

# **BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**(draft) Minutes of a Bedfield Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at the Bedfield Community HUB Pavilion. The meeting commenced at 1930.**

## ***02/23 - 01 Present***

- Alison Manning (Chairperson - AM), John Dickson (Vice Chairperson – JD), Keith Frost (KF), Jenny Barham (JB) Maureen Whiteman (MW) and Richard Pickard (RP).
- Geoff Robinson (GR) as Parish Clerk.
- Andrew Manning (ANM) as Community Club representative, plus Bob Whiteman, the former Tree Warden (RW).
- One member of the public

## ***02/23 - 02 Apologies for Absence***

- Lisa Crane (LC - Approved absence).
- One member of the public who also wished to thank the Parish Council for their work.

## ***02/23 - 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 had previously circulated the procedure and key dates for the parish and district council elections on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023. He outlined the salient points and said he would circulate further information as he received it, together with the appropriate website links.
- KF stated that he intended to stand down as a councillor from the election after being involved for over ten years. He was warmly thanked for all his hard work and achievements for the council and the people of Bedfield.

## ***02/23 - 04 Public Open Session***

- None.

## ***02/23 - 05 Minutes of the Last Meeting (16<sup>th</sup> November 2022)***

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

## ***02/23 - 06 Matters Arising from the Minutes***

- The purchase of the VAD had been agreed and it had been obtained by GR from the favoured (and cheapest) supplier, Elan City. This followed three estimates being obtained.
- A discussion then took place as to the best location for the initial two posts.
- KF had researched the most suitable locations and these were agreed as being Long Green (near the allotments facing Earl Soham) and Southold Road (before the lane to the pumping station, facing Worlingworth). He will confirm that these locations are likely to meet the SCC Highways criteria in terms of distances.
- Near Bedfield School playing field was also considered but it was accepted that for a lot of the time parked cars restricted speed in any case.
- It was hoped that as further finance became available, other suitable poles for the VAD could be added, especially at Little Green.
- A request for donations and project volunteers had resulted in three donations so far totaling £120.00, with another two totaling £150.00 being promised during the meeting. A villager had expressed willingness to organise the volunteer project team to run the project on an ongoing basis. In addition, the councillors warmly acknowledged and thanked Councillor Matthew Hicks for his very generous grant from his Locality Funds, without which this project would not have been possible.
- GR to commence the installation protocols in accordance with SCC Highways requirements.

## ***02/23 - 07 Report of District & County Councillor***

- All reports received from Councillor Matthew Hicks had been circulated.

## ***02/23 - 08 Financial Update (General)***

- Expenditure since the last (November meeting) has been £35.00 (ICO Annual fee), £50.00 (Donation to the Benefice Magazine), and £16.50 (CAS Councilor course – LC).
- Income since the last meeting has been £0.05 (Barclays Interest) and £1,550.00 MSDC Grant towards

the VAD).

- Expected expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 is £942.00 (Clerks second half salary & PAYE), similarly £120.00 for his expenses, £60.00 (MSDC Play area inspection fee) and £2945.02 for the VAR Elan City). All were approved.
- Similarly, income since the last bank statement has been £120.00 (Villager VAD donations and £500.00 (SCC VAD grant).
- 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 £1,607.00 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This compares with £2,777.22 at the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2022. Neither the level of the clerks' salary award or the requirement to pay two years local audit fees had been anticipated at the start of this financial year. He also stated that although he considered this figure to be adequate, ideally it should be returned to the level of circa 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. In addition, the cost of a full election would seriously deplete this anticipated balance. However, a potential payment from the Environmental Agency for a replacement borehole lease looked hopeful and the increase in the precept for 2023/24 would help. He emphasized, however, that a lot could happen between now and the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024!
- GR had attended a meeting with the editor of the Benefice Magazine and other interested parties from Bedfield & Worlingworth. This was to consider the options available to improve the business model for both income and its content. Although there was initial confusion over the purpose of the meeting, limited progress was made and a councillor from Monk Soham PC agreed to look at how to improve the content of the magazine and attract more advertisers, in conjunction with the editor. A further meeting will be arranged in about two months' time. The counsellors agreed to allocate £60.00 (maximum), subject to the outcome of the review.
- The precept for 2023/24 had been agreed with MSDC at £5,100.00 and included an increase of £1,000.00, as approved by the councillors at the last meeting.
- MH had generously approved grants from his SCC and MSDC Localities Fund of £2,050.00 (see below) towards the cost of the VAD and was greatly thanked. Three donations from villagers were also gratefully acknowledged.
- The new Barclays account mandate needs to be signed by AM and JD and witnessed at Barclays in Framlingham. This will correct the fact that Barclays had been cashing checks with incorrect account signatories since April 2021.

