

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: Cllrs H Phillips (Chair), L Wortley, T Munson, D Warren, H Watts. D Hattrell (Clerk), J Finch (County Cllr), B Hurren (District Cllr) and 4 members of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

COOPTION OF MEMBER: Vince Strafford had applied to join the Parish Council (PC). He was hoping to attend, however, needed to make his apologies at short notice. The Chair proposed the co-option of Vince Strafford in his absence. This was seconded by Cllr T Munson and unanimously carried. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office will be duly completed and signed ahead of the next PC Meeting. The Clerk was to contact Cllr Strafford between Meetings in relation to the Register of Members Interests and other administrative matters – **Action Clerk.**

APOLOGIES: None were given. As reported at the last Meeting, C Parr and K Couling had resigned from the PC effective from 17th June 2024. The Clerk will now follow the procedure to publicise these two vacancies and remove their contact details from our website – **Action Clerk.**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: Nothing was declared.

MINUTES OF 28th MAY 2024: An addition was agreed to point 3) on the second page of the Minutes under matters arising from the Minutes. A more detailed explanation was provided for the grass cutting. With this addition, the Minutes were accepted as correct – **Action Clerk to update the Minutes on our website with the new wording.**

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: The potential to reimburse the one-off cost of remedying the poor cutting at Ash Street/Fen Street and Gunary Close was raised. It was concluded for an Agenda item to be added to the July Meeting – **Action Clerk.** The points raised were that the grass cutting could not have been considered an emergency, it is the responsibility of another authority (Babergh District Council) who didn't have the required equipment, Parishioners may be taxed twice for the same work, frustration that we do not currently have portfolio holders/committee structure, frustration that we didn't call an extraordinary meeting ahead of C Parr funding the work, and the merits of having a volunteer group. The Clerk explained that the phone call came through on the Friday afternoon of a Bank Holiday weekend and we already had a PC Meeting scheduled for the following Tuesday, so an extraordinary meeting was not possible in the timescale. Cllr Wortley explained that we have researched the merits of a committee structure, and a proper tender process has been agreed as the first step. It was agreed for the Chair to speak to resident C Parr ahead of the next PC Meeting to consider terms of reference for the Village Volunteer Group being proposed – **Action Chair.** The Chair reported that the County Council is considering quoting options for restoration of the Cox Hill to Fen Street footpath. The Chair agreed to put further pressure on the Police to attend a PC meeting to explain their structure – **Action Chair.**

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: Progress with the potential Stone Street 20 mph speed restriction was questioned. With the permissive path closed, the safety of pedestrians is even more compromised. Another resident felt 20 mph was still too fast. She requested restricting traffic would be a better solution. Potential Vehicle Activated Signage was then debated. It was agreed to await the outcome of the 20-mph speed limit. This is in the hands of the Highway authority, so not a decision the PC could make. He will check we have included the closure of the permissive path as further evidence in our representation -**Action Chair**. The Chair then read a note from another resident who could not make the meeting and whilst most of his points were covered, his point about Bowls Club parking would be followed up. Cllr Hurren and the Chair both agreed to write to the Bowls Club seeking cooperation - **Action Chair**.

REVIEW OF ITEMS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC: See above.

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr B Hurren attended and confirmed the District Council (DC) are still restricting business due to the forthcoming Elections. At the DC currently they are striving to improve even further their housing stock, making them more energy efficient. Some of their older houses may require retrofitting to bring them up to standard. On local matters, he has agreement from the officers at the DC to sweep Butchers Lane and Wash Lane if the PC decided to go ahead with the mud scraping. He was disappointed with the state of some roads with potholes, especially at Hagmore Green. He has reported the latter to Assington PC. He warned the mud scraping in Boxford may reveal more potholes. Cllr Hurren agreed to chase the issue with the bund below the oil tank by the sheltered housing in Ash Street filling with water. The Chair agreed to email Cllr Hurren with further details on this subject - **Action Chair**.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch was unable to attend, and no report was provided.

