

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 26th March 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: Cllr C Parr (Chair), Cllrs H Phillips, D Warren, H Watts, L Wortley, K Couling, D Hattrell (Clerk), Cllrs B Hurren (District Cllr), J Finch (County Cllr) and 3 members of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

APOLOGIES: were received and accepted from Cllr T Munson.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: Nothing was declared.

MINUTES OF 27th FEBRUARY 2024: These were accepted as correct. The Chair, however, confirmed he will remain in the Public Realms Sub Committee with Cllr K Couling chairing. (It can be noted all our Sub Committees report to the full PC for decision making and have no delegated powers. Cllrs should ask the Chair and Clerk to include Agenda items -at least 1 week ahead of the meeting- to enable their fellow Cllrs to research ready to debate at the meeting concerned).

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: The potential for this Parish Council (PC) to authorize the scraping of Wash Lane and Butchers Lane was discussed. (This did not form an Agenda item, so it was not possible to make a resolution). It was noted that any approval would not be considered without appropriate permission from the Highways Authority and pressing them to carry out the work. Most agreed with the principle of the PC instructing the work once the above two conditions are met. The only point against was that householders were potentially being taxed twice. County Cllr J Finch had been pressing for the work to be done, however, it was not considered a high priority. District Cllr B Hurren confirmed that Wash Lane was part of a District Council cycle route, so had been pressing to get the work done. Cllr Hurren will ensure the cycle signage is reinstated when the work is complete. The Chair agreed to take the lead in this respect and keep the PC informed - **Action Chair**. The Chair reminded members to respond to Cllr T Munson regarding the draft emergency response plan. Cllr D Warren commented on a good plan which was well thought out. Cllr H Phillips has investigated the memorial bench near the flats and felt it should remain in the current location. He will follow up with a memorial plaque on a picnic bench at the Playing Field. Cllr B Hurren was still to provide a copy of the license for the path from Cox Hill to Fen Street *he was reminded when he arrived at the meeting and agreed to email Cllr H Phillips and the Clerk - **Action Cllr B Hurren**.

PUBLIC FORUM: A resident was still concerned about trees in the waterway reported at the last meeting. He has contacted the Environment Agency without success. He agreed the Fen Street to Cox Hill footpath is still in poor condition. He reported glass left in the Playground potentially from youths. He was interested to hear views on the planning for 6 dwellings on Goodlands. Finally, he asked about Police Reporting.

REVIEW OF ITEMS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC: The Clerk confirmed that the Chair had asked her to invite the Police to our April Meeting to explain their structure. They have agreed to attend, which is very welcome - **Action Clerk to include an early Agenda item - April**. County Cllr J Finch confirmed that each Parish will now have a nominated Police

Contact. Further investigation will be needed to determine whether Babergh District Council (BDC) or the Environment Agency (EA) are responsible for the trees in the stream reported above again.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch attended and confirmed that 60 additional staff are to help reform Special Educational Needs and Disability services in Suffolk. A 10-week public consultation on Suffolk Devolution started on 18th March. He was questioned regarding the responsibility for deciding whether Devolution goes ahead which was confirmed as Suffolk County Council (SCC). New dragon patcher technology is being used to fix rural potholes. Residents are invited to share information on how they travel to help inform Suffolk's Local Transport Plan. In February 2022, for environmental reasons County Highways agreed to stop using glyphosate for routine weed treatment and to find more natural alternatives. Unfortunately, the alternative products have not been as effective. Further research is on-going with some responsible usage of glyphosate. SCC have issued formal objections to the making of a Development Consent Order for the Bramford to Twinstead lines. 98% of pupils received a place of one of their preferred secondary schools. Virtual fostering and adoption sessions continue. He outlined tasks completed locally and agreed to check the schedule for the junction surfacing/repairs at Butchers Lane/Ash Street. It was previously noted to be included in the 2024-25 year – **Action County Cllr J Finch to confirm.**

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr B Hurren attended and was congratulated on Babergh and Mid Suffolk's recent "UK Council of the Year" Award. He was pleased feedback on the Village sweep was good. He is looking for a volunteer to help him litter pick on the bypass. The budget has been challenging and may lead to the withdrawal of some services. He is proud of the value for money the BDC are providing. He was pleased with the Appeal outcome refusing permission for the Catesby development and felt that this enables the Parish to set its own path going forward. He would support Local Needs Housing. On Devolution, he would prefer less duplication with a system of Unitary Councils with proper funding and governance.

