

BOTESDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held Monday, 4 September 2023
Botesdale Village Hall

Present: Cllr Des Bavington-Lowe
Cllr Andrew Edwards (Chair)
Cllr Greg Russell
Cllr Elizabeth Stanford
Cllr Simon Dickinson
Cllr Richard Lock
Cllr William Sargeant
Cllr Jack Stracey

Parish Clerk – Leeann Jackson-Eve

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Sally Jarvis
2. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 3 July 2023.** The minutes, circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed as a true record.
3. **Members Declarations of Interests and Dispensations:** None.
4. **Public Forum:** None.
5. **Planning:**
 - 5.1 **Planning Applications:** None.
 - 5.2 **Notice of Intent to prune/remove tree(s) in the Conservation Area:**
 - 5.2.1 **Willow Weavers, Fen Lane.** Ref. DC/23/04031. Application for works to a tree in a Conservation Area - Fell 1No Holly Tree (T1) as it is too close to an old wall. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
 - 5.3 **Notification of Planning Decisions by Mid Suffolk DC:** None.
 - 5.4 **Notification of other Planning Matters:** None.
6. **Correspondence:**
 - 6.1 **MSDC:** The PC noted a new grant available to work with communities in cleaning up neighbourhoods and building local pride. It was agreed to apply for funding for sign cleaning/refurbishment.
 - 6.2 **MSDC:** The PC noted that applications were open for the 2024 scheme to fund tree planting schemes – street trees, a copse or an avenue; small community woods; hedgerows – both new and improving existing ones, especially where they helped bridge gaps in the landscape; and community or scattered orchards. It was agreed to forward the information on to Barwoods.
 - 6.3 **Suffolk Police:** It was noted that the current Community Engagement Officer, Stefan Henriksen, was moving to a new position and to date there was no replacement for CEO. It was agreed to write to the Police Commissioner thanking him for the outgoing CEO's service and enquiring about a replacement.
 - 6.4 **Santiago's Art Café:** It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to approve the request for a car to be placed on the Marketplace on the weekend of 8th and 9th September as part of a month-long exhibition and sale of motorsport photography and art.
 - 6.5 **PJA:** The PC noted the services of a transport planning, engineering and place-making consultancy based in Cambridge with respect of a Traffic Management study. It was agreed to contact East Bergholt Parish Council to enquire about their experience with PJA and the cost of the service.
 - 6.6 **Parkview Chapel:** The PC noted the thank you letter from the Chapel for PIIP funding for Youth Club equipment.
7. **Ongoing Items:**
 - 7.1 **Recreation Ground:** It was noted that work to extend the Junior Swing to include two flat seats as originally specified was to be undertaken by Urban Forestry after the school summer holidays. The Zip Wire had been re-tensioned improve its performance and the additional fencing discussed at the July meeting had been ordered. The Sub-Committee was currently working with JBA and UF to improve its understanding of planned maintenance activities in advance of the maintenance tender process for next year.

Following a further complaint regarding the use of the facilities after dusk, Cllr Russell and the Clerk had met the complainant on site on 14 August 2023. The complainant was again advised to notify the police about such incidents but was reluctant to do so. There was concern that this would compromise leverage with the Suffolk Police if future "eyes on" visits were needed. It was agreed to install clearer photoluminescent signage to emphasise the opening hours. The Sub Committee had proposed that the rather ambiguous "dawn to dusk" opening times were replaced by defined times as follows:

- April to October (incl) – 07:00 – 21:30
- November to March (incl) – 07:00 – 19:30

The PC RESOLVED, with all agreed, to adopt the proposed new opening hours. New signage would be provided.

Finally, the facilities had been nominated by UF for a British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) award. The Site was visited by the judges on 31 July 2023, and the results were awaited.

- 7.2 **TRO for Back Hills, Chapel Lane and Mill Road North:** The Clerk had circulated the draft TRO maps and these had been agreed with some minor amendments. The amendments had been approved and the proposal would be taken forward by SCC.
- 7.3 **TRO for extension of 30mph on B1113:** The Clerk had circulated the draft TRO map and it had been agreed. The proposal would now be taken forward by SCC.
- 7.4 **Marl Pits:** There was no update.
- 7.5 **Sarah's Wood:** There was no update.