FINANCE: 1ST May 2024 opened with total Bank Balances at **£112,603.13**. Income in May came to **£8240.62** including the VAT reclaim and a grant of £1750 towards the Churchyard wall. The sum of the payments made during May was **£4510.29**. The Bank balances closed on 31st May 2024 at **£33,090.18** in the Community Account, **£30,550.00** in the Deposit Account and **£52,693.28** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£116,333.46**.

The following pre-agreed payments for May paid on 4th June 2024: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1440.31	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Fund Tr	M A Crighton	185.00	Cemetery contract
Funds Tr	Boxford Village Hall	121.50	Hall hire including APM
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts Ltd	42.00	Cemetery path
Funds Tr	Boxford PCC	2500.00	Grant towards church ins

The following pre-agreed payments were paid on 15th June 2024: -

Funds Tr	B D Hurren	773.00	Asset Restoration
Funds Tr	Babergh DC	65.00	Cemetery (garden waste bin)
Funds Tr	Boxford Friendship Group	50.00	Donation

The following DD around 21st June 2024: -

DD	Eon Next	£56.30	Bell Ho electricity s/charge
Total		£5233.11	

a) Internal Audit Report 2023/24

All matters approved with the following future recommendations. An action plan will be agreed at the July Meeting – **Action Clerk to put on the July Agenda:** -

- 1) Produce a grant awarding policy – action required.
- 2) Bank statements compared to balances reported to meetings -frequency quarterly. This was mentioned briefly at the previous meeting. It was noted Cllr L Wortley has online access to our bank records and is not part of the Finance Sub Committee so is well placed to review and report to the full PC quarterly – this was agreed and will be included in our Action plan.
- 3) Council advised to ensure that an accounting statement is submitted to external auditors detailing the creditor adjustment **this was done.*
- 4) We tailor our Model Publication Scheme to accurately reflect PC's activities undertaken – action required.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the Clerk/RFO for all her hard work in relation to audit.

- b) Butchers Lane and Wash Lane scraping** – The Chair explained that the responsibility for the road condition/scraping lies with County Highways. The DC would sweep and have agreed this, should the PC proceed. Other issues of drainage would also need to be addressed. The Chair explained that Colin Parr has been pursuing County Highways without success. The Chair explained that unless we instruct it ourselves, it is likely not to happen. We have a quotation of around £1000 for Butchers Lane and haven't received a quote for Wash Lane yet. We would need to get permission from County Highways for our Contractor to do the work. They are currently a County approved contractor, however, not for road scraping. We would also need to apply for the road closure for the duration of the works, which would increase the cost. At this the Chair confirmed he didn't have a proposal; however, he suggested the principle is considered. After discussion, it was agreed that this PC will not pursue the work themselves. We will continue to pressure County Highways to do it. The meeting was closed briefly for a resident to speak. She confirmed that Wash Lane is being used by Boxford Fruit Farm tractors and it was agreed for Cllr Watts to speak to them to see if they could assist with the mud clearance – **Action Cllr Watts.**

- c) Any other urgent Finance matters** – nothing was raised.

CEMETERY: Report from Sub Committee. Cllr Warren explained that complaints have been made about the long-wet grass sticking to the headstones after strimming. The contractor has been asked to blow the grass away from the headstones, which doesn't seem to be happening. Changes to the specification could be considered. In the churchyard, advice from Suffolk Wildlife Trust is being followed to see what can be yielded from a different regime. The Chair is taking this forward – **Action Chair.** Cllr Warren is concerned about the

untidy appearance for the duration of this experimental approach. Cllr Warren is constructing compost heaps currently.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY: Report from Sub Committee. The Biodiversity Statement was close to completion.

