

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: Cllr C Parr (Chair), Cllrs H Phillips, K Couling, D Warren, H Watts, L Wortley. D Hattrell (Clerk), J Finch (County Cllr), and 2 members of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

APOLOGIES: were received and accepted from Cllr T Munson. District Cllr B Hurren had also sent his apologies.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: Nothing was declared.

MINUTES OF 26th MARCH 2024: These were accepted as correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: Cllr H Phillips went through the noted actions in turn. The Chair updated that no progress has yet been made towards the scraping of Butchers Lane and Wash Lane. County Cllr J Finch will help increase the focus on this matter. The Chair has tried to communicate with the director of highways to no avail. In relation to the footpath from Cox Hill to Fen Street, District Cllr B Hurren has provided Cllr H Phillips and the Clerk with the copy License. This has been shared with County Cllr J Finch who is progressing both with the Head of Footpaths and their Legal Department. The surfacing of Butchers Lane/Ash Street junction has been confirmed for this Financial Year. The Chair still must get the new Internal Control Policy typed out and to the Clerk for circulation to the Parish Council. It was agreed to issue a general thank you to the Community Wardens for their recent attention to the Village - **Action Clerk.**

POLICE STRUCTURE: Unfortunately, Steven Coughlan from Suffolk Police did not make the meeting to explain their structure.

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr B Hurren sent his apologies.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch attended and confirmed to reduce pollution there is a new Suffolk Campaign to urge drivers to switch off their car engines when parked - this is particularly relevant outside schools. Cllr H Watts disputed pollution was generated from running cars as MOT's require safe levels. The County Council considers the National Grid projects of Lion Link and Sea Link could share infrastructure. Further funding has been allocated for new and existing bus services and Electric Vehicle charging points in Suffolk. Suffolk Highways have a new machine called "The Roadmender" to join their new "Dragon Patcher" to fill potholes in the County. Virtual Fostering and Adoption information sessions continue.

County Cllr J Finch was asked to provide some thoughts about Devolution. The closing date for responses to the consultation was 10 weeks after the 18th of March. The Chair asked if Suffolk Highways could contribute to the cost of scraping Butchers Lane and Wash Lane if the Parish Council were to arrange.

PUBLIC FORUM: Nothing was raised.

REVIEW OF ITEMS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC: Not applicable as no items were raised.

FINANCE: The Bank balances as of 31st March 2024 were **£3785.18** in the Community Account, **£26,000.00** in the Deposit Account and **£55425.00** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£85,210.18**.

The following pre-agreed payments for March paid between 27th March and 2nd April: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1449.80	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Fund Tr	D Warren	32.40	Cemetery Exps/planting
Funds Tr	K Couling	48.50	Asset Repairs
Funds Tr	Suffolk County Council	2677.62	Streetlighting annual
Funds Tr	Sudbury Town Council	1279.91	Contract Street Cleaning
Funds Tr	Hestur Ltd	780.00	VH Inspection
Funds Tr	Ecosystems	720.00	Misc - Highways
Funds Tr	Sudbury Town Council	360.00	Assets - Planters
Funds Tr	Sudbury Town Council	153.12	Asset Repairs - grit bin
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts Ltd	42.00	Cemetery path treatmt
Funds Tr	C Parr	56.45	Chairs expenses
Funds Tr	Boxford Village Hall	94.50	Hall hire

a) Annual Accounting and Governance Statements 2023/24

The End of Year Accounts, Accounting and Governance Statements for the year ending 31st March 2024 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr H Phillips proposed to approve these as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr H Watts and unanimously carried. These were duly signed by the Chair and Clerk.

