

Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting
Held on 5th January 2022 at 7:00pm
In Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall

Present

Cllr David Brinkley (Chair)

Cllr Rhea Gardner

Cllr Clive Lenton

Cllr Lynda Seagroatt

Cllr Mick Richardson (ESC)

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

3 members of the public were present

In the absence of the Chair, the Clerk asked for a Councillor to act as Chair for the meeting. Cllr Seagroatt proposed Cllr Brinkley which was seconded by Cllr Gardner. Cllr Brinkley accepted and all were in favour.

1. To receive Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Cllr Heather Owen (holiday) and Cllr Evelyn Bloomfield (isolating due to family member with Covid). These were accepted.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest and any Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items (either pecuniary or non-pecuniary):

There were none.

3. Public Participation – To receive:

a) Reports from County and District Councillors:

- Suffolk County Cllr Patti Mulcahy: No report received on this occasion.

The Chair expressed his disappointment that Cllr Mulcahy was absent from the meeting again and had sent no report. He felt that there were items on the agenda where the Council could have benefited from some guidance and support from Cllr Mulcahy.

- East Suffolk District Cllr Mick Richardson:

Cllr Richardson was thanked by the Chair for the joint report, sent by Cllr Kerry, which had previously been circulated by the Clerk. Cllr Richardson was welcomed to the meeting and congratulated on his recent election win. He was also thanked by the Chair for his generous donation of £1,000 from his Enabling Communities Budget for the Nest Swing.

b) Questions from any member of the public:

- A member of the public wished to express their concern over the decision by East Suffolk Council Planning Department not to require an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed Bucklesham Solar Farm. The villager had written to Ben Woolnough at ESC Planning Department to share these concerns which had also been forwarded to all Parish Councillors.

The Chair reiterated that the Parish Council cannot comment on the proposed Solar Farm as no Planning Application had formally been submitted yet, but reassured the villager that their concerns had been heard and that full consideration would be given to these if and when the Council was asked to comment on any future plans.

4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 3rd November 2021:

All Councillors agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr Lenton proposed that the minutes should be signed, this was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all Councillors agreed.

The minutes had already been published on the website in draft form in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Action: Clerk

5. Clerks Report – To receive updates on matters not requiring debate or decision:

The Clerk's report had been previously circulated to all Councillors and much of its contents were on the Agenda, however some specific points were highlighted.

- i. Despite numerous requests for Ipswich Borough Council Parks Department to fit a new basketball hoop and complete the much needed maintenance work on the Playing Field (as identified in the RoSPA report of December 2020) the work had still not been done. The Sicon Foundation had also offered to source a basketball hoop but this had not materialised. The Clerk asked if the Council would reconsider purchasing the basketball hoop from Playdale which had previously been rejected due to the high cost. As a year had passed since the original quote and prices had likely increased further, in order to move this on Cllr Brinkley proposed that the Clerk should order a replacement hoop if the cost did not exceed £800.00 (the Previous quote had been £705). This was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in favour.
- ii. The Clerk reported that the 420 trees received from the Woodland Trust had been successfully planted and that there had been many very positive emails and comments from villagers thanking the Council for organising this.
- iii. A quote from BF Landscapes had been received to lay a path on the entrance to the Playing Field. In the winter months access to the field is difficult due to the mud, especially for wheelchair users and push chairs. The quote was for £2,480. The Clerk had sought permission from Suffolk County Council for the Parish Council to continue the path onto the strip of grass entering the Playing Field, but despite phone calls, emails and a letter, a response had not been received.

Chair's initials:

The Clerk agreed to continue to seek permission for the path from SCC and to request two further quotes in accordance with the Parish Council’s Policy on spending.

- iv. The Gym Equipment from Sunshine Gym will be installed on 10th January. Workers will arrive at 8am and it should take two days to complete.
- v. Following relentless requests from the Clerk to repair the crack and lift in the path outside Number 1 Levington Lane, Suffolk Highways have agreed to carry out the work which should start within the next 20 days.
- vi. East Suffolk Norse have enquired as to whether the Council will be organising the Annual Spring Clean and if we want to borrow their equipment again. The suggested date was Saturday 9th April at 10am. This will be a later start than usual following a suggestion from a villager. Date and time will be advertised in the Bugle and a villager had offered to post details on the Village Friends page on Facebook.
- vii. As the Clerk has now been in post for 6 months, it will be necessary to arrange a Review of her working practices. This could be held via zoom with the Chair and one other Councillor, however and all members of the Council may attend if they wish. It was agreed to arrange a date for this sometime in January when Cllr Owen is available.

