

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 27th February 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

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

APOLOGIES: None were received.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: Cllr Phillips declared an interest in the Playing Field Management Committee Finance item.

MINUTES OF 23rd JANUARY 2024: These were accepted as correct with a minor correction showing the registration of Bell House under the Reports section.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: The Chair met the managers of the foster home who are making an application to improve off-road parking. Cllr Watts had reported to The Fleece concern re cigarette butts left outside the pub. The Chair will follow this up as the problem is ongoing. Volunteers or a Contractors quote to restore the grass verge at Ash Street/Fen Street will be considered at a future meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM: A resident thanked the Parish Council (PC) for the work in the Graveyard and Cemetery and he noted that the verge in Fen Street/Ash Street was to be tidied by the PC. He reported the footpath from Fen Street to Cox Hill was washing away. He was concerned that cigarette butts were still left outside The Fleece. He asked if the memorial bench by the flats could be re-positioned to the Playing Fields. He had raised with County Highways the poor cutting of the hedge along the A1071. He was concerned that the trees in the stream in Ash Street (outside 23-25) should be inspected for safety as they had exposed roots. He had reported the tree down on the Croft which was being dealt with. He was concerned about potential Suffolk Devolution. Another resident expected we will hear about the Sand Hill Appeal soon. He commented that the lack of pothole repair by County Highways is leading to successful compensation claims. He suggested lobbying our MP. He asked if there was progress regarding the Village Car Park. He reported that the yellow lining has faded making parking enforcement more difficult. He stated it is worth checking whether Part B Permission from the Church would be required for any surfacing of the Churchyard path. In relation to a potential new Street Light near Brook Hall Road, he would be opposed to the removal of the walnut tree. He referred to the closure of the footpath near the A1071 bridge and commented that the notice seems confusing. He has reported flooding on Cox Hill on the Highways Reporting tool. He also mentioned leaf-fall makes the footpath from Fen Street to Cox Hill slippery.

REVIEW OF ITEMS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC: Cllr Hurren has a copy of the Footpath Agreement for the path between Cox Hill and Fen Street. It was agreed for Cllr Phillips to investigate. Cllr Phillips will investigate the bench suggested to be re-located to the Playing Field. Cllr Hurren was organising a Village Litter pick including the A1071. The Chair is concerned about the inefficiency of crews fixing 1 pothole in isolation and intends to work

with our County Cllr to bring about a change. A survey for the potential Village Car Park was arranged.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch attended, and his report confirmed construction commences on Sizewell C and the Suffolk County Council (SCC) has various monitoring responsibilities over highways, archaeology, and flooding. They will also administer funds secured through the Deed of Obligation to limit the impact on local communities during construction. The partnership responsible for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services in Suffolk have apologised to families and commits to urgent action to improve following Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspections. Dragon Patcher technology is being trialled in Suffolk to fix potholes quicker with significant carbon and raw material saving. SCC are offering new funding for arts and heritage in Suffolk. He reminded people to register for alerts about roadworks in the area under the one. network map and to continue to report defects on the Highways Reporting Tool. Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions continue.

Local issues: -

- 1) Investigation is ongoing relating to the Buses involving our Chair and our County Cllr.
- 2) The scraping of Wash Lane and Butchers Lane is being chased. Our Chair raised the idea of the PC instructing the work ourselves.
- 3) The first section of Butchers Lane from Ellis Street to the Fen Street junction has been put forward for resurfacing in the 24/25 year.
- 4) County Cllr Finch has agreed to fund the Engineers Survey for the potential 20 mph limit.

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr B Hurren attended and reported on hedge trimming including the bottom of Sherbourne Street. He also played an active role, supported by residents, in making the most of the mechanical village sweeping. He is organizing the Village litter pick on 23rd/24th March. The District Councils BMSDC part of the Precept is going up by 2.99% equating to a rise of £188 per annum for a Band D property. He still has his Locality Budget to spend on a scheme before the financial year ends - deadline 22nd March - **Action All**.

Cllr Hurren explained the District Council is trying to find new ways of raising money. They are increasing Council Tax on empty homes. They are taking a harder look at car parking issues. They are winning Planning Appeals currently; however, new developments do bring new homes bonuses. He was pleased with the recent mechanical sweep and the cutting of Sherbourne Street hedge. Some cycle route signs need repair. The Stone Street one has been reported and it was agreed for the Clerk to report the one at the end of Stone Street Road - **Action Clerk**. The chevrons have been knocked over on the sharp bends on A1071 near the turning to Kersey, this was being reported urgently.

FINANCE: The Bank balances as of 1st February 2024 were **£15860.91** in the Community Account, **£13543.18** in the Deposit Account and **£73116.33** in the Reserve Account, making a total of **£102,520.42**.

