

BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

(draft) Minutes of the Annual Meeting (AGM) of Bedfield Parish Council held on Wednesday 17th May 2023 at the Bedfield Community HUB Pavilion. The meeting commenced at 1900.

05/23 - 01 Present

- Alison Manning (Chair - AM), John Dickson (Vice Chair – JD), Jenny Barham (JB), Maureen Whiteman (MW), Richard Pickard (RP) and Lisa Crane (LC).
- Geoff Robinson (GR) as Parish Clerk.
- Andrew Manning (ANM) as Community Club representative.
- Matthew Hicks (MH) as local ward MSDC & Suffolk County Councillor (for Item 05/23 – 05).
- Four members of the public

05/23 - 02 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- AM was unanimously elected as Chair and JD as Vice Chair. AM signed her “Declaration of Acceptance of Office “ in the presence of GR.

05/23 - 03 Apologies for Absence

- None

05/23 - 04 Declaration of Members Interests

- All the councillors signed their “Declaration of Acceptance of Office” declarations, which were witnessed by GR.
- All “Register of Members Interests” forms had been completed and will be processed by GR with MSDC.
- GR reminded the councillors that any outstanding election expenses returns must be made to MSDC as soon as possible.
- It was agreed to co-opt a member to fill the current councillor vacancy. GR to advertise the vacancy in early August 2023 to be filled at the next meeting in September 2023.

05/23 - 05 Report of District & County Councillor

MH summarised the salient points of his recent annual report, these briefly being:

- The SCC total budget for 2023/24 is £685m, 75% of which is spent on the care of vulnerable adults and children. They had imposed a rate increase of 3.99% rather than the 5% allowed by central government. However, central government had, at the last minute, made some additional funds available, which means that services will not need to be cut.
- All street lighting has been replaced with environmentally friendly fittings and the savings have already exceeded the costs.
- The Development deal agreed by central government with Suffolk County Council means income of £489m, spread over a thirty-year period means that items like footpaths, some road surfaces and other deferred items could now be tackled. It also means that at the next election, residents will be voting for a SCC councillor and a local “Mayor”. Both the major political parties see this as a proven way forward. It will also assist businesses to recruit locally via local education establishments.
- The refurbishment of Foxhall recycling centre has been completed and is a big improvement, together with an updated appointments system.
- SCC had objected to the National Grid’s proposal to site local electricity pylons in the county, through which 30% of the nation’s electricity flows. This is because there is no perceived local benefit to Suffolk and it is hoped that central government will listen to the objections and act accordingly.

05/23 - 06 Public Open Session

- One member of the public asked what plans the PC and/or the Community Club had to repair and approve the access across Long Green to the HUB. This was in very poor condition and there was a serious risk of damage to vehicles. (see Item 05/23- 12 below).

05/23 - 07 Minutes of the Last Meeting (15th February 2023)

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

05/23 - 08 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- The purchase of the VAD had been made and was awaiting installation. This depended on the

contractors to SCC Highways siting the poles. However, all the appropriate paperwork had been completed with SCC Highways and the contractors had up to the middle of July 2023 to complete their installation.

- See item 05/23 – 13 below regarding the play-area inspection.

05/23 - 09 Financial Update (General)

- Expenditure since the last (February) meeting in the 2022/23 financial year had been £943.19 (Clerks second half salary & PAYE) and £120.88 for his expenses.
- Income for the same period had been two donations of £100.00 and £0.12 bank interest.
- Paid expenditure so far in the 2023/24 financial year had been nil, but £210.00 was due to SALC (2023/24 subscription), £50.00 to Paul Burrows (internal audit fee for 2022/23), £223.34 to MSDC (dog bin emptying contract 2023/24) and £150.65 to B&MSCC (their share of the recent VAT repayment from HMRC). All were authorised for payment.
- GR introduced the completed accounts for 2022/23, which had been audited by Paul Burrows in his position as local auditor. No irregularities had been identified. GR asked the Councillors to formally approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. This was unanimously agreed and the accounts were signed by AM as Chair and GR as the RFO. The required public notices will be posted to the website and on the notice board by the 4th June 2023 due date.
- GR stated that there had been no progress regarding a potential payment amount towards the Benefice Magazine.
- The 2023/24 Clerk's contract was agreed and signed.
- The 2023/24 Financial Risk Assessment was agreed and signed.
- The 2022/23 CIL Return was agreed and signed.
- The delayed 2022 play area inspection report had finally been received and was discussed (See Item 05/23 - 12 below).
- GR had contacted Anglia Water and confirmed that they wished to renew the lease on the Long Green borehole. Negotiations would commence shortly.

05/23 - 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) – Approved by MSDC.
- DC/23/00630 (Kamarda – Erection of Single-Story Extension) – Approved by MSDC.
- DC/23/01911 (Dog Grooming Parlour at Hall Farm) – Approved by MSDC & Open for business.
- Non-compliance of demolition approval at Home Farm. – The site clearance has resumed.

05/23 - 11 Police Report

- GR stated that there had been no reported crimes in Bedfield shown on the police website for the period January to March 2023.

02/23 - 12 Community Club Update

ANM explained several salient items, namely,

- GR and Keith Frost had retired from the Management Committee of the Community Club, after long periods of involvement. KMM said that they certainly would be missed and thanked them for their considerable input and achievements.
- It was worrying that the Management Committee was now down to just five active members.
- The Church organised Beetle Drive and Coronation weekend (organised in partnership with the Community Club) had both been a success and thanked all the volunteers and those who had attended. It was great to see the increasing use of the HUB.
- The Tennis Club had been taken back under full Club control and the way forward remains uncertain.
- Plans for the 2023 Village Fete were well advanced and several organising meetings had been held.
- A “Hands on Exhibition” was to be held on Monday the 22nd of May 2023. Everyone was encouraged to attend, view the plans produced by the architect and/or simply give their views as to the way forward for developing the whole community space that the HUB provides.
- Details of the lease renewal for the field was still awaited from the Bedfield Town Estate.
- It was recognised that the track entrance to the HUB across Long Green was in a very poor state (see also Item 05/23 – 06 above). This needed to be repaired as soon as possible and plans were in hand for a temporary fix. A longer term solution was also needed, although this was complicated by what could (and could not) be done on Registered Common Land. It would also form part of the long term plans for the HUB in terms of refurbishment and potential projects.

05/23 - 13 Any Other Business and Correspondence Etc .

- Several potholes had been repaired by SCC Highways and GR asked that any other defects noted should be referred to him.
- AM had not heard from a representative of a nearby village who had their own thermal imaging equipment but would follow it up.
- There had been no progress in appointing a Tree Warden. The post will be advertised in a forthcoming community newsletter.
- JB had attended a recent meeting of The Eye Grammar School Trust and the only application from Bedfield had been approved.
- The long awaited 2022 play area inspection had been received, with the inspector highlighting several “low risk” or “very low risk” areas that need attention. After a discussion regarding the merits of retaining the “tunnel”, it was agreed that AM would contact KOMPAN to obtain a quote to fit artificial grass, as the councillors felt that this was a better option than a potential “working party” fix. Other minor potential genetic faults with the equipment will be addressed but it was thought to be odd that the same inspection company did not highlight these when it was inspected as new. Worn earth at the entrance will be replaced, but closing the entrance to allow for this to be fixed was not an option under the required Safeguarding Policy. New notices will be posted as the current ones have faded.

02/23 - 13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th 2023, commencing at 19:30 at the Bedfield HUB.

The meeting ended at 20:00.

Chairperson.....