

BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

(draft) Minutes of a Bedfield Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20th September 2022 at the Bedfield Community HUB Pavilion. The meeting commenced at 1930.

09/22 - 01 Present

- Alison Manning (Chairperson - AM), John Dickson (Vice Chairperson – JD), Keith Frost (KF), Jenny Barham (JB) and Lisa Crane (LC).
- Geoff Robinson (GR) as Parish Clerk & Community Club Secretary.
- Four members of the public.
- Two applicants in relation to DC/22/04177 (see item 09/22 - 11 below)
- Matthew Hicks (MH - MSDC & SCC Ward Councillor) – (for Item 09/22 - 09 below).

09/22 - 02 Apologies for Absence

- Maureen Whiteman (MW) and Richard Pickard (RP) – both approved absences.

09/22 - 03 Declaration of Members Interests

- The New Code of Conduct for councillors had been circulated by GR, together with several explanatory circulars from SALC. After a brief discussion, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the New Code. The required additional personal interest documentation had been submitted or reviewed by AM, LC, KF, JD, JB and MW. GR to remind RP of the need to consider his declaration.
- Councillors were also reminded of the need to notify any changes to their circumstances which may affect their whole Declaration of Members Interests. GR had requested two councillors to submit amended Declarations which needed to include their person addresses. These had been received and posted to the MSDC Portal. No further changes were notified during the meeting.
- JD was adjudged to have a pecuniary interest in Item 09/22 - 11 in relation to planning application DC/22/04177 and left the room during the discussion.

09/22 - 04 Public Open Session

- A villager raised concerns that the planning requirements for the demolition of old buildings at Home Farm were not being met in terms of safety and local disturbance. GR had previously copied the planning statement to her. He had advised her that the matter should be reported to MSDC if her concerns persist.

09/22 - 05 Minutes of the Last Meeting (AGM – 25th May 2022)

- These were agreed as accurate and were signed by AM as Chairperson.

09/22 - 06 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- The new dog-waste bin for Long Green had been fitted by KF.
- The new play area signs had been installed by SCC Highways.
- A request to allow the leading of horses across Long Green had been received from a resident. GR explained the requirements of Common Land and stated that it would be allowable provided that the rights of all other villagers were not impinged in any way and that no right of easement was assumed. The request was therefore agreed, subject to a review in six months time. GR to advise the resident accordingly.

09/22 - 07 Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting (25th May 2022)

- These were agreed as accurate and were signed by AM as Chairperson.

09/22 - 08 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- The play area signs had now been installed (see Item 09/22 – 06 above).

05/22 - 09 Report of District & County Councillor

All reports received from Councillor Matthew Hicks have been circulated. He reiterated the following salient points and was asked questions by councillors viz

- A solar panel initiative would again be running to obtain panels and associated batteries at reduced prices for residents, including those already with panels. Residents must register an interest on a website to obtain further details.
- A cost-of-living review and potential grants were under consideration, especially for residents very

near the poverty line. Many residents were in this category for the first time. A scheme had been initiated to provide grants for “one-off” items such as white kitchen goods.

- A publicity campaign is to be launched to point out the dangers of putting used batteries in recycling bins as a serious fire and damage had been caused at a recycling plant due to this practice. They must be taken instead to an established battery recycling point (like at Bedfield HUB!).
- JB raised the issue that MSDC is too reliant on website contact for enquiries, with phone calls taking up to thirty minutes to be answered. MH will investigate.
- JD raised the issue of inconsistency in the provision of free school buses by SCC. MH stated that there were problems but the policy was to provide transport to the nearest school because of high costs. He accepted that this was not always ideal and created anomalies. He acknowledged that there were sometimes a few exceptions such as where the transport of Ukrainian refugees were involved.

