

Minutes of Bucklesham Parish Council Meeting

Held on 2nd March 2022 at 7:00pm

In Bucklesham and Foxhall Village Hall

Present

Cllr Trevor Bickers
Cllr Rhea Gardner

Cllr Evelyn Bloomfield
Cllr Clive Lenton

Cllr David Brinkley (Chair)
Cllr Lynda Seagroatt

Ruth Johnson (Clerk)

No members of the public were present

1. Apologies for absence:

a. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from Cllr Heather Owen (illness).

b. To accept apologies for absence.

Acceptance of the apology of Cllr Owen was proposed by Cllr Bloomfield, seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in agreement.

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. The Chair welcomed Cllr Trevor Bickers to his first meeting as Councillor.

2. To receive any:

a. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.

There were none.

b. Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest.

Cllr Bloomfield declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 10 a i. as she is a relative of the applicant.

c. Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items.

There were none.

d. Declarations of Gifts or Hospitality received over the value of £25.00

There were none.

e. Notification of Lobbying with reference to Planning Applications to be discussed.

There were none.

3. Public Participation – To receive:

a) Reports from County and District Councillors:

- Suffolk County Cllr Patti Mulcahy: No report received.

The Chair expressed his great disappointment that Cllr Mulcahy had sent no report and was absent from the meeting once again, as there were items on the agenda where the Council could have benefited from some guidance. The Clerk had emailed Cllr Mulcahy on three separate occasions since January requesting help and guidance on village matters. One reply was received but no follow-up to the resulting questions asked. The Clerk was asked to write to the Chair of Suffolk County Council, Cllr Graham Newman, to express the Council's disappointment with the lack of engagement from Cllr Mulcahy and to ask for his advice with regards to this.

Action: Clerk

Chair's initials:

- East Suffolk District Cllr Mick Richardson and Cllr Richard Kerry:

Cllr Kerry and Cllr Richardson had informed the Clerk that they were unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

Both Cllr Richardson and Cllr Kerry had been contacted by the Clerk for advice as to any possible emergency funds available to the Parish Council following the expense of felling the dangerous poplar trees on the Playing Field. Both Councillors had offered to investigate and had given advice and possible solutions. The Clerk had asked if Cllr Richardson would be prepared to allow the £1,000.00 awarded from his Enabling Communities Budget, allocated for the Nest Swing, to be redistributed in this very exceptional circumstance as the issue of the dangerous trees was far more urgent. Cllr Richardson had very kindly agreed to this which was welcomed by the whole Council.

The Chair asked that the Clerk thank Cllr Richardson and Cllr Kerry for the support they always show the Council in all matters and the promptness with which they reply to any questions or requests, and for always keeping the Council updated with reports and relevant initiatives via email.

Action: Clerk

- b) Questions from any member of the public:

- No members of the public were in attendance.

4. To agree Minutes of meeting dated 5th January 2022:

All Councillors agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr Brinkley proposed that the minutes should be signed, this was seconded by Cllr Gardner 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. Kevin Coe had completed the various jobs around the village to an excellent standard. The old floodlights had been removed from the Playing Field, the new finger pointer signs had been installed showing the Church, the Playing Field and the Village Hall, and the back of the old BT phone box had been boarded up ready to be converted into an Information Booth.
- ii. The new basketball hoop and backboard had been delivered by Playdale Playgrounds and Cllr Lenton had offered to fix this into place as soon as possible.