PUBLIC REALMS: Report from Sub Committee and consider whether resident volunteer – K Couling to continue to liaise with Community Wardens and report via this Sub Committee. Placement of restored benches. The meeting was closed briefly to allow a suggestion from a resident. The PC agreed with her suggestion that the restored teak bench be positioned in the WI bed at the top of School Hill – **Action Chair**. It was agreed for the Clerk to contact Richard Parmee at the DC to ask for a modification to their junction grass cutting at the Homefield junction with Swan Street as there are visibility issues – **Action Clerk**. It was agreed for resident K Couling to continue to liaise with the Community Wardens and to prioritise instructions from the PC. Cllr Munson confirmed the Wardens are not to touch the beds at the entrance to The Causeway and the WI bed at the top of School Hill. It was noted that the newly planted flowers in the planters on the bridge are dying due to lack of water.

PARISH TREE WARDEN: Our current Parish Tree Warden is moving away, and it was agreed to appoint Wal Wallace to take over the role. It was agreed for Drake Davis and Wal Wallace to plan for handover.

PARKING AT BROOK HALL ROAD: The parking is worsening especially following wet weather (so the verge cannot be used) and on certain days when there are staff meetings at the Care Home. The Care Home is run by a private business and the most likely solution would be for them, with permission from the County Council, to improve the surface of the verge for parking and add a dropped kerb. Cllr Watts agreed to liaise and write to them with this suggestion between meetings – **Action Cllr Watts**.

MEMBERS REPORTS including handover from our retiring Councillors. The Chair reported that the Church clock has stopped. The PC maintains the clock as a public clock for the Village. The Chair has arranged for a new contractor to attend from Norwich. Our usual contractor has moved away. The Old Gaol project is underway with the allocated funding. The frustrations in relation to the village bus provision were outlined at the last PC Meeting and community volunteers are looking to go to press to put further pressure on the County Council. Our current volunteer will no longer be helping us put notices on the Fleece and Gunary Close notice boards. Keys were given to Cllr Munson who volunteered to put notices up and the Chair to print the notices for her going forward – **Action Chair and Cllr Munson**. The Clerk will ask Cllr Hurren if he could change the lock on the Stone Street noticeboard as the keys cannot be found currently – **Action Clerk**.

CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE: Nothing was raised.

The meeting closed at **9.50 p.m.**

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall on **Tuesday 18th June 2024**

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

- A) Listed Building Consent was granted for replacement sitting room window at 22 Ellis Street - **DC/24/00716**.
- B) Non-material amendment and Listed Building Consent were approved for alterations to Wynne Cottage, Swan Street - **DC/24/01682/3**.
- C) Conditions were approved for Listed Building Consent application at the Old Gaol, Broad Street - **DC/24/02520**.
- D) The Appeal against refusal was dismissed for Land to rear of Units 1 & 2, former Hawthorns Business Park - **DC/23/03267**.
- E) Listed Building Consent was granted to replace roofing felt at The Old Bakery, 12-16 Broad Street - **DC/24/01883**.

The following applications were discussed: -

- 1) Application for a lawful Development Certificate for continued use of land as residential amenity land at Pippettes Farm, Stone Street - **DC/24/02489**.
No evidence had been provided for the PC to contribute to the application.
- 2) Application for Listed Building Consent for basement repairs and reinstatement works following oil leak at 12 Swan Street - **DC/24/02560**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

- 3) **Strategic Planning** - The Croft contract for purchase, the Housing Needs Survey including agreement with Community Action Suffolk (CAS) and survey questions and the Village Car Park.

In relation the Croft, the Chair reported that the draft contract for the purchase of the land had been received. It was delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair to conclude this between meetings. A CIL bid was to be made to support the purchase and the work proposed to the land. The Environmental and ecology subcommittee will be putting together some proposals for the land.

In relation to the Community Action Suffolk Housing Needs Survey questions, it was agreed to query/suggest the use of 5 years as a consistent period within the survey and subject to this aspect being addressed, the remainder of the questions were to remain unaltered.

Finally, the Chair and C Parr visited the owner of the land along Stone Street Road designated for a potential village car park. It was a positive meeting, and it is likely the next meeting will be by video conferencing. Good progress is being made and as soon as a proposal can be put forward, it is hoped this will be discussed by the PC held in public rather than a closed session.

- 4) **Any Other Urgent Planning Matters** - Nothing was raised.