09/22 - 10 Financial Update

- Payments since the meeting in May 2022 have been £100.00 for the internal audit fee for two years (Paul Burrows) and the annual charge of £208.75 for having the dog-waste bins emptied (MSDC).
- Income for the same period has been £0.01 interest (Barclays).
- GR produced a summary of estimated spending for the rest of the 2022/23 financial year which showed a final projected carry-forward figure of £2816.00 at 31st March 2023. This compares with £2777.00 at the 31st March 2022. The projected figure is without prejudice to any unforeseen circumstances. He advised the councillors that they may need to consider an increase in the 2023/24 precept when it is set at the November 2022 meeting.
- Payments were authorised as £785.28 for the Clerk’s first half year salary and PAYE, plus £156.17 in expenses. Also authorised was £192.00 for verge cutting (M&M Stacey), £1537.22 for the insurance renewal for 2022/23 and £71.75 for the notice board refurbishment materials (Julian Sayer).
- GR explained that although the renewal premium with Gallaghers was circa £250 higher than this year, it was in line with what he had anticipated. The problem is that the pavilion is of non-standard construction and that the play area is seen as being high risk. He had tried to obtain quotes from other brokers without any success. It was also agreed to accept Gallaghers offer of a three-year Long-Term Agreement Option (LTA) with Hiscock Insurance, frozen at £1537.22 per annum. GR to advise Gallaghers accordingly.
- The 2021/22 accounts had been accepted under Exemption status (AGA2) by the national auditors, PKF Littlejohn.
- GR stated that the SALC membership fee would be increased by about £20 for the 2023/24 year as it was to be based on the number of village residents.

09/22 - 11 Planning Updates

- DC/22/01762 (The Grove – various additions & replacements) – Approved by MSDC.
- DC/22/01925 (Home Farm – variations to existing plans) – Approved by MSDC.
- DC/22/02024 (Edale – Revised application to DC/21/0626) – Refused by MSDC.
- DC/22/03149 (Bedfield House – Conversion of a Barn to 1 dwelling) – Supported & with MSDC.
- DC/22/04177 (Land Next to Walnut Tree Cottage – Outline Planning for one dwelling).

GR updated the meeting on the current MSDC new draft Local Plan and the 1998 current edition, vis a vis the “defined” development areas in Bedfield Little and Long Green. The application was discussed, and the unanimous view was that it met the Parish Council’s criteria of welcoming a limited development in the village and the subsequent new families that it brought into the community. The application was therefore fully supported. GR to advise MSDC accordingly.

09/22 - 12 Police Report

- GR stated that the Suffolk Police crime website for the period for March to June 2022 one crime of “Violence and Sexual Offences”, which appeared to have occurred in Cemetery Road near Bedfield House. No details are shown.

09/22 - 13 Community Club Update

GR, LC and AM introduced several salient points, viz:

- The Fete had been a huge success, being blessed with excellent weather and everyone seemed to have had a great time. It had been very well organised, with many people assisting. The only downside had been that COVID had reduced the numbers and the availability of some volunteers.
- The Tennis Club was still a cause for concern, with little information available regarding both its operation and management. It is thought that estimates are being obtained for the resurfacing of the court. Serious consideration is being given for taking the operation of the court back to the Community

Club to ensure its full use can be achieved. Various financial considerations will need to be taken and a referendum held to assess support for a refurbished tennis facility.

- A qualified surveyor had attended a meeting under a CAS/Suffolk Pro-Held scheme and offered to research options ranging from part refurbishment to the complete replacement of the pavilion. His report is awaited and may include proposals for the tennis court. Further consultation will take place by community events and social media when further details are received.
- An excellent application for a grant towards providing wi-fi at the pavilion had been submitted to MSDC by Andrew Manning and their response was awaited.
- The pavilion had been pressure-washed and then painted by volunteers (many thanks to all) and looked excellent.
- Football had returned to the field, with a youth team using the facilities. KF is in discussion with their management regarding rental fees, which will take into account helping them with start-up costs.
- The wildflower meadow had been cut to the requirements of the Gardening Club at a cost to them of £240 (including VAT). A problem with ragwort had been speedily rectified by the Club. KF commented that the orchids on the meadow had been prolific this year.

09/22 – 15 Any Other Business and Correspondence Etc

- GR had continued to address several issues with SCC Highways regarding potholes, verges, footpaths and other highways matters. Dealing with their responses was in hand, but SCC Highways had replaced several footpath finger posts.
- A MSDC Request for responses to their Walking and Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and the National Pylon Proposals (Near Stowmarket) had been circulated for comment.
- MSDC had been advised that after village consultation, the most popular suggestion for the name of the development at Home Fram had been BARRELLS CORNER.
- Julian Sayer had done an excellent job of refurbishing the notice boards at cost and he has warmly thanked for his efforts.
- SCC had been asked to look at the state of some village roadside footpaths and their response was awaited.
- The verges had been cut by JD, who had taken longer than anticipated. Disappointingly, SCC Highways did not follow-up with their intended cutting in July,
- Speeding in the village remained a problem. GR was tasked to look at potential courses of action for discussion at the next meeting in November.

02/22 - 15 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting for Wednesday (**now**) the 16th of November 2022 at the Bedfield Community HUB Pavilion.

The meeting ended at 20:35.

Chairperson.....