

BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

(draft) Minutes of a Bedfield Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 13th September 2023 at the Bedfield Community HUB Pavilion. The meeting commenced at 19:30

09/23 - 01 Present

- Alison Manning (Chair - AM), John Dickson (Vice Chair – JD), Jenny Barham (JB), Maureen Whiteman (MW) 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 09/23 – 05 below).
- Martin Abley (MA) and Marion Harvey (MH), two potential candidates for co-option.
- Vince Prank (VP) as VAD Project Manager (see Item 09/23 - 07 below).
- Four other members of the public

09/23 - 02 Apologies for Absence

- Michael Walsh (MSW), an applicant for co-option (see also Item 09/23 – 03 below).

09/23 - 03 Co-Option of Three Councillors

- All the councillors were reminded that they must notify GR of any changes affecting their Register of Members Interest status. None were declared.
- MW resigned as a councillor and was unanimously thanked for her contribution whilst in post. Richard Pickard had also resigned and was thanked for his input during his years as a councillor.
- This meant there were now three vacancies, with three villagers interested in being co-opted to Bedfield Parish Council. Accordingly, MA and MH were unanimously co-opted, signed their Acceptance of Office declaration and joined the meeting.
- MSW was co-opted in his absence and will sign the Acceptance of Office Declaration at the earliest opportunity.
- All three must complete the Register of Members Interest declaration within twenty-eight days, to be returned to MSDC via GR

09/23 - 04 Public Open Session

- None (but see Item 09/23 – 07 below, relating to the VAD).

09/23 - 05 Report from Matthew Hicks, County Council and District Council Ward Councillor

MH attended for this item the salient points of his update being:

- The SCC budget for 2023/24 is already under pressure mainly due to the increased special educational needs and associated transport costs of children, which frequently change at short notice. Similarly, the costs associated with adults had escalated. Some children require an individual budget of £1m. One major problem is that there is no sign of additional central government funding this year, so difficult choices will have to be made.
- SCC has set up “no cold calling zones” in some areas to combat aggressive door to door selling, which appear to be working. These sellers are known colloquially as the “Nottingham Knockers” and details can be found on the SCC Trading Standards website.
- The Fire Service is always looking to recruit local part-time volunteers and is to set up a training centre at Wattisham Airfield. It is also to re-establish a local command centre.

09/23 - 06 Minutes of the AGM (17th May 2023)

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

09/23 - 07 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- The purchase of the VAD had been made and was now working at Southold Road, after a spell on Long Green. VP and JD were thanked for its installation and the data from the Long Green did not show any significant problems, with most vehicles compliant with the speed limit. Data from Southold Road will be assessed soon. After a brief discussion it was agreed not to adjust the range of the radar for the time being and to let the VAD continue to display the speeds across the whole range.
- AM had been in touch with Kompan regarding re-turfing the play area tunnel but ultimately it had been replaced by ANM and LC, who were thanked for their efforts.

05/23 - 08 Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting (17th May 2023)

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

09/23 – 09 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- None.

09/23 - 10 Financial Update (General)

- The 2022/23 Annual Accounts had been accepted by our national auditors, PKF Littlejohn.
- Expenditure since the last (May) meeting had been payment of £150.65 to B&MSCC (VAT refund), £223.34 to MSDC (Dog-bin emptying), £210.00 to SALC (Membership renewal 2023/24) and £126.88 for VAD fittings (Vince Prank). The cheque for £50.00 in respect of the local audit fee was still to be cashed.
- Income since the last (May) meeting had been £0.20 in interest from Barclays, although the second half year precept payment of £2,550.00 from MSDC was imminent.
- Due for payment now were the Clerk's First half Salary and PAYE (£870.25) and his expenses (£161.66). Other payments also due were £1653.00 to Gallaghers (Insurance renewal 2023/24) and to MSDC for £133.84 (2023 election expenses). All were approved for payment.
- It was agreed to accept the Environmental Agency offer of a twenty-one renewed lease on the Long Green borehole, plus up to £750.00 towards our legal expenses. It was also agreed to use Fairweatherlaw as our solicitors at a cost of £600 plus VAT, with £12.00 for disbursements. GR to action with both.
- GR produced an estimate for the rest of the 2023/24 year, that without prejudice to any unforeseen circumstances, would show a balance at 31st March 2024 of circa £3,641.00. This is a much better amount than at the 1st April 2023 of £1,805.25. This will all need to be reviewed when the precept for 2024/25 is set at the November 2023 meeting.
- GR stated that Caroline Berkley had already obtained additional advertising of £1,000 for the Community Magazine and had improved the layout. GR to pass on the thanks of the councillors.
- The 2022/23 CIL Return had been agreed, signed and posted to the website.
- Renewal of the HUB field lease would take place shortly and the BTE were consulting the Charity Commission to see if a longer than seven-year lease would be possible. All our solicitors fees will be met by the Community Club on this occasion.

