

BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

(draft) Minutes of a Bedfield Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 16th November 2022 at the Bedfield Community HUB Pavilion. The meeting commenced at 1930.

11/22 - 01 Present

- Alison Manning (Chairperson - AM), John Dickson (Vice Chairperson – JD), Keith Frost (KF), Jenny Barham (JB) Maureen Whiteman (MW) and Lisa Crane (LC).
- Geoff Robinson (GR) as Parish Clerk & Community Club Secretary.
- Four members of the public, plus The Tree Warden (RW).
- Matthew Hicks (MH - MSDC & SCC Ward Councillor) – for Item 09/22 - 07 below.

11/22 - 02 Apologies for Absence

- Richard Pickard (RP) – approved absence.

11/22 - 03 Declaration of Members Interests

- Councillors were reminded of the need to notify any changes to their circumstances which may affect their Declaration of Members Interests.
- GR explained that all the councillors would be required to submit their nominations for the May 2023 elections, but that more details would be available at the February 2023 meeting.

11/22 - 04 Public Open Session

- Comments have been included in Item 11/22 – 06 regarding horses on Long Green and Item 11/22 – 09 regarding funding for the parish magazine).

11/22 - 05 Minutes of the Last Meeting (20th September 2022)

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

11/22 - 06 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- GR had advised the applicant that the Council had agreed to allow the leading of horses across Long Green, subject to a review in six months' time.
- GR had researched the cost of providing Radar Speed Signs and had obtained three estimates. The cheapest one was for the Evolis System, which was in use at Kenton and was nominated as the favourite at the last meeting. This would cost circa £2,200, which at the current time was unaffordable to the Parish Council. After a detailed discussion, at which the members of the public present were invited to contribute, it was agreed in principle to try and source funds for its purchase and installation. MH was asked to make a grant from his locality funds and will come back to GR with a proposal. It was agreed that sponsorship and/or donations may also be appropriate. GR to research further and collate funding responses. He will also speak to the Kenton Community Committee Chairman.

11/22 - 07 Report of District & County Councillor

All reports received from Councillor Matthew Hicks have been circulated. He reiterated the following salient points, namely,

- It was going to be very challenging to set the precept for 2023/24 with costs rising and more and more demands on the SCC budgets. It is likely the government will freeze or restrict central funding and rely on SCC raising the current restriction of precept increases from the current 2.99% to be allowable without a referendum. There is an item on their website which allows the public to express their views on what should be priorities (or not!).
- Many new places had been funded for children with Special Educational Needs (SEND), which was at stage three in the plan. 1,317 new places had been found, mainly at locations near to their homes to reduce the stress of having to travel.
- The Foxhall recycling site is to be improved at a cost of £7 million.

11/22 - 08 Financial Update (General)

- Payments since the meeting in September 2022 have been £1192.00 (M&M Stacy for(verge cutting), the Clerk for his first half salary, PAYE and expenses (£637.63, £147.45 and £156.57 respectively), Julian Sayer £71.75 (notice board refurbishment), CHT £225.60 (for new pads for the cPADs), £1537.22 (Gallaghers insurance renewal) and to the Community Club £496.34 (Their share of the VAT refund for the period 1st April to 30th September 2022).

- Income for the same period has been £0.03 interest (Barclays), a VAT refund of £598.65 (see item above) and the second half year precept (£2050.00).
- 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 £1,955 at 31st March 2023. This compares with £2,777.22 at the 31st of March 2022. Neither the level of the clerks' salary award or the purchase of pads for the CPADs had been anticipated at the start of this financial year. The projected figure is without prejudice to any unforeseen circumstances. GR advised the councillors that they may need to consider an increase in the 2023/24 precept (see Item 11/22 - 09 below).

11/22 - 09 Financial Update (Precept Setting 2023/24)

GR had previously prepared and circulated a financial forecast for the 2023/24, to assist in the setting of the precept, the salient points of the subsequent discussion being,

