

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 24th October 2023 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: H Phillips (Chaired the Meeting) , L Carpenter, T Munson, D Warren, H Watts, L Wortley, J Finch (County Cllr), B Hurren (District Cllr) and 3 members of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

APOLOGIES: were received and accepted from Cllr C Parr (Chair). The Clerk had also sent apologies as was unwell. Cllr Carpenter recorded the Minutes.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: Cllr Phillips had declared an interest in the application for floodlights on the Playing Field. Cllr Parr (Chair) had declared an interest between meetings in respect of 4 Butchers Lane. Cllr Carpenter had declared an interest in the tree application at 2 The Causeway.

MINUTES OF 26th SEPTEMBER 2023: Minutes were accepted as correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

- Royland's Lane footpath - Cllr Wortley let SCC know it hasn't been cut - SCC have passed it on to Rights of Way
- Stone Street permissive path has been cleared but is currently closed due to the fence having fallen down and animals needing to be secured. Cllr Phillips is getting quotes for repair; The Chair has approached the owner regarding continuation of permissive path along his land.
- 2 Brook Hall Road parking issue: Jesscare are concerned and are in touch with neighbours. Cllr Finch clarified they are an Essex County Council contractor. Cllrs Hurren and Finch are looking into who owns the verges. Representatives of Jesscare are invited to the next PC meeting.
- The issue of Station Field street lighting being on all night is to be carried over to the next meeting - the current situation being that SCC won't adopt the area until the management company has brought things up to standard.

PUBLIC FORUM: 3 members of the public were present. One member commented that the provision at 2 Brook Hall Road generally have good relationships with their neighbours. One member had several issues to raise:

- a parking issue at 14 Holbrook Barn Road which is causing a safety violation on the pavement and lack of road safety on the bend. Cllrs suggested the member of the public file a police report.
- Questioning why Boxford PC showed an entry on the accounts as paying BDC election costs when we didn't have an election. Cllrs explained that there are still costs attached to an uncontested election such as Cllrs having to register.
- A question around what are plans for Bell House. Cllr Phillips explained this is no longer used/needed by the PC and will be disposed of.
- A question about the Sand Hill development appeal and why the date of the hearing (12th Dec) has not yet been made public: suggestion that it is important that local residents are informed well ahead of time. Venue is yet to be decided - Cllr Hurren confirmed he is getting that organised.

- A question about the Diocese giving permission for cemetery maintenance costs – Cllr Warren clarified that he has been in touch with relevant people and permission has been granted.
- Query whether the PC has a General Risk Register regarding issues such as flooding, finance, employment. Cllr Phillips confirmed this is not the case.
- A suggestion that the PC write to the Environment Agency requesting gullies, river etc should be cleared more than once a year. He was informed that the PC has been in touch with the Environment Agency on numerous occasions.

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 attended and his report, issued in advance, covered that the County Council has £1.8m to spend each year for the next two on enhancements to the passenger transport network in Suffolk. He reported that Milestone Infrastructure was awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract commencing this month. This includes roads, pavements, right of way, drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow clearance, gritting and many other services. Funding has been allocated to upgrade Haughley and Ely rail junctions. When complete this is hoped to ease road congestion and provide a boost to the local economy. Fire Service control is being brought back to Suffolk by the end of 2024. Inflation, transport for children with Special Educational Needs and the cost of children in Care is contributing to a predicted overspend this year. Councils unite against National Grid pylon proposals for Norwich to Tilbury. A new fostering film has been launched and virtual Fostering and Adoption sessions continue. The traffic survey results had been shared by J Finch and he has offered to pay for the report that is required for the next stage if agreeable to the Parish Council.

