

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 24th January 2023 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: L Wortley (Chaired the Meeting), T Munson, J Moles, D Warren, H Watts, J Finch (County Cllr), B Hurren (District Cllr), D Hattrell (Clerk) and 7 members of the public attended in person. There were no requests for video links.

APOLOGIES: were received from J Fincham-Jacques.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: No declarations were made, however, L Wortley reminded the meeting of her involvement in researching the Box Valley structures.

MINUTES OF 29TH NOVEMBER 2022: These were accepted as correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: D Warren queried the speed monitoring and was surprised at the low average speed recorded. Although he felt it was accurate, J Finch agreed to follow up.

PUBLIC FORUM: A resident observed that the Neighbourhood Plan does not oppose what is happening at the Fruit Farm. Representatives from Boxford Rovers Football gave the background to their request for funding towards necessary improvements to the shower facilities at the Playing Field. The whole project is close to £20k and the improvements need to be in place by August/September this year.

REVIEW OF ITEMS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC: All covered under Agenda items. The Clerk advised the editor of Box River News is trying to attend the February Parish Council Meeting. The Finance Agenda item will be moved to February - **Action Clerk**. L Wortley had discussed with the editor and confirmed that she would prefer to explain the position in person rather than by correspondence.

RECLAIM THE RAIN: Two representatives from the Reclaim the Rain project attended. The project aims to both reduce the flood risk and to make good use of the water held back or diverted. They are trying to raise awareness of the project at this stage and to gather ideas. A survey was conducted with over 100 responses. The flood and drought risks were recognised by the respondents, however, the action already being taken was quite low. Drop in sessions were being arranged for the community together with engagement with the school and scouts. The project team were waiting on some work identifying landowners on a map of the valley around Boxford. A resident confirmed that this work is well underway ahead of the next Steering Group Meeting. The project is engaging with all the relevant authorities. Proposals made will be assessed with flood risk modeling.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch attended and his report in advance confirmed the £500M Devolution Deal that was signed off on 8th December 2022 by The Levelling Up Secretary of State, Michael Gove. The deal would bring investment, affordable homes, devolved adult education budget, transport settlement and improved energy efficiency in homes. The deal is subject to local consultation and an elected Council Leader. The 23/24 budget was contributed to by the on-line survey results and the aim is to protect front-line services and increase funding towards Adult Care and Children's Services, tree management and support for Citizens Advice. Further host families are needed for Ukrainian

Refugees. Cassius won a Best Elderly Care Technology Solution Award. Winter gritting was well underway. Suffolk archives on-line gallery is showcasing the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions continue. In relation to the proposal sent from J Finch earlier in the day in relation to the lines to stop parking in front of the bus shelter, the Parish Council agreed with the principle of retaining parking in front of one section of the Bus Shelter with the proviso that a walkway is protected with hatchings to allow people to walk across both sections of the front of the Bus Shelter with parking further back on one side only. This will enable residents to view the enclosed museum section of the Bus Shelter when this is completed - **Action Clerk to confirm to J Finch.** J Finch confirmed all other highways items chased this evening are on the list including the mud scraping of Butchers Lane and Wash Lane and the white lining renewal at the Ellis Street/Sand Hill junction.

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr B Hurren confirmed that in relation to Butchers Lane and Wash Lane, Babergh District Council has a sweeping role following the mud being scraped off by County Highways. He was pleased the Parish Liaison Meetings had resumed albeit during the day. Attention at the District Council has been on the budget and the forthcoming Election arrangements. New Refuse vehicles are in place and recycling is on-going with the majority of the recycling happening in the UK and none going to China. Photo ID will be required for voting this year. He is following up the situation at the croft with Flagship. He confirmed the notice board on The Fleece needs replacing and he suggested regular maintenance on all the wooden outdoor furniture for the future. He will research our share of the 106 monies. In relation to the developers Appeal at Sand Hill, he is hopeful Babergh District Council will win, however, he is concerned about the repercussions of the Goodlands decision. J Moles asked about the clearance of rubbish at Homefield and B Hurren confirmed that he keeps chasing its removal.

