



Bulmer Parish Council



Bulmer Parish Council

Minutes for the Parish Council meeting
held at Bulmer Village Hall dated
25th June 2024 at 7.15pm





Bulmer Parish Council



Minutes of the Bulmer Parish Council meeting held at Bulmer Village Hall on Tuesday 25th June 2024 at 7.15pm.

Members of the press and public are welcome to attend.

Minutes

Present: Cllrs R Raymond, A Crawshay, R Morris

In the Chair: Cllr R Raymond

Also in attendance: Lynsey Ritchie-Fagg (Parish Clerk & RFO)

1. **Apologies for absence:** There were none highlighted.
2. **Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests:** There were none highlighted.
3. **Minutes of previous meeting:** The minutes of the meeting dated 25th June 2024, having been previously circulated, were agreed by those present and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record and unanimously agreed by all.
4. **Co Option of Councillors:** Full Council agreed the Co Option of Dominick Burke & Paul Paxton and both signed the Declarations of Acceptance of Office. The Parish Council welcome Councillor Dominick Burke & Councillor Paul Paxton.
5. **Public Questions:** There were none highlighted.
6. **Report from District Councillor:** There were none highlighted.
7. **Report from the County Councillor:** There were none highlighted.
8. **Chairman Declaration of Acceptance to Office:** Chairman Rosemary Raymond signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, in the presence of the Parish Clerk for the Municipal year 2024/2025.
9. **Vice Chairman:** The Council agreed to Cllr Rebecca Burke being elected as the Vice Chairman for the Municipal year 2024/2025.
10. **Vice Chairman Declaration of Acceptance to Office:** Councillor Rebecca Burke signed the Vice Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office, in the presence of the Parish Clerk for the Municipal year 2024/2025.
11. **Council Declaration of Acceptance to Office:** Declaration of Acceptance to Office for the Municipal year 2024/2025 signed by Cllr A Crawshay, Cllr D Burke, Cllr P Paxton, signed in the presence of the Parish Clerk.
12. **Internal Controls Representative:** Cllr P Paxton has been appointed as the Internal Controls Representative. Proposed: Cllr R Raymond, Seconded: Cllr A Crawshay.
13. **Internal Audit:**
 - a) Parish Clerk has advised the Internal Audit is being undertaken dated 27th June 2024. The audit has taken hours to prepare due to documents requiring updates.
 - b) External Auditor Form 3: Section 1: Annual Governance Statement & Section 2: Accounting Statement were signed in sight of the Full Council by the Chairman and Parish Clerk.
14. **Public Rights:** 1st July to 9th August 2024 inclusive are the dates that can be used by members of the public to contact the RFO/Parish Clerk to discuss accounts and the audit.



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15. Approval of Documents:

The Full Council has reviewed and agreed to adopt the updated documents:

- a) Standing Orders
- b) Financial Regulations
- c) Asset Register
- d) Co-Option Policy
- e) Data Protection Policy
- f) Equality & Diversity Policy
- g) Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- h) LGPS Discretions Policy Statement
- i) Privacy Statement
- j) Business Continuity Policy
- k) Internal Controls Policy

16. Finance: Financial Regulations

Council to review and confirm reserves totals to Parish Clerk: This is a requirement of the Internal Audit.

- a) General Reserves: £11,000
- b) Ear Marked Reserves: £31,694
- c) Emergency Funds: £1,000
- d) Elections Reserves: £1,0000
- e) Scheme of Delegation: What can be spent without requesting at Parish Council meeting: £250.00

17. Parish Clerk & RFO Contract:

- Cllr R Raymond has requested the Parish Clerk to consider amendments to the contract presented in February 2024. The contract is a legally binding document, and failure to sign it would result in the Council being in breach of its terms and conditions. The Parish Clerk has stated that their acceptance of the position was based on the terms outlined in the contract, and therefore, no changes to the contract will be considered.
- Cllr R Raymond has noted that no previous Clerk has received payment for travel to Parish Council meetings and that the contract designates Bulmer as the Parish Clerk's place of work. The contract specifies that the Parish Clerk's home address is their place of work and that any travel expenses will be reimbursed.