Chair's initials:

- iii. East Suffolk Norse no longer loan equipment for the annual Litter Pick but instead will permanently supply Parishes with their own equipment to share with neighbouring villages. The Clerk has collected these from Ufford ready for the Litter Pick on Saturday 9th April starting at 10am.
- iv. The new outdoor gym equipment has been installed and is in good use. There had been many very positive emails and telephone calls to the Parish Council regarding this project. A disclaimer notice had been collected by the Clerk from the sign makers and will be installed by Cllr Lenton as soon as possible. Came and Company, who insure the Field, have been instructed to add this equipment to the Council's Public Liability Insurance.
- v. As part of the Jubilee celebrations, Bucklesham had been awarded one of 200 English Oak Trees donated by East Suffolk Council as part of their Treebilee Project. This had been planted on the Playing Field by the Golden Jubilee bench.
- vi. The two Chat Benches donated by East Suffolk Council's Felixstowe Community Partnership had been installed along the woodland walkway in the two top corners of the Playing Field.
- vii. Despite reports of several villagers asking if there were to be celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, only two villagers had volunteered to help organise this after it had again been requested in the Bugle and the Bugle Bulletin. Cllr Seagroatt had therefore concluded that it was unfeasible to expect only three people to manage such an event and regretfully decided there would be no Jubilee celebration event organised by the Council.
- viii. The Clerk had been contacted by a resident of Green Crescent asking for help with regards to an ongoing issue of blocked drains at the bottom of the Crescent. It was explained that at times, during very heavy rain, the floods get very close to entering properties. Photographs had been provided. The resident had reported this on the Suffolk Highways 'Report it' tool previously, and although the inspector had agreed there was a significant issue, there had been no action taken. The Clerk explained to the resident that the Parish Council has no jurisdiction over such matters, which was completely understood, but that she would endeavour to do her best to pursue this. The Clerk explained to the Council that she had once again reported the issue, had contacted the head of Highways directly, and had sought advice and support from Cllr Mulcahy. Unfortunately no response from Cllr Mulcahy had been received so far.

6. To discuss Clerk's Review and approve recommendations arising from it:

Cllr Owen and Cllr Brinkley met with the Clerk in January to review the previous six months. The minutes of this meeting had previously been shared with the Council by Cllr Owen.

All the work that had been achieved over the last six months was greatly appreciated and Cllr Brinkley thanked the Clerk for all of this. Cllr Owen had stated in the minutes that she felt there was so much more work involved now as the Council rightly had a higher profile within the Village.

Chair's initials:

The Clerk was asked whether she was happy with her role and Cllr Brinkley listed the main achievements in the past six months which had included –

- Instigating the efficient function of Bucklesham Parish Council
- Rewriting and implementing 28 Policies and Codes of Practice
- Audit for 2020/21
- Budget for 2022/2023
- Success with Planning Enforcement Enquiries
- Development of Financial Controls and Policy, and Management of Accounts
- Quiet Lanes Project
- Bucklesham Suffolk Cloud – New Village Website (implementation and overseeing)
- Development of Bugle Bulletin
- Ongoing Management of the Playing Field
 - New fencing for car park
 - 8 New Picnic Benches
 - Tree Planting Project (420 trees in woodland walkway)
 - Gym Equipment Project
 - Chat benches
- Bulb Planting event – 2,500 daffodil bulbs distributed and planted around the village
- Successfully applying for 19 Grants totalling £73,500.00 for various village projects
- Completing the New Clerk's Training Course with SALC (8 hours)

It was felt that due to this higher profile, the hours the Clerk was paid was not enough and did not recognise all the work undertaken. Cllr Brinkley suggested an increase in hours from 25 hours a month to 30 hours a month. The Clerk is currently paid at point 12 under NALC's National Salary Awards and it was suggested this be increased to point 14. Cllr Owen's minutes had explained that when looking at other vacancies for Clerks positions, the Parish Council had not been paying the Clerk enough for all the work she had to do each month. Other Clerks in neighbouring Councils are paid much more money for much less work. The Clerk does not wish claim Pension or the car allowance as she feels not too much driving is involved. Cllr Brinkley suggested any journeys made (to collect the Bugle from the Printers for example) should be totalled up by the Clerk and be paid at the end of each financial year.

