

COTTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held on March 21, 2018 at 7.30pm
at The Trowel and Hammer

PRESENT	Cllrs Peter Gibbs, Sarah Wenban, Chris Tester, Paul Howlett, and Beryl Ellis, and Rod Caird (Clerk). Four members of the public together with Cllr Andrew Stringer were also present.
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1/210318 Apologies and approvals of absence

Cllrs David Williams and Marian Cocksedge had sent their apologies and their absence was approved.

2/210318 Declarations of Interest and dispensations requested

None

3/210318 To approve the Minutes of the meetings on January 17, 2018 and February 15, 2018

The Minutes were approved and signed.

4/210318 To receive comments from members of the public on matters on the Agenda and reports from the District and County Councillor

Cllr Stringer's written reports are circulated with these minutes, and will also be sent to all subscribers to the village email list and published on the website.

He drew particular attention to the funds which will be available from CIL moneys collected by Mid Suffolk and available for Parish Councils – individually or in collaboration – to bid for as support for substantial infrastructure projects. There will be bidding rounds in May and October each year.

5/210318 To consider any updates on current planning applications, including Two dwellings to the rear of Broadway Cottage (withdrawn); Conversion at Willowfields, Willow Farm (granted); Construction of 1 dwelling at Willow Farm (refused) and Two-storey dwelling at Kimberley (pending)

No further planning applications have been received. It was reported that the two-storey dwelling at Kimberley has now been approved, though the planning website still has it listed as "registered".

6/210318 To consider the Mid-Suffolk Ward Boundary review

It was noted that the current draft review overstates Cotton's voting population by about 100 (the true figure is closer to 500 than 600), and that the reference to Cotton making no comment during the consultation refers to the most

recent stage of the process; earlier, Cotton Parish Council clearly stated a preference for being combined with Mendlesham rather than Bacton. It was agreed the Clerk would draft a new comment for the current deadline of April 30, emphasising the Council's continuing view that combining with the stable population of Mendlesham makes much more sense than being attached to the rapidly growing community of Bacton.

7/210318 To review progress on refurbishment of the village sign

Cllr Howlett will take the sign down for repair when the weather improves in April. Funding will need to be found for tree work close to the sign.

8/210318 To discuss the village's preparedness for bad weather incidents

It was agreed the Parish Council should purchase and install a number of grit bins around the village in order to improve road conditions in poor weather. Clerk will action and will liaise with the County authority about position and supply of grit.

9/210318 To review the arrangements for distribution of the Cotton Quarterly

It was agreed the arrangements are now running smoothly.

10/210318 To consider the future management arrangements for Carters Meadow

Following various discussions and consultation with SALC it was agreed that the current management arrangements should be left in place. Clerk will research other nearby parishes where a separate Trust runs woodland, etc., in order to clarify insurance and asset register policies. Meanwhile it was also agreed the Parish Council will continue if necessary to pay the separate insurance premium for Carters Meadow, though the Clerk will attempt to combine the insurances into one policy.

11/210318 To consider arrangements for ongoing maintenance of the cotton.onesuffolk website

It was agreed the Clerk will look after the website for the time being.

12/210318 To receive a financial report from the Clerk including any payments due, including any further details about the Data Protection Regulations, consideration of Section 137 grants and arrangements for the 2017/18 audit.

A bank reconciliation was presented showing a bank balance of £19,047.72. A payment of £125 was made to Polstead Press for printing the Quarterly. CIL funds of £3,559.70 are held for specific community infrastructure projects in addition to an earmarked village reserve of £15,000. No specific bids had been received for Section 137 grants but possible projects for might include the Church bell-ringing group; a village event to mark the centenary of the end of WWI; and the playground at the Village Hall.

It was agreed to appoint SALC as internal auditor for 2017/18.

The Clerk reported that in order to be compliant with the new data protection regime (GDPR) by the end of May, the council would have to appoint an external DPO (Data Protection Officer). The DPO Centre Ltd is offering this service and has been working with SALC. Although it is difficult to assess one company offering this service as against another, and although councillors felt pressurised into an expensive appointment, it was agreed to delegate the decision to the Clerk and Chairman, on the understanding that the current quoted year one price of £600 should be negotiated down if possible. It was suggested the extent of the commitments being asked of a small council should be raised with Dr Daniel Poulter MP.

13/210318 Correspondence and urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

The village litter pick will be held on April 14.

The next meetings will be held on May 2, 2018 (at 7.00pm, which will be the Annual Parish Meeting and the AGM of the Parish Council), July 18, 2018 at 7.30pm, and September 19, 2018 at 7.30pm.

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