The following pre-agreed payments for January: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
Funds Tr	Boxford Playing Fields	1964.44	PC Grant - Changing Rooms
Funds Tr	Employment Costs totalled	1454.36	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension

Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts Ltd	2526.00	Cemetery – includ fencing.
Funds Tr	Suffolk Tree Services	1200.00	Cemetery – trees
Funds Tr	Sudbury Town Council	965.15	Litter services
Funds Tr	Vertas Group	698.22	PF Grass Contract
Funds Tr	Suffolk Cloud	205.00	Domain & Emails
Funds Tr	B D Hurren	125.00	Asset Repairs
Funds Tr	Boxford Village Hall	94.50	Jan - hall hire.
Funds Tr	H Phillips	74.97	Expenses
Further urgent pre-agreed payments during February			
Funds Tr	Mortimer Contracts	804.00	Cemetery
Funds Tr	Gotelee Solicitors	300.00	legal deposit
Funds Tr	Boxford Village Hall	94.50	Dec – hall hire.

a) Annual Grant for Village Hall

The Village Hall Management Committee had asked for a contribution towards specific improvements to storage facilities totalling £3636. Following discussion, the Chair proposed a grant of £2500 against this request and this was resolved to be paid upon completion of the work which should be done before 31st March 2024 – **Action Clerk**. The Village Hall Survey was to be done on 4th March and the cost will be £650, well within the budget allocated.

b) Donation to Community Action Suffolk

It was resolved to donate £100 to this charity – **Action Clerk**.

c) 2 Playing Field Projects – Floodlights and replacement aerial runway

Cllr Phillips explained the proposals in respect of these two projects. It was agreed to issue a letter of support and to contribute £2000 from the Earmarked Reserves towards the Playing Fields. Cllr Phillips will confirm when the funds are needed.

d) Review of Internal Control Policy

It was agreed for members of the Finance Sub Committee to review ahead of the **March PC Meeting (Agenda item)**, where the wording can be finalised – **Action Finance Sub-Committee**. The Clerk stressed the importance of this document in confirming how we were safeguarding public money and that it reflected current procedures. A full review will be needed in the new financial year with the introduction of Scribe Accounting.

e) Approval of Invoice for clearance work on School Hill and Sand Hill.

The Invoice was circulated to members ahead of the meeting and it was resolved to approve this Invoice for payment – **Action Clerk**.

f) Further tree work to clear branches around 3 lighting columns on School Hill

The principle of authorising this work at approximately £600 was approved on this occasion. This is hoped to improve the effectiveness of our existing lights going forward. This work will include reducing the holly tree near the restored seat.

*For future reference, it can be noted that trimming around streetlights is one of the reports we can make to Highways on the link from the homepage of our website.

g) Quote for 10 flower boxes.

7 flower boxes for the price of 6 have been proposed including modifications which overall will cost up to £900. It was resolved to purchase these – **Action K Couling**. The Chair was confident that volunteers would keep these watered.

h) Proposal to Restate the Annual Returns to bring accounts in line with work done during the financial year and more precise Income & Expenditure End of Year Reporting.

The Clerk had researched how this can be done with Scribe Accounting going forward. The Accounting figures from last year would need to be re-stated on the AGAR, so both years are presented on the same basis. For work done and invoiced during March 2024, creditor adjustments would be made. For work done but not yet invoiced accrual adjustments would be made. This would make the End of Year slightly more complicated with further explanations of variances required. The benefit would bring a higher level of accuracy for future Financial Planning. Both the existing practice and this new proposal are compliant, so members were aware they had a choice. It was agreed if this Council goes ahead with this amendment, the additional work involved would come under the reasonable cost of implementing Scribe Accounting. With all matters considered, the Chair proposed we adjust on a more precise Income & Expenditure basis. This was resolved – **Action Clerk.**

- i) Any other urgent Finance items: It was noted that the work at the Old Gaol is still within the budget of £2000.

CORRESPONDENCE: The report had been circulated ahead of the Meeting and on-going matters were noted. Members stated that they no longer require a summary of correspondence between meetings. The Clerk will go through a similar process to establish the items for Agenda requiring approval without documenting the list. This will save sometime in the preparation for the Meetings.

CONSIDER POTENTIAL NEW STREETLIGHT ON COX HILL – It was resolved not to proceed towards a new light on Cox Hill, however, the situation is to be reviewed once the tree has been trimmed obstructing light to the vicinity. Cllr Couling had asked for various quotes totalling £8727.67 plus VAT largely for new lights between meetings. These had been circulated to the full PC. He recommended we proceed to replace an old redundant lantern on School Hill (repairs to an existing asset). This was approved at £458.56 plus VAT. A potential new light reported at the January Meeting at Ash Street/Butchers Lane was discussed and Cllr Couling will discuss the costs with SCC Engineers and report back to the PC between meetings. Concern was expressed regarding the safety of the unlit junction with the A1071 on Sand Hill and the Chair will consider it as a Highways project.