It was agreed by all Councillors that the Parish Council was now under excellent management, had a fantastic new website which is maintained to a very high standard and that the initiatives the Clerk had implemented had resulted in the Council having a much higher profile within the Village. It was felt that sourcing and applying for so many Grants for the Village was working in the best interests of the whole community. The Clerk was thanked for her time and commitment. The Clerk expressed her thanks for the Council's words and all parties agreed that if any issues did arise in the future they would come together immediately to address these concerns.

Cllr Seagroatt proposed that the Clerk's hours be increased to 30 per month and the salary be increased to point 14 on the National Salary Awards, as set by NALC, with effect from 1st January 2022. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner with all in favour.

Chair's initials:

7. To discuss and agree training for all Councillors:

The Clerk explained that when undertaking her recent training with SALC, it had been strongly suggested that all Councillors had at least one session of training in the four year cycle, indeed many Councils stipulate this in their Standing Orders. The Parish Council has three new Councillors who have as yet received no training at all and four experienced Councillors who had not had training in the last 7 years. SALC had offered whole Council training at a cost of £600.00 but unfortunately the dates available had not been convenient to the whole Council.

SALC also administer training for individual Parish Councillors, available remotely, which is covered in six modules at a cost of £25.00 for each module for each attendee. It was suggested by SALC that each Councillor could attend one module each and disseminate the training to the rest of the Council. It was agreed this could work but it would be imperative that each Councillor be committed to their session and there was the possibility of the training being ‘watered down’.

In addition to general training Councillors also expressed concern that they did not fully understand the East Suffolk Council Planning Portal. The Clerk had asked Judi Hallet, an experienced Clerk and former Councillor, if she would consider running a session on this subject and Judi had agreed. The cost of this would be £150.00 for one intensive Bucklesham-focused training session for the whole Council plus the Clerk. A suggested date of Wednesday 3rd August 2022 from 6pm to 9pm was proposed by Cllr Brinkley and seconded by Cllr Lenton with all in favour and all Councillors and the Clerk committing to attend.

Action: Clerk

8. Playing Field:

a. To discuss the quote to fell the remaining 11 poplar trees following the recent storm damage.

Following the recent storms it was considered a matter of urgency to move forward with the project of felling the remaining poplar trees on the field.

John Willis, Assistant Arboriculture Manager at Suffolk Coastal Norse, had been asked to quote for the work but informed the Clerk that they do not have a specialist team for tree felling and instead employ Seth Lord, a private contractor. Mr Willis stated that while Mr Lord’s work would be competitive it would not likely be any cheaper than any reputable tree surgeon. The Clerk had asked Mr Lord to quote for the work and was awaiting the outcome of this request.

The quote to fell all 11 trees from Paul’s Tree Services, who had cleared the fallen trees in the emergency following the storm, was £5,040.00 and an extra £1,660.00 to also grind out the stumps, totalling £6,700.00. The Clerk advised the Council that there was £3,000.00 in Reserves for Playing Field emergencies and there had recently been a VAT reclaim totalling £2,406.13. The Parish Council would therefore have to use £1,293.87 from General Reserves to make up this shortfall. It was not deemed necessary to obtain a further third quote as the Council had done this previously when the original tree felling took place.

It was proposed by Cllr Brinkley that Paul’s Tree Services be asked to carry out this work as a matter of urgency unless the second quote was significantly cheaper. This was seconded by Cllr Lenton with all in favour.

b. To discuss the quote to replace the damaged fence around the car park following the storm.

One of the large poplar trees that came down in the recent storm had damaged the new fence around the car park and had completely broken one whole panel. The cost of replacing this by Goddard Fencing, the original installers, would be £1,320.00. This was not covered under the Insurance as no Parish Council insurance will cover ‘storm damage’ for fences, walls or hedges. The cost to remove the trees was also not covered. Cllr Brinkley proposed that the fence be replaced and this was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

c. To discuss the quote for a path approaching the Playing Field.

