

BOTESDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held Monday, 8 January 2024
Botesdale Village Hall

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

No Members of the Public

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Elizabeth Stanford and Parish Clerk.
2. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 4 December 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:** There were no members of the public present. County Cllr Jessica Fleming had sent her apologies and a report, which was discussed. It was noted that Suffolk County Council wished to recognise valuable environmental work done throughout Suffolk and invited nominations for an awards ceremony to be held on 27 March 2024, at The Hold in Ipswich. One category was Greenest School Award and it was suggested that St Botolph's Primary School would be a good candidate following its recent successful decarbonisation project. It was agreed to forward Cllr Fleming's report to the school Governors.
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:**
 - 5.3.1 **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%. NO OBJECTION.
 - 5.4 **Notification of other Planning Matters:** None.
6. **Correspondence:**
 - 6.1 **MSDC:** The PC noted the increases in the annual cost of emptying dog and litter bins from £37.13 to £69.00 per litter bin and £43.49 to £69.00 per dog bin. Five and eight bins respectively would cost £897.00 with an additional £69.00 for the new dog bin at Back Hills/B1113.
 - 6.2 **MSDC:** The PC considered the progress with the production of the Joint Local Plan Part 2 DPD with an invitation for site submissions to be put forward for residential land use for consideration for future development, i.e. Call for Sites. It was noted that the proposed Joint Local Plan boundaries were consistent with the B & R Neighbourhood Plan.
7. **Ongoing Items:**
 - 7.1 **Recreation Ground:** The Sub Committee had received a qualified but positive response from Urban Forestry (UF) regarding provision of ongoing Maintenance post 29 February 2024. They were clearly invested in the ongoing Maintenance given the high profile they had received from the success of the Project. The Sub Committee would aim for an arrangement that balanced UF's desire for delivery flexibility, the best application of their skills and experience and the need to ensure that BPC's accountability obligations were protected. A meeting with UF to work through the arrangement was scheduled for 9 January 2024.
 - 7.2 **TRO for Back Hills, Chapel Lane and Mill Road North:** There was no update.
 - 7.3 **TRO for extension of 30mph on B1113:** There was no update.
 - 7.4 **Village Appraisal:** The Chair reported that he had reviewed the previous Village Appraisal and felt it would benefit from a second review, possibly by a parishioner. It was agreed to mention it in the parish magazine.

- 7.5 **Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan:** The Clerk had contacted former Steering Group members and Cllrs Dickinson, Russell and Sargeant had agreed to continue.
- 7.6 **Flooding Prevention:** It had been noted that the pipe taking water off the bypass was still not working correctly and was contributing to the flooding and erosion of the Bridewell Lane footpath. The Clerk had received a video from Cllr Dickinson and had reported it to SCC.
- 7.7 **Sarah's Wood:** There was no update.
8. **Other Items:**
- 8.1 **Digital Exclusion:** Councillors held a lengthy discussion about whether digital exclusion was an issue within the community, noting that it was a nationwide issue. It was thought that it could affect as many as 200 parishioners. Locally, it was felt that poor internet connectivity contributed to problems. It was agreed to mention it in the parish magazine and ask for feedback on how big an issue this was in Botesdale. It would also highlight that the PC was aware of the issue and discussing whether it could link up with District and County strategies. The Clerk would investigate whether BPC could access the Digital Inclusion Fund.
- 8.2 **Parking Bay on Chapel Lane:** There was no update.
- 8.3 **Footpaths and Streams Signage:** It was noted that funding from the Little Ouse Headwaters Project would not be forthcoming. The cost of making/fitting the board and printing the information board will be an estimated £570-600. This has increased since the initial estimate agreed in 2023-04-03 due to a changed in panel size. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to fund the signage from Parish CIL.
- 8.4 **Annual Parish Meeting:** It was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on 8 April at 6:30pm, prior to the regular meeting of the PC. The deadline for community reports was 29 March and organisations would be encouraged to attend.
- 8.5 **Litter Pick:** The 20 April had been suggested but it was felt that was too late in the year as weed growth would hamper litter picking. It was agreed to put forward 2 March instead.
- 8.6 **Internal Audit Review:** Cllrs Lock and Edwards would carry out the annual review and report no later than the March meeting.
9. **Village Status Reports:**
- 9.1 **Chair's Report:** The Chair reported that he felt it would be worth trying to strike up a more open dialogue with the Llanover Estate regarding land owned by them in the village. He also queried whether Parkview Chapel could be a possible future meeting venue should the Village Hall not be available. He reported that the Christmas tree had been dismantled successfully.
- 9.2 **Clerk's Report:** None.
- 9.3 **Local Organisations:**
- Suffolk Green Cluster – Cllrs Lock and Russell had attended the latest meeting on 14 December and reported back to the PC. A long discussion was had revolving around what membership might entail, what was to be gained and whether BPC should become members. This was voted on with no majority conclusion. In the end it was agreed that Cllr Lock would forward the minutes of the SGC meetings so far for BPC to review. It was also agreed that it was important to note the PC's current obligations regarding climate change, etc as set out in its Environmental and Sustainability Policy.
- 9.4 **Village Assets:**
- Marl Pits – It was noted that a further meeting with Suffolk Wildlife Trust was not needed at this point.
- 9.6 **Public Rights of Way:** The erosion to the steps to the boardwalk on the walk between Spring Meadows and Mill Hill was noted.
- 9.6 **Highways Issues:**
- The Chair and Cllr Russell had made a site visit to Back Hills and commented on the high volume of school traffic and that the school bus had to reverse into the school drive to turn around because the gates were locked. It was agreed to request a traffic review from SCC Highways and also suggested that the high grass verge in front of the school could become parking. The Clerk would investigate both suggestions.
 - It was agreed to get advice from a contractor about further erosion of the edges of Back Hills adjacent to the Burgess development.

9.7 **Welcome Packs:** 1 to William. Everyone thanked Cllr Stracey for his work on the new Welcome Pack brochure.

9. **Finance (as of 31/12/23):**

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| 10.1 | Account Balance: | £ 159,653.82 | |
| | Bank Balance: | £ 159,653.82 | |
| | Income: | £ 800.00 | Rick PC Christmas Tree Contribution |

10.2 **Accounts for Payment:**

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|----------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Admin Payments | £ 1,406.94 | Not itemised due to GDPR |
| Street Sweeping etc. | £ 205.14 | St Clean etc January 2024 |
| Urban Forestry | £ 3,419.50 | Rec Ground - Improvements |
| A. Edwards | £ 135.35 | Christmas Event |
| TBS Hire | £ 57.96 | Hire of Barriers – Xmas tree |
| Elveden Farms Ltd | £ 1,170.00 | Christmas tree |

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

10.3 **Draft Budget 2024-25:** It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to set a BUDGET of £60,740 for the year 2024-25 and to retain earmarked funds of £158,160.69, making a total fund of £218,900.69. The PC RESOLVED, with all agreed, to sign the form requesting a precept of £60,900 from Mid Suffolk District Council. This represented an overall 7.3% rise on the amount received in 2023-24.

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

12. **Next Meeting:** 5 February 2024

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.25pm.