

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 28th November 2023 at 4.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: C Parr (Chair), H Phillips, L Carpenter, D Warren, H Watts, L Wortley, D Hattrell (Clerk), B Hurren (District Cllr) and 4 members of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

APOLOGIES: were received and accepted from T Munson. County Cllr J Finch had also sent his apologies.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: Nothing was declared.

MINUTES OF 24th OCTOBER 2023: These were accepted as correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: The parking outside 2 Brook Hall Road is still unresolved. It was agreed for a Councillor to investigate with Jesscare to see if they were working towards a solution. L Wortley updated the meeting about footpaths 18 and 23 (Roylands Lane). The landowner has committed to cutting the hedge along one side. A larger project has been identified near the pumping station. L Wortley will continue to monitor and keep the Parish Council and residents updated - **Action L Wortley**. H Watts volunteered to speak to residents on Station Field about requesting their Street Lights go off at mid-night in line with others in the Village. B Hurren agreed to report to the Housing Association - **Action H Watts and B Hurren**.

PUBLIC FORUM: Items raised by the residents present included: -

- Parking at 2 Brook Hall Road - **see above**.
- Glasses and cigarette butts being left outside The Fleece - **H Watts agreed to follow up**.
- Failure of cars to give way at junctions in the centre of the Village and re-painting the lining at junctions was suggested - **on list for County Highways**
- Suggestion that residents drive around the Village at 20 mph to slow traffic generally
- With the production of Neighbourhood Plans at Groton and Edwardstone, the impact of further traffic on Swan Street was a concern if development is agreed - **these points were noted**.
- Publicity of forthcoming Appeal - **this is in Box River News and letters have gone to residents**
- Why have Assington & Stoke got 20 mph limits and not Boxford - **on list for County Highways**
- Poor Footpath near the Stone Street/Stone Street Road A1071 crossing point with road signs to negotiate and lack of protective barrier - points noted
- Concern that Stone Street Hamlet is being forgotten - **The Chair reassured that isn't the case**.
- The residents would like to see a 20 mph speed limit and weight restriction on Stone Street
- Another resident of Stone Street would like restricted access to be introduced - **these points were both noted and the Chair spoke about potentially putting a project together**.
- A resident recalled asking County Cllr J Finch about Vehicle Activated Signage and that he had confirmed that these are shared with 4 or 5 other Villages.

- A resident was concerned that residents without internet access were unable to look at the summary of planning discussed by the Parish Council. The report in Box River News directs to the website for full Minutes - **this was noted.**

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. L Carpenter added that not all of the items are within our control, however, we can put pressure on the Highways Agency.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch had sent his apologies and his report, issued in advance, covered that grants are available to assist households or businesses with initial recovery costs from flooding due to Storm Babet including discount on Council Tax and the costs of making properties more resilient to future flooding. The County Council is seeking views on next years budget and also on the future of library services. Large scale energy projects are being offered connections at National Grid at locations in Suffolk ahead of speaking to Councils or Communities. Funding is being offered to support projects aimed at reducing the number of people in Suffolk excluded from the benefits of digital technology. Virtual fostering and adoption sessions continue.

Members were concerned that J Finch had not answered local issues affecting Boxford. The Chair spoke of increasing the pressure to get our issues resolved. These include: -

- 1) Getting a schedule of gully/drain clearance
- 2) All the traffic surveys have been done. The Chair updated the Meeting of the results of the surveys and the next stage including further evidence gathering and discussion to progress towards 20 mph limits.
- 3) Road maintenance generally awful and the lack of scraping of Butchers Lane and Wash Lane to enable effective sweeping - **B Hurren agreed to ask Public Realms to press for the scraping to enable them to organise the sweeping.**
- 4) Lack of support from Highways towards the filling of some Grit Bins
- 5) Traffic Signs in poor condition and obstructed by foliage
- 6) Trees overhanging verges
- 7) Re-doing lining in the Village
- 8) The need to discuss with Highways Engineers some yellow lines for the pinch-point near the Churchyard wall. This is needed to protect the wall and allow for larger vehicles to pass more easily
- 9) The box for turning right onto Sand Hill from the Hadleigh direction is not large enough