The Clerk had previously been asked to obtain quotes to lay a solid path on the entrance to the Playing Field as this often gets very muddy in the winter, making access to the field difficult for older members of the village, disabled people in wheelchairs and parents with pushchairs. The Clerk had obtained no objection to the path from either East Suffolk Planning or Suffolk County Council.

Three quotes had been sought, with difficulty, as many contractors had shown a disinterest in doing the work. However, two quotes had been obtained with the most competitive one from Kesgrave Pavings of £1,085.00. Cllr Brinkley proposed that this quote be accepted and Kesgrave Pavings be asked to carry out the work as soon as possible. This was seconded by Cllr Bloomfield with all in favour.

d. To discuss issue of dog fouling and the quote for fencing around the Play Area.

The Parish Council had been made aware that there had been several comments on village Social Media pages about dogs fouling on the Playing Field and incidents of children falling in this. Numerous solutions had been suggested by villagers including a ban of dogs on the field, a request for dogs to be kept on a lead at all times on the field and fencing in the whole Play Area.

The Clerk had sought quotes to fence in the area which would be in the region of £17,000.00. East Suffolk Council would issue a ‘Dog Control Public Space Order’ either prohibiting dogs from the field altogether or instigating a policy of ‘Dogs on Leads’.

As any change in the use of the field would need the support of the Friends of the Playing Field (FOPs) and the whole village, the Parish Council agreed to put the matter of a solution to this ongoing problem on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting on 4th May 2022. This would be advertised in the next Bugle and on a Bugle Bulletin email alert allowing all villagers to have their say and enabling the Parish Council to then agree on a solution.

- e. **To discuss the maintenance contract of the Playing Field by East Suffolk Norse relieving previous contractor of their obligations.**

Ipswich Borough Council had been providing a service of inspecting the play equipment and had provided RoSPA reports on an annual basis. However, they had not sent the Council a completed RoSPA report since December 2020, or responded to any communications with regards to the necessary maintenance tasks, including replacing the removed basketball hoop, despite numerous requests from the Clerk.

The Clerk had met with Simon Walker from Suffolk Coastal Norse with regards to them taking over the contract of the Play Equipment inspections and the annual RoSPA report. Simon had spent considerable time familiarising himself with the field and all the equipment and had reported that apart from needing a clean the equipment was in good working order with no concerns apparent. Norse offered 3 inspections per year at a cost of £25.00 per visit and an annual RoSPA inspection in March/April at £75.00. It was proposed by Cllr Bloomfield that Suffolk Coastal Norse be asked to take over the contract of the inspections of the play equipment and the annual RoSPA report. This was seconded by Cllr Gardner and all were in favour.

Action: Clerk

9. Documentation:

- a. **To receive notification of Asset Register Review and approve revised document (previously sent to Councillors on 10/02/22)**

The Clerk reminded the Council that they were required to review the Asset Register each year. It had recently been updated again adding the new Gym Equipment and Finger Pointer signs. Cllr Bickers proposed that this was an accurate document which was seconded by Cllr Gardner with all in favour.

- b. **To accept and adopt the Dispensation Policy (as sent to Councillors on 10/02/22)**

Following advice from SALC the Clerk had written a new Dispensation Policy which had been circulated to all Councillors and there were no questions. Cllr Seagroatt proposed this be adopted which was seconded by Cllr Lenton with all in favour.

Action: Clerk

10. Planning:

- a. To discuss the following Planning Applications received:
 - i. DC/21/5712/FUL continued use of land for siting of mobile home Tenth Road, IP10 0BP
Councillors made the following comments:
 - Councillors could see no change from the previous two Planning Applications.
 - Councillors did not feel that the ill health of the applicant, as stated in the Planning application, was a material planning consideration.
 - As 'No Objection' was registered for the previous two applications the Council had no further comment to make on this identical third application.Conclusion: **'No Further Comment'** sent directly to ESC with the additional comments as above.