- 18. Pension:** The Parish Clerk has informed the Council that they are responsible for providing a pension, as stipulated in the contract and required by law as an employer. The Local Government Pension Scheme, chosen prior to the Clerk's employment, is specified in the contract provided in February 2024. This contract is legally binding, and the offered pension was a key factor in the Clerk's acceptance of the role. Therefore, the Parish Clerk has stated that no changes to the pension will be considered.

- 19. Training with the EALC:** Copford with Easthorpe Parish Council and Thorrington Parish Council have funded the core training courses for the Parish Clerk. Bulmer agreed to cover the costs of the Cilca Qualification due to start in September 2024. Please reconfirm this is agreeable: Costs: £35.00 Standalone Compulsory Course & Course enrolment £675.00: Parish Clerk has advised a Bursary is available towards the cost of the Cilca Qualification. Proposed: Cllr R Burke, Seconded: Cllr A Crawshay.

- 20. Code of Conduct Training:** Parish Clerk to request the Councillors confirm they have read and understand the Code of Conduct training provided by Braintree District Council.
Item moved to July Agenda.



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21. Accounts: Payments for approval and signatures at meeting on 25th June 2024.

- a) Payments presented for approval and signed by Cllr D Burke & Cllr P Paxton at the Parish meeting dated 25th June 2024. Cllrs R Raymond & A Crawshay will authorise the banking online with Unity Trust.
- b) Bank Reconciliations dated 30th May 2024 were approved and signed by Cllr D Burke & Cllr P Paxton at the Parish Meeting dated 25th June 2024.

22. Clerk's Report:

- Wishlist/Budget Plan: 1-5 Year Plan: What are the wishes of the Council and the local community?
- Reminder to Cllr R Raymond to ask if the equipment required for the standpipe has been sorted with her contact.
- Highways have been contacted regarding the overgrown hedges and verges within Bulmer.
- Three quotes have been requested for costs of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS systems.)
- First Aid Training for using the Defibrillators – Parish Clerk has continued to liaise with different charities and companies. Sudbury maybe the best choice
- Council has been reminded to read the Code of Conduct and to confirm the new LGA are agreeable.
- VOIP Telephone has been purchased and will be split across each Council to cover costs; Invoice totals £8.75 per month.
- Reminder to all Council of the importance of GDPR and Data Protection.
- Parish Clerk has stated that once SLCC membership is due for renewal, one membership will be purchased and the costs split proportionately between all 3 Parishes the Parish Clerk works for, saving funds across the board.
- Council Representatives to be considered once notice of vacancy has expired dated 12th July and to be discussed at next Parish Council meeting:
 - a) Allotment Officer: Mike Crome
 - b) Footpaths: Cllr R Raymond.

23. Councillor's Reports:

- WhatsApp Village Group: Cllr R Raymond has reported that the Parish Clerk is not in favour of the proposed Village WhatsApp Group. However, the Parish Clerk has clarified that they have always supported the idea of a Village WhatsApp Group. The Village needs to be prepared that more things are needed to be done as a Village away from the Parish Council. The Village WhatsApp Group has been created because the community needs to take initiative and act on their own rather than waiting for support from the BDC, which has not been forthcoming. As a village, Bulmer must be self-reliant. Legally, if activities are organised by the Parish Council, they must comply with Public Liability requirements and follow legal protocols. However, if the village organises activities independently, they are not bound by these legal constraints. A member of the public noted that individuals participating in activities by the roadside will not be covered by insurance, and this risk must be communicated to everyone involved.
- Whats On: Would like somebody to step up as Editor for the Newsletter.
- Website: Village Website and Parish Council website to be separated: Review to happen once more details are provided in due course. Two Councillors have left due to changes that are being suggested and Cllr R Raymond has advised she is liaising with Cllr D Holland, as legislation does not fit all Council sizes. Parish Clerk to liaise with Mike Crome, Allotment Officer to develop Parish Council Website.
- Cllr R Raymond has advised Cllr P Schwier has forwarded details of Track & Find, to allow reporting of verges, hedges and any concerns/requirements of works to be done including fly tipping.
- Chemicals used on verges and grass need to be animal friendly to kill weeds.

Closure

Lynsey Ritchie-Fagg: Parish Clerk & RFO
14th July 2024