09/23 - 11 Planning Updates

- DC/22/02024 (Edale – revised application to DC/21/06226) – Appeal allowed by the Inspector.
- DC/23/02675 (Home Fram – Variation of Planning Permission) – allowed by MSDC.
- DC/23/02889 (Home Fram – as above) – allowed by MSDC.
- DC/23/03213 (Cloverlea – Large Home Extension Requirement) – Allowed by MSDC.
- DC/23/03499 (Willow Croft - Erection of Seven Dwellings). This application had been received too late to be included on the agenda for this meeting and subsequently discussed. An extraordinary meeting will be held on Thursday 28th September 2023 to discuss the application.

09/23 - 12 (Police Report

- GR stated that the police website showed recorded crimes of one “other theft” in the area “in or near the sports recreation area” in April 2023, a “violence or sexual offence” in the area of both Little Green and Long Green during May 2023 and one further “violence or sexual offence” at Long Green in July 2023.
- He explained that no further details would be forthcoming due to DPA restrictions and that as they recorded crimes were generically grouped, they could be fairly trivial incidents.

09/23 - 13 Community Club Update

ANM explained several salient items, namely,

- The 2023 Fete had been a great success, blessed with perfect weather and a net profit of £3,500 plus had been made. He wished to thank everyone who had taken part in any capacity. The profit will help towards any grant applications where proof of part self-funding is required.
- The play area tunnel had been re-turfed and repaired and LC was thanked for the topsoil and ANM for the labour.
- A recent pop-up pub had been successful and proved popular, with another one planned soon.
- A Pilates group had been established and already increased to two sessions on a Tuesday evening.
- The Tennis Club was up and thriving again. They Club was negotiating the way forward in terms of finance and management. This is likely to be under the control of the Community Club, with

- representation on the Management Committee.
- LC stated that following the recent exhibition regarding potential improvements to the pavilion, a further meeting with the architect was planned for October 2023. This would consider moving on to costings and lead eventually to further public consultations. However, as the process is being provided free via CAS, the timetable is in their hands.
- Higel Billington and David Whitham had repaired the entrance track across Long Green in time for the fete and was wearing reasonably well up to now, but the forthcoming winter will test its durability.

09/23 - 14 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. He will now report several near Rose Cottage. He will also ask SCC to look at the footpath between Bedfield School and Chicken Alley, which requires cleaning and the hedge cut back, due to danger to users, especially families with children.
- GR was awaiting further details from the organisers of the Thermal Imaging Project and had recorded an interest.
- MW was thanked for attending the forty-year commemorative lunch of the High Suffolk Community Bus, on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Correspondence regarding a MSDC external review of the May 2023 local election had been received but no action was required.
- A former villager had offered family historic records associated with Bedfield to the village. Unfortunately they were in manuscript and impractical to store or make available. He had been thanked but advised to offer them to the SCC County Records Office.
- It was decided not to take advantage of the MDSC Tree and Wildlife Planting Scheme this year, as Planting in 2022 had had mixed success, partly due the extremely hot weather and the challenge of keeping them watered..
- An offer of “Pride in Your Place” funding had been received from MSDC, offering up to £250 in certain circumstances. However, it was felt that there were no obvious criteria that could be met.

09/23 - 15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd November 2023, commencing at 19:30 at the Bedfield HUB.

The meeting ended at 20:40.

Chairperson.....