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

There were none.

c. To ratify decisions taken between meetings:

- i. DC/21/5663/FUL 9 St Mary's Park, IP10 ODY – single story extension
The Councillors made the following comments –
- No Objection
- A comment of No Objection was registered with East Suffolk Planning on 10/01/22
- ii. DC/21/5006/LBC – The Rectory, Church Lane, IP10 ODX – two story extension to existing dwelling
The Councillors made the following comments –
- No Objection
- A comment of No Objection was registered with East Suffolk Planning on 19/01/22
- iii. DC/21/3832/ARM 33 New dwellings on Levington Lane
The Councillors made the following comments –
- No Objection
- A comment of No Objection was registered with East Suffolk Planning on 06/02/22
- iv. DC/22/0330/FUL 6 Church Close, IP10 ODU proposed part first floor/part two story side extension
The Councillors made the following comments –
- No Objection
- A comment of No Objection was registered with East Suffolk Planning on 11/02/22
- v. DC/22/0370/FUL – Kembroke Cottage, Kirton Road, Bucklesham double garage
The Councillors made the following comments –
- No Objection
- A comment of No Objection was registered with East Suffolk Planning on 12/02/22

Action: Clerk

11. Finance Matters:

a. To accept accounts up until 28th February 2022 and review of Bank Statements:

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

b. To discuss the quotes for printing the Bugle for the coming year:

The Clerk had received a quote from Prints 4 U to print the Bugle for the coming year. Due to an unavoidable increase in costs the new charge for 235 copies would increase from £88.00 to £94.00. This was considered still very competitive and was the best quote received. Cllr Brinkley requested that the Clerk again encourage villagers to receive the Bugle via email as this would further cut down the cost of printing.

Chair's initials:

c. To discuss the move to a different provider for banking:

The Clerk had been investigating suitable accounts with a different bank following HSBC's decision to start charging for banking services. It was agreed to wait until the audit had been completed and the new financial year had begun before moving to another provider. The Chair reported that Barclays, Santander, Lloyds and NatWest were all refusing to take new businesses wishing to switch from HSBC. The only two banks who were offering free banking to those who wish to switch are Co-operative Bank and Metro Bank.

d. To receive notification of emergency payments made after storm – tree felling
£1,200.00

Following the recent storms the Council had agreed via email the cost of removing the dangerous and precariously positioned trees on the Playing Field.

e. To ratify decision to pay Kevin Coe to undertake village maintenance jobs

It was agreed to employ the services of Kevin Coe, a well-respected and highly recommended handyman, to complete various maintenance jobs around the village. The cost of this work was £250.00.

f. To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

i. Kevin Coe (village maintenance)	£250.00
ii. Signs 4 U (Playing Field Gym Equip disclaimer notice)	£51.48
iii. Paul's Tree Services (emergency tree felling)	£1,200.00

g. To note Payments made since last meeting:

i. Broxap (Gym Equipment)	£4,589.40
ii. Broxap (Gym Equipment installation)	£1,858.80
iii. Playdale Playgrounds (basketball hoop)	£904.96
iv. H Owen (padlock for field)	£41.99
v. H Owen (postage stamps)	£7.92

h. To note Payments received since last meeting:

i. Cllr Richardson Enabling Communities Budget	£1,000.00
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i. To note Bank Balances as at 28th February 2022:

i. Current Account (No. 80152285)	£8,630.94
ii. Savings Account (No. 00605875)	£4,250.61

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

Action: Clerk

Chair's initials:

12. To receive agenda items for next meeting on Wednesday 4th May 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.

The next meeting in May will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting. It was agreed that the start time of the Annual Parish Meeting would be 6:30pm followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council straight after. The Clerk was asked to write to all those who offered a report last year for this year's reports.

The issue of continual dog fouling on the field and the request to fence in the area was considered likely to attract many villagers to the meeting and the Clerk agreed to advertise this in the Bugle to ensure as many people as possible were aware of the forthcoming discussion and the possible implications of any changes to the use of the field.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 8:25 pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Ruth Johnson
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Chair's initials: