Minutes of Combs Parish Council Meeting
Monday 14th October at 7.30pm, Battisford Cricket Club

Present: T Kitson (chair); A Tomlinson (councillor); K Archer (councillor);) T Bamber (councillor); H Larsen (councillor); C Ratcliffe (councillor); S Ottewell (clerk); K Oakes (County councillor)

1) Apologies for absence
Cllr Betchley – apology accepted
Cllr J Matthissen (District Councillor) – apology noted

2) Declaration of Interest/Declaration of lobbying
Nothing to declare

3) Public Forum
No members of the public attended

4) Minutes of meeting held on Monday 9th September
The Minutes for Monday 9th September 2024 was reviewed. It was agreed they be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting by the chairman.

5) Clerk's Report
The Clerk sent out the report prior to the meeting to allow the councillors time to read, no questions were raised (Appendix 1).

6) Chairman's Report
The Chair had sent out his report prior to the meeting. He talked though the Woodlands Farm solar farm public appeal process; no other questions were raised (appendix 2)

7) County Councillor's Report
The county councillor had sent in the report prior to the meeting (Appendix 3)

8) District Councillor's Report
Cllr Matthissen sent in the report prior to the meeting (Appendix 4) but was unable to attend the meeting. Questions were raised regarding the new waste bin process.
Action Point – Clerk to request further information from Cllr Matthiesen

9) Planning Applications received for consideration
(a) DC/24/03980 Blackberry Annex, Wilbur View – change of use of annex to holiday let
The councillors do not object

10) Finance

(a) Accounts review to date and finance approval
All councillors agreed with both the budget analysis/ variance report and the predicted income/expenditure report

(b) Payments to hand
(i) Electricity for streetlights - August (direct debit) – £161.42
Approved - Parish Councils Act 157, s.3; Highways Act 1980. S.301

(ii) Replacement defibrillator battery - £267.00
Approved – Public Health Act 1936, s234

(iii) Quarterly bank services charges £18.00
Approved – Local Government Act 1972, s111

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11) Clerk role
No applications for the post of Parish Clerk had been received by the closing date and therefore it was proposed and agreed that Suzanne Ottewell be offered the position. Councillors were delighted to note that Mrs. Ottewell accepted and Cllr Kitson and she will finalise a contract of employment.
Action point: Cllr Kitson and Clerk to finalise employment contract

12) To review the external audit report
The report was reviewed and accepted by all the councillors and it was agreed that no further action was needed

13) To review the Cricket Club's application for funding for a sewage treatment plant
Battisford Cricket Club have requested £1500 towards the cost of the sewage treatment plant following the upgrading of their toilets and shower facilities. All councillors agreed to accept the request and that payment will be made on commencement of the work.
Action Point – Clerk to write letter to Battisford Cricket Club confirming the Parish Council's support

14) Call for Sites update
Cllr Bamber has drafted a report in preparation of any future action regarding Call for Sites 2024. Councillors were pleased to note that a Combs resident with experience in similar representations has offered his feedback on the most effective ways to negotiate the process

15) To agree whether or not to broach the idea of formulating a Community-led Neighbourhood Plan
This was discussed at great length with councillors weighing up the potential benefits against the significant effort required. Cllr Archer offered to arrange a discussion for councillors with an ex-colleague with direct experience of the matter
Action point – Cllr Archer to arrange talk

16) To agree fixed assets register
The register was reviewed and accepted by all the councillors and agreed it could be signed

17) To consider the purchase of a dog bin by the path running between Park Road and Webb's Close
A local resident has suggested this dog bin and all councilors were in favour**.**
Action Point: Clerk to investigate costs and the processes with MSDC

18) Community Newsletter – review funding and time commitment
A report breaking down income and expenditure for 2024 and a forecast for 2025 was reviewed by the councillors. They had concerns regarding the organisation of the newsletter and addition funding requested and could not approve, even in principle, that they would continue to support.
Action Point – Cllr Kitson to arrange meeting with Battisford PC, BVHMC and newsletter editor to reach agreement

19) General maintenance of assets – proposal to advertise for handyperson
It was agreed that a handyperson is required for general maintenance around the village and that an advertisement should be place in the next newsletter.
Action Point – Clerk to arrange

20) Correspondence / Items for inclusion on the next agenda
No other correspondence to report. November agenda to include replacement batteries for SIDs and the 2025-26 Budget.

Date and time of next meeting: Monday 11th November 2024 at 7:30pm, Battisford Cricket Club
The Meeting closed at 21:15

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