#### **02/23 - 09 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/22/04755 (Harvest Cottage – Erection of Cart Lodge etc) – Approved by MSDC.
- DC/23/00630 (Kamarda – Erection of Single-Story Extension) – Supported & with MSDC.
- Non-compliance of demolition approval at Home Farm. - Still suspended and GR to seek an update.

#### **02/23 - 10 Police Report**

- GR stated that the police crime website for the period for October to December 2022 showed no recorded offences in Bedfield.
- GR had contacted Eye police to ask them to explain some definitions such as “Violence and Sexual Offences” and had received a response. This clarified some of the queries but was still a little confusing in other ways. However, the location of the blue marker dot on the map to designate an offence should not be taken as definitive.

#### **02/23 - 11 Community Club Update**

ANM explained several salient items, namely,

- The Tennis Club had been taken back under full Club control but the way forward was uncertain. Villagers will be asked for their opinions and GR will attempt to have an assessment of the condition of the court undertaken.
- Estimates and suggestions were still awaited on the pavilion under the CAS/Suffolk Pro-Help scheme after a visit by a architect on their behalf. Public consultations will then take place after these are received.
- The Warm-Space initiative had not been a success through lack of interest, which was very much in keeping with other locations in rural mid-Suffolk and will end on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
- The Community Club AGM will be at 19:30 on Wednesday the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023, with the first 2023 fete planning meeting being on the 15<sup>th</sup> March – everyone will be very welcome at both.
- The Coronation of King Charles III is being celebrated at the HUB with plans still being developed in conjunction with the Friends of Bedfield Heritage.
- A very successful event had been organised by Gay Clarke on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and had raised

over £750.00 (plus Gift Aid) for the Turkish Earthquake Disaster.

- GR stated that he was in consultation with the Bedfield Town Estate (BTE) to try and have the forthcoming lease renewal extended from seven to twenty-one years. He had supplied a submission regarding village community use this gained from the HUB. He expressed thanks for the very positive way that the BTE was helping with this initiative. Although the lease is with the Parish Council, the Club had agreed to pay the associated solicitor's fees. A longer lease would greatly assist with future grant applications.

**02/23 - 12 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. This included repairs to the kerb at the rear of Jasmine Cottages.
- The Thermal Imaging Project had been replaced by a similar one organised by the Four Rivers Lightwave Team. Feedback was good but there appeared to be some problems with making contact with the advertised telephone numbers.
- RW as Tree Warden had resigned and was thanked for his efforts. GR had emailed a potential replacement, but who could not take on the role due to other commitments. A request for interested people is to be put on the website and in the newsletter. A discussion took place with RW about several outstanding potential problems. KF agreed to prune the tree at the HUB which is partially overhanging the play area.
- AM had met Paula Booth and Richard Parmee of MSDC regarding the HUB field and old play area, where some of the newly planted trees may have died. It has been decided to wait and see what the spring brings in terms of survival. Also discussed was the requirements and timetable for cutting the wildflower meadow, which he suggested should be cut in parts over a three-year cycle. The subsequent discussion raised some doubts on both the wisdom of this and the subsequent costs. It was agreed to monitor the situation, with any cutting completed by the end of July at the latest, or at the time of the fete to save costs.
- A villager has undertaken the painting of the kiosk in his own time and at his own expense, as well as providing fairy lighting at Christmas. He was thanked for his action and AM will write to him personally.

**02/23 - 13 Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023 commencing at 19:00 and will be the AGM. This will then be followed by the Annual Village Meeting (AVM) at circa 20:00.

The meeting ended at 21:00.

**Chairperson.....**