be permitted 5 minutes each to address the Committee rather than the 2 ½ minutes each as before. Once the Committee meeting date has been confirmed, the Parish Councils will be advised of a decision.

Cllr M Green left the meeting.

2767/2425 INFORMATION SIGN: to AGREE the Wording and Purchase of an Information Sign for the Recreation Field

The Council had agreed to erect a sign at the last meeting; it is intended for the sign to be erected on the gate of the Recreation Field.

Cllr M Green returned to the meeting.

Cllr D Busby left the meeting.

Cllr Ward had circulated a draft of the proposed sign to the Council prior to the meeting, and that an electronic version of an 800mm by 400mm 'mock-up' will be forthcoming. The Council agreed the wording is likely to need revisions.

ACTION: The Council will consider the draft mock-up when received and will put forward suggested revisions, with a mind to condensing the original draft.

Cllr Butters considered a sign should be erected relevant to the entire village hall site, incorporating a site map.

ACTION: Cllr Butters is to look at the possibility of installing a sign for the entire village hall site, engaging with all interested parties.

2768/2425 PARISH COUNCIL EMAILS: to AGREE Actions as Required

Cllr Green advised he had tried to sign the Parish Council to a Microsoft business account but was unable to do so as the Parish Council doesn't currently have control of the domain name.

ACTION: Cllr Green is to contact Strudwick to ask for the necessary access information.

2769/2425 COMMUNITY SPEED MANAGEMENT

(i) **20'S PLENTY : to AGREE Actions as Required**

Cllr Tyrrell advised that the application is progressing nicely. The SCC Traffic Survey Team have scheduled the surveys to be installed on The Street, Back Lane and Elm Lane on 5th February 2025 and collected on 13th February 2025; the cost of the surveys will be £700 +VAT. The findings of the survey will need to show an average mean speed under 24mph for the scheme to continue.

Cllr Ward advised the Parish Council had submitted a FOI to Suffolk Police asking for "*the dates of safety van speed camera visits to the Old London Road, Copdock over the last 12 months, and the subsequent number of fines from each visit*".

The dates and total number of speeding offences recorded, for the C495 Old London Road, Copdock, is as follows:

Date	Total Offences
03/11/2023	2
06/12/2023	6
12/01/2024	9
06/02/2024	7
12/03/2024	2
18/03/2024	10
05/04/2024	5
12/04/2024	7
03/05/2024	8
14/05/2024	7
15/05/2024	5
17/05/2024	12
25/05/2024	3
11/06/2024	11

14/06/2024	10
24/06/2024	14
26/06/2024	2
01/07/2024	9
09/08/2024	11
03/09/2024	10
20/09/2024	10
22/10/2024	6

There have been 22 visits, and 166 fines issued for the period 3rd November 2023 to 22nd October 2024.

The Suffolk Police coding for the OLR is “green” which stipulates that deployment of the Safety Camera Team is once every six weeks on the basis that the non-compliance rate is on average between 11-49 vehicles per hour. The data gleaned from the FOI shows that the OLR is clearly at the bottom of the range and so there appears to be no realistic prospect of upgrading to “amber”, thus increasing the visits to monthly.

2770/2425 SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS & DRAINAGE UPDATES

Cllr Ward advised he had met with Mr M Lee, of Suffolk County Council Farm Estates, who had subsequently ordered a survey of the trees adjoining Chapel Lane, Washbrook, located on SCC land. The completed survey identifies that most of the trees require works to be undertaken.

Cllr Ward advised that a response has been received from Suffolk County Cllr Paul West, Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding regarding the (northbound) carriageway of the OLR, as follows:

“The issues on the northbound carriageway near the underpass are recorded on the Suffolk Highways Flood Site Register. Extensive cleansing, jetting and investigations have been carried out. it is not sufficient to restore the capacity. The problems on there are much more complex.

This particular issue does not fall into any of the priorities shown above so there is little prospect of SCC doing major improvement work at this location in the foreseeable future.”

Cllr Ward will continue to pursue this matter.

Cllr Ward advised that the blocked gully on the south bound carriageway appears to have been cleared, and that the footpath clearance works need to be resumed.

2771/2425 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS

(i) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Ward advised that the Design Guidelines have been successfully rewritten, removing any confusion with regards to putting forward development sites.

Babergh District Council has been instructed to carry out a focused and short consultation solely on the amended Guidelines , after which the external examiner can complete her report. There is some ambiguity over when the NP can be put to referendum owing to the uncertainty regarding local elections in May. Any referendum has to be administered by the BMSDC elections team; the Parish Council is in their hands as to when this can be conducted. Councillors restated their intention to get this completed as soon as possible , especially in light of the greatly increased annual housing target imposed on BMSDC by the Government.

Babergh District Council have sent out invitations to their next Town and Parish Liaison Meeting on Monday 20th January from 09:30 – 11:30am.

This meeting is intended to provide Parish and Town Councils with an update on the following:

- Devolution and Local Government Reform
- Planning Matters (including the revised National Planning Policy Framework)

ACTION: Cllrs will attend the BDC meeting to learn more about the revised NPPF and how the revised Government housing target will affect Neighbourhood Plans currently in the course of being drafted.

(ii) Active Travel Scheme

The Parish Council has submitted its response to the consultation, as published on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Butters advised she is arranging a liaison meeting with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Capel St. Mary Parish Council, thus providing an opportunity for the neighbouring councils to discuss any linked concerns and issues.

2772/2425 NEWSLETTER: to AGREE publication of a Parish Council newsletter

The Parish Council agreed to publish another edition of the Parish Council newsletter; the likely cost would be a maximum of £195 and would be distributed free of charge with the In Touch publication.

Cllr Downey left the meeting.

ACTION: Cllr Ward is to draft a newsletter, to be circulated to all council members for comment.

ACTION: The Clerk is to ask the website provider for website visit data.

Cllr Downey returned to the meeting.

2773/2425 2025/26 MEETING DATES: to AGREE the 2025/26 Meeting Dates, including the Annual Parish Meeting

The dates for the 2025/26 meetings of the Council, including the Annual Parish Council meeting, were agreed as circulated to the Council prior to the meeting.

ACTION: The Clerk is to publish the 2025/26 Parish Council meeting dates, including the Annual Parish meeting, on the Parish Council website and is to book the Village Hall Lounge.

2774/2425 NEXT MEETING: to CONFIRM the Date and Time of the Next Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Council is to be held on 4th February 2025 at the Village Hall, Copdock at 7pm.

2775/2425 MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

There were no matters raised by members.

2776/2425 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

ACTION: The Clerk is to ask the website provider for regular data on website hits.

The meeting closed at 20:51.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

2763 MATTERS ARISING: to CONSIDER Matters Arising from the Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd December 2024

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

Email: clerk@copdockandwashbrook.org

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