

BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

(draft) Minutes of a “Virtual” Meeting held by Zoom on Wednesday 25th November 2020 (1935 to 2013) and Thursday 26th November 2020 (1900 to 2010)

11/20 – 01 Introduction

KF welcomed everyone to the third virtual meeting by Zoom being necessary because of the COVID – 19 requirements. The meeting had to be split due to the Zoom 40-minute rule.

11/20 - 02 Present

- Keith Frost (KF), Suzie Carr (SC), Ed Nesling (EN), Richard Pickard (RP), Steve Harvey (SH), and John Dickson (JD).
- Alison Manning (AM) as the Play Area Project Manager.
- Vince Prank (VP) as the Defibrillator Manager.
- Matthew Hicks (MH) as SCC and MSDC Ward Councillor (for Item 11/20 - 06 below)
- Geoff Robinson (GR) as Parish Clerk & Sports Club Secretary.

11/20 - 03 Apologies for Absence

- Jenny Barnham (Approved – IT problems)

11/20 - 04 Public Open Session

- The perceived need for everyone to communicate better within the village(s) was raised. This was totally endorsed by everyone present and had been said by JD at the last meeting. All available avenues of communication should be used to advertise events, as residents do not have access to them all. AM added that the Newsletter they published on behalf of The Sports Club has 98 recipients and was being extremely well received throughout Bedfield and Monk Soham.

11/20 - 05 Declaration of Members Interests

- GR reminded the councillors of the need to occasionally review their declarations and keep them up to date. No changes were notified.
- SC submitted her resignation at the end of the meeting, to take immediate effect. KF expressed thanks for all her enthusiasm and participation over the many years that she had been a councillor. GR to commence the vacancy procedures.
- Similarly, KF stated that he intended to stand down as Chairman with effect from the May 2021 AGM and that some thought needed to be given as to who should replace him. He has unanimously thanked by everyone for his contribution and enthusiasm in all his years as Chairman.

11/20 - 06 Report of District & County Councillor

Councillor Hicks attended and drew attention to the items in his latest report, which had been recently circulated. In addition, he mentioned:

- The focus of SCC during the current lockdown has been to reintroduce the “Home But Not Alone” initiative and introduce a new one called “Suffolk Advice and Support Services. The first is designed to provide support to obtain medicines and essentials such as food and the second with grants for unforeseen debt due to the pandemic and has helped 300 people. A total of £1.5 million has been allocated. A hotline is available.
- Other projects such as improvements to the A140 at Eye and the recruitment of volunteers for adoption and fostering remains a priority.
- There was some money left in his locality budgets and that he had recently agreed to grant the Sports Club £2,000.00 towards their plans to improve the entrance splay to Long Green. He would particularly like smaller groups and organisations to contact him. (Accordingly, GR will email the Gardening Club with MH’s details).

11/20 - 07 *Bedfield and Monk Soham Tennis Club*

- GR spoke on behalf of David Entwisle (DE) to update the councillors regarding potential problems facing the Tennis Club. Although the court had been well used in the Summer following the first lockdown period and membership stood at circa 65, for separate domestic reasons all of the Committee had been forced to resign. Although DE was currently in the process of seeking volunteers to fill some or all of the committee roles, this was proving to be extremely difficult. In addition, a decision has to be made whether or not to renew the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) subscription and if the decision is made not to, then their insurance would lapse. GR stated that the latter was not a problem as the Tennis Club is also covered by the joint Parish Council & Sports Club insurance. The membership figure of around 65 consists mainly of families and includes children. Current membership subscriptions end on the 31st March 2021. Strong support was offered by all the councillors and it was agreed to look at the matter again when the situation became clearer.

11/20 - 08 *Defibrillator Update*

- VP stated that the replacement batteries had been purchased, largely with the remaining donations held by the CHT, but that the balance had been paid by the Parish Council. About £100.00 was now due for a heating unit for one of the cPADS and this was authorised. He explained that the major expense for the batteries would occur every four years.
- A general discussion then took place and it was agreed that until the possibility of new technology was available, funds would need to be continually provided and that future donations or Crowdfunding were two possibilities. GR pointed out that spread over four years, the amount was not excessive. The generosity of the original donors was greatly appreciated.