8. Other Items:

- 8.1 **PC Strategy Meeting:** The PC considered proposals emerging from an informal meeting which discussed community engagement and involvement, and the future of the parish council and the village. It was therefore RESOLVED, with all agreed, to
 - Update the 2003 Village Appraisal with new consultation. Cllr Edwards had volunteered to review the existing Village Appraisal and make a report to the PC on how best to update it. The PC would also consider whether to include Rickinghall as in the 2003 Appraisal.
 - Update Welcome Pack – Cllr Stracey was in the process of designing a new introduction to the village to go in the packs.
 - Publish councillor bios – Councillors who would like to provide bios were asked to send these to the Clerk. These would then be published on the website.
- 8.2 **Christmas 2023:** The PC agreed arrangements for Xmas Tree and related events, with delivery of the Christmas tree and safety barriers on Friday, 24 November, a decorating working party on Sunday, 26 November and the Lights-On event on Saturday, 2 December at 6pm. It was agreed to discuss arrangements for the evening with Santiagos for use of the space in front of the café and their possible late opening to provide refreshments and music.
- 8.3 **PIIP Application:** The PC considered an application from St Mary's Rickinghall to help towards the re-tiling of the north chancel roof of Rickinghall Church and replacement of damaged asbestos rainwater gutter. Councillors were minded to support this community asset but noted that there was an ongoing debate about whether parish councils were able to give funds to ecclesiastical bodies. The Local Government Act 1894, which set up parish councils as separate from parochial church councils, specifically prohibited it. There was subsequent legislation which allowed parish councils broad powers to grant funding wherever it benefited the community (s137 funds or through the General Power of Competence) but that was in opposition to the LGA 1894, and use of those powers had been challenged by auditors in a handful of cases. The PC decided that it could not grant funding now due to the lack of clarity in law. However, should current efforts to get this clarified by Parliament succeed, the PC would be happy to consider a future application.

9. Village Status Reports:

- 9.1 **Chair's Report:** The Chair reported that he had again attended 'Councillor's Corner' at the Rickinghall Farmer's Market, Saturday 12th August alongside District Councillor Gilly Morgan and Rickinghall Chair Geoff Short. There had been good attendance from the public and a number of general questions throughout the morning with no complaints. He and Cllr Short had spoken to Gordon Lawrence about the Community Transport bus but had made no headway in addressing the barriers to the Parish Councils funding the purchase of a new bus. At present, Mr

Lawrence was still resistant to Rickinghall PC remaining owner of a new bus or establishing the organisation as a separate legal entity. District Cllr Morgan had agreed to investigate options with the MSDC legal team. The Chair also noted that he had received two complaints about overgrown vegetation along The Drift and these had been reported to SCC. Clearance work had since been completed.

9.2 **Clerk's Report:** None.

9.3 **Local Organisations:**

- Streams and Footpaths – Cllr Stracey had agreed to design the information board for the site at Fen Lane and the Little Ouse Headwaters Project had confirmed that it would provide funding for the board.
- Village Hall – The main door lock mechanism had been repaired recently. All issued keys were still usable. The carpets, chairs and pre-school mats had all been cleaned.

9.4 **Village Assets:** None.

9.5 **Public Rights of Way:** None.

9.6 **Highways Issues:**

- A complaint had been made about the bank nearest Sarah's Wood washing away and encroaching on the highway. Cllr Sargeant would look at the planning drawings to see how they aligned with the site as built.
- There had recently been repeated inconsiderate parking at the corner of The Street and Bridewell Lane. It was noted that this could be reported directly to West Suffolk Council.
- The 30mph/playground signs on Mill Road North had fallen over and it was noted that they had been reported to SCC. It was suggested that the location might benefit from entrance gates and it was agreed to get a quote from SCC.

9.7 **Welcome Packs:** None.

10. Finance (as of 31/08/23):

10.1	Account Balance:	£ 121,060.74	
	Bank Balance:	£ 121,060.74	
	Income:	£ 406.38	MSDC Street Cleaning Grant 1 st qtr

10.2 **Accounts for Payment:**

Admin Payments	£ 1,349.50	Not itemised due to GDPR
Street Sweeping etc.	£ 289.30	St Clean etc September 23
PKF Littlejohn LLP	£ 1,008.00	External Audit Fees
James Blake Associates	£ 663.60	Rec Ground: Maint Contract Admin
Urban Forestry	£ 5,244.00	Rec Ground: Quarterly Maint Invoice
MSDC	£ 149.65	Election Fees 2023

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

Payments by Direct Debit:

HMRC	£ 181.15	PAYE for 1 st qtr 2023-24
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10.3 **External Audit Report:** The PC noted the positive report for 2022-23.

11. **Matters to be brought to attention of the Council:** None.

12. **Next Meeting:** 2 October 2023

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:15pm.