PARISH COUNCIL SUPPORT GROUP UPDATE ON KEY ISSUES: Colin Parr was invited to give an update. Firstly he spoke on behalf of the Community Council relating to the arrangements for the Coronation. Fund raising is underway and there is every expectation that the Parish Council will not need to fund the full £10,000 reserved. Broad Street is likely to be closed and it was noted that the County Council are waiving charges again. He asked if the Parish Council were insuring the Coronation Event as it is of a civic nature. The Clerk agreed to investigate this point, however, her initial thoughts were that the public liability insurance would usually fall with the Community Council - **Action Clerk.** The support group have identified that both Butchers Lane and Wash Lane need to be scraped and repaired by County Highways ahead of sweeping by the District Council. He expressed concern that the County Council were not delivering the services residents are paying for and the situation would need to be escalated to secure better provision. H Watts has agreed to be the link between the support group and the Parish Council. C Parr went onto report that the sweeping by the District Council is not thorough with parked cars getting in the way. He was also concerned with the lack of service delivery from the Community Wardens. C Parr asked if the Parish Council could delay setting the Precept to enable more input from the Parish Support Group. It was explained that the deadline of the end of January was close and it was on the Agenda for the Parish Council to finalise that evening. The Clerk had researched with SALC as to whether non Parish Council members of the Finance Sub Committee were permitted and they were not. C Parr hadn't appreciated this. T Munson stressed the need to have further Councillors stand as a full 9 would allow the Parish Council to be more pro-active in resolving some of the issues his group were identifying. He wanted

to speak about Box River News funding and it was explained the editor couldn't make this meeting, so it would be discussed at the February Parish Council Meeting.

FINANCE: The Bank balances as at 4th January 2023 were **£44104.08** in the Community Account, **£13415.46** in the Deposit Account and **£63528.24** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£121047.78**.

The following pre-agreed payments for November: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	2163.29	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Funds Tr	M A Crighton	185.00	Cemetery Contract
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts	42.00	Cemetery path
Funds Tr	Glasdon	116.28	Dog bags for dispenser
Funds Tr	Smith of Derby	7389.48	Church Clock
Funds Tr	Edwardstone Christmas Tree	120.00	Christmas Tree

The following pre-agreed payments for December

Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1386.59	Clerk's Salary
Funds Tr	PKF Littlejohn LLP	360.00	External Audit Fee
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contractors Ltd	42.00	Cemetery path

Matters arising from the Finance Working Party Meeting on 13th December 2022

1) Precept standstill or increase? The District Council had confirmed this month that their predicted database figures were correct. The figures for a standstill or 1.9% increased budget had been calculated, however, a higher figure could be agreed. Following discussion T Munson proposed a 1.9% increase to residents giving a Precept of £41600. This was seconded by H Watts and unanimously carried. As it was getting very late T Munson then needed to leave the Meeting.

2) Village Asset Funding was discussed and the only action was to increase the Standing Order to our Reserve Account for the Playing Fields annual £5000 reserves which is subject to approval by full Council every year. The meeting was reminded that any decision relating to the spending of those reserves still need to be resolved by full Council at a Parish Council Meeting. This was approved.

3) Tenders were discussed and the next ones are scheduled for this autumn after the Elections. This was noted.

4) The Finance Working Party Meeting noted that the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Internal Control Policy were reviewed in this financial year by full Council. A future Agenda item of reviewing the reserves policy was suggested and agreed for February - **Action Clerk**. This Council continues to adhere to the National Salary Awards for Local Councils.

5) The Finance Working Party Meeting noted that the Finance Sub Committee must be formed from the Parish Council membership.

External Audit conclusion: All areas of the External Audit were approved and other matters not affecting the auditors decision were drawn to the Parish Council's notice. These were noted in the Internal Audit Report and were the frequency of budget monitoring and the

formal review of the internal controls. These areas had already been resolved in this financial year. The External Audit Report and Certificate is now on the Parish Council Website.

