

BIRDBROOK PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2023 A 7.00PM
AT BIRDBROOK COMMUNITY HOUSE

PRESENT: Mr Steve Rhenius (Chair)
Mr Martin Gilbert (Vice-Chair)
Ms Katie Gentry
Mr Alan Cook
Mrs Anita Chadney
Mr Tim Chadney
Mr Eric Stone

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Diana Garrod (Braintree District Council)
Mrs Debbie Hilliard (Clerk)
5 Members of the public

Mr Rhenius welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Members of the public were invited to submit their questions.

Questions asked:

When are you going to start getting together for the Speed Awareness? Ms Gentry answered that dates were in the newsletter and social media, the date being next Wednesday 22 March between 10am and 12 noon in the Community House – a session to become familiar with the equipment and then get underway.

It was also noted that it would not be possible to use the cameras on the A1017 for safety reasons. However, Katie had spoken to a PCSO who advised that they (the PCSO) could.

We are very concerned about the price increases put in place to use the Community House – these were implemented without notice and backdated – can you comment? The members of public present explained that The rent has remained the same but the Trustees have added an energy premium of £15 per use for heating. The groups have only just been made aware of the charge and it has been backdated to September 2022. There was no prior notice was given by the Community House Trustees. The additional charge was likely to make it unaffordable for the groups to continue using the hall with the risk that they would have to disband. The groups represented were Pilates and Yoga, Ladies' Group and the Bowls Club.

Parish Councillors confirmed that they wanted the groups to continue to run and be able to access the Community House. It was confirmed that each group was being charged the same flat rate of £15 regardless of how long they used the Community House for and how many of the rooms they use. It was further noted that the radiators were not fit for purpose as the rooms were frequently cold and, as they were managed remotely via an app, users could not change the level of heating.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Community House Trustees was due to take place on 23 March and group representatives were encouraged to attend to put their case to the Trustees. The Parish Council confirmed they would pass on the concerns raised to the Trustees.

Cllr Garrod advised that she was able to access a Councillors' Community Grant which was aimed at small community groups in need of support. The next Community Grant round would start after the

elections in May and she encouraged the groups to come forward to whoever was elected as District Councillor.

Concerns about the proposed Solar Farm at Wixoe – It was noted that although this proposal was located in Suffolk, areas of Birdbrook Parish were likely to be impacted by increased traffic. Cllr Garrod and two members of the public confirmed they had attended the recent public meeting. Cllr Garrod confirmed she had alerted both ECC and BDC. BDC had confirmed they would put their comments to Suffolk County Council and ECC had raised no objection to date. It was noted that no formal application had been made yet.

It was agreed that Cllr Garrod present her report at this point of the meeting.

Cllr Garrod presented. It was noted her full report had been circulated to the Parish Council prior to the meeting. Points noted were:

- £1m fund available to help the most vulnerable.
- Proposed asylum centre at Wethersfield airbase.
- Local Crime – theft of vehicles and trailers in the area.

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

Cllr Garrod and all members of the public left the meeting.

23/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Schwier.

23/15 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

23/16 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 January 2023 were approved and signed. This was proposed by Mr Cook and seconded by Mr Stone with all in favour.

23/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23/18 ACTION LIST

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
23/03	New parish councillors to complete Declaration of Interest Forms and Acceptance of Office Forms and return to the Clerk	AC/TC/ES	Completed. Clerk will forward to BDC.
	Clerk to notify EALC and BDC of new members		Completed
23/05	Clerk to confirm with Mrs Rhenius format of new email addresses	Clerk	Completed. New addresses now in place.
23/08	Pond retaining wall – Clerk to contact ECC	Clerk	Emailed Dean Warren. See agenda item 8 below

	Grass cutting – tender awaited from JBP landscapes and local resident and Trust a Trader. Agenda next meeting	Clerk	Agenda item 8
23/09	Planning – Jubilee Beacon – land ownership	Clerk	Common land.
23/10	Budget Form – Clerk to return signed copy to BDC	Clerk	Completed.

23/19 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR/COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Noted above.

23/20 MEMBERS' REPORTS:-

- a) Pond – Mr Gilbert reported. Due to the wet weather the pond was now clear of algae but this was likely to change as the weather improved. Mr Gilbert had spoken to Cllr Schwier about the retaining wall as the coping stones had now fallen off completely and advised that ECC have confirmed they will take the matter on board and it will be under their jurisdiction. An inspection has taken place and work will be scheduled. It was noted that people had been walking on the ice on the pond in the recent cold weather despite verbal warnings from witnesses of the risk.
- b) Parks – Grass Cutting Contracts. It was noted that 3 quotes had been received: -
- Mr K Shears £415.00 per cut
 - Mr D Allen £1800 for 12 cuts per year (half of playing field no 1) or £1,980 (to cut all of playing field 1)
 - JPB Landscapes £312.50 per cut

After consideration it was agreed that Mr Allen's quote be accepted, subject to receipt of evidence of public liability insurance. The Clerk will contact Mr Allen. **Action.**

Play Equipment inspection – It was agreed to ask Wicksteed Leisure for an unaccompanied inspection. The Clerk will contact Wicksteed to arrange. **Action.**

It was noted that hedges were overgrown onto the pavement in Baythorne End. Mr Chadney will contact the owner and ask for them to be cut back.