- b) It was noted that the District Cllr Locality Award Income of £984.28 was received on 2nd April 2024.
- c) CIL Return for period ending 31st March 2024 was then considered and Cllr D Warren proposed approval. This was seconded by Cllr H Phillips and unanimously carried. These were duly signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- d) The cost of the Discover Suffolk Leaflet Printing was explained by Cllr L Wortley. Details had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Our share of the cost was duly approved. This was proposed by Cllr D Warren, seconded by Cllr H Watts, and unanimously carried. Cllr L Wortley will take this forward once Groton and Edwardstone have resolved their contributions.
- e) The quote to restore Village Benches had been circulated ahead of the Meeting and was duly approved. Cllr H Watts proposed approval, Cllr D Warren seconded, and it was unanimously carried - **Action Clerk to instruct the work**. As the contractor is unwell at present, working groups will help if needed to ensure the benches are in a good state ahead of Open Gardens.
- f) A donation of £50 to Boxford Friendship Group was duly approved.

- g) **Any other urgent financial matters.** Minor expenditure was agreed to purchase a new lock for the Stone Street notice board – **Action Cllr K Couling.** Cllr H Phillips will start getting things in motion regarding the Housing Needs Survey. It can be noted that the principle of considering a Housing Needs Survey and meeting the cost was agreed at the January 2024 meeting as one of the recommendations from the Finance Sub Committee. The merits of a more formal Committee structure were briefly mentioned. The Clerk explained that currently the Sub Committee’s are working groups to research matters between the formal Parish Council (PC) Meetings. The full PC is the decision-making body. It is essential that items are put on the agenda and information is circulated to the full PC for lawful resolutions to be made. Guidance can be shared in relation to formal Committee’s, however, with monthly PC Meetings, this simple structure should be the least bureaucratic going forward. The Chair agreed to arrange a brainstorming session over the next 10 working days to consider the best way forward. Cllr H Phillips recognized that bureaucracy could slow progress, however, stated that it is essential the PC operates within the law. Cllr L Wortley echoed these points. Cllr H Watts asked what the PC was doing wrong as all Councillors agree on most things. The Clerk explained that it is healthy to debate at meetings, so that each Councillor has a fair hearing and has notice to research. Meetings are held in public, and it is important to conduct business in an open and transparent way. Full training is available and encouraged.

CORRESPONDENCE: No correspondence report was provided upon instructions from the PC. Various emails were circulated to the full PC throughout the month. These included the draft Minutes issued to the full PC on 8th April with reminders that the Agenda/Summons must specify the business which is proposed to transact (enabling Councillors to research and prepare). The Chair must ensure clear lawful resolutions are made. The Clerk also shared some advice from SALC on Committee Structures. Currently all Resolutions are made by the full Council at PC Meetings.

HIGHWAYS: update re 20 mph limit. The Chair is still researching the small waiting area in the middle of the road on the A1071 for vehicles waiting to turn right onto Sand Hill. Research is also on-going in relation to the pinch-point on Church Street where buses and other large vehicles are finding it difficult to negotiate due to parked cars. The Chair is researching solutions with both nearby residents and Suffolk Highways. Cllr H Phillips mentioned that fixing signs to Listed property might raise concerns.

CEMETERY: Report from Sub Committee. The Clerk also reported dates of forthcoming Burials on 26th April and 20th May 2024. A working party has been arranged for Saturday 11th May starting at 10.00 a.m. The work to the Churchyard wall is still on schedule for the School Summer Holidays. This was resolved at the November 2023 PC Meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY: Report from Sub Committee. L Carpenter, the Chair of Natural Boxford, attended to give a report. It was agreed to divert some of the funds approved for seeds to the printing of re-useable banners. Good progress is being made on the biodiversity statement, which should be a useful document going forward. She explained changes to the way the District Council is managing their green spaces and QR codes will be

available to scan to find out more information. Natural Boxford has taken over the management of the bed at the entrance to The Causeway and she explained the planting and grass cutting regime. They had a working party scheduled to take out the thistles. Thermal imaging cameras will be used as part of the project to sign post options for residents to reduce the heat lost from their homes. They are receiving training on testing the river quality to establish a base line. Sewage is a problem in nearby parishes following storms. Swift boxes have been put up in liaison with the Church. They are having a stall at the forthcoming Open Gardens. Cllr H Phillips asked about clearing the silt build up which is slowing the water flow near the Old Gaol. He felt river maintenance was important to prevent potential flooding. L Carpenter noted these points, recognized the need for a coherent plan and explained that nature and water voles, for example, require protection. The Chair had observed that the bridge on Ash Street/Fen Street is breaking away. L Carpenter confirmed that Natural Boxford is looking into flood risks with the help from expertise in the Village. The Chair stressed the importance of the District Council seeking views from residents when they are changing grass cutting regimes. The Chair agreed to discuss with R Parmee at the District Council directly. L Carpenter explained that residents are encouraged to provide feedback to the District Council as these changes are being tried currently. During her report, L Carpenter became concerned about unwelcome mutterings from Councillor or Councillors seated close to the public area. She paused her report to ask these interruptions to cease and then continued.

PUBLIC REALMS: Report from Sub Committee. Cllr K Couling reported that the Community Wardens are still busy with their contract work in the Village. He was awaiting a response from the County Council Street Lighting Engineer, A Last. The replacement lantern on School Hill had been authorized after the February 2024 PC Meeting approval. He is still waiting to discuss a potential new light for Ash Street/Butchers Lane. He is organizing some painting of bins in the Village and the approved flower boxes are being organized. Sponsors in the Village are helping with the flowers. The trees bordering the Churchyard and the School are being assessed further. Our Parish Tree Warden has given advice.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING on 23RD MAY starting at 7.45 p.m. in the Village Hall. It was agreed for the Clerk to contact Community Organisations for reports as usual. The Clerk explained the purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting and the difference with the Annual Meeting of the PC which is also held in May. It was agreed for Councillors to give reports from their sub committees at the Annual Parish Meeting. It will be an opportunity to share with the Parish the increased focus this Parish Council is bringing.

URGENT REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS: Various comments were made between meetings at the request for a Liberal Democratic candidate for the forthcoming general elections to attend a PC Meeting to introduce himself and observe local matters underway. Comments had been made that the meeting is held in public, however, would not be appropriate for any candidate to use it as a political platform. The Chair reported that he turned down the request between meetings. In relation to the Listed Building Permission for the gate and display proposed for the Old Gaol, the heritage officers have asked for more detail on the design of the gate. The Chair is contacting them in this regard.

The meeting ended at **9.00 p.m.**

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall on **Tuesday 23rd April 2024**

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

- A) Listed Building Consent was granted to erect wrought iron gates and fit display boards at Bus Shelter (Old Gaol) Broad Street – **DC/24/00451**.
- B) The Planning Authority did not raise objections to the tree application at Vermont, 13 Stone Street – **DC/24/01091**.
- C) Non-Material Amendments were approved re garage wall brickwork at Glebe House, 3 Rectory Park – **DC/22/06404**.
- D) The Planning Authority do not wish to object to the reduction of the crown of cherry at Newlands Lodge, Stone Street – **DC/24/01242**.
- E) The Planning Authority do not wish to object to the felling of rowan at 3 Broad Street – **DC/24/01333**.

The following applications were discussed: -

- 1) Objections were issued to the application to amend planning permission on Land to South of Daking Avenue as agreed at the March Meeting – **DC/24/01029**.
- 2) Application for Listed Building Consent for plaster and timber frame of Swan Cottage, 19 Swan Street – **DC/24/01384**. This was considered between meetings to comply with the deadline. There were **No Objections**.
- 3) TPO Application to crown ash at Riverhall, Ellis Street – **DC/24/01618**.

No Objections from the Parish Tree Warden and the Environment Sub Committee.

- 4) Application for Listed Building Consent for replacement sitting room window at 22 Ellis Street – **DC/24/00716**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

- 5) Application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to previously approved application at Wynne Cottage, Swan Street – **DC/24/01682**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

- 6) Any other urgent planning matters – A confidential document was received from the Chief Planning Officer between meetings relating to the Wash Lane structures. It was agreed for Cllrs Wortley and Phillips to draft a suitable enquiry to the Chief Planning Officer on the way forward for the Clerk to issue on behalf of the PC – **Action Cllrs Wortley, Phillips, and the Clerk**. It was noted it is now after the deadline for Catesby to challenge the Planning Appeal Decision for refusal of the Sand Hill development.