

BIRDBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**HELD ON TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.00PM
AT THE COMMUNITY HOUSE, BIRDBROOK**

PRESENT: Mr Steve Rhenius (Chair)
Mr Alan Cook
Ms Katie Gentry
Mrs Anita Chadney

ALSO PRESENT: 8 Members of the public
Mrs Debbie Hilliard (Clerk)

Questions from members of the public:-

Mr James Joy, owner of the Birdbrook Plough, advised he had applied for grant funding from the Department of Levelling Up and had been advised that the Plough was eligible for a grant. He now needed support from the local community and the local MP and councillors to submit a full application. He would also need testimonials from residents. A business plan was being prepared. He explained that the application was for £250,000 of funding, and he would need to match-fund 20% of this. Mr Joy's proposal was a full refurbishment of the building, inside and outside to make the property energy efficient and reduce its carbon footprint. Any work would be in keeping with its Grade II listing and the conservation area. He also proposed to rebuild the cart lodge to the rear of the car park and establish a micro-brewery to create a second revenue for the pub. The grant would also support running costs for the first 12 months. Mr Joy explained he was trying to create longevity for the pub with a long-term plan of between 5-10 years. He aimed to have the application ready to submit by 15 September. Mr Joy further advised he would need members of the community or parish council to join the Board of Directors. The ownership would be a 16-year lease.

Questions asked :-

Have you spoken to anyone else who has done the same thing? Yes, a person in Margate and someone known to him, and he would like to collaborate with them regarding the project.

Who would run it? I would but would not be front of house. Staff would be employed.

Is it to be a pub? Yes, run as a pub with food offered.

There followed a general discussion regarding the importance of the pub as a social hub for the village. It was noted that the village did run a Warm Hub through the winter which had continued as a social morning on Fridays at the community house as well as the Bowls Club.

Mr Joy was thanked for his report and left the meeting.

Two members of the public advised that they were concerned about the state of the churchyard, stating that it was untidy and grass cuttings were not removed which then covered the internment slabs which left the churchyard looking messy and uncared for. They wanted to install a commemorative bench to remember a member of their family. The parish council explained that the churchyard was the

responsibility of the church, and the family should approach the parochial church council or diocese regarding this.

These members of the public then asked if their proposed bench could be located elsewhere. Consideration was given to whether it could be located by the oak tree on the green. It was agreed that the Clerk would explore whether planning permission would be needed to use this location as the green was common land. **Action.**

A member of the public reported on the poor state of footpaths, many being overgrown. It was explained that paths crossing crops were the responsibility of the farmer to clear the paths. Other areas were generally the responsibility of the landowner. However, any issues should be reported to Essex County Council Highways, and they would usually contact the landowner.

Members of the public left the meeting.

23/63 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Tim Chadney, Cllr Diana Garrod and Cllr Peter Schwier.

23/64 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

23/65 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Alan Cook proposed and Katy Gentry seconded with all in favour that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Action List

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
23/54	Declarations of Interest. Tim and Anita to complete new forms.	TC/AC/Clerk	Emailed 12/7. Forms completed
23/57	Highways Alan to complete form for crash barrier application.	AC	Clerk to resend form
	Steve to explore VAS sign	SR	See Chair's report

23/66 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made relating to the meeting agenda items.

23/67 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR/COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Councillors not present to report. It was noted that Cllr Garrod had emailed her September report for circulation.

23/68 MEMBERS' REPORTS

(a) Pond – It was noted that the pond needed some general tidying up.

(b) Parks – Points noted were:

- Mrs Chadney reported that the swing rope was still hanging from the tree in the playing field at Birdbrook. It was proposed and agreed that Mrs Chadney would arrange for it to be removed. **Action.**

- Mrs Chadney reported she had met with Playdale regarding the Baythorne End play area, the representative had inspected the site and was in the process of putting together a plan for a cost of approximately £25,000. Grant applications for this amount were also underway.
- Mrs Chadney proposed and it was agreed that an application be submitted to the Coronation Living Heritage Fund for a community orchard which could also be planted near the Baythorne End play area.
- Birdbrook Play area – it was noted that the holes were still there and the grass cutting contractor had not actioned this. The Clerk will follow up. **Action.**

(c) Chair's Report –

- Steve had met the Chair of Wixoe Parish Council who advised that following the consultation regarding the proposed solar farm, it had been agreed to protect the archaeological site and they no longer objected to the proposal.
- Steve was arranging to meet the Chair of Ridgewell Parish Council to discuss VAS signs. It was noted that Stambourne Parish Council were also exploring installing VAS signs and the Clerk will report back on progress. **Action.**
- It was noted that the Baythorne End noticeboard required some maintenance including sanding and repainting with wood preserver. Alan Cook agreed to contact Mr Downer for an estimate. **Action.**

(d) Highways – Alan Cook reported.

- Clare Bridge – Alan continues to liaise with a local resident on the situation and incidents were being monitored. Alan will contact Cllr Schwier for an update on progress.
- Pot holes – one in Fell Road.

(e) Footpaths – Considered above.

(f) Media – Katie Gentry reported.

- It was noted the current issue was now full with some items rolling over to the next issue.
- The Facebook page was continuing to grow with positive feedback.
- It was noted that monitoring of advertising revenue was needed, and it was proposed and agreed that the Clerk and Katie will liaise on this. **Action.**
- Requests had been received for a Halloween event. It was agreed that Katie and Anita would liaise on this. **Action.**

23/69 PLANNING

Nothing to report.

23/70 FINANCE

It was noted that the external auditors had closed the accounts for the year 31 March 2023 with no issues.

The finance report was considered and accepted with no questions.

23/71 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

None.

23/72 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

None.

23/73 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 14 November 2023 at 7pm

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at approximately 8.45pm.

Signed: 

Dated: 14/11/23

Action List

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
23/57	Crash barrier application – Clerk to resend form	Clerk	
23/68	Playing field – - AC/TC to remove the rope swing. - Uneven grass surface – Clerk to follow up with grass cutting contractor	AC/TC Clerk	Emailed 11/9
	Baythorne End noticeboard – Alan to contact Mr Downer for an estimate	AC	
	VAS sign – Steve meeting Chair of Ridgewell and Clerk will keep advised of Stambourne’s proposed VAS sign.	SR/Clerk	
	Birdbrook Magazine advertising income – KG/Clerk to liaise on closer monitoring of invoices.	KG/Clerk	Reviewed & emailed KG 11/9
	Proposed Halloween party – AC/KG	AC/KG	