A quote was still being obtained before the Parish Council could consider sharing legal costs in relation to the planning process affecting the agricultural structures. The cost can be shared with Polstead Parish Council if Boxford Parish Council resolve to do so. L Wortley will confirm when this item can go back on the Agenda - **Action L Wortley**. H Watts visited the Boxford Suffolk Farms business and was impressed with the counter measures they are making in relation to these structures. He agreed to share any relevant information with his fellow Councillors.

The cost of new Parish trees will be added to the February Agenda as T Munson is taking the lead with this item and had left the Meeting by this point - **Action Clerk**.

Members were supportive of helping meet the costs of the necessary improvements to the shower facilities at the Playing Field. This would not only help Boxford Rovers, but also support other users of the facility long into the future. Following discussion and being mindful of the contribution that could be made from the Babergh 106 funds for Boxford, members resolved to offer £5000 which will be made up with Babergh 106 funds and Parish Council funds. B Hurren had agreed to update the Parish Council on the amount of 106 funds for Boxford and the exact division could be finalised at the February Parish Council Meeting. The Parish Council may support a further amount from the 106 funds subject to further consideration and knowledge of the full amount available. The Parish Council also agreed to encourage B Hurren to allocate up to £1000 of his Locality money towards these improvements - **Action Clerk to confirm to Boxford Rovers and B Hurren and add an Agenda item to the February Meeting so the final split can be considered to enable the 106 application to be made.**

CORRESPONDENCE: The correspondence report had been circulated ahead of the Meeting. All matters were noted.

CEMETERY: D Warren met Suffolk Tree Services at the Churchyard and Cemetery to examine the trees. He had reported via email between meetings. The Parish Council was to decide how to proceed. It was resolved to authorise the initial clearance and instruct Suffolk Tree Services to proceed with the urgent trees subject to planning approval. It was noted any major work to the Churchyard trees will require full permission from the Church in addition to Conservation Area Tree approval. This was proposed by H Watts, seconded by D Warren and unanimously carried. Monies will be diverted from longer term Cemetery reserves. When the clearance has been made and further investigation carried out, the Parish Council will consider the next steps. It was noted tenders will be sought in the autumn for regular Village Contracts including a maintenance contract for the Churchyard and Cemetery trees. Members agreed for the Clerk to approach the surveyor recommended by a village architect to pursue the Church boundary wall permissions. B Hurren suggested this action is put on hold whilst he tries to resolve with the information we currently have. This was noted. B Hurren agreed to send the email from Babergh Planners on this subject - **Action B Hurren**. H Philips offered to provide a paper on the Planning for a new Cemetery - he was thanked and this was agreed.

BROAD STREET BUS HATCHINGS: Recommendations had been made by J Finch. Members were in agreement in principle to only taking up one parking space with the hatchings, however, with a slight addition of a narrow strip (hatchings) allowing walking distance all the way along the front of the bus shelter. The additional strip of hatchings would allow access to the shelter seating area and the museum display when it is in place and people could walk from the shelter to catch buses easily - **Action Clerk to confirm to J Finch.**

BUS SERVICE: It was noted safety concerns had been expressed by the Bus Company in view of the need to use larger buses and the pinch point opposite the Church wall due to parking opposite. J Moles explained his attempts to investigate the matter. Following discussion H Watts agreed to speak to the Head teacher and it was also agreed following this discussion, Babergh Council could be asked to ticket cars inappropriately parked on junctions etc - **Action H Watts and Clerk.**

PROMOTING THE ELECTIONS AND NEW COUNCILLORS: The Clerk was attending a briefing the following week on the timings and procedures of the Elections/Nomination papers and agreed to report back to Council. It was resolved to bring the Annual Parish Meeting forward this year to our March Parish Council Meeting date to help promote the Elections ahead of the Nomination deadline. The Annual Parish Meeting will therefore be held on 28th March at 7.30 p.m. with a brief Parish Council Meeting following at 9.00 p.m. with a much reduced Agenda.

