

BIRDBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 10 JANUARY 2023 AT 7.00PM
AT BIRDBROOK COMMUNITY HOUSE

PRESENT: Mr Steve Rhenius (Chair)
Mr Alan Cook
Mr Martin Gilbert

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Diana Garrod
Mrs Debbie Hilliard (Clerk)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Anita Chadney
Mr Tim Chadney
Mr Eric Stone
One member of the public

23/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from County Councillor Peter Schwier and Katie Gentry.

23/02 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

23/03 CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

After consideration Mr Cook proposed and Mr Gilbert seconded with all in favour that Mrs Anita Chadney, Mr Tim Chadney and Mr Eric Stone be co-opted to Birdbrook Parish Council. The new members verbally confirmed they had read and accepted the Code of Conduct as issued by the Clerk. The new members were also issued with Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Declaration of Business Interest forms to complete and return to the Clerk as soon as possible. The Clerk will notify Braintree District Council and EALC of the co-options. **Action.**

23/04 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Mr Gilbert proposed and Mr Cook seconded, and it was agreed with all in favour that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

23/05 ACTION LIST

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
22/80	Email addresses – to be Chair@ and Clerk@. Debbie to check other websites and confirm with Val.	Debbie	Checked and email PC 18/11. Await confirmation and proceed. Clerk to confirm with Val . Action
22/85	Grass Cutting – Debbie to contact local parishes for information on their contractors	Debbie	Emailed Stambourne/Toppesfield and Ridgewell 18/11. Agenda item 8.
	BDC Cost Savings email – all councillors to read email and submit comments to Steve who will submit them.	Steve/all councillors	No responses.

22/88	Budget 2022-23 – Agree and finalise in January when BDC figures available BALC – Debbie to investigate further on benefits of membership and report back	Agenda next meeting/Debbie Debbie/agenda next meeting	Agenda item 10. c/f not completed.
	Potential new councillors – 3 have agreed interest in co-option. Debbie to contact BDC and process.	Debbie	Completed

23/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23/07 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR/COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Garrod was invited to present her report. It was noted that her full written report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Points noted were:-

- Proposed solar farm near Steeple Bumpstead – an exhibition on the proposal would take place at the village hall on 12 January between 3-6pm.
- Housing Strategy consultation ends on 7 February 2023.
- BDC Members' allowance – it was noted that members had elected not to increase their allowance. In response to questions Cllr Garrod advised that allowances could be looked at via Google and not every councillor chooses to take up their allowance.
- Police, Fire and Crime Officer's public meeting to take place online.
- Second quarter performance management report noted.
- Acorn Biomass Energy Plan proposal nr Haverhill – meeting scheduled for 12 January 2023 at 1pm.

There were no further questions and Cllr Garrod was thanked for her report.

23/08 MEMBERS' REPORTS

- a) Pond – Mr Gilbert reported. Nothing further had been heard from Cllr Schwier regarding the retaining wall. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Cllr Schwier again on this. **Action.** Mr Gilbert also noted that there was less green algae on the surface of the pond.
- b) Parks – Mr Gilbert noted that the invoice from Fenland had been received and paid and wanted to check that all works had been properly completed. He will review the work and report back.

Grass cutting – The Clerk advised she had spoken to Mr Shears who notified of his intention to submit a tender for the new contract. Mr Shears had also been asked to submit his final invoice. It was noted that Mr Shears had also advised of his intention to cut the grass in January, but the Clerk had advised him not to and to await the response from this meeting. Parish Councillors agreed that no cut should be made at this stage.

The Clerk also advised she had sent the tender details to another company and awaited their response. She had further searched on "Trust a Trader" and send a message to another company and await their response. Mr Gilbert advised that a local resident had also expressed interest and Mr Gilbert will remind them that a tender should be submitted. It was agreed that tenders should be looked at and a new contract agreed as soon as possible. Agenda next meeting. **Action.**

- c) Chair's Report – Two items noted:-

- Warm Hub – It was noted the warm hub was open in the Community House and although numbers attending were not large, it had been well received and enjoyed by those attending and volunteers had come forward to help run the hub. It was hoped that the positive response from those attending would spread the word and encourage more people to attend. Consideration was given to how long it would continue and it was noted that it had only been possible to run the hub due to the grant received by the Community House Trustees from Braintree District Council and the emphasis of this grant was to provide a warm space for people to use. The Community House Trustees were happy to continue funding it for the six months (as agreed by BDC) and then review.
- Pot holes – Mr Rhenius was aware of the increase in potholes across the parish, particularly Clare bridge in Baythorne End. It was noted this might be in part due to the recent cold spell followed by wet weather. Consideration was given to contacting Cllr Schwier on this situation. Cllr Garrod advised that Cllr Schwier would need photographs, accurate location point preferably using “What Three Words” app and information/evidence of the potholes causing damage to vehicles. This was noted.

Cllr Garrod left the meeting.

- d) Highways Report – Mr Cook had also noted the increase of potholes throughout the parish. There was further discussion regarding the state of the road through Baythorne End and Clare Bridge. It was noted the River Stour which Clare Bridge crosses, formed the boundary between Essex and Suffolk and it was difficult to establish which county authority was responsible for the bridge. It was agreed that councillors would provide details of the potholes using the criteria provided by Cllr Garrod above to notify ECC of the situation.
- e) Media – It was noted that Ms Gentry was not present to report. It was further noted that the next Birdbrook Parish News would be published in March, slightly later than scheduled.

23/09 PLANNING

- Jubilee Beacon – It was noted the application form was almost completed with only the ownership of the land to be completed. This land had previously been identified as common land. The Clerk will complete the form. **Action.**
- Application Number 22/03459/HH - Annexe At, Sunnybank, New England Road – no objection.

23/10 FINANCE

The following points were noted:-

- Finance Report – noted and accepted.
- Budget and Precept 2023-24 – After consideration of the budget and explanations for the benefit of the new councillors, Mr Cook proposed and Mr Gilbert seconded with all in favour that the budget be accepted and the precept be agreed as £13,685.00 for the year 2023-24. Mr Rhenius, as Chair, signed the budget form which the Clerk will return to BDC. **Action.**

23/11 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

None.

23/12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

None.

23/13 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

14 March

9 May

4 July
 5 September
 14 November

All Tuesdays at 7pm.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at approximately 8.25pm.

Signed: 

Dated: 14/3/23

Action List

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
23/03	New parish councillors to complete Declaration of Business Interests and Acceptance of Office forms and return to Clerk. Clerk to notify BDC and EALC of new members.	New councillors Clerk	
23/05	Clerk to confirm with Mrs Rhenius format of new email addresses. BALC – further info needed	Clerk Clerk	Emailed Val 13/1 Completed
23/08	Pond retaining wall – Clerk to contact ECC Grass Cutting – tender awaited from JBP Landscapes and parishioner and response from Trust a Trader. Agenda next meeting.	Clerk Clerk to agenda	Emailed Dean Warren ECC Highways who was referred this matter from P Schwier 13/1
23/09	Planning – Jubilee Beacon application – land ownership. Sunnybank	Clerk to complete	
23/10	Budget form – Clerk to return signed copy to BDC	Clerk	