FINANCE: The Bank balances as of 1st March 2024 were **£10576.45** in the Community Account, **£26,000.00** in the Deposit Account and **£55425.00** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£92,001.45**.

The following pre-agreed payments for February: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
Funds Tr	Suffolk Tree Services	2460.00	Cemetery
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1455.89	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts Ltd	936.00	Highways clearance & path
Funds Tr	C Parr	341.99	Chairs expenses
Funds Tr	Community Action Suffolk	100.00	Charity donation
Funds Tr	Boxford Village Hall	94.50	Hall hire
Funds Tr	Glasdon UK Limited	218.26	Bin renewal/asset repairs

a) Consider grant towards the insurance costs of the Church.

Following discussion, it was resolved to pay up to £2500 against the insurance costs of the Church. This will be paid as soon as the Chair has spoken with the Revd. – **Action**

Chair and Clerk. In the meantime, the funds will be transferred to our Earmarked Reserves along with the grant to the Village Hall – **Action Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO).**

b) Review of Internal Control Policy

The previous Internal Control Policy remained in place for most of the financial year, however, the document needs to be reviewed in each financial year. The **RFO** had provided a draft document reflecting our current controls and recommended a more comprehensive review following the move to Scribe Accounting from 1st April 2024. This advice was not taken up. The Finance Sub Committee did not meet, however, some members of the sub-committee worked on suggested amendments between meetings. The **RFO** was not consulted on these amendments prior to the meeting, so was unable to research compliance with our Financial Regs and the efficiency of the changes in relation to resources and Scribe accounting. The new Internal Control Policy was approved effective from 1st April 2024 and the Chair agreed to provide a copy to the **RFO** in due course – **Action Chair**. The **RFO** will then circulate to the **PC**. Among other changes the frequency of VAT reclaims was increased to quarterly, bank reconciliations to monthly and item 11) as below was deleted: -

11) Village Organisations are encouraged to share their plans in the autumn annually to enable additional financial support to be considered and budgeted.

c) District Cllr Locality Award

The District Cllr Locality Award was approved between meetings. Cllr L Wortley obtained estimates and completed the application on behalf of the **PC**. This will be reported as Income at a future meeting.

d) Any other urgent Finance items: The Chair encouraged the Sub Committees to share their plans for the instruction of future work. (No resolutions were possible without Agenda items enabling members to research ahead of the meeting for democratic decision-making during meetings held in public. This also allows residents to comment on items on the agenda before decisions are made). Cllr D Warren asked if the remaining fencing could be approved. All were in support – ***The Invoice has since been received for £135 plus VAT - this minor work has now been approved by the Chair and Clerk, so is in order for payment.**

CORRESPONDENCE: No report was provided upon instructions from the **PC** at the previous meeting. Various emails were circulated to the full **PC** throughout the month. The Clerk had researched the powers this **PC** has to take on areas the responsibility of County Highways and had issued guidance between Meetings. The Clerk regularly issued details of Training available from SALC and encouraged attendance. She had also circulated the Code of Conduct in view of some concerns following the February Meeting.

HIGHWAYS: County Cllr J Finch had paid for the survey on a potential 20 mph limit for parts of the Village. He had also provided a supportive statement. Cllr H Watts thanked him for supporting the proposed reduction. Cllr D Warren agreed as he felt we owe it to our residents to encourage traffic to move at safe speeds. All were in support of our Chair moving this forward – **Action Chair**.