URGENT REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS: It was agreed to include Highways and Parking as an Agenda item at the February Meeting - **Action Clerk.**

The meeting closed at **11.15 p.m.**

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall and by Video Conferencing on **Tuesday 24th January 2023**

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

A) Planning Permission was granted for alterations to vehicular access and construction of additional car parking spaces at 30 Stone Street - **DC/22/04975.**

B) Planning Permission was granted for 6 dwellings, outbuildings and access (including access to Primrose Wood) on Land to the South of, Daking Avenue - **DC/22/02448**.

C) The Planning Authority did not wish to object to work to Conservation Area trees at Hill Cottage, 38 Ellis Street - **DC/22/05536**.

D) Non material amendment was approved for change in window and door materials at The Bungalow, Roylands Lane - **DC/22/05814**.

E) Discharge of Conditions was confirmed for verge & eaves and construction management plan at 30 Stone Street - **DC/22/05746**.

F) Non material amendment for windows was approved at The Homestead, Hadleigh Road - **DC/22/06278**.

G) Listed Building Consent was granted to repair boundary wall and replace gate at Swan Cottage, 19 Swan Street- **DC/22/05711**.

H) The Planning Authority do not wish to object to the Conservation Area application to fell norway spruce at Gray Gables Cottage, 2 Stone Street Road - **DC/22/05920**.

I) Conditions were approved for Materials, Cycle Storage, Construction Plan, Refuse bins and Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy at Unit 1 Hawthorn Business Park, Calais Street - **DC/22/05637**.

J) The Planning Authority did not wish to object to works to Conservation Area trees at Box House, Swan Street - **DC/22/06332**.

The following applications were discussed: -

1) Tree Conservation Area application at Gray Gables Cottage, 2 Stone Street Road - **DC/22/05920**

The Parish Council had **No Objections** between Meetings.

2) Tree Conservation Area application at Box House, Swan Street - **DC/22/06332**

Both the Parish Council and Tree Warden had **No Objections**.

3) Planning and Listed Building Applications to replace gates and posts at Kemball House, 22 Broad Street - **DC/22/06182 and 06183**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections** between Meetings.

4) Application to extend and insert new ground floor window and carport/store at Gray Gables Cottage, 2 Stone Street Road - **DC/22/06282**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections** between Meetings.

5) Application for reserved matters following outline application at site of former Green Lawns Bonsai Nursery - **DC/22/06375**.

No Objections were raised between Meetings

6) Application for Planning Permission for two storey extensions and loft conversion at Glebe House, 3 Rectory Park - **DC/22/06404**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections providing** there is no loss of neighbour amenity and the Planning Officers are satisfied this large proposal would not represent overdevelopment in its setting.

7) Any other urgent planning matters: - The Meeting was closed to allow H Phillips to explain the challenge by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in relation to the Goodlands delegated decision. This went against criteria in the Neighbourhood Plan as outside the settlement boundary, it ignores the designation of a Green Space and does not follow the Rural Exceptions site criteria requiring local connections. However, all matters considered including the smaller dwellings proposed and the access across the land, meant that the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group would not be asking for a Judicial Review. They have therefore written to the Planning Authority expressing concern, however, subject to certain criteria being met, they would not be challenging the Decision. This includes transfer of the land to the Woodland Trust by legal agreement and that this Decision will not set a Precedent for future applications in Boxford. It is extremely disappointing that this Decision has gone against the Neighbourhood Plan and so close to its Adoption. H Phillips offered to assist the Parish Council with any future applications outside the settlement boundary. Members thanked H Phillips for providing this update and it was agreed for H Phillips to provide a copy of their challenge to the Clerk for circulation. The Parish Council agreed to write to reinforce these points - **Action L Wortley and Clerk**.