

BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

20 Heath Close, Polstead Heath, Colchester CO6 5BE

Tel: 01787 739317 Email: clerk@boxford-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 24th September 2024 at **7.00 p.m.** in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: Cllrs H Phillips (Chair), L Wortley, D Warren, H Watts, V Strafford. CCllr J Finch, DCllr B Hurren (from 8.15pm), Z Rumsey (Clerk), Constable John Moore and 15 members of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

1. **Apologies:** None received
2. **Declarations of Interest by Councillors:** None
3. **Minutes of 13th August 2024:** These were accepted as correct
4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:**
 - Footpath at Primrose Wood – this needs to be discussed with DCllr Hurren.
 - Brass Plaques – DCllr Hurren
 - Citizens Advice Publicity – An offer of an advert in the Box River News has been made, waiting for a response.
 - Aerial Slide Project – This is due to start early November, the Floodlight Project has been completed.
 - Chain and lock at the Croft – These have been purchased, it has been agreed that a key lock box will be installed on the side of the Bowls building and another on the playing field pavilion.
5. **Questions from the Public:**
 - Comment regarding alleged house of criminal activities within the village.
 - Bridleway/footpath between Cox Hill to the pond on Holbrook Estate is difficult to walk or ride along as it is very overgrown by hedges.
 - Permissive path on Stone Street has been closed therefore walkers need to use the narrow lane which is dangerous with oncoming traffic.
 - 20 mph speed limit – there is an error on the report and the traffic survey, which refer to Stone Street Road rather than Stone Street (road towards the hamlet). The report is confusing. Stone Street residents still very keen to implement 20 mph speed limit.
 - Biodiversity statement – please will the Parish Council take into consideration that the church has surveyed and found 75 species of wild flowers and some quite unusual insects. This should be taken seriously as a statutory duty.
6. **Review of items raised by the Public**
 - Cllr Phillips asked whether the activities have been reported to the police. The response was that it was thought so. Constable Moore responded that any matter should be reported to the police,
 - Cllr Wortley reported that SCC Rights of Way department cut the grass on the right hand side, but not the hedges. Residents will need to be reminded that they are responsible for maintaining the hedges. Cllr Wortley has spoken with our Footpath Warden who will look into the matter. Cllr Wortley encouraged residents to always report any footpath or highways issues using the reporting tool via the SCC website.
 - Cllr Phillips confirmed that the permissive footpath is no longer permissive as the owner has closed it off, as is his right. Cllr Stafford has offered to speak with the owner to see if he will reopen.
 - Cllr Phillips advised that the 20 mph matter will be discussed later in the meeting.
 - Cllr Phillips understands that the statutory duty is to preserve and enhance the environment. This will also be discussed later in the meeting.
7. **District Council Report:** Report received from DCllr Hurren prior to the meeting. The points were raised in particular regarding a call for sites and Passive Homes. The full report can be found on BPC website. DCllr Hurren also advised that the Kingfisher Pool in Sudbury would continue to be closed for a further 12 weeks for major repair works. Cllr Wortley asked if there was an update regarding the Wash Lane development. A response has been promised within two weeks, Tom Barker is confident on a resolution.
8. **County Council Report:** Report received from CCllr Finch prior to the meeting. The points were raised in particular regarding The Bramford to Twinstead Project, Children's Services, Solar Together and Great Blakenham Recycling Centre. The full report can be found on BPC website.

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9. Local Policing Structure: Constable Moore explained that there have been some structure changes across Suffolk. Babergh has now been split into 5 areas with an Officer responsible for each area. PC Georgia Norman is the Officer in charge of Boxford and surrounding areas. Crime reporting will not change - The quickest way to report a non-emergency crime is online via the Suffolk Constabulary Website. 101 can still be used unless in an emergency, where 999 should still be used. Suffolk Constabulary are using Social Media, where information is shared, alongside the Suffolk Constabulary website. Constable Moore reminded the residents that the only way the police know of a crime is if it is reported, so it is best to report a crime, even if you think someone else has probably reported it.

10. Finance – Bank Balances and previously agreed payments for the August period.

29th June 2024 opened with total Bank Balances at **£111,031.38**. Income in July & August came to **£1,639.36** including cemetery fees and VAT refund. The sum of the payments made during July & August was **£24,173.64**. The Bank balances closed on 30th August 2024 at **£15,051.00** in the Community Account, **£40,682.22** in the Deposit Account and **£33,984.28** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£89,717.50**.

The following pre-agreed payments for July & August paid: -

Date paid	Payee	Amount	Details
22.07.24	E.On	£22.12	Electricity
24.07.24	C Parr	£159.85	Chair's Expenses
	Box Media	£550.00	Quarterly charge Box River News
	Babergh District Council	£1,821.60	Bin Empty Service
	Gotelee Solicitors	£4,050.00	Croft Purchase
26.07.24	Suffolk Preservation	£30.00	Subscription
01.08.24	Mortimer Contracts	£42.00	Cemetery Path
	Topline Pest Control	£45.00	Churchyard moles
	Geosphere Ltd	£97.20	Mapping Software
	Employment Cost (total)	£1,710.41	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
	Gotelee Solicitors	£712.20	Solicitors Fees
	Sudbury Town Council	£905.57	Community Wardens
05.08.24	Boxford Village Hall	£94.50	Hall Hire
	Gotelee Solicitors	£120.00	Legal Fees
	C Lawson	£500.00	Croft Installation
16.08.24	E.On	£34.47	Electricity
30.08.24	S Mattocks	£22.00	Ink
	Mortimer Contracts	£42.00	Cemetery Path
	H Phillips	£61.59	Expenses
	Boxford Village Hall	£94.50	Hall Hire
	M Crighton	£185.00	Grass Cutting - Graveyard
	Employment Cost (total)	£1629.64	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
	Community Action Suffolk	£1,200.00	Housing Needs Survey
	Boxford Playing Field	£4,000.00	Capital Grant

It was not possible to reconcile the bank account at today's date as the payments given did not include September payments.

Consider the following items: -

- a) **Agreement of Tender Specifications:** It was resolved that the tender specifications were to be merged but in principle are agreed. Cllr Wortley will finalise and put together tenders to send out to contractors, together with the help from the Clerk.
- b) **Review Asset Register and Insurance:** Additional volunteers to be added to policy, Payroll amount to be amended according to new Clerk's salary, income should be increased to £65,937 from £40,000. Following these amendments it was resolved to accept the insurance policy. It was resolved to remove the strimmers from the Asset Register and accept the remainder.
- c) **Grant Awarding Policy:** one or two amendments to be made regarding sub-finance committee.

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d) **External Auditors' Report:** Distributed prior to the meeting, there have been no matters brought to our attention as a result of the audit.

e) **Any other urgent Finance matters:** None

11. Planning – Report on Decisions from the Planning Authority.

- **DC/24/02841 – Land to the South of Daking Avenue, Boxford** – Conditions 7 & 21 have been refused. Conditions 6, 9, 10 & 13 have been approved.
- **DC/24/02859 – Wynne Cottage, Swan Street, Boxford** – All conditions have been approved.
- **DC/24/03206 – Land To The South Of, Daking Avenue, Boxford** – Conditions have been approved.

Consider the following items: -

a) **Any other urgent planning matters**

Dealt with in Cllr Wortley's question to DCllr Hurren regarding response from Chief Planning Officer on structures in Wash Lane area. Noted that response is promised within 14 days.

12. **Grass maintenance plan and specification:** Discussions took place regarding what the Council should be doing. There have been a number of negative comments regarding the long grass in the churchyard. Should there be a consultation to find out who wants what? It was resolved to invite Suffolk Wildlife Trust to come back to discuss a compromise. Grass in churchyard scheduled to be cut soon.
13. **Parking restriction options:** SSC could like confirmation that the residents affected have been consulted. It was confirmed this has been discussed but there should be a more formal consultation. Cllr Strafford suggested writing to the residents – this will be supported by CCllr Finch.
14. **20MPH speed limit:** CCllr Finch confirmed that it has been approved in principle to take the next steps, with certain amendments: the speed sign coming into Sand Hill should be pushed further down the hill, so that vehicles turning off the A1071 have time to adjust their speed. It is proposed that the recommendations be reviewed. Discussions continued regarding enforcing the speed limit, Constable Moore confirmed it is very difficult for the Police to enforce this.
15. **Housing Needs Survey:** The surveys are printed; the next job is to seal the surveys in envelopes and arrange for distribution. This should not be done too far in advance of 5th October as the survey goes live on 14th. Cllr Phillips and Cllr Strafford to organize envelope stuffing and distribution.
16. **On-line presence:** It was proposed that the Parish Council should set up a Microsoft licence to enable the clerk to store documents safely and for the other Councillors to be able to access. This was resolved and Cllr Strafford will liaise with the Clerk to set up.
17. **Proposed closure of the Mill Surgery and dispensary:** Discussions took place to establish how the Parish Council were potentially able to assist. It was resolved that members of the Parish Council will attend the meeting to find out exactly the reasons why the GP partnership intends to close the surgery and will look into ways in which it may assist the efforts to keep the surgery open. Cllr Strafford will lead from the Parish Council and make further investigations.
18. **Threat to the viability of the Post Office:** It was reported that the matter is being reviewed and the owner is hopeful to remain open.
19. **VE 80th Anniversary:** It was resolved to ask the Community Council to arrange an event with support from the Parish Council
20. **Church Clock:** Two quotes have been received. After discussions regarding the level of repair / replacement required, it was resolved to accept the basic repair for £1,300 + VAT and the annual service for £470 + VAT, which forms part of the annual budget of £500. It was also resolved to place a reserve of £1000 per annum for further clock repairs in the future.
21. **Cox Hill Permissive Path:** The matter was discussed; parts have been repaired but the worst section has been left. Cllr Wortley will contact SCC Rights of Way to find out their intentions for further repairs.
22. **Cemetery and Churchyard - regular report from subcommittee**
- a) **Approve the cutting and removal of the grass:** a quote has been received of £420+VAT. It was resolved to approve this quote.
- b) **Approve the removal of the leaves:** a quote has been received for £22+VAT per hour for approximately 8-10 hours. This quote was approved.

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- c) It was noted that there has been a large log and other debris potentially thrown over from Rectory Park that needs to be cleared. It has been quoted £980+VAT, which will include cutting back brambles, nettles and holly bush. It was discussed whether an article should be put in the BRN to inform residents of the cost to remove the debris and ask residents to be more mindful. This will be taken to the next meeting to be discussed further.
- 23. Environmental and Ecology - regular report from subcommittee including the Biodiversity Statement:** The biodiversity statement was sent around the members prior to the meeting. It was resolved to adopt the statement and upload to the website. Additional details to be added at a later date in the form of Appendices to the Statement.
- 24. Public Realms - regular report from subcommittee:** No report received
 - a) **Replacement of summer flowers:** Carried over to next meeting
- 25. Members' Reports:** None received
- 26. Clerk's Correspondence:** Nothing to report.

The chair declared the public meeting closed at 22.15.