

## BIRDBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 7.00PM  
AT THE COMMUNITY HOUSE, BIRDBROOK

**PRESENT:** Mr Steve Rhenius (Chair)  
Mr Alan Cook  
Mr Martin Gilbert  
Miss Katie Gentry (arrived late)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mrs Debbie Hilliard (Clerk)  
Mr Steve Filbey (Trustee – Birdbrook Community House)  
3 Members of the Public

Members of the public present had expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council and were in attendance to observe.

#### 22/78 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Peter Schwier (ECC) and Cllr Diana Garrod (BDC).

#### 22/79 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

#### 22/80 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Alan Cook proposed and Martin Gilbert seconded with all in favour that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 September 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed as amended.

#### Action List

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
22/73	Forward information re pond retaining wall to Cllr Schwier	Clerk	Emailed 8/9
22/73	Parks – Draft advert for grass cutting tender	Clerk	Completed and emailed to PC 12/9
	Playing Field Bin Emptying – raise with Community House Trustees at next meeting.	Clerk	Confirmed SS cleans pavilion. Emailed PC 12/9. Await answer.
	Cleaning/Maintenance of Play Equipment – wait until Martin has looked at Baythorne End equipment and reported back before deciding to accept the quote from Fenland.	MG/Clerk	MG confirmed equipment worth cleaning. I notified Online Playgrounds 12/9 by email. They have confirmed. Lead time 8-12 weeks.
22/73	EALC AGM – Steve to report back	SR	Under Chair's report
22/73	Highways – Whitley Bridge Fingerpost sign – follow up	Clerk	Checked ECC website. Information shows "repair will be undertaken on an unspecified timescale".
22/73	Media – Val/Katie/Debbie to liaise re website/domaine/email addresses to be set up	Clerk/VR/KG	Val and Katie have met. Addresses agreed as Chair@ and Clerk@.

	RH Obituary – AC to action	AC	Debbie to check other parishes to see how the parish councillors are addressed. <b>Action.</b>
22/74	Finance – Electricity – Npower/Eon credit.	Clerk	Completed.

**22/81 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**22/82 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR/COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

District Councillor and County Councillor not present.

**22/83 COMMUNICATION AND REPORT OF THE CLERK**

All items covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**22/84 DOCUMENTS ON DEPOSIT**

None.

**22/85 MEMBERS' REPORTS**

(a) Pond – Martin reported. There was no change to the surface of the pond. Martin awaited a response from Mr Rook regarding outcomes of their meeting in the summer. However, Mr Rook had undertaken work to tidy some of the vegetation on the pond area.

*Retaining Wall* – Martin has taken some more photographs of the retaining wall which will be sent to Cllr Schwier. No further response as yet from ether ECC Highways or Cllr Schwier on this.

*Katie Gentry arrived at the meeting.*

(b) Parks – Points noted were:

*Grass cutting* – It was noted that the current contract ended at the end of the year. An advert for the grass cutting contract had gone out on social media and the magazine but there had been no responses. It was agreed that Debbie would ask other local parishes who they used.  
**Action.**

*Christmas fundraising* – Katie reported. She had received 10 requests from stallholders asking if there was going to be a Christmas Craft Fair. It was agreed to go ahead, and the date was agreed as Saturday 10 December 11am to 3pm. Prices to remain as previous.

(c) Chair's Report – Steve Rhenius reported:

*EALC AGM* – Steve had attended and handed out documents from the event and gave a verbal report which was noted.

*Community Speedwatch Training* – Steve attended this with one other person from Birdbrook. It was noted 3 people were needed to run speedwatch. Suitable locations had been identified as outside Baythorne End shop and by The Old Schoolhouse, The Street, Birdbrook. Consideration was also given to restrictions on noisy vehicles, and it was noted that in the long term there might be cameras available which could monitor noise levels.

*Essex Libraries* – ECC have committed funds to keep libraries open.

*BDC Budgets* – The email from BDC notifying of cost savings had been circulated by Debbie and was noted. Parish councillors were asked to read the email and forward any comments to Steve who would collate and submit them. **Action.**

(d) Highways – Alan reported. There were no major issues to note but he was monitoring Fell Road which was beginning to break up in some areas.

(e) Media – Katie reported.

*Birdbrook Parish News* – The next issue was being prepared for publication.

*Social Media* – It was noted that the post regarding table tennis had been posted.

#### **22/86 WARM ROOM/COMMUNITY HOUSE**

Martin reported. It was noted there had been a call out for communities to establish a “warm room” that people could use during the energy cost crisis. At the last meeting Cllr Schwier had referenced this and mentioned that ECC might have some grant funding available to support this. A number of local residents had offered support for a scheme. Mr Filbey, Chair of Birdbrook Community House Trustees, confirmed that he had approached both Cllr Schwier and Cllr Garrod regarding the funding and had successfully made an application. The Community House had now received a grant of £1,000 to use towards the cost of running a Warm Room in the Community House.

After discussion it was agreed that Martin Gilbert, Alan Cook, Katie Gentry and Steve Filbey would meet on Thursday 24 November 2022 at 6pm to

#### **22/87 PLANNING**

- 22/02642/HH - Tye Barn , Finkle Green, Birdbrook – no comment
- 22/03047/HH - The Old Rectory , The Street, Birdbrook – no comment

#### **22/88 FINANCE**

- Finance Report – The Finance Report was received and considered. Mr Cook proposed and Mr Gilbert seconded that the report be approved.
- Budget 2023-24 – The budget form was considered. It was noted that Braintree District Council had already given notice that it would be looking to reduce costs. After consideration and discussion it was agreed that the budget would remain as per last year’s figures and be reviewed and finalised at the January meeting when further information from Braintree would be available. **Action.**
- Proposed purchase of picnic bench for Birdbrook play area – Debbie explained that the Councillors’ Community Grant application for this had been unsuccessful. If the parish council were to agree to go ahead with the purchase it would have to be funded completely from the fundraising monies ring-fenced for refurbishment of the play areas which would reduce the amount available for the proposed refurbishment of Baythorne End play area. After discussion it was agreed to vote on this. One councillor voted in favour of purchasing the bench and three were against. It was duly confirmed that the purchase of the bench would not proceed.
- BALC – It was agreed to defer this item until Debbie had followed up on how pro-active the group was being regarding the proposed prison at Wethersfield. **Action.**

#### **22/89 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

None.

#### **22/90 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

None.

## 22/91 DATES OF MEETINGS 2023

10 January  
14 March  
9 May  
4 July  
5 September  
14 November

All are Tuesdays at 7pm.

The three members of the public attending were invited to discuss joining the Parish Council. After consideration and discussion they confirmed interest in being co-opted to the Parish Council. Contact details were given and the Clerk will notify BDC to look at next steps. **Action.**

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at approximately 8.30pm.

Signed:  .....

Dated: 10/1/23 .....

### 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.
22/85	Grass Cutting – Debbie to contact local parishes for information on their contractors  BDC Cost Savings email – all councillors to read email and submit comments to Steve who will submit them.	Debbie  Steve/all councillors	Emailed Stambourne/Toppesfield and Ridgewell 18/11
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	
	Potential new councillors – 3 have agreed interest in co-option. Debbie to contact BDC and process.	Debbie	Completed