6. To receive and ask questions of report from Cllr Gardner on Felixstowe Peninsular Partnership on 02/12/2021:

Cllr Gardner reported that Walton Parish Nursing Home was seeking £5,200 to support its project between January and October 2022. It provides mental health wellbeing and reduces social isolation through its work in the Walton community. It currently has a shortfall of £8,000. After discussion the proposal was approved by the Partnership by a unanimous vote. Further funding may be available from Community Action Suffolk.

Felixstowe Salvation Army Christmas Day dinner was for 80 residents. The organisation was seeking £1,200 to support its annual Christmas Day dinner service. Some of the members of the Community Partnership had assisted at this event and believed it to be very valuable in reducing social isolation. Each diner has a 3 course meal and receives a gift. Volunteers also provide transport to and from the hall. After a brief discussion, this proposal was also agreed by a unanimous vote.

The next Community Partnership meeting was booked for 17th March 2022 and Cllr Gardner hoped to attend.

7. To elect an Archer Cartwright Charity representative:

The Clerk had received an email from Rosemary Farrow from the Archer Cartwright Charity requesting that the Parish Council elect a representative to serve as a Trustee as the current representative had served for 4 years. Cllr Rhea Gardner had taken this role previously and informed the Council she was happy to stand again. Cllr Lenton proposed that Cllr Gardner be re-elected as Parish Council representative on the Archer Cartwright Charity. This was seconded by Cllr Brinkley and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

Chair’s initials:

8. To elect a SALC representative:

Following the resignation from the Parish Council of Cllr Burgess it was necessary to elect another SALC representative. Cllr Gardner informed the Council that she was happy to take on this role. Cllr Seagroatt proposed that Cllr Gardner be the SALC rep for the Council. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton and all were in favour. The Chair thanked Cllr Gardner for taking on another role which was considered a very useful networking tool.

Action: Clerk

9. To discuss the complaints from villagers regarding dog fouling on the Playing Field:

The Clerk informed the Council that she had again received complaints about the amount of dog fouling left on the Playing Field, with a specific complaint regarding one particular family. The family in question frequently walk their dogs off the lead on the Playing Field and had been seen on more than one occasion apparently not noticing when their dog had fouled. There also appeared to be an issue with villagers walking more than one dog off the lead as this proved difficult to keep track of where they were. The Clerk had informed the complainant that the Parish Council had no jurisdiction over dog fouling and that any issues should be reported to Suffolk Coastal Norse who had the power to issue offenders with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Suffolk Coastal Norse had previously informed the Clerk that they do not recommend or encourage people to confront perpetrators themselves for fear of repercussions. The Assistant Waste Management Officer at Suffolk Coastal Norse offered a solution of issuing a Public Space Protection Order for the Playing Field. This could take the form of either a complete 'Exclusion of Dogs on the Playing Field' or 'Dogs on Leads on the Playing Field'. If the Parish Council requested Suffolk Coastal Norse to issue a PSPO there would need to be a public consultation and a commitment from the Parish Council that they would be prepared to write witness statements reporting the perpetrators. The Council acknowledged that this could put the Clerk in a very difficult position given that the offenders were likely to be her neighbours.

It was agreed to put the suggestion of asking Suffolk Coastal Norse to issue a PSPO for the Playing Field on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting in May. The Parish Council could advertise the meeting and the idea of a PSPO in the Spring Bugle, which would allow Villagers to share their opinions on the proposal. It was considered vital to have the support of the village before implementing such a change in use of the Playing Field.

Action: Clerk

10. To discuss the retirement of David Butcher from the role of village Tree Warden:

Due to the retirement of the Tree Warden, David Butcher, the Parish Council had advertised in the New Year Bugle for someone else to take on the role. Unfortunately, no one had volunteered. The Chair wished it to be minuted that David had been a fantastic Tree Warden, with particular note of the hours of care and attention given to the hedgerow on Levington Lane's Slip Ponds field. It was agreed that while Tree Wardens are valued volunteers, they are not necessarily qualified tree experts, but they are very helpful in championing the trees in the village, looking out for early signs of disease, and helping with the laying of hedges.

It was also acknowledged that it would be very helpful to have a volunteer who was prepared to help with the management of the trees on the Playing Field.

The Clerk agreed to ask again in the Spring Bugle if anyone was interested in taking on the role.

Action: Clerk

11. To discuss the implementation of the Bucklesham Emergency Plan:

The Clerk informed the Council that many Parishes have an Emergency Plan and that this is encouraged by East Suffolk Council. In the event of an emergency impacting the Parish, certain residents could form an emergency coordination group. When safe to do so, these villagers would assess the impacts of the incident, coordinate the local response, inform and support residents and responding agencies as far as is practical.

The Clerk explained that it is usual to have villagers with a particular skillset on the Coordination Group, such as medical professionals, emergency responders, military personnel etc. Also included could be villagers with access to equipment such as chainsaws, towing equipment, generators etc. If the village agreed to forming a Community Emergency Planning Group (CEPG), which was registered with East Suffolk Council, all volunteers would be covered by East Suffolk Council's insurance, when an emergency was officially declared.

It was agreed that the Clerk would ask for volunteers in the Spring Bugle to ascertain if there was enough interest in forming a CEPG and that this could be another item for the Annual Parish Meeting in May.

Action: Clerk

12. Planning:

a. To discuss the following Planning Applications received:

There had been no planning applications received.

b. To discuss any application coming forth since publication of agenda:

- i. DC/21/5663/FUL Single story extension, 9 St Mary's Park, Bucklesham IP10 ODY
Councillors made the following comments:
- No Objection
 - Conclusion: **No Objection** – sent to ESC directly

c. To ratify decisions taken between meetings:

- i. DC/21/4818/FUL Removal of existing conservatory and construction of replacement single story extension. 3, Church Close, Bucklesham IP10 ODU
Councillors made the following comments:
- No Objection
 - Conclusion: **No Objection** – sent to ESC previously

Action: Clerk

Chair's initials:

Bucklesham Solar Farm

The Clerk reminded Councillors that East Suffolk Council Planning Department had made the decision not to require an Environmental Impact Assessment with regards to the proposed Solar Farm in Bucklesham. Correspondence had been received from Ben Woolnough assuring the Council that the decision would not notably diminish the extent of consideration given to the effects of the development and that extensive assessments and surveys would still be necessary.

It was noted that a Planning Application may be forthcoming at any time and that the time given to respond to this may not coincide with the next Parish Council meeting. In the event of this occurring, the Parish Council will hold an additional meeting to discuss the application and will notify the public in the usual way including the Bugle Bulletin.

13. Finance Matters:

a. To accept accounts up until 31st December 2021 and review of Bank Statements:

The accounts had been sent to all Councillors and there were no questions. Cllr Brinkley was asked to sign and verify that the bank statements reflected the money held at the end of the month.

b. To review our Internal Accounting Procedures and the suitability of our Internal Auditor:

The Clerk had previously sent an email reminding Councillors that one of the annual tasks the Parish Council needs to complete is a review of our Internal Controls for dealing with financial matters and the efficiency of our Internal Audit.

Financial Controls

We have the following financial controls in place:

- Clerk checks invoice against estimate (where appropriate) and queries any differences
- Clerk draws cheque
- Two signatories see invoice and reconcile with cheque (then sign cheque, cheque stub and initial invoice)
- Bank reconciliation is produced at the end of every month and sent to Councillors
- A Councillor reviews the Bank Statements at each meeting (i.e. at least 6 times a year)
- Financial Regulations are in place and reviewed annually

Efficiency of Internal Audit

The Clerk recommended that the internal auditor we use (Mr Trevor Brown) is efficient and competent for the following reasons:

- He is a retired Clerk and is fully aware of the Parish Council accounting processes
- He is used by Heelis and Lodge, a local known and respected audit firm
- He was used by SALC to carry out their audits until he retired from this role three years ago
- He produces a list of documents and items he requires to complete the audit
- He monitors our Website regularly to check tasks have been completed (and alerts the Clerk if he can see a task not completed)
- He produces a written report for the audit and makes recommendations clear to the Council (see latest copy on our website)

Appointment of Internal Auditor

It was proposed by Cllr Brinkley and seconded by Cllr Lenton that all procedures in place were adequate and that the Council continue to use the excellent services of Mr Brown. All were in favour.

In line with this, the Clerk informed the Council that she had been using the Year End Preparation Checklist, devised last year, in preparation for the audit. This had been circulated previously by email. It had proved very helpful as it had helped to avoid having several items on the agenda all at once as the Council had spread the necessary tasks throughout the year and had a few at each meeting.

- c. To discuss and agree quote from Norse for grass cutting of playing field in 2022 of £481.90+VAT:

The Clerk had compiled a list of cuts of the field in 2021 which had been 8 in total instead of the 16 that the Council had been invoiced for. Owing to this list the Clerk was able to request a revised invoice reducing the cost from £935 to £467. Cllr Seagroatt proposed that this year's quote of £481.90 for 8 cuts be accepted which was seconded by Cllr Lenton. All were in favour. The Chair thanked the Clerk for her diligence in this matter which had saved the Council £454.

- d. To discuss and agree the Budget for 2022-23:

The budget had been sent out previously and lengthy discussion took place. Cllr Brinkley stated that he felt the planned expenditure was neither too generous nor too cautious and that the Budget was very well laid out and explained. Cllr Brinkley suggested that the amount allocated for 'Training' be increased as there had been two new Councillors recently with a third imminent. The Clerk had amended this to reflect the need. Cllr Lenton proposed the Budget be agreed, this was seconded by Cllr Seagroatt and all were in favour.

- e. To discuss and agree Precept request for 2022-23:

It was agreed that once again this year the Parish Council would manage the finances to ensure a 0% increase for the village in recognition of the continued financial hardships that many are facing. It was proposed by Cllr Brinkley that a figure of £9,213.00 be requested from East Suffolk Council for the precept and seconded by Cllr Gardner. All were in favour.

- f. To discuss and approve Clerk as authoriser for payments from Bank Account:

The Clerk informed the Council that if they were to move to full online banking it would be necessary for the Clerk to be an authoriser. The Council's Financial Controls would still be in place as it would still be necessary for a second authoriser for each payment. The Clerk had sought advice on this matter from Trevor Brown and SALC who had assured her that this was usual practice with bank accounts suitable for Parish Councils and perfectly acceptable if the Parish Council agreed to it. Cllr Brinkley proposed the Clerk be approved as an authoriser which was seconded by Cllr Gardner. All were in favour.

g. To discuss and approve move to a different provider for banking:

In December 2021 HSBC informed the Clerk that they have introduced charges for the type of account that the Parish Council hold. The monthly charges for administering the account would be £5.00 with a charge of 40p for each cheque written. This would amount to over £60 per account per year.

Due to the necessity to ensure Parish Council funds were spent wisely, the Clerk had investigated switching to Barclays as they offer free banking with facilities for dual authorisers, as used by the Village Hall. Unfortunately Barclays are not accepting new customers at present. The Clerk offered to further investigate other suitable accounts which would offer free banking.

h. To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

i.	East Suffolk Norse (grass cuts on Playing Field)	£561.42
ii.	Print 4 U (New Year Bugles)	£88.00
iii.	M Green (disposal of rubbish in Playing Field container)	£60.00
iv.	Suffolk Cloud (website hosting)	£120.00

i. To note Payments made since last meeting:

i.	Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (donation)	£50.00
ii.	Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal (donation)	£25.00
iii.	Bucklesham & Foxhall Village Hall (Hall hire)	£75.00
iv.	B&M Concrete (top soil for tree planting)	£110.16
v.	R Johnson (Clerks Salary plus expenses Oct/Nov/Dec)	£772.70
vi.	HMRC (Clerk's PAYE)	£173.80

j. To note Payments received since last meeting:

	There were none	£0.00
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k. To note Bank Balances as at 31st December 2021:

i.	Current Account (No. 80152285)	£16,930.49
ii.	Savings Account (No. 00605875)	£4,250.53

Cllr Brinkley proposed that all finance matters were accepted, seconded by Cllr Seagroatt with all in favour.

Action: Clerk

14. To co-opt Parish Councillor and signing of 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office':

Two members of the village had come forward to stand as a Parish Councillor following the advert in the New Year Bugle. Candidate A was unable to attend the meeting on the night but had written a statement which was read aloud by the Clerk on his behalf. Candidate B read aloud a statement as to why he would like to be considered for the role and took questions from the Councillors.

The whole Council agreed that both candidates would make excellent Councillors and both were thanked for their interest. Two votes were cast for candidate A, two votes were cast for Candidate B, with the Chair having the casting vote, therefore Mr Trevor Bickers, Candidate B, was successfully co-opted on to the Parish Council. It was very much hoped that the other candidate would consider standing again should a vacancy arise in the future.

Chair's initials:

The Clerk agreed to contact Mr Bickers in the next few days to complete the necessary paperwork.

15. To receive agenda items for next meeting on Wednesday 2nd March 2022:

There were no other agenda items as at the meeting from the Councillors, but the Clerk reminded them that all projects going forward would be included and that any new items should be notified to her at least one week before the meeting.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 8:25pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Ruth Johnson
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair's initials: