

## BIRDBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2020 AT 7.00PM

**PRESENT:** Mr Peter Smart (Chair)  
Mr Alan Cook  
Mr Martin Gilbert  
Mr Richard Walker  
Mr Steve Rhenius

**ALSO PRESENT:** Cllr Diana Garrod (Braintree District Council)(arrived late)  
Mrs Debbie Hilliard (Clerk)

#### 20/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

#### 20/23 OTHER ABSENCES

Cllr David Finch.

#### 20/24 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

(a) The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed.

(b) Matters arising, including Action List:

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
7/1/20 20/9(a)	<b>Pond ownership</b> – The Clerk to explore land ownership through the land registry and title number and report back	Clerk	A written enquiry submitted on 26/2 as online proved unsuccessful. Await reply.
20/9(b)	<b>Play Areas Annual Inspection</b> – The Clerk to ask Fenland Leisure to carry out the work on the “high risk” items of the inspection report.	Clerk	On hold. It transpired Fenland wanted to replace whole swing for cost of approx. £6,000. Take swing out of commission until way forward agreed. Agreed to order orange mesh to take swing out of use.
	<b>Proposed Refurbishment of Play Equipment</b> – Alan and Martin to proceed with grant applications for funding.	Alan and Martin	NB. Fenland say safety surface can be cleaned and re-used for any refurb.
7/1/20 20/13	<b>Verge Cutting</b> – Clerk to contact ECC Highways to see if they will take on verge cutting.	Clerk	Clerk spoke to ECC 26/2. Verge cutting outsourced to BDC. Am awaiting contact info for someone at BDC to continue enquiry.
7/1/20 20/14	<b>Grass Cutting</b> – Clerk to follow up 2 <sup>nd</sup> contractor asked to quote for grass cutting.	Clerk	Email sent 15/1. No reply as yet.

7/1/20 20/15	<b>CIF Grant</b> – Clerk will seek clarification from EALC re grant for handyman being over period of 3 years with £5,000 per year.	Clerk	Completed.
7/1/20 20/17	<b>Winter Salt Bag Scheme</b> – An item to go in Birdbrook News to publicise availability of salt.		Completed.

## 20/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

## 20/26 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Garrod presented her report and the following points were noted:-

- Sible Hedingham medical centre.
- Meet Up Mondays.
- Electric car charge centre to be built at Braintree.
- CCTV being used in various areas for enforcement matters.
- 18 new fire officers appointed.
- Great British Clean up scheduled for 20 March-13 April 2020.
- The new Visit Braintree tourism website.
- Courtauld display at the Braintree Museum.

A full report will be forwarded to the Clerk for councillors.

## 20/27 REPORT OF THE CLERK

*Neighbourhood Watch* – The Parish Council were approached by Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator regarding setting up a group for Birdbrook. The Neighbourhood Plan survey indicated interest shown in setting up a group. It was noted that schemes should be led by a community group and not the Parish Council. After discussion, it was agreed to put an article in the next Birdbrook News. The local co-ordinator could also be invited to attending an informal meeting. **Action.**

## 20/28 DOCUMENTS ON DEPOSIT

*Command Service Report* – noted.

*Essex Air Ambulance Donation* – The Essex Air Ambulance thanked the Parish Council for the donation.

## 20/29 MEMBERS' REPORTS

(a) **Pond** – Martin reported the pond water had cleared and looked healthy. The Parish Council considered whether to buy more stock of Aquaplankton. It was noted it was cheaper to buy 12 bags but storing the surplus could be an issue as the storage shed was leaking and might damage the stock. Another option to consider would be to dredge the pond but this would be costly and access could be an issue. It was **agreed** to wait the outcome of the Land Registry searches before proceeding further. This will be carried forward to the May meeting. **Action.**

(b) **Play areas – Refurbishment** - Martin has investigated funding options, including:-

- The Dedham Vale Society with grants up to £2,500.

- Lottery – Martin has started the application process, there are 2 types:
  - Under £10,000 - applications have a 50% success rate and take about 18 weeks.
  - Between £10-£50,000 – Applications for this have a 10% success rate and take six months to process.
- The Landfill Trust - A representative from one of the play equipment companies advised that applications can be made to the Landfill Trust if a parish is within 15 miles of a landfill site. The rep is going to explore this further.
- Community 360 – Cllr Garrod suggested this option.

It was agreed to continue to seek funding and report further at the next meeting. **Action.**

(c) **Chairman’s Report** – Nothing to report as all items covered elsewhere on the agenda.

(d) **Highways** – Richard reported he and Alan had met with Jasmine Wiles (ECC/BDC Highways Liaison Officer) at the end of January and discussed the following:-

- *Proposal to extend the footpath from the Fell Road/Moat Road to the bus shelter* – the LHP budget was not sufficient to cover this, therefore it will not agree to this proposal.
- *Missing salt bin* – Jasmine advised an engineer’s inspection revealed that the gradient was not sufficient to warrant a bin and therefore it would not be returned.
- *Fingerpost fallen down at Stambourne Road, Birdbrook* – can apply for LHP. However, Debbie advised that this work was now being done by a volunteer as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- *40mph limit at Steeple Bumpstead, New England Road be extended to the junction with the main road* – Jasmine advised that this would not be accepted. However, the 25mph sign at Baythorne End will be reinstated once the correct sized pole was fitted. The request to move Station Road to a 30mph would not be accepted as it does not meet the relevant criteria for this speed.
- *Missing Birdbrook village sign* – Richard asked who was responsible for this? Jasmine advised the Parish Council can submit an application to the Local Highways Panel but BDC do not have a maintenance budget for LHP. It was suggested the parish approach ECC but the sign can only have the village name and a 5 word message underneath. The Parish Council could just replace the signs itself at its own expense but would need to apply for a licence to install them.
- *Various highways issues reported in via the online system* – once an issue is reported it must not be reported again. We should continue to check the list on the online system but the waiting time is long. One option would be to approach your County Councillor.
- *Lights outside the Housing Association properties in School Fields* – These lights are not the responsibility of the Parish Council nor Essex County Council. It was agreed they must have been installed when the properties were built and responsibility must therefore be with the Housing Association.
- *Land to the front of School Fields* – It was unclear who was responsible for this land. The Highways Rangers could be asked to attend and carry out work but there may be a limit to how much work they will undertake.

The Parish Council were disappointed at the lack of support these works had from either BDC or ECC Highways but thanked Alan and Richard for taking the time to meet Jasmine and raise the items.

## 20/30 PLANNING

Nothing to report.

*Cllr Garrod left the meeting.*

#### **20/31 STREETLIGHTS**

A and J Lighting have converted all the parish lights to LEDs apart from two outstanding items:-

- The light at the corner of Baythorne End near the bus shelter has no electricity. This has been reported to UK Power who will resolve the problem.
- The light near the Old Swan Pub, Baythorne End – A and J Lighting will need to use traffic lights to access this light as it is located on the bend. The Parish Council agreed to A and J Lighting proceeding with this. A and J Lighting have proposed and it was also agreed that the cost of using traffic lights would be split 50/50.
- Alan suggested and it was agreed that a letter be sent to Essex County Council reporting the conversion of the Parish's lights to LED, a decision made ahead of ECC.
- The Parish Council approved the payment of A and J Lighting's invoice for the work.

#### **20/32 VE DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

Martin reported that plans were progressing for an event in the village. The following points were noted:-

- A PA system is available.
- A good number of local residents have expressed interest in attending the event.
- Ridgewell Gliding Club have offered a gliding lesson as a raffle prize.
- The Parochial Church Council have advised there will be a church service.
- A bagpiper will be able to attend.
- The pub has booked singers and have offered to do a barbecue.
- They are considering applying for a road closure through Birdbrook to enable a