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr B Hurren attended and confirmed his full report would follow on wider District Council matters. Locally he remembered when barriers were in place at the Stone Street to Stone Street Road A1071 crossing point. He has reported a hole which has formed in the vicinity and County Highways have fenced off pending repairs. He also reported the Quiet Lanes sign to Assington Parish Council at Hagmore Green being in need of repair. He agrees the verge to the Brewers Arms should be walkable and not obstructed. The first part of the Joint Local Plan has been approved. A steer has been given to Planning to take more sensible approaches to heritage planning issues. A press release has been issued to introduce the concept of Local Listed Building Consent Orders which intend to streamline the process of applying for balanced and sensitive energy efficiency improvements. This may lead to listed buildings having less issues with poor insulation and drafty windows. This may be introduced properly in the second part of the

Joint Local Plan. They now have a new head of housing and they are looking to improve the maintenance of their housing stock. He promoted the excellent work of the Citizens Advice Bureau locally and he urged continued use of Boxford Post Office that will benefit from increased footfall. For the future, the District Council may look again at merging Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils fully. Funding sources currently include the CIFCO, solar panels and energy from waste. Finally B Hurren confirmed that the Jubilee bench is finished and ready to install. The Chair confirmed the base is being installed this week and thereafter he confirmed B Hurren could install back in place.

Questions: - The Chair asked the following: -

- 1) It would be helpful to have a sweeping schedule of dates and times for the 4 scheduled visits each year? B Hurren will investigate and confirmed currently we benefit from additional sweeps on his request.
- 2) Has the Goodlands Play Area been attended to? No - B Hurren will press for it to be done. The Chair said if the funding is passed to the Parish Council, we would be happy to organise.

FINANCE: The Bank balances as at 1st November 2023 were **£35121.01** in the Community Account, **£13496.18** in the Deposit Account and **£71957.71** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£120574.90**.

The following pre-agreed payments for October: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1338.71	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Funds Tr	Sudbury Town Council	910.74	Litter Services
Funds Tr	Vertas Group	698.22	Playing Field Grass
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	S J Sargeant Contracts	864.00	Urgent Footpath fencing
Funds Tr	M W Nice Ltd	488.83	Urgent Footpath fencing

Stone Street Permissive Path

An urgent health and safety issue arose between meetings as walkers were needing to divert from the safe Stone Street Permissive path and walk along the road. Competitive quotations were urgently obtained and the whole Council were consulted between meetings. Repairs were completed and now the path has re-opened to walkers. **All Members resolved their full agreement and the need for urgency between Meetings.**

Report on Finance Sub Committee Meeting

The Chair reported on a productive and detailed session last week by the Finance Sub Committee. We are trying to get a better understanding of required expenditure going forward. The final budget setting will take place at the January Parish Council Meeting. The Sub Committee's are working hard to refine proposals for future spending. It may be necessary to take on more expenditure to make Boxford the place it should be. It was agreed that the full Council will meet early January for a brainstorming session on Finances ahead of the final budget and precept setting.

One Financial item in Committee following the Meeting

Quotations for restoration of the Churchyard boundary wall were discussed in Committee after the Meeting. It was resolved to authorise S L Faiers for the restoration and SV Traffic

Management to organise the relevant traffic management during the works which will be carried out in the School Summer Holidays - 2024.

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

CEMETERY: D Warren reported on a delay with the Cemetery/Churchyard tree work due to the bad weather. The work was now scheduled to start in the week of our Meeting. The Churchyard boundary wall restoration was discussed in Committee and is noted as a Financial item above.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY: L Carpenter reported that our focus on Environmental and Ecology matters had been lagging behind previously. However, this is changing as follows: -

- The Sub Committee has been in touch with Sudbury Town Council regarding the second hand planters - yet to hear back again in order to have a look. We also have some other ideas for the road bridge if the planters are not appropriate.
- They attended a networking event hosted by the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Climate Change Partnership which was highly informative and inspiring and at which they met some useful local contacts.
- L Carpenter is going to attend a meeting starting to explore the possibilities around a Community Energy project for the area: SCC, Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council (BMSDC), Community Energy South and representatives from East Bergholt, Hadleigh and more. We are in a good position potentially having the Groton primary sub-station near. Lindsey PC are also very interested and are in the same system as us. This is only the second meeting so it is good to be getting in at the beginning. There are several successful community power projects already in operation eg at Coddendam.
- They have had a meeting with Paul Hodgkin from Hadleigh Environmental Action Team (HEAT) which was very helpful in terms of sharing experience about making a successful and supported village group, as well as contacts. They are about to start a monitoring project of the River Box as part of a catchment area focus which we will support. L Carpenter is going to attend their AGM and next River Group meeting. Paul also shared that a thermal imaging door to door project can be a great way of getting householders interested in energy efficiency
- They forwarded info about grants for solar power for schools to the school office and FOBS
- Cathy Smith from Suffolk Wildlife Trust visited for the day and had a walk around the village looking at various sites where we can make some biodiversity/habitat improvements with relatively small adjustments e.g. asking for verges to be cut less frequently with higher cutters; and, where we can introduce something new with relatively little investment that will greatly increase valuable habitat for wildlife eg widening hedge bases at a few locations on the playing fields and planting a community orchard. We will be following up to put things into action. She shared a wealth of useful information and contacts regarding plants, processes, grants and

contacts. There is the possibility of installing some swift boxes with the support of Wilder Together to support the dwindling swift population in Boxford; and, there are records of stag beetles in the area so building some stag beetle pyramids, possibly in conjunction with Primrose Wood is being explored. In the afternoon she offered the Churchyard and Cemetery sub-committee some useful suggestions and advice regarding enhancing biodiversity and preserving habitat plus some more useful contacts for support and advice.

- several more residents have come forward to be part of the village group and now Cathy has visited we will be convening a first meeting soon as there is a lot to get moving on! The Group is made up with around 8-10 people from the Village.

Following the above report, members of the Parish Council encouraged all the initiative exploration to continue in this area.

URGENT REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS:

H Phillips reported that he has retrieved the Deeds for Bell House and now would like to press on the Register on Land Registry. This will cost in the region of £500. It was resolved to proceed. It was agreed to press on with leaf clearance in the Cemetery between Meetings - **Action D Warren.** L Carpenter suggested that the leaves are composted in the future and this was noted. Finally the Chair updated the Meeting about the bid for funding to continue the 91 bus on non school days. Evidence was collated by D Burden following the survey and we should know the outcome of the bid before Christmas. In relation to an item in Committee following the Meeting, Members resolved unanimously to invite councillor applicant Kevin Couling to join the Parish Council effective from the December Meeting.

The meeting closed at **5.57 p.m.**

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall (and by Video Conferencing?) on **Tuesday 28th November 2023**

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

- A) Conditions were approved for bricks, mortar mix and new gate at Swan Cottage, 19 Swan Street - **DC/23/04558**.
- B) Non Material amendment was approved for facing materials at ground floor at Former Green Lawns Bonsai Nursery, Hadleigh Road, Boxford - **DC/23/04683**.
- C) The Planning Authority do not wish to object to the tree application at 4 Butchers Lane - **DC/23/04624**. Cllr C Parr (Chair) had previously declared an interest in this application.
- D) Consent had been granted for tree work at 1 The Causeway - **DC/23/04737**.
- E) The Planning Authority do not wish to object to the tree application at 2 The Causeway - **DC/23/04740**. Cllr L Carpenter had previously declared an interest in this application.
- F) Planning Permission had been granted for out-building conversion to form annexed accommodation ancillary to host dwelling at Coddenham Hall, Boxford Lane - **DC/23/04326**.
- G) Planning Permission was granted for conservatory at 12 Clubs Lane - **DC/23/04482**.
- H) Consent was refused for removal of lime trees at 4 The Causeway - **DC/23/04722**.
- I) Consent was granted for tree work at 6 The Causeway - **DC/23/04761**.
- J) Discharge of Conditions were approved for fenestration and roof lights at 30 Stone Street - **DC/23/04987**.

The following applications were discussed: -

- 1) Conservation Area Application to fell dying cherry tree at 3 The Causeway - **DC/23/05036**. Both the Parish Council and our Parish Tree Warden had **No Objections** between Meetings.

- 2) Application under Section S73 for Removal or Variation of a condition at Unit 1, Hawthorn Business Park, Calais Street - **DC/23/05086**.
The Parish Council had **No Objections** between Meetings.

- 3) Planning Application for replacement dwelling at Hawthorns, Calais Street - **DC/23/03355**.
The Parish Council had **No Objections** providing the proposal would not result in loss of amenity to the neighbouring residences. This was considered between meetings to comply with the deadline.

- 4) **Planning Application** - Separation of existing detached annex to create 1 dwelling at Annexe At, Pippettes Farm, Stone Street - **DC/23/05238**.
This was discussed and the Parish Council had No Objections.

- 5) Road Name for new development at Hawthorn Business Park. **Hawthorn Lane was suggested, so this will be forwarded to the District Council - Action Clerk.**

- 6) Any other urgent planning matters - including **Sand Hill Appeal**. The Chair took the opportunity to thank L Wortley for all the work she is putting in regarding preparation for the Sand Hill Appeal.