CEMETERY: Report from Sub Committee. The Cemetery Sub-committee reported on the on-going maintenance of the boundary with the school which will be considered in the maintenance program for the next financial year. The Chair suggested budgets are approved, so that work can be instructed between meetings by the various sub-committees - **Action Clerk to investigate options with SALC.** The meeting was closed briefly to allow the representative from the Church to speak. She thanked the **PC** for the grant and on-going work in the Churchyard. She agreed to share a report from their architect to assist with future planning and offered to help with working parties.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY: Report from Sub Committee. Cllr L Wortley explained that Natural Boxford are working on drafting a Statement of Aims and will send round for views in due course - **Action Sub Committee.**

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING on 23RD MAY: It was agreed for the Friendship Group to arrange refreshments and a small donation of £50 was suggested - **Action Clerk - April Agenda item.** The Chair encouraged most Councillors to speak during the power point presentation and to share good news on projects.

PUBLIC REALMS: It was agreed to include a regular new Agenda item - **Action Clerk.** Cllr K Couling confirmed the holly has been trimmed near the bench and work is in progress trimming branches obstructing the streetlights as previously agreed. The Chair handed the Clerk details of the contractor concerned and suggested they be considered as an Approved Contractor for the **PC.** Cllr K Couling asked for an official thank you to The Community Wardens for their recent hard work - **Action Cllr Couling to draft for the Clerk.** Cllr D Warren reported that UK power is attending in April to reduce branches interfering with their power lines in the Village. The Chair clarified that there is no intention of cutting the walnut tree down on Brook Hall Road. He wanted an understanding that when existing lights fail, we can get on to repair/replace between meetings - See Clerk's Action under Cemetery item to investigate with SALC - **Action Clerk.** Minor expenses were agreed for tins of paint to maintain Village assets and maximise discounts.

URGENT REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS: Some celebration will be supported for marking 250 years of postal service to Boxford. The Chair acknowledged some concern expressed on Facebook regarding the Precept increase.

The meeting closed at 9.22 p.m.

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall on **Tuesday 26th March 2024**

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

- A) The Planning Authority do not wish to object to conservation area tree work to sycamore and silver birch at The Grange, Stone Street - **DC/24/00530**.
- B) Listed Building Consent was granted for alterations at The Old Bakery, 12-16 Broad Street - **DC/23/04804**.
- C) The Appeal brought by Catesby Development against the Refusal to grant Planning Permission for 64 dwellings was dismissed.
- D) The Planning Authority do not wish to object to conservation area tree work at Kemball House, 22 Broad Street - **DC/24/01014**.

The following applications were discussed: -

- 1) Kemball Ho, 22 Broad St - Notification of works to Conservation Area Trees - **DC/24/01014**. This was considered between meetings to comply with the deadline.

Both the Parish Tree Warden and the Parish Council had **No Objections**. The Decision had recently been received from the Planning Authority also not objecting.

- 2) Vermont, 13 Stone Street - Notification of works to Conservation Area Trees - **DC/24/01091**. This was considered between meetings to comply with the deadline.

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

- 3) Newlands Lodge, Stone Street - Notification of works to Conservation Area Trees - **DC/24/01242**.

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

- 4) Old Chapel House, Stone Street - Householder Application - Erection of two storey rear extension with single storey side extension. Changes to fenestration and render including construction of solar panels - **DC/24/01313**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

- 5) 3 Broad Street - Notification of works to tree in a Conservation Area - **DC/24/01333**.

Following discussion, the Parish Council agreed to accept the advice from our Parish Tree Warden of **No Objections**.

- 6) Land To the South Of, Daking Avenue - Application to vary plans and visibility splays - **DC/24/01029**.

Following discussion members unanimously agreed to Object to these changes. Cllr L Wortley agreed to draft a suitable response for the Clerk to send - **Action Cllr L Wortley and Clerk**.

- 7) **Any other urgent planning matters including confirmation Sand Hill Appeal was dismissed.**

Cllr L Wortley reported that the Appeal by Catesby Homes was dismissed due to the proposal being outside the settlement boundary, the harm to the character and appearance of the area and the unsuitability of Ellis Street for the footpath changes. The Judicial Review period ends on 17th April. Cllr B Hurren praised the way the Appeal was defended.

On another matter, it was agreed to delegate the consideration of tree applications between meetings to the Parish Tree Warden and the Environmental and Ecology Sub-Committee - **Action Clerk**.