

BOTESDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held Monday, 9 January 2023

Botesdale Village Hall

Present: Cllr Des Bavington-Lowe (Vice-Chair) Cllr Simon Dickinson
Cllr Andrew Edwards Cllr Sally Jarvis
Cllr Richard Lock Cllr William Sargeant (Chair)
Cllr Jack Stracey

Parish Clerk – Leeann Jackson-Eve
County/District Cllr Jessica Fleming
3 Members of the Public

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Greg Russell and Elizabeth Stanford
2. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 5 December 2022.** The minutes, circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed as a true record.
3. **Members Declarations of Interests and Dispensations:** None.
4. **Public Forum:** A resident of Bury Road expressed serious concerns about the effect of construction traffic at the Bennett Homes site on Bury Road, in addition to the dust, dirt and noise emanating from the site. Traffic nuisance included queues of lorries running from the site entrance opposite Tollgate House to the B1113 junction and beyond, restricting visibility at the junction; lorries mounting the kerb outside of Tollgate House and destroying the verge; and a constant build up on the road surface of heavy mud. At the time of reporting, the resident had been advised that over 40 lorries a day would be attending the site that week. With only one man using a jet spray to clean the lorry wheels, it had resulted in a quagmire around the site entrance and the noise from the road sweeping machine was constant and disruptive. Attempts to contact Bennett Homes had met with no satisfaction.
County/District Cllr Jessica Fleming reported that she had received numerous complaints about delivery vehicles to and from the site speeding through Mellis and Yaxley and had asked Suffolk Highways to investigate. She had also written to the MSDC Enforcement team proposing that work on site be stopped until the existing Construction Method Statement was re-written to address the concerns and interests of local residents in Botesdale and further afield. At present it did not adequately address wheel washing, dust/noise monitoring or the management of construction traffic. The Deliveries Management Plan was inadequate, as it more or less limited its scope to movements within the site and did not address effects externally. The site access opposite the Listed Tollgate House was proving to be inappropriate and as the project was due to last four years, she felt that an alternative should be considered with the involvement of Suffolk Highways.
Cllr Fleming reported generally that Warm Spaces were now available throughout Suffolk and more information could be found at the Rural Coffee Caravan website. It was noted that a warm space was now available every Friday in January/February at 12:30pm at Parkview Chapel. The District Council continued to work with County Highways on its Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan, and it was suggested that the PC write to support the two schemes located in Botesdale. This was agreed to.
A member of the public requested that the speed limit on Back Hills be reduced to 20mph. It was noted that a request had been made in the past for a 30mph limit, but this had not been supported by Suffolk Highways. Cllr Fleming confirmed that Suffolk Highways rarely supported a reduction to 20mph, but it would be worth trying again for an extension of the 30mph limit on Hall Lane, which would include Back Hills.
A member of the public asked for something to be done about the potholes on Mill Road North.
5. **Planning:**
 - 5.1 **Planning Applications:** None.
 - 5.2 **Notice of Intent to prune/remove tree(s) in the Conservation Area:** None.
 - 5.3 **Notification of Planning Decisions by Mid Suffolk DC:** None.

5.4 **Notification of other Planning Matters:** The PC had received notification of the disturbance residents were experiencing near the Bennett Homes site prior to the meeting and also took into account reports from the Public Forum. It was concluded that the failure of Bennett Homes to adequately manage the site had resulted in a significant diminishment of nearby residents' quality of life. It was agreed that no-one within 50m of the site could fail to be affected and residents had councillors' full sympathy and support. It was therefore agreed to write to the District Council Enforcement Team fully supporting Cllr Fleming's proposal to halt work on site so that the Construction Method Statement and Deliveries Management Plan could be amended and brought up to an adequate standard. The proposal to consider an alternative site access during the construction period was also fully supported by the Parish Council.

6. Correspondence:

6.1 **MSDC:** The PC noted the information about the re-start of Parish Liaison meetings. The Chairman would attend the next one, to be held on 7 February at 1.30pm – 3.30pm at The Mix, Stowmarket.

6.2 **Redgrave Parish Council:** The PC received the update on a B1113 weight restriction. Suffolk Highways had indicated that a tube survey would be necessary to measure the scale of the problem and had given an estimated cost of £410. Redgrave PC would be considering this at their January meeting.

7. Ongoing Items:

7.1 **Speed Indicator Device:** It was noted at the December meeting that a larger post would be necessary to support the combined weight of the unit and solar panel. MJ Nunn had now provided a quote of £406 for installation of the post. The cost of the new post would be £155. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to accept the quotes.

7.2 **Recreation Ground Refurbishment:** It was reported that the focus of the construction progress was still on the landscaping (hedging, planting, etc.), pathways (particularly the Eco-Sensory pathway) and the new entrance. The PC noted the performance of the BRGRP against the Budget established by BPC both in terms of expenditure and funding. It was noted that in recognition of the extended Construction period, JBA had agreed to cap their fees at the Contract Sum at least until Practical Completion. With regard to funding, it was noted that in mid-December, in the absence of any progress regarding the provision of awarded funds and failures to meet promised communication milestones, a complaint was made to the National Lottery's East Anglia Funding Manager. The complaint prompted both positive reactions and actions from the Lottery, the latter resulting in the payment before Christmas of £49,520. In keeping with the issues that had prompted the complaint, the amount paid exceeded the sum claimed. This overpayment had been reported to the Lottery.

