

# BOTESDALE PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Parish Clerk – Leeann Jackson-Eve  
County Cllr Jessica Fleming  
No Members of the Public

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Simon Dickinson
2. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 6 November 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:** The County Councillor reported that Suffolk Floods Team had issued a format for collecting local evidence following storms Babet and Kieran which would enable engineers to focus on trouble spots, actions and assess properties eligibility for grants to be administered through District Councils. This was available on the SCC website. Residents were encouraged to continue to report flooding with photographs and relevant dates on the Highways Reporting Tool.  
She reminded residents that the 13-week two-part consultation on Suffolk Libraries was open until Friday 26 January 2024.  
She reported that Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex County Councils had jointly commissioned Hiorns Smart Energy Networks to prepare an independent report into the Norwich to Tilbury project. Leaders of the three councils were asking National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) and the electricity system planner, National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to consider the findings.  
She reported that Suffolk's Environmental Awards were open for nominations until 31 January 2024. The awards ceremony would be held on 27 March 2024, at The Hold in Ipswich.  
Finally, she reported that a rare, possible pre-Christian temple from the time of the East Anglian Kings, had been found at the Sutton Hoo Rendlesham site. The discovery was made this summer by Suffolk County Council's Rendlesham Revealed community archaeology project.
5. **Planning:**
  - 5.1 **Planning Applications:**
    - 5.1.1 **Botesdale Dental Practice, The Drift.** Ref. DC/23/04818. Application for Advertisement Consent - Construction of illuminated lettered signage. It was noted that the proposed sign would be back lit and on until 10pm. Noting that nearby streetlights were on until midnight, it was felt that the effect on neighbouring properties would not be significant. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
    - 5.1.2 **Woodstock Barn, Chapel Lane.** Ref. DC/23/05154. Householder Application - Erection of single storey extension, addition of windows to south elevation and fenestration alterations to attached outbuilding. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to have no objection.
  - 5.2 **Notice of Intent to prune/remove tree(s) in the Conservation Area:**
    - 5.2.1 **The Chestnuts, Bridewell Lane.** Ref. DC/23/05174. Application for works to a tree in a Conservation Area - Reduce 1 No Horse Chestnut tree by up to 30%. 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 **SCC:** The PC noted the outcome following the recent street lighting term maintenance contract procurement carried out by Suffolk County Council and the appointment of J McCann & Co Ltd. from 1st October 2023.
- 6.2 **MSDC:** The PC noted the invitation to participate in consultation on Local Listed Building Consent Orders, a legal tool that would simplify the process for making certain types of improvements to listed buildings. It was agreed that Cllr Bavington-Lowe would respond on behalf of the PC possible.
- 6.3 **MSDC:** It was noted that the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1 2018-2037 was formally adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council on 20 Nov 2023.

## 7. **Ongoing Items:**

- 7.1 **Recreation Ground:** Discussions continued with Urban Forestry regarding the Operations and Maintenance activities from 1 March 2024. The Sub Committee remained of the view that the most viable and pragmatic approach to the ongoing Maintenance would be to utilise Urban Forestry's unique knowledge of the site and extensive expertise. The PC would not need to retain the services of James Blake Associates. Utilising the existing Maintenance Scope of Works, a draft Maintenance Schedule for the works had been developed and the Schedule was with UF for review. It would form the basis of discussions with UF over the next few months as the Maintenance provision from 1 March 2024 was developed. It had been proposed to UF to enter into a two-year contract from 1 March 2024 but indicated that the PC might consider a three-year arrangement if it was commercially attractive.  
The Parish Council was very pleased and proud to note that the Recreation Ground had earned JBA and UF the British Association of Landscape Industries 2023 National Landscape Principal Award in the Community and Schools Development category. This was also recognised as a testament to the vision and hard work of the Recreation Ground Regeneration Project Sub Committee, with a special mention to Cllr Russell.
- 7.2 **TRO for Back Hills, Chapel Lane and Mill Road North:** The PC considered a quote from Suffolk County Council for the work – Professional services quotation £7,512.74 (inc. VAT) and Construction estimate (inc. traffic management) £2,160-£2,640 (inc. VAT). It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to accept the quote/estimate and allocate CIL funds to the project.
- 7.3 **TRO for extension of 30mph on B1113:** The PC considered a quote from Suffolk County Council for the work – Professional services quotation £5,174.25 (inc. VAT) and Construction estimate (inc. traffic management) £1,360-£1660 (inc. VAT). It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to accept the quote/estimate and allocate CIL funds to the project.
- 7.4 **Village Appraisal:** There was no update.
- 7.5 **Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan:** There was no update.
- 7.6 **Flooding Prevention:** The Clerk had drafted a two-page flooding emergency guide based on the SCC guide. This had been disseminated via the website and Facebook in order to help residents find the support they needed, and it was hoped that it could be accommodated in the next parish magazine. Some landowners, including Llanover, had received letters reminding them to clear their ditches. Other information about financial and practical support from the District and County Council had been circulated via Facebook.
- 7.7 **Sarah's Wood:** There was no update.

## 8. **Other Items:**

- 8.1 **Botesdale Recreation Ground Charity:** Following on from the report in October, the PC continued to consider whether there was any benefit to maintaining the Recreation Ground's charitable status. Advice had been taken from Birketts LLP and this noted that the legal title to the land was already held by the Parish Council so there did not need to be any form of transfer of the legal title. However, the charitable trusts would need to be dealt with. The PC would need to apply to the Charity Commission to request that the land was released from the charitable trusts and the charity closed. There was no provision in the Charities Act allowing an interest in land to be given away to a non-charity therefore a case would need to be made to the Charity Commission for why it should allow this to happen. It was felt that the fact the land was already fully protected for public recreation by the relevant open spaces legislation might be sufficient. However, it was noted that the

Charity Commission might not approve the proposal and there would need to be very good reasons as to why it was no longer suitable to hold it on charitable trusts. It was noted that Birketts' fees to apply to close down the charity and document that the land was held by the Parish Council outright, including liaising with the Charity Commission, might be somewhere in the region of £3,500-£5,000 plus VAT and disbursements. Although the PC felt that this was a significant sum of money, this course of action would remove the administrative burden of maintaining charitable status, vastly increase the transparency of the arrangements and make it far easier for future employees and councillors to understand them. It was therefore RESOLVED, with all agreed, to accept the estimate from Birketts and instruct the work to take place in the new financial year.

## 9. Village Status Reports:

9.1 **Chair's Report:** The Chair reported that he was unable to attend 'Councillor's Corner' at the most recent Rickinghall Farmer's Market. He had laid the wreath at the Remembrance Day event on Sunday, 12 November and noted that it was well-attended. However, there had been three separate events and he wondered whether this could be simplified. The Clerk would contact the organisers. He had compered the Christmas tree Lights On ceremony, and it was agreed that the Clerk would investigate a small PA system as it had been difficult to hear a single voice among the crowds.

9.2 **Clerk's Report:** SCC Highways had visited Cherry Tree House, Cherry Tree Lane to investigate solutions to prevent vehicles from damaging the property. SCC had concluded that road users had the responsibility to drive appropriately, it was a clear village environment and the road narrowed before overhanging buildings were visible. It was not a through route and there was very little reason to use Cherry Tree Lane unless specifically visiting or delivering to the road. An 'Unsuitable for HGV' sign would therefore not be appropriate as it wouldn't impact the delivery vehicles which were causing the damage. It was suggested that the resident might wish to install a chevron sign on the building to highlight the overhang. This response would be passed to the resident.

### 9.3 Local Organisations:

- Streams and Footpaths – The Clerk was still waiting for confirmation from the Little Ouse Headwaters Project of their funding offer.
- Village Hall – Pre-School classes were currently at capacity with a waiting list in place. SCC would be informed of the situation. A possible solution was a larger/extended log cabin. The VH was considering a paid position of treasurer as the position remained unfilled and the Pre-School had taken this route successfully. The new Booking Secretary was Julie Edwards. The AGM was set for 25 March 2024 and the former and current Chairs would prepare the annual report collectively. The next regular meeting was on 22 January 2024.
- Suffolk Green Cluster – Cllr Lock reported that the next meeting was on 14 December at 1-5pm.

### 9.4 Village Assets:

- Marl Pits – Following the erection of the sign on site, the PC had received two offers of help from local residents with regard to pond restoration. One had experience with Suffolk Wildlife Trust, and it was agreed to ask them for advice and opinions on next steps.

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

9.6 **Highways Issues:** As discussed at the last meeting, the road surface of Back Hills was very poor, particularly in the passing places, and the surface water often hid the damaged road surface below. Water tended to collect on that side as drainage was inappropriately situated on the high side. Councillors further considered the "one way" solution – making Back Hills no entry from Hall Road – but there was no consensus. It was agreed to make a site visit in the upcoming weeks.

9.7 **Welcome Packs:** It was noted that the new cover leaflet was complete.

## 9. Finance (as of 30/11/23):

10.1	<b>Account Balance:</b>	£ 168,254.35	
	<b>Bank Balance:</b>	£ 168,254.35	
	<b>Income:</b>	£ 406.38	MSDC Street Cleaning Grant 2 <sup>nd</sup> qtr
		£ 50.00	Rick PC War Memorial Insurance
		£ 5,712.62	Lottery Grant 5th Claim – Rec Gnd

10.2 **Accounts for Payment:**

Admin Payments	£	1,893.12	Not itemised due to GDPR
Street Sweeping etc.	£	205.14	St Clean etc December 23
Birketts LLP	£	1,680.00	Charity Advice – Rec Ground
Starboard Systems Ltd	£	417.60	Scribe Accounts
Glasdon UK Ltd	£	815.87	Dog Bins (2)
A. Edwards	£	25.00	Christmas Event
Rickinghall Village Hall	£	4,000.00	CIL – Solar Project
Multisigns	£	6.00	CAP Information Sign
Multisigns	£	108.00	CAP Art Fitted
S Green	£	50.00	Clean bus shelter/signs/boards
TBS Hire	£	199.80	Hire of Barriers – Xmas tree

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

10.3 **Draft Budget 2024-25:** It was agreed to add £5,000 into the budget for the work quoted at item 8.1. The draft budget would be considered further at the next meeting.

11. **Matters to be brought to attention of the Council:** Cllr Russell asked for Digital Exclusion on the next agenda, having circulated some information.

12. **Next Meeting:** 8 January 2024

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:38pm.