Cllr Finch also reported on several other issues:

- government allocation of funds towards rural transport networks: he suggested the PC's best option was to favour enhancement of existing services and service providers, and that this is reflected via the website application form before 6th November 2023
- thanks were given to the Fire service for their recent efforts during flooding
- Cllr Warren asked about SCC denying knowledge of Homefield grit box – Cllr Finch requested details be sent to him to look into
- a Highways officer is looking into the situation regarding gullies not having been cleared in Boxford since August 2022
- the Speed Survey data is back and Cllr Finch urged PCllrs to look at results and his recommendation – the working party confirmed they will be doing so and reporting back
- confirmation that any verge cutting issues should be registered via the reporting tool, and Cllr Finch notified if nothing happens
- SCC continue to say there is no budget for clearing Butcher's lane – there may be the possibility of funding out of the Cllr's locality budget
- a special gully clearing machine has been requested for School Hill
- the question of yellow lines on Church Street needs more debate

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

- the extent of flooding that this area has experienced and expressed the opinion that it will get worse with climate change. Blocked drains being a big problem in Boxford and elsewhere. Cllr Phillips noted that the Chair is in touch with a senior drains officer, and the PC has been using the reporting tool for 8 years.
- Cllr Hurren reported that Stage One of the Joint Local Plan is now ready and should be approved at the next meeting: 25% affordable housing plus possible access to exception sites replacing the 35% affordable housing initially asked for. Stage Two includes biodiversity considerations being given weight in every decision made and is likely to be passed by late 2024.
- MSB Council leader Busby has been in ill health and is now in an advisory role – Cllr Ward is leader at present. The new council is ‘thrashing things out’ and aiming to improve in some areas especially Planning and Housing Repairs. MSB DC are looking at social issues such as loneliness and mental health, especially for children and are working with schools.
- Cllr Hurren spoke regarding finding a venue for the 12th Dec Sand Hill Appeal hearing and the desire to keep it in the village if at all possible – a decision needs to be made by the end of this week.
- Cllr Phillips asked if the results of the local census are published. Cllr Hurren responded that they are – generally we have an aging population with Boxford having a greater proportion of younger residents than elsewhere. He also commented that we can see an aging population as a valuable asset these days in terms of skills, knowledge and expertise.
- Cllr Hurren mentioned the range of grants that are available and how this is not always easily navigated and that many organisation may not be aware of them. Cllr Carpenter suggested an article in the BRN could be a good way of letting people know; Cllr Hurren also asks for the information to be shared on the village FB noticeboard.

FINANCE: The Bank balances as at 2nd October 2023 were **£42,400.20** in the Community Account, **£13496.18** in the Deposit Account and **£71654.71** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£127,551.09**.

The following pre-agreed payments for September: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
Funds Tr	Dynamic Fireworks Ltd	3239.78	Fireworks for Event
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1356.51	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Funds Tr	Business Services at CAS	582.25	PC Insurance
Funds Tr	PKF Littlejohn LLP	378.00	External Audit
Funds Tr	SALC	368.40	Internal Audit
Funds Tr	M A Crighton	270.00	Cemetery Contract
Funds Tr	Glasdon UK Ltd	217.56	Dog Waste Bags
Funds Tr	Boxford Village Hall	189.00	Hall hire
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts	42.00	Cemetery path treatmt
Funds Tr	Suffolk.Cloud	320.00	Web start up & hosting

Community Wardens

The Chair met the Supervisor for the Community Wardens and recommended Council to consider increasing the hours by 1 per week to be monitored carefully until the end of the contract period. This was agreed unanimously. We also have the opportunity to secure 9 planters from Sudbury Town Council at a discount price which could fit in with plans outlined by the Environment and Ecology Sub Committee. The Parish Council agreed in principle to securing these planters and the sub-committee are going to see what condition they are in to start with.

Bank Signatories

The Bank Signatory form had been submitted and since approved by the Bank. The remaining members of the Finance Sub Committee can now request Internet Banking - **Action Finance Sub Committee**. D Warren had recently done the same so can explain what is involved.

Risk Management Policy Review

The Policy had been circulated in the build up to the Meeting and it was resolved that this still meets our needs. Proposed Cllr Phillips, Seconded Cllr Watts, all agreed Inspections will need to take place, if not done so already, by the relevant Sub Committees to feed into budget any necessary maintenance or renewal required.

Cllr Wortley suggested an amendment to wording at the top of the column to "Where the risk assessed does not involve the potential for physical injury, the same method of calculating the risk factor has been applied i.e. severity x frequency"

Review of Insurance Renewal

The cover had been checked and the reason for the slight increase in premium was due to the Index Linking. The Insurance had been renewed and premium paid.

Parish Council Website progress report

The Parish Council Website was up and running and there is a link from the Community Site.

Contract Specifications and Tender Process

Previously the Parish Council has put contract work out to tender every 4 years immediately after an Election to allow the new Council to shape future contracts. These usually include the Cemetery Contracts and the Sweeping/Litter picking Contract. This year in view of good work being carried out by the new Sub Committees, it is not timely to go out to tender at this stage. It was agreed that we write to our existing contractors and ask them to quote for next year on the current basis so we have quotes for Finance Committee. Meanwhile Sub Committees can work actively with the existing contractors on any refinements and we plan to put all the contracts out to tender next autumn for 2025. The existing contracts can be tweaked as we go along with agreement of our contractors. This way the contract specifications may end up better and we will have 2 years of this term to monitor. This was resolved.

Model Publication Scheme Policy

The Policy had been reviewed by Cllr Phillips and he had circulated ahead and recommended adoption at this Meeting. Proposed Cllr Warren, Sec Cllr Munson – all agreed.

CORRESPONDENCE: The correspondence report had been circulated ahead of the Meeting. All matters were noted. There was a suggestion that the Clerk may be able to set up some auto-responders to forward items such as the SALC newsletters to save her time.

CEMETERY: Cllr Phillips has contacted a mole-catcher due to the extent of mole runs. Cllr Warren has chased up the application for approval of work to be done with the Diocese and been assured approval is given and work can start on Monday 31st October as planned – apart from the oak which needs input from the electricity network who can't be available until January.

Having cleared ivy from the wall it is clear less work is needed than previously envisaged: only spoiled bricks need to be addressed. Quotes are being obtained and ideally work should take place in school summer holiday to reduce traffic control needs as this is an additional cost.

The contractor will bring a leaf-blower next time to clear grass cuttings from floral tributes on graves. Cllr Hurren confirmed the bench is repaired and ready for installation

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY: (New regular item - Report from Sub Committee)

- The Sub Committee are looking into, and will be costing options for bringing some greenery to the road bridge in the village centre, including finding out which bodies are involved – Highways? Utilities possible as there are two cable pipes running alongside the bridge.
- They have started thinking about possible budget requirements, including for putting on one or two events
- They have got in touch with Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) and Suffolk County Council Wilder Together (WT) to organise a general Boxford visit to look at potential sites where we could introduce projects to increase biodiversity and enhance wildlife habitat
- SWT is booked in to come and look at the Churchyard and Cemetery – thanks Cllr Phillips for organising
- Information has been shared with the Womens Institute (WI) regarding establishing a wild flower area at the top of school hill, and I have followed up with her but yet to hear back. We are wondering about the rest of the area up there and if it might be something we can take on.
- A few positive responses have come in from our circular letter inviting expressions of interest in forming a village Ecology group, or requests for support with existing projects. These will be now be followed up and an initial meeting organised for after we have had the village visit with SWT/WT so we know more about what might be possible projects to share, as well as seeing what ideas others have to get going with. Those interested so far include Primrose Wood volunteers, footpath wardens, Brownies and Rainbows children, and a few individuals so a promising start.
- We would very much like to pursue the bike rack idea for the centre of the village and have started to look into how to go about this.

- Cllr Wortley is checking through all the planning regarding Goodlands and the additional land to add to Primrose Wood: Cllr Wortley updated the PC with her findings. It appears there is no mention of this in the planning documents: it is understood that the land has been offered to the Woodland Trust who have accepted but as yet no exchange has taken place. The Planning Permission was raised on these grounds but officers did not enact it – Cllr Hurren is going to look into this further.
- We feel that the replacement for the bus shelter oak needs to be a native species tree that doesn't mind getting its feet wet
- We have the suggestion to approach the White Hart again about possible school drop off and pick up parking arrangements
- Good to see some concrete suggestions for flood mitigation projects coming from the Reclaim the Rain project in view of this last weekend's flooding in the village and surroundings
- Cllrs Carpenter and Munson will be attending a Climate and Environmental networking event in Bury in early November to meet other organisations, share and learn more about what others are doing.
- Cllr Munson noted that Phil Baker who is leading on the local Wildfire and Resilience planning has put a report in the BRN, and that the next meeting is on 14th November at Gt Waldingfield VH. It is hoped that both Boxford VH and the Playing Fields Pavilion will agree to be emergency venues.
- We have the go ahead for a PC table at the monthly village market: one of the things included could be to start our local biodiversity baseline study with a map of the area which people can record sightings on.
- Cllr Munson had circulated a request from a lobbying group that the PC petition MP Cartlidge to support the government's Climate and Environment Bill. Cllrs voted on this – 1 for, 3 against, 2 abstentions – reasons given as it not being appropriate for the PC as representatives of our residents to lobby on their behalf in what is seen as a political matter, and, that the Bill itself is woefully inadequate.

VENUE FOR NOVEMBER MEETING: The Venue is the Village Hall at an earlier time of 4.00 p.m on Tuesday 28th November (our usual meeting date).

Cllr Munson, and Cllr Hurren gave their apologies for this meeting.

URGENT REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS: The bus survey results will be circulated shortly and will be taken forward with the relevant parties. Cllr Carpenter reported that the monthly market organisers are happy for the PC to have a regular table at the market. Cllr Watts proposed we go ahead with this, seconded Cllr Phillips – all agreed. Cllr Carpenter to lead on organising this. First one this coming Saturday Cllrs Munson and Watts agreed to be in attendance.

Cllr Warren asked if there is any provision for sandbags in the village. It was confirmed that the PC do not have any, that the DC don't recommend their use although the feeling was that they are actually effective. On reflection it was felt that really individual property owners are responsible for their own properties. It was agreed to discuss a Confidential item following the Meeting.

The meeting closed at9.45.... **p.m.**

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall on **Tuesday 24th October 2023**

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

- A) Conditions had been discharged for foul water run off and management of manure at Vermont, 13 Stone Street - **DC/23/04257**.
- B) The Planning Authority does not wish to object to Conservation Area tree application at Cherrytrees, Clubs Lane, Boxford - **DC/23/04070**.
- C) The Planning Authority does not wish to object to the felling of oak by the Old Gaol at 9 Broad Street, Boxford - **DC/23/04087**.
- D) The Planning Authority grants consent to fell protected sycamore tree at 2 Rectory Park, Boxford - **DC/23/04088**.
- E) Listed Building Consent was granted for restoration following oil leak at 12 Swan Street - **DC/23/04009**.

The following applications were discussed: -

- 1) 12 Clubs Lane - Householder Application for Conservatory - **DC/23/04482**. The Parish Council had **No Objections** between meetings providing the Heritage Team were content with the proposals.
- 2) Proposed Floodlights at the Playing Field - **DC/23/04369**. Cllr Phillips had declared an interest. Whilst the Parish Council had No Objections to this application in principle, it was recommended that keen attention is paid to minimising light pollution, the type of lights, timings and direction etc. This response was issued between meetings to comply with the deadline.
- 3) Tree applications at 4 Butchers Lane, 1,2,4 & 6 The Causeway. The Chair had declared an interest in the tree application at 4 Butchers Lane. Cllr Carpenter declared an interest in 2 The Causeway.

4 Butchers Lane **DC/23/04624- No Objections**

1 The Causeway **DC/23/04737 - No Objections**

4 The Causeway **DC/23/04722** - on balance the Parish Council agreed to object to the removal of the limes, the owner could organise some work to the boundary ivy and trees to increase light into their garden. It was also suggested that further pollarding to the limes be refused to allow them to recover from the over pollarded state.

2 The Causeway DC/23/04740 - No Objections

6 The Causeway DC/23/04761 - It was agreed to respond with the Tree Wardens recommended points - to reduce the walnut to 20 ft would ruin it (could be a mistake with wording) and also to lift crowns of 3 beech trees up to 20 ft seems excessive (so again could be a wording error).

4) Application for full Planning Permission for 1 dwelling with cart lodge at Green Lawns Bonsai Nursery, Hadleigh Road - DC/23/04218.

The Parish Council had No Objections.

5) The Old Bakery, 12-16 Broad Street - Application for Listed Building Consent for Internal alterations and installation of doors and window - DC/23/04804.

The Parish Council had No Objections providing the Heritage Team were content with the proposals.

All above planning matters were agreed as stated.

The feeling that the Tree Warden, Drake Davis is doing a great job, was recorded.

6) Any other urgent planning matters - Planning had been received during the Clerk's Annual leave last week including planning and listed building applications at 25 Swan Street and application for planning permission without compliance of conditions at 7 Boxford Lane. Forms had just been circulated and it was resolved to respond to these applications between meetings.