7.3 **Recreation Ground Operation and Management:** There was no update.

7.4 **Village Assets Refurbishment:** The Clerk was seeking quotes for the work agreed at the December meeting and had contacted a company called Parish Assets Management who could provide surveys and remedial work.

7.5 **Community Governance Review:** There had been no reply from MSDC to the PCs' consultation submission in November. It was requested that District Cllr Fleming follow up on this.

7.6 **Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan:** Following the request to seven local organisations for more information on PIIP projects, there had been two replies to date. It was suggested that any replies could be considered at the next meeting.

7.7 **Marl Pits:** Cllrs Bavington-Lowe and Edwards volunteered to erect the information sign on site.

7.8 **Street Light Replacement Programme:** There was no update.

7.9 **Sarah's Wood:** It was noted that Magpie Trees were due to do some tree work at the Wood on behalf of Burgess Homes.

8. Other Items:

8.1 **Annual Parish Meeting:** It was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on 3 April at 6:30pm, prior to the regular meeting of the PC. The deadline for community reports was 24 March.

8.2 **Litter Pick:** A provisional date of 22 April had been suggested for the litter pick. However, it was felt that by this time the verges would be too overgrown. It was agreed to suggest a date in late March to Rickingham PC.

- 8.3 **Internal Audit Review:** Cllrs Lock and Sargeant would carry out the annual review and report no later than the March meeting.
- 8.4 **Council Administration:** The PC considered two services which it was felt would provide continuity of service, greater flexibility and the opportunity for improved oversight of financial and payroll activity:
- Use of the Scribe package for accounting activity within the Council at a cost of £29 per month – annual payment of £348 plus £247 set-up fee.
 - Use of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils’ payroll service at a cost of £7.50 per month (£90 annually).
- It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to accept the quotes for both services.

9. **Village Status Reports:**

- 9.1 **Chairman’s Report:** The Christmas tree removal had run smoothly.
- 9.2 **Clerk’s Report:** The Clerk reported that the Waterplus bill would be issued monthly, rather than quarterly as at present, from February 2023 and as a regular payment, it was suitable for a direct debit. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to set up the direct debit.
- 9.3 **Local Organisations:**
- BARWOODS - It was noted that bulbs were emerging.
 - Streams and Footpaths Project - It was confirmed that more planting had taken place and the split willow had been removed.
 - Village Hall – It was noted that the next management committee meeting was on Monday, 16 January. A fire door latch had failed but had been repaired.
- 9.4 **Village Assets:** War Memorial – A paper wreath would be removed.
- 9.5 **Public Rights of Way:** At the last meeting it was agreed to consider repair or rebuild to the steps off FP15 in Bridewell Lane. It was suggested that some minor repairs, combined with levelling the road surface beneath the bottom step, would improve the safety of the steps. The Clerk would ask M J Nunn Surfacing to advise on any work which would have to be carried out on the highway.
- 9.6 **Highways Issues:** It was agreed to report potholes on Mill Road North and Bridewell Lane.
- 9.7 **Welcome Packs:** None.

10. **Finance:**

10.1	Account Balance:	£ 134,473.28	
	Income:	£ 3,234.57	MSDC Capital Grant 3rd Claim - Rec Gnd
		£ 26,094.21	Lottery Grant 1st Claim - Rec Gnd
		£ 15,134.57	Lottery Grant 2nd Claim - Rec Gnd
		£ 8,291.95	Lottery Grant 3rd Claim - Rec Gnd
		£ 7,894.75	HMRC – VAT Reclaim Oct22-Dec22

10.2 **Accounts for Payment:**

Admin Payments	£ 1,685.11	Not itemised due to GDPR
Street Sweeping etc.	£ 124.28	St Clean etc January 2023
Waterplus	£ 133.09	Rec Ground Water Charges
ElanCity	£ 6,040.80	Evolis SID x 2
M J Nunn Surfacing	£ 1,009.92	Repair of Signage – Fen Lane and Village Boundary
Urban Forestry	£ 15,895.56	Rec Ground Construction Fees
TBS Hire	£ 89.76	Hire of Barriers – Xmas tree
Gislingham Silver Band	£ 50.00	Christmas Lights On

It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to approve payment of the accounts above.

- 10.3 **Draft Budget 2023-24:** It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to set a BUDGET of £51,300 for the year 2023-24 and to retain earmarked funds of £114,706.37, making a total fund of £166,006.37. The PC RESOLVED, with all agreed, to sign the form requesting a precept of £49,200 from Mid Suffolk District Council. This represented an overall 5.5% rise on the amount received in 2022-23.

11. **Matters for the next meeting of the Council:**

12. **Next Meeting:** 6 February 2023

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:55pm.