

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL** held on Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

**PRESENT:** C Parr (Chairman), H Phillips , T Munson, D Warren, H Watts, L Wortley, D Hattrell (Clerk), J Finch (County Cllr) and 5 members of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

**APOLOGIES:** were received and accepted from L Carpenter. District Cllr B Hurren had also sent his apologies.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS:** D Warren declared an interest as his residence is nearby to the proposed development which is subject to Appeal currently on land to the East of Sand Hill.

**MINUTES OF 25th JULY 2023:** These were accepted as correct.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:** None.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** A resident raised some observations about footpaths in need of attention near his home around Stone Street/Wash Lane. There was also a reminder on another footpath which is blocked from Roylands Lane . L Wortley took details of these three issues and confirmed she would investigate and liaise with our Footpath Wardens. She confirmed that the issue near Roylands Lane was known and the County Council could take no action, until after the bird nesting season, to request that the foliage is cut back. The Chairman thought the permissive path along Stone Street had already been cleared, so L Wortley agreed to check this. Attention then turned to Counsels Opinion sent to Babergh Planning about the fruit cages. The Chairman had raised with our District Cllr after the Parish Council had chased without response. The Chairman felt the service we were getting was not good enough and a written complaint was agreed - **Action L Wortley and Clerk**. Another resident was concerned about the change of use of a property on Brook Hall Road to a foster home which was generating complaints about parking. D Warren advised he has approached people at the property to try to encourage more considerate parking and he will monitor to see if this is achieved. Finally there were concerns about the street lighting staying on all night at Station Field which is troubling some nearby residents. The Clerk explained, if the same as the other lights in the Village, the owner could ask for them to be programmed to go off at Midnight. The first step would be to establish whether the Management Company were responsible for the lights at this stage and any plans for the County Council to adopt them.

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

**COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:** County Cllr J Finch attended and his report, issued in advance, covered the County Council celebrating a new partnership called Ambling African Women. This aims to break down cultural barriers to accessing Suffolk Countryside. Suffolk Trading Standards are urging a man to hand himself in for sentencing for substantial fraudulent trading. This year the County Council staff and teams have been recognised by being short listed at the Social Worker of the Year Awards. Parents and Carers can now

apply for primary and secondary school places for September 2024. Facilities at the Suffolk Fire and Rescue training centre at Wattisham have been upgraded. The County Council fears new energy proposals will harm the Suffolk Coastline. There is a free exhibition "Wolsey's Ipswich" at the Hold. Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions continue. County Cllr J Finch had chased the Boxford speed survey and received confirmation that the results are due on 29th September.

T Munson agreed to put details on the Community FaceBook page relating to the virtual fostering and adoption sessions. T Munson was concerned that the drains are not being cleared which resulted in water pouring down School Hill and into the School during a heavy downpour in August. The Chairman confirmed the drains and gullies were included in the number of issues he has been chasing. Once they are done, the importance of a regular maintenance program going forward was stressed. The Chairman raised other issues of grass verge cutting, debris in the middle of the road on Butchers Lane and yellow lining for the Church Street pinch point. With residents parking opposite the Churchyard boundary wall on Church Street, insufficient space is left for large vehicles including buses. The Chairman asked for the support of County Cllr J Finch towards these matters and the potential of Quiet Lane designations.

**DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT:** District Cllr B Hurren had sent his apologies and confirmed his report would follow. The report was not received ahead of the Meeting, so it was agreed to circulate this to the full Parish Council upon receipt - **Action Clerk.**

**FINANCE:** The Bank balances as at 1st September 2023 were **£24497.53** in the Community Account, **£13460.11** in the Deposit Account and **£71165.79** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£109,123.43.**

The following pre-agreed payments for September: -

<b>Cheque No.</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Details</b>
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1360.31	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Funds Tr	Vertas Group Ltd	698.22	Playing Field grass contract
Funds Tr	Babergh District Council	163.10	Election Charges
Funds Tr	M A Crighton	185.00	Cemetery contract
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts Ltd	42.00	Cemetery path-moss treatmt
Funds Tr	Boxford Village Hall	94.50	Hall hire

The following pre-agreed payments for August: -

Funds Tr	Suffolk Tree Services	2152.44	Cemetery Trees
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1390.49	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Funds Tr	Sudbury Town Council	655.07	Street Cleaning Contract
Funds Tr	Indigo Ross	537.60	NP Documents
Funds Tr	M A Crighton	185.00	Cemetery contract
Funds Tr	L Carpenter	111.60	Travel Expenses
Funds Tr	Geosphere Ltd	97.20	Online Mapping
Funds Tr	D May Plumbing	88.00	Cemetery tap
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts Ltd	42.00	Cemetery path

### **Bank Signatories**

It was resolved at the July Meeting for all the Finance Committee Members to become signatories and to remove any signatories who have left the Parish Council. The Clerk brought the forms to the Meeting for signing. The forms were duly signed and approved for

the Clerk to submit - **Action Clerk**. The new signatories are still to identify themselves to the bank - **Action H Phillips** \*this has been done.

### **Half Year Budget Review**

The Clerk had shared the review ahead of the Meeting showing expenditure at 39% of budget at this half year point. However, it is important to factor in the big commitments in the pipeline such as the Cemetery tree work, the contribution towards the changing facility upgrades at the Playing Fields and the Village Hall Survey work. The Chairman confirmed the Sub Committees will need to work hard in the build up to budget working on their current and future plans, so all of this can be taken into consideration. The Finance Sub Committee Meeting had been fixed for 22nd November 2023 at 11.00 am in the Village Hall Committee Room, however, further full Council brainstorming sessions would also be planned.

**Bell House telephone and electricity contracts:** The telephone had been cancelled as agreed. The Clerk had reported ahead of the Meeting that the electricity will still attract a daily standing charge whether or not we cancel the supply. Therefore the supply hasn't been cancelled at this stage. It may be prudent to have a smart meter fitted free of charge to avoid the need for manual readings. If so, a volunteer to organise this and be available to let the Eon workers in for this to be carried out would be required. No decision was made in this respect at the Meeting.

### **Internal Audit Report**

**The Parish Council officially received the Internal Audit Report and the Recommendations as follows: -**

- 1) Update the procurement thresholds to £30,000 on the next annual review of our Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. It was agreed for Finance Committee to review these - **Action Finance Sub Committee**. The Responsible Finance Officer/Clerk is obtaining details of the wording for amendments.
- 2) That we record in the Minutes that the End of Year Bank Reconciliation shows 3 bank statements verified - **Action Clerk**.
- 3) CIL reserves and other reserves be included within Finance Committee Review and included in our Reserves Policy - **Action Finance Sub Committee**.
- 4) Record in Minutes at the time of the Insurance Review that the Asset Register has been reviewed within the last 12 months - see Insurance Review below.
- 5) Website Accessibility Statement recorded by previous Internal Audit is to comply with current legislation - our new website covers this.
- 6) Minute Record apologies by cllrs as accepted - this had been done in respect of Cllr L Carpenter's apologies.
- 7) Finally we need a Model Publication Scheme - H Phillips agreed to take this on towards the end of this Financial Year - **Action H Phillips**. There is guidance from SALC.

### **Review of Internal Audit and appointment of Internal Auditors going forward**

Members agreed that the scope of the Internal Audit with SALC is comprehensive and it was resolved to continue to appoint SALC going forward into the next financial year.

### External Audit Report

The External Audit Report has been received confirming no matters came to the attention of the Auditors giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. Therefore, all matters approved and nothing was brought to our attention as a result of the Audit.

### Review of Insurance Renewal

The Asset Register has been reviewed in the last 12 months and will be reviewed by the recently formed Finance Sub Committee. We had a comprehensive review of our insurances in 2022 with our agent. We entered a 3 year long term undertaking for premium certainty and discount with Ansvar. We were therefore just about to enter our second year of the undertaking. There has been a slight increase in premium from last year and the Clerk was checking the reason with our agent and whether it is due to the index linking **\*This was confirmed**. It was noted that we Declared 9 Councillors and one Employee and it was agreed to check that our liability cover was wider than this extending to volunteers helping with Parish Council projects - **Action Clerk - this has been checked and confirmed to be the case, volunteers working with the Parish Council on projects are covered in respect of public liability. However, if we have the same volunteers working with the Parish Council for longer periods we can declare more volunteers in the future.** Subject to that information, it was approved to renew our Insurance - **Action Clerk \*the policy has now been renewed.** Members are to consider the scope of our Insurance in future months and years.

### Parish Council Website progress report

The previous Council voted in April this year to accept the quotation from Suffolk Cloud to provide a new website and it was an action for the Clerk to take forward. A link was shared with the Parish Council ahead of the Meeting. Suffolk Cloud currently support around 100 parish councils in Suffolk and Essex, this will ease training, administration and in the future, succession planning. They can also, of course, provide training. The Parish Council noted our existing arrangements were a compliance issue as we could not have a Website Accessibility Statement, which the new site does provide - see Internal Audit. All were happy with the new website and it was agreed for the Clerk to liaise with the webmaster for the Community site to have a link set up to direct to the Parish Council new site - **Action Clerk - \*this has been done**. The Clerk suggested we still make use of the Community Site for publicising information and the Chairman is working with the webmaster to ensure appropriate support is given to enable her excellent service to the Village to continue.

### Restoration of Jubilee Seat

A quote was previously requested from B Hurren to restore this seat. Upon receipt, this was circulated and it was agreed not to delay the authorisation of £285 for all materials and labour. Members approved this decision. It was also agreed to improve the plinth before restoring the seat to its position and it was delegated to the Chairman to arrange this between Meetings - **Action Chairman**.

### Availability of Grants

H Watts confirmed that he is organising some research into possible Grant applications to support some of the on-going Parish Council Projects.

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

**CEMETERY:** D Warren from the Cemetery Sub Committee shared a report to the full Parish Council of their proposals for the Churchyard and Cemetery going forward. He also outlined the approved work to date and progress towards the Churchyard boundary wall. Within the report were details of the tree work authorised between meetings which was resolved at the July Parish Council Meeting. The earliest the tree work can be done is 30th October 2023. Estimates are being obtained to restore the Churchyard boundary wall which will include traffic management. The Parish Council thanked D Warren for this work between meetings. H Phillips shared his calculations for future burials which were discussed and he recommended with appropriate management going forward, there was no need to reserve for new Cemetery land. The Parish Council thanked H Phillips for this work between meetings.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY:** New regular item - Report from Sub Committee  
T Munson reported that she attended the SALC Climate Forum and both herself and L Carpenter had been attending various events to network and gain knowledge to help with this new Sub Committee on the Parish Council. They could potentially join the Wilder Together initiative. T Munson was already working with other Parish Councils on Wild Fire and Emergency Planning. On the latter they are fact finding for suitable venues in an emergency. The Reclaim the Rain project is gaining pace and reports to Box River News shows the initiatives such as willow plantation, working with Village Organisations, Water Butts etc. The Chairman asked them to consider what budget they will need going forward, so that Finance Committee can factor this in - **Action Sub Committee**. The Chairman also asked the Sub Committee to consider organising planting in the Village to improve the appearance.

**COMMUNITY WARDENS:** The Chairman confirmed he had a Meeting scheduled with the Supervisor to the Community Wardens. It was noted there may be a delay with the specification for the Village Contracts as the Sub Committees and Chairman work with the various contractors further. It was agreed for the Chairman to keep the Clerk updated in this respect - **Action Chairman and Clerk**.

**VENUE FOR NOVEMBER MEETING:** It was agreed to ask the Village Hall to confirm whether there is an alternative evening around that time when the Hall is available - **Action Clerk \* the meeting has since been rescheduled for an earlier time of 4.00 p.m on the usual date 28th November 2023.**

**URGENT REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS:** T Munson suggested considering installing a bicycle rack in the centre of the Village. This was noted. D Warren reported that the trees interfering with the power lines will be cut back as he has reported them and will follow up. D Warren reported that the grit bins are due to be refilled soon, however, any located in non-adopted roads will not be filled. The Chairman confirmed the traffic survey was due to finish towards the end of the month. We can then analyse the evidence in relation to the protection of the Village Bus Service.

The meeting closed at **9.35 p.m.**

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall (No Video link was requested) on **Tuesday 26th September 2023**

*The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -*

A) Non material amendments to change external materials was approved at 11 Boxford Lane - **DC/23/03048**.

B) Listed Building Consent was granted for external repair and rendering at 15 Swan Street - **DC/23/02474**.

C) Listed Building Consent was granted for internal alterations and to replace a window with French doors at Vermont, 13 Stone Street - **DC/23/02713**.

D) Planning Permission was granted for cartlodge at Plot 1, Hawthorn Business Park, Calais Street - **DC/23/02802**.

E) Conditions were approved for materials and rainwater goods at 30 Stone Street, Boxford - **DC/23/02974**.

F) Planning Permission has been granted to change use of land for keeping horses at Vermont, 13 Stone street - **DC/23/02720**.

G) Consent has been granted to fell 2 sycamore trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders at The Rectory, School Hill - **DC/23/03208**.

H) Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent were refused for alterations to 25 Swan Street - **DC/23/02932/3**.

I) Planning Permission was refused on land to Rear of Units 1 & 2, Former Hawthorns Business Park, Calais Street as an unsustainable location contrary to various Planning Policies - **DC/23/03267**.

J) The Planning Authority did not wish to object to the proposed removal of cedar to ground level at The Grange, Stone Street - **DC/23/03834**.

*The following applications were discussed: -*

1) Conservation Area tree applicatoin at The Grange, Stone Street - **DC/23/03834**.  
Both the Parish Tree Warden and the Parish Council had **No Objections** between Meetings.

2) Listed Building application for reinstatement following oil leak at 12 Swan Street - **DC/23/04009**.  
The Parish Council had **No Objections** between Meetings.

3) Appeal for refusal of 64 dwellings on Land to the East of Sand Hill - **APP/D3505/W/23/3314690 - the Declared Interest was noted earlier in the Meeting.**

It has been confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate that the Appeal will now go to hearing rather than by written representations. It was agreed that, if permitted, L Wortley would represent the Parish Council and speak at the Hearing - **Action L Wortley.**

4) Conservation Area tree application at Cherrytrees, Clubs Lane - **DC/23/04070.**

Both the Parish Tree Warden and the Parish Council had **No Objections** to the felling of this tree between Meetings.

5) Two tree applications brought by the Parish Council to work on protected trees in the Cemetery and Churchyard and to fell an oak by the Old Gaol - **DC/23/04088 & DC/23/04087**

No comments were raised.

6) Householder application for annexed accommodation at Coddenham Hall, Boxford Lane - **DC/23/04326.**

This application was discussed and it was resolved that the Parish Council had **No Objections** subject to two conditions: -

1) The annex should remain ancillary to the host dwelling to accommodate dependent relatives and should not be allowed to become a separate residence

2) The Ecology Report is adhered to especially bearing in mind the change in legislation this November for developments to deliver 10% net bio-diversity gain.

7) Any other urgent planning matters - H Phillips explained about the Joint Local Plan which was split into two sections. The second part, which is being considered currently, sets targets for homes for the Plan period. The results of this part of the Joint Local Plan is expected as late as 2025 and H Phillips suggested we carry on as before and it remains to be seen, the effects of this on the current Appeal being considered.