REPORT OF MEETING WITH STONE STREET HAMLET RESIDENTS: A very positive meeting with around 25 residents was held and many ideas generated. The main issue is traffic as the hamlet was not designed for volume and speed. The project for the proposed 20 mph limit will include Stone Street Hamlet. Following the meeting a quote was requested to cut the hedge and verge at Stone Street Hamlet. This would usually be the responsibility of Suffolk Highways. Members had taken the view that it was not going to happen if the PC didn't step in. It was agreed to pay, in principle, this time, up to £500.

SUFFOLK DEVOLUTION: Cllr Munson had attended the event about Suffolk Devolution and urged other Cllrs to go along. The Event organisers spoke of the benefits which are more money and more autonomy. The 10-week consultation will end in May, and it could be in place as early as next year. The Devolution deal would give extra money over 30 years and

could help towards the regeneration of brown field sites, transport, education and give extra controls over areas currently controlled elsewhere. A new leader of the County Council would be elected on commencement. Cllr Munson urged a balanced consideration of the drawbacks along with the benefits and confirmed that the event seemed to largely concentrate on the positives of Suffolk Devolution.

REQUEST FOR A CYCLE RACK: Cllr Munson reported that the idea of a cycle rack has been discussed at Natural Boxford and the Bike Club are also in support. They are currently investigating a possible location potentially near the White Hart and wanted to see if the Parish Council were prepared to fund it. Some concerns were expressed; however, it was agreed to continue to investigate and bring it back to the Parish Council at a future Meeting – **Action Cllr Munson.** Cllr Hurren agreed to investigate to see if some cycle racks were available to be donated to the village – **Action District Cllr Hurren.** It was noted that car parking continues to be an issue in the centre of the Village and unfortunately the White Hart were unable to help with the use of their car park.

CEMETERY: Report from Sub Committee.

Minor work at the Cemetery to reinstate the hedge and a new tap for the Churchyard. The drains were cleared at £50 between meetings. It was agreed to consider further additional fencing at £300 near the dustbins and the Churchyard tarmacking in the next financial year.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY: Cllr Munson reported on the bed at the entrance to The Causeway/opposite the Garage including relevant history. She confirmed it will be colourful, however, not too regimented. Bulbs are already coming up which were stifled by the lack of previous clearance. The grass will be cut regularly, however, the regime will allow a better balance for insects etc. Natural Boxford have applied for a License from the County Council to maintain the area. Although some PC members were seeking a more formal appearance, it was agreed to hold off and monitor the area over the coming months. Cllr Munson reassured the meeting the vision splay will be maintained for junction safety.

Cllr Munson handed out a draft Emergency Response Plan for Boxford and asked members to read it and give her feedback.

URGENT REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS:

Members authorised Cllr Couling to obtain a notice for the Jubilee seat at £35, dark green paint at cost (receipt to be provided). It was agreed to amend the Sub Committees, taking the Chair out of the Public Realms Sub Committee, and replacing him with Cllrs Couling and Warren – **Action Clerk.** Consideration is being given to a modest sum towards a potential celebration of 250 years of the postal service coming to Boxford. Cllr Munson attended a community meeting regarding local bus provision for routes near Monks Eleigh. Although this doesn't directly apply to Boxford at this stage, Cllr Munson will continue to take an interest.

The meeting closed at **10.30 p.m.**

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council in Boxford Village Hall on **Tuesday 27th February 2024**

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

- A) Planning Permission was granted to change roof profile and windows to rear from the original plans at Kiln Place, Cox Hill - **DC/23/05713**.
- B) Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent was granted for extension and alterations at Wynne Cottage, Swan Street - **DC/23/05599/05600**.
- C) Planning Permission was granted to vary plans and documents at 30 Stone Street - **DC/23/05770**.
- D) Planning Permission was granted for brick wall and sliding gate at 4 Butchers Lane, Boxford - **DC/23/05530**.

The following applications were discussed: -

- 1) The Grange, Stone Street tree work - **DC/24/00530**.
This application was considered between meetings to comply with the deadline.
The Parish Tree Warden and Parish Council had **No Objections**.

- 2) Appeal on land to rear of units 1&2, former Hawthorns Business Pk, Calais St. - **DC/23/03267**. *It was noted that it was good practice to discuss planning applications at PC Meetings held in public wherever possible. As we are only given 21 days, it is often necessary to respond ahead of a PC Meeting. On those occasions reports are given at the next available Meeting.*
Following discussion, it was agreed to continue to object on the same grounds as before - **Action Clerk**.

- 3) Listed Building Application at The Old Bakery, 12-16 Broad Street. - **DC/23/04804**.
Following discussion, The Parish Council agreed they had **No Objections**.

- 4) Report on this Councils application for Listed Building Consent at The Old Gaol, Broad Street - **DC/24/00451**.

There were **No Objections** as it is our application following Pre-application advice. The relevant history is currently being researched. The intention is to gate one side of the shelter.

- 5) Any other urgent planning matters - Sand Hill Appeal.
No information has been provided following the Appeal at this stage. The Decision is still awaited, and District Cllr Hurren noted others were taking around 3 months.
1 month has elapsed since the final deadline for submissions.