- An increase for a potential rise in the Clerk's salary increase for 2023/24 had been allowed for together with an amount in expenses. .00
- The parish council election expenses by MSDC in May 2023 would cost in the region of £125.00, but up to £1,345.00 if a full election was necessary.
- An inflation-based figure had been allowed for the estimated annual running expenses such as SALC, dog-bin emptying, playground inspection, etc.
- JD pointed out that the insurance premium was fixed at £1,536.00 in 2022 for three years and would not be £1,700.00 as estimated in the forecast. GR acknowledged that but said that the overestimated amount would go towards balancing any unexpected expenses, as it was difficult to forecast for up to eighteen months ahead in any case.
- All other known running expenses had been included, such as minor repairs to the play area.
- Income had been estimated using the 2022/23 precept of £4,100.00.
- The net result was a deficit of estimated expenses against income of £610.00.
- The estimated financial reserve of £1,955.00 at 1st April 2023 (see item 11/22 – 08 above) was much lower than it has been for many years and in the opinion of GR, is too low to be healthy. The anticipated deficit of £610.00 would therefore lower this figure significantly further, if not addressed.
- It was likely that circa £550.00 would be received from the Environment Agency when the current twenty-one-year lease expired for the boreholes on Long Green. However, this was not guaranteed as they had the option no to retain the boreholes, although this was unlikely.
- GR explained that the precept had not risen for several years and was needed just to maintain current services and to increase the financial reserve to a more creditable amount.
- GR stated that to increase the precept by £1000 would mean an increase of circa £5.50, based on the current amount paid for a Band F property. This increase was unanimously agreed by the councillors.
- Other potential expenditure was also discussed, including the cost of having the play area cut, verge cutting and a donation to the parish magazine and all were deferred. In the case of the later, GR to email Val Swallow with alternative suggestions for funding, which included charging more to advertisers. It was also suggested that supplying digital copies to those who wanted them would also save money although it was accepted many people preferred a hard copy of the magazine.
- The cost of a Speed Activated Repeater device was discussed and MH was asked for a contribution from his locality funds, which he agreed to consider. Funding of the device will be assessed for the possibility of sponsorship and/or donations when more information was known. GR to collate the project and funding options.
- The Community Club will cover the legal costs of renewing the HUB field lease when due in September 2024 and also the possible need to have the field surveyed to allow a long lease period. The latter will cost £750. A cost benefit analysis will be done to determine if this is viable once the Charity Commission and the Bedfield Town Estate determine the possibility of a longer lease and in practical terms, the length that can be negotiated.

11/22 - 10 Planning Updates

- DC/22/02024 (Edale – Revised application to DC/21/0626) – Refusal appeal with the Inspector.
- DC/22/03149 (Bedfield House – Conversion of a Barn to 1 dwelling) – Supported & still with MSDC.
- DC/22/04177 (Land Next to Walnut Tree Cottage – Refused by MSDC.
- DC/22/04755 (Harvest Cottage – Erection of Cart Lodge etc) – supported and with MSDC.
- Non-compliance of demolition approval at Home Farm. - Work is still suspended.

11/22 - 11 Police Report

- GR stated that the Suffolk Police crime website for the period for July to September 2022 "Violence and Sexual Offences", which appeared to have occurred in Cemetery Road near Bedfield School. No further details are shown. How these generic descriptions were arrived at and the fact that this

particular one seems to occur frequently was queried and GR to invite police representation at the next meeting.

11/22 - 12 Community Club Update

GR, LC and AM introduced several salient points, namely,

- The Tennis Club was still a cause for concern, although their chairman had received a quote for the necessary resurfacing of £19,000.00 He has been advised that two others must be obtained and that one possibility being considered is to take the tennis court back under the total management of the Community Club.
- LC had been in touch with the CAS/Suffolk Pro-Help scheme and a further meeting at the Hum was imminent and to be arranged. This will enable options for refurbishment/replacement to be advanced.
- An application for a grant towards providing wi-fi at the pavilion had been successful and the installation had been completed.
- An application for a grant to provide Winter Warmth Funding for villagers to meet at the HUB had been successful and subject to receiving enough volunteers, sessions have been planned to open the pavilion to the community. Its viability will then be assessed in terms of usage.
- An altercation at the field between a dogwalker and a member of the football club had resulted in accusations against each other and emails from two others had been received expressing concern. AM and Graham Mobbs (GM) as Chairman of the Community Club had met with the football club member involved. The view is that whilst it was an undesirable event, it should be treated as low key. The dogwalker has been notified that no further action will be taken on this occasion other than to warn both individuals that the field is there for all to share and responsible behaviour is required by all users. The complainant has also been warned that his inappropriate, aggressive and unsubstantiated comments will not be tolerated against Club and Parish Council Members. AM and GM were commended for the way the incident had been handled. GR to produce a draft users Code of Conduct for future use.

11/22 – 13 Any Other Business and Correspondence Etc .

- Documents relating to the MSDC Draft Five Year Housing Plan, the Plug-in Electric Car Charging Scheme and the Thermal Imaging Projects had all been circulated.
- It was agreed that any planning regarding the celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III next May should include Bedfield Church. GR stated that a TV license would be required for any live television viewing in the pavilion.
- RW as Tree Warden advised that several ash trees in the village were in poor condition, especially one near the play area at the HUB. He will also liaise with Alison and Paula Booth regarding a visit from MSDC (and Paula) regarding the potential replacement of the trees that has died since planting earlier this year.

1122 -- 14 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting for Wednesday the 15th February 2023 at the Bedfield Community HUB Pavilion, commencing at 19:30.

The meeting ended at 21:15.

Chairperson.....