11/20 - 09 *Financial Update*

- The 2019/20 accounts had been submitted to the national auditors and approval received.
- Payments recorded at the bank since the last meeting have been £85.66, £621.70 and £143.42 as the Clerk's first half year expenses, salary and PAYE, plus £915.66 to Came and Company for the 2020/21 insurance renewal.
- Income recorded at the bank since the last meeting has been the second half precept payment of £2,050.00, a Sports Club donation of £1,000 and loan of £4,000.00 towards the play area fencing, plus a VAT repayment of £1,686.29 from HMRC up to and including the 31st October 2020.
- Other payments made have been £35.00 to the ICO (GDPR registration), £9,553.38 to Eastern Play Services (play area fencing) £144.00 to the CHT (balance of cPAD batteries) and £96.00 to Bedfield & Monk Soham Sports Club (VAT in respect of purchases by them).
- Other income received has been a donation of £1,962.50 from The Sports Club towards the play area furniture.
- Likely outstanding payments for the rest of 2020/21 include the clerk's second half year expenses salary and PAYE (circa £90.00, £621.70 & £143.42 respectively), plus salary arrears of circa £41.00 (including PAYE) and £2,355.00 for the play area fencing (Low Carbon Products Ltd).
- Likely anticipated income for the rest of 2020/21 is £392.50 VAT repayment on the play area furniture (HMRC).
- GR had prepared a ballpark estimate of finances for 2021/22 and working on a carryforward figure from 2020/21 of £2,771.23, he estimated that the similar figure the at 31st March 2022 would be £5,031.23. However, he emphasized that a lot could happen before then in these uncertain times! Accordingly, after a brief discussion, it was agreed that the precept should remain at £4,100.00 for the 2021/22 financial year.
- GR had now been able to apply for telephone and internet banking and this had been granted in a limited form, but payments still could not be made. The latter was in hand with Barclays.
- Sadly our local auditor Don Hughes had recently died and condolences were offered to Beryl, his widow and family. Paul Burrows was appointed to replace him as local auditor.

11/20 - 10 Bedfield COVID-19 Emergency Volunteer Group

- AM stated that the activities of the Group on Saturday mornings had resumed for the current lockdown, although with a very much reduced throughput, but the last one in the current emergency would be this Saturday (ie 28th November 2020). The personal details of the users would be again “mothballed”, with their permission, under secure conditions and within the terms of the Parish Council’s - Privacy Policy. All agreed that hopefully it will never be needed again.
- KF on behalf of the Parish Council again expressed his thanks for the achievements and professionalism of the Group and its volunteers.

11/20 - 11 Planning Update

- DC/20/2764 (New Vehicular Entrance at Home Farm) - No objection submitted and decision awaited from MSDC.
- DC/20/02896 (Cart Lodge at Cowslip Cottage) – Now withdrawn.
- DC/20/05068 (Mole Cottage – Building of a Cart Lodge) – No objection – GR to advise MSDC.

11/20 - 12 MSDC Draft Local Plan and CIL Payment Review

- GR had previously circulated the latest (and final) MSDC proposals. It appears that they had taken on board our request to include the houses from The Rabbits to Dog Corner in the Settlement Plan for Bedfield Little Green and exclude the allotments from equivalent Long Green Settlement Area.

11/20 - 13 Play Area Update

AM and GR updated the meeting on the progress of the new play area project, salient points of which were that:

- AM stated that the play area is all but complete, with the last areas, including the tunnel turfed and seeded. Thanks were offered to the volunteers who recently helped with the mounds. The bench furniture has been ordered and will before cleaning materials delivered on the 18th December and will be assembled and fitted, with two of the benches replacing the old wooden ones next to the pavilion. The fence was completed and feedback received was universally positive. A box had been provided and will contain items to allow very young children to have more play options next Summer. The litter bin from the old play area had been relocated, thus saving £400.00.
- An incident had occurred when a small part of the equipment had worked loose. This had been quickly tightened. The councillors were assured that it had been done locally as a matter of expediency and that any serious faults discovered would be immediately brought to the attention of Kompan. An inspection programme has been initiated.
- AM stated that both feedback and usage had far exceeded expectations and it was being used as a meeting point by people from a wide area, as well as the village(s).
- GR stated that he had been in touch with MSDC and was awaiting an estimate for grass cutting and had asked to be included in their annual inspection programme.
- The councillors expressed thanks to AM and GR for their considerable achievement in such a successful and rewarding project,

11/20 - 14 CCTV and Privacy Policy

- The ICO registration had been completed.

11/20 - 15 Minutes of the Last Meeting (8th September 2020)

- These were agreed as accurate, subject to a small amendment to delete “Friends First Friday” in Item 09/20 - 16) and will be signed by KF as Chairman.

11/20 - 16 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- Andrew Manning had kindly looked at the proposed draft of the Welcome Pack again and contacted several of the organisations to ensure it was accurate. The latest draft version is now

with Mark Howard (MH) and it was agreed to wait until future Covid-19 regulations were clearer.

