

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 19th December 2023 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: C Parr (Chair), L Carpenter, T Munson, D Warren, H Watts, L Wortley, K Couling, B Hurren (District Cllr) and 1 member of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

CO-OPTION OF MEMBER: Kevin Couling had applied to join the Parish Council and having got to know Kevin over some months, members were pleased to invite Kevin to be Co-opted. Kevin duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the Meeting as a Councillor.

APOLOGIES: were received and accepted from Cllr H Phillips and D Hattrell (Clerk). County Cllr J Finch had also sent his apologies. District Cllr B Hurren was to arrive late.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: None were declared.

MINUTES OF 28th NOVEMBER 2023: These were accepted as correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: D. Warren reported that leaves have been cleared in the cemetery since the last meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM: The member of the public who attended raised the issue again of parking problems in and around Brook Hall Road. A car parked in Cox Hill is causing problems for people turning into and out of Brook Hall Road. Up to 7 cars are sometimes parked outside the care home on the corner, meaning that drivers have to "slalom" up the road. T. Munson reported that she has spoken to the manager of the care home about this issue. The ownership of the grass verge is still unclear and is being investigated. A solution is being sought and it is expected that the parking situation will improve over time.

REVIEW OF ITEMS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC: All were covered under Agenda items or addressed in direct response to the resident during the Public Forum.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch had sent his apologies and his report confirmed the Cabinet have approved new funding to re-surface residential roads and welcomes Government's announcement of funds ring-fenced over the next ten years. The County Council Adult Social Care Service was rated good overall by the Care Quality Commission. A 1400 year old temple was discovered at Rendlesham. The County Council remain united against the Norwich to Tilbury onshore pylons option. Virtual fostering and adoption sessions continue.

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr B Hurren attended and reported on:

1. Primrose Wood access. A sign has been put up outside the intended new Goodlands development, indicating that the Woodland Trust will be given the land. However, it is unlikely that the public will be allowed to walk to Primrose Wood via the intended footpath until after building works have been completed. The Chairman raised a question about whether the land transfer will be dependent on a buyer being found for

the development site. It appears that this is the case, but it is expected that the site will sell quickly.

2. The Goodlands playground. Some grass cutting has been done, but the area still looks a little sparse. Cllr Hurren will find out who is on the management committee, so that the environment and ecology sub-committee can liaise with them.
3. The Trees for Newborns scheme is still on offer for babies born in the current calendar year.
4. Parking in Babergh is back for discussion. Cllr Hurren is against parking charges in the market towns, as is the parish council, but it is becoming more difficult to oppose it, given the position regarding business rates (which are charged to Babergh on car parks).
5. The Sand Hill appeal hearing. The hearing went much as expected. However, Cllr Hurren objected to any suggestion that the Station Field drainage system is defective and opposes any proposal to dig the attenuation tanks up and replace them with a reservoir on the development site.
6. The number of people in housing need in the Boxford area has increased.
7. The Jubilee bench repairs have been completed. The bench in the cemetery needs attention but is privately owned. The clerk will be asked to look at the records to see who originally put it there.

Following the report, the Chair raised a question about road sweeping in Boxford. This needs to be done at least 4 times a year. If a proper schedule is provided, the Parish Council will try to ensure that people know where not to park, so that the road sweepers can do their job.

FINANCE: The Bank balances as at 1st December 2023 were **£32826.33** in the Community Account, **£13496.18** in the Deposit Account and **£72260.71** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£118,583.22**.

The following pre-agreed payments for November: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
Funds Tr	Boxford Playing Fields	3035.56	PC CIL Grant - Changing Rooms
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	2167.33	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Funds Tr	Sudbury Trees	500.00	Christmas Tree
Funds Tr	B D Hurren	285.00	Restoration of Seat
Funds Tr	Boxford Village Hall	94.50	Hall hire
Funds Tr	M A Crighton	185.00	Cemetery Contract
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts	42.00	Cemetery path treatmt
Funds Tr	Topline	55.00	Cemetery mole contract
Funds Tr	L Carpenter	18.00	Travel
Funds Tr	Suffolk Tree Services	7320.00	Cemetery tree work
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts Ltd	474.00	Cemetery leaf clearance

Clerk's Salary

The pay settlements from April 2023 was finally agreed in November 2023, so this month's employment costs include the back-dated amounts.

Full Council Finance Brainstorm

A Meeting was arranged for 10.00 am on Friday 12th January.

Any other urgent Finance items:

The quote for cutting the hedge at the Cemetery/Churchyard from the Mortimers was approved. Proposer: T. Munson; Seconder: H. Watts. The work will be carried out between Christmas and New Year. D. Warren will obtain a quote for repair of the fence and gate in Stone Street Road.

It was agreed that the Environment and Ecology sub-committee is authorized to spend up to £100 on seeds for high verges at the top of Swan Street and other projects of this nature. Proposer: C. Parr; Seconder: H. Watts.

CORRESPONDENCE: The report had been limited due to the Clerk being unwell, however, there were less weeks than usual between Meetings due to Christmas. All on-going matters were noted.

CEMETERY: The large leaning sycamore in the Cemetery had been felled and leaves had also been cleared. See Finance item of quote for cutting hedge. D. Warren reported that the ongoing work in the churchyard cannot proceed until the ground dries. He will chase the traffic management company regarding the application to SCC, needed to allow work to proceed on the churchyard wall. A number of trees in the churchyard are growing through graves and need to be felled/managed. T. Munson noted that any felled trees should be replaced with suitable specimens somewhere in the village.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY: L. Carpenter reported on the following:

1. Meeting with H. Phillips to look at the playing field with a view to implementing the suggestions made by Cathy Smith from SWT. A presentation will be made to the Playing Fields committee in the new year.
2. L. Carpenter attended the HEAT AGM (Hadleigh Environmental Action Team) and the River Group meeting, which yielded useful information and contacts.
3. She is in touch with Gale Pryor of HEAT, who is about to start a monitoring project of the River Box. The sub-committee will join in with this, starting in the new year.
4. L. Carpenter is putting together an initial meeting of the community group in January.
5. Proposal for small scale project to explore increasing biodiversity on the steep verges in Swan Street (see Finance item). The suggestion is to cut, remove cuttings, make some 50-70% bare patches and re-seed with Yellow Rattle and other suitable wildflower seeds.
6. The sub-committee will investigate the SCC Community Self-Management scheme for verges.
7. One of the church wardens, who is a member of the community group is offering support for any environmental projects in the churchyard, eg swift boxes and bat boxes. She will liaise with the church, possibly through the "Ecochurch" initiative.
8. Goodlands play area (see District Councillor's Report) – Richard Parmee at SCC may be able to supply plants and seeds.
9. Woodland Trust is looking for landowners and farmers who have space for tree planting.

10. Need for a mechanism for publicising this kind of information. Parish Council to think about how best to disseminate information generally.

URGENT REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS:

T.Munson reported on Reclaim the Rain projects. The lake at the back of Brook Hall Road to be planted with cricket-bat willows to reduce water and silt run-off. Another potential site for cricket-bat willows upstream from Groton. The lake at the Spinney cannot be enlarged as the landowner will not permit this. Rainwater will be collected in the cemetery via a water-butt on the Village Hall.

On another matter, T Munson noted that it would be helpful to have some office equipment in the meeting room in the Village Hall so that it can be used for parish council business.

The Chair reported on a number of matters, as follows:

1. Bus service. The Saturday bus service is set to continue for the first quarter of 2024. Beeston's has bid for a subsidy for the Saturday and non-school day service. Chairman to meet with Simon Barnett of SCC in early January and will continue to pressure SCC regarding the £1.8m which the government has provided to improve rural transport.
2. Street lighting. A condition survey will be carried out on 9th January. K. Couling to attend.
3. Traffic. The 20mph project is moving forward and building greater support. On-site meeting with Highways planned for New Year. Also looking at parking restrictions at the pinch-point in Church Street, but noted the need to retain as much parking as possible. A full inspection of all roads in the village will be carried out and all necessary repairs (carriageway, drains, gullies) will be noted on a map. Meeting to be held in January with residents of Stone Street to discuss the traffic problems.
4. Drains and gullies. SCC currently cleans them once a year. This is insufficient. A machine was cleaning in School Hill recently. K. Couling to check both sides of the road were cleared.
5. Project planned to look at flood risk mitigation for Boxford, linking with Reclaim the Rain and the Environment Agency. T. Munson offered to liaise with Reclaim the Rain. H. Watts to head up the project.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall (and by Video Conferencing?) on **Tuesday 19th December 2023**

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

- A) Planning Permission was granted for a new dwelling at Green Lawns Bonsai Nursery, Hadleigh Road - **DC/23/04218**.
- B) Planning Permission was granted for installation of 2 floodlights restricted to 20.00 hrs daily and 21.30hrs during the annual fireworks display in the interests of residential amenity at the Playing Field, Homefield - **DC/23/04369**.
- C) Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent were refused for alterations to 25 Swan Street due to potential harm to heritage assets - **DC/23/04815/16**.
- D) Planning Permission was granted to vary the application at 7 Boxford Lane - **DC/23/04834**.
- E) Planning Permission was granted for replacement dwelling at Hawthorns, Calais Street - **DC/23/03355**.
- F) Non Material amendment was approved at the site of Former Green Lawns Bonsai Nursery, Hadleigh Road - **DC/23/05444**.

The following applications were discussed: -

- 1) Wynne Cottage, Swan Street - Householder and Listed Building applications for extension and alterations - **DC/23/05599/600**.

The parish council had **No Objections**.

- 2) Kiln Place, Cox Hill - Application to vary condition - **DC/23/05713**.

The parish council had **No Objections**, subject to the amended extension not impacting adversely on neighbouring properties.

- 3) 27 Brook Hall Road - Application for work to protected oak - **DC/23/05753**.

The parish council had **No Objections**.

The Chairman suggested that routine tree applications be delegated to the Tree Warden and L. Carpenter. Proposal was accepted unanimously: Proposer: C. Parr; Seconder: T. Munson.

- 4) Any other urgent planning matters including update on Sand Hill Appeal. Update on Sand Hill appeal. The timetable for final submissions has been noted. L. Wortley will draft a final statement for the Parish Council when Babergh's final statement is available.