- c) Chair's Report – Mr Rhenius reported. Points noted were:-
- Poor state of the roads in Baythorne End.
 - Mr Brace's email regarding the recent incident of a van crashing into his garden and only avoiding damage to his property due to the earthworks he has in place for protection. Mr Stone advised he had spoken to Mr Brace discussing the speed of traffic using the A1017, particularly from New England. It was proposed and agreed that a working group of 2 or 3 parish councillors would take on Mr Brace's proposal to extend the speed limit of 40mph to New England. The membership of this group to be agreed at the May meeting. **Action.**
 - Mr Rhenius reminded councillors of training opportunities with the EALC.
 - Census data circulated by Mr Rhenius was noted.
 - Car sales site at New England – it was noted this appeared to be a new company. It was proposed and agreed that BDC planning be contacted to ensure compliancy with all planning regulations. **Action.**
 - Streetlighting – Light at the end of Station Road – It was noted it was unclear if the cowling had been fitted. The Clerk will check. **Action.**

- Lottery funding for playgrounds – It was noted that a local parish council had successfully bid for lottery funding for new play equipment. Their application had involved evidence from nearby communities ie., schools etc and it was noted that this could be used for a future bid by Birdbrook. It was agreed to contact Ovington Parish Council to see what they did. **Action.**
- d) Highways – Mr Cook reported. He had not received any new reports regarding potholes. Mr Cook was aware of the large number of deep ruts and gullies at the edge of roads. Mr Cook had been contacted by a resident regarding a blocked drain at the junction of Moat Road/Station Road which was causing flooding. A photo was being provided and it was agreed to report this to Cllr Schwier. **Action.**
- e) Media – Miss Gentry reported. She had received enquiries asking if there were plans to celebrate the Coronation and have an Easter Craft Fair. Do we want to carry on fundraising in this way given the increased cost of hiring the hall? What were the costs of hiring last year against this year? £15.00 – noted could increase the charge for a table slightly. Date proposed and agreed for Craft Fair as 15 April 2023 11am to 3pm. Clothes collection service noted which can be used and get funds for the amount of clothes given at not cost to the council. Agreed provided we co-ordinate bags for collection. Could book the collection on a hub day. Noted and agreed. **Action.**

23/21 PLANNING

Proposed solar farm at Wixoe – considered above.

23/22 CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

The date was noted as 6 May 2023. Miss Gentry confirmed that members of the Platinum Jubilee Committee were happy to form a committee for the Coronation and Miss Gentry further confirmed she would be happy to Chair this. It was proposed and agreed to be one day only. It was noted that an application could be made for an events licence so that the Coronation could be screened in the Community House. It was agreed that Mrs Chadney would join this committee.

23/23 EMERGENCY PLAN

The Emergency Plan was reviewed. It was agreed to include the new parish councillors contact details in the plan. **Action**

23/24 FINANCE

The Finance Report was considered, agreed and accepted. It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the Street Lighting Agreement to the new councillors. **Action.**

23/25 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

One item considered which was minuted separately.

23/26 TIME, DAY AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

9 May (AGM and Parish Assembly)
 4 July
 5 September
 14 November
 All Tuesdays at 7pm in the Community House.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at approximately 9.15pm.

Signed: SIR Rhein

Date: 9/05/23

Action List

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
23/18	Clerk to send Decs of Int to BDC and notify EALC of new members. <i>NB for me – check if on website and notify users of change of emails.</i>	Clerk	
23/09	Jubilee Beacon – need to submit advert to paper. See email from Haverhill Echo and action	Clerk	
23/20	Grass cutting Contract – Clerk to contact Mr Allen for proof of public liability insurance. If so then Mr Allen’s quote accepted. Hedges overgrown onto footpath in Baythorne End. TC to contact owner re trimming back Play Equipment Inspection – Use Wicksteed Leisure. Clerk to contact. Speed Limit A1017 – Working Group to be established at the May meeting. New England Car Sales – Clerk to contact planning to ensure compliancy Streetlighting – Station Road – check if the cowling has been fitted. Lottery funding – play equipment – contact Ovington PC to see what they did. Blocked drain Moat Road/Fell Road – use What 3 Words and report to Cllr Schwier. Clothes donation service – agreed.	Clerk TC Clerk Clerk to agenda Clerk Clerk AC Clerk KG	Email sent 23/3 Form emailed 23/3 No invoice found – emailed A&J for a quote. 23/3 Emailed Cll Schwier with What3Words 23/3
23/23	Emergency Plan – Clerk to include new pcs and return to BDC	Clerk	Completed 23/3
23/24	Circulate Street lighting agreement	Clerk	Emailed 23/3