- RP said that he had been contacted by the “village resident” mentioned in Item 09/20 – 16 of the last minutes, who was unable to attend this meeting in person. This had been followed up by an email, which RP had circulated. Two matters appertaining to the minutes had been raised, the first stating that they wanted to be named in revised minutes and secondly, alleging that the GR had used his position as Clerk to give personal opinions. GR explained that SALC guidance specifically states that villagers should not be identified in the minutes of parish council meetings for GDPR reasons. In addition, the email had been addressed to The Sports Club, not the Parish Council. Secondly, as he always does, he had made it quite clear before speaking that it was as Secretary of Bedfield and Monk Soham Sports Club and on behalf of its Committee, not in his role as Parish Clerk. This was accepted by the councillors and has since been confirmed as correct by SALC. KF to write to the parishioner involved. (See also Item 11/20 - 19 below).

09/20 - 17 Police Report

- GR stated that the Suffolk Police crime website for the period July to September showed no crime in Bedfield. The October 2020 figures were not yet available.

09/20 - 18 Sports Club Matters

GR emphasized (again) that he wanted to make it clear that he would be speaking in his role as Sports Club Secretary, on behalf of its committee and not as the Bedfield Parish Clerk. This was acceptable to the councillors. Salient points of his presentation included:

- The AGM is to be held on Wednesday the 2nd December 2020, by Zoom, Commencing at 1930. The coordinates were on the agenda which has been circulated to everyone who may have an interest. As always, everyone is very welcome to attend.
- It was ironic that COVID-19 had brought both potential problems and unexpected financial benefits to The Sports Club. The potential problems were mainly that regular income was down to the post office and bottle bank, yet a further grant of £1334.00 had been received from central government funds. Much of current funds had been ringfenced for anticipated spending and this included £4,000.00 loaned to the Parish Council towards the play area fencing. Overall, despite a reasonable bank balance at present, we still had to be very prudent and this was being monitored on an ongoing basis by our very competent Treasurer, Andrew Manning. A project to improve the entrance to Long Green from the highway is being scoped, with £2,000 from Matthew Hicks promised and hopefully, will be started very soon.
- Without exception the Committee of the Sports Club are always looking for “new blood” and are delighted that several new faces have come forward offering to be involved. In addition, they are always looking for new ideas and ways to develop the “hub” concept and increase the involvement of the whole village(s). In that context, Andrew Manning had recently had a conversation with Chrissie Smart and discussed very positive ways of going forward regarding the benefits to the whole community working together with the Church.
- Whilst not looking to make large profits the Sports Club does need income to simply continue to provide the excellent facilities that are available, let alone those planned. As you can imagine, this is even more important at the moment and for the foreseeable future. Our current policy of a single fee of £15 for the hire of field, carpark area or pavilion (or for all three together!) and for any length of time, simply does not economic make sense. In addition, it does not reflect the time of year regarding heating, lighting etc. It’s therefore obvious that hiring should reflect the seasons of the year. Most other parishes factor these considerations into the hire fees and this will be discussed at the AGM.

05/20 - 19 AOB and Correspondence Etc

- GR stated that he had again phoned Barlow and Sons but could not speak to anyone, despite it having been during their advertised office hours.
- In the email received by RP (see Item 11/20 - 16 above) the same parishioner had also asked what the parish council was doing to address road safety in Bedfield, had queried the need for CCTV at the sports field and asked was the Clerk aware of all organisations and groups operating in Bedfield.

At the request of KF, GR highlighted many attempts over a number of years that the Parish Council had tried to improve road safety, including extending the speed limits, measuring speed and opposing planning applications such as the recent one for Poplar Farm, Worlingworth. It was agreed to scope the possibility of radar speed check machines for the village, although this would not be possible cost-wise in the current financial year. JD also raised the possibility of improving safety on Long Green for pedestrians by the provision of footpaths, which could again be considered in the near future if funding became available.

He also reminded the meeting that the recently adopted Safeguarding and Privacy Policy covered in detail CCTV and the Parish Council was registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). Feedback from village had been good and police advice taken. He added that images would only be viewed when necessary to investigate a serious incident and not as a matter of course. It would be done by the nominated Safeguarding Officers when required. All would be automatically wiped after one month. Unfortunately, it was suspected that the carpark had already been used for drug dealing.

GR stated that where appropriate, he frequently distributed emails, circulars and other information to village organisations. These included The Gardening Club, Tennis Club, BTE, Community Bus and even on occasion, individuals, when he thought the content would be useful. However, he emphasized that GDPR did have to be strictly observed in line with our Privacy Policy. He also stated that it was obvious he could not include organisations if they had not told him of their existence or contact details.

05/20 - 20 Date of Next Meeting

- The date of the next meeting was fixed for Wednesday 1930 on 24th February 2020, the mode to be agreed nearer the time and dependent on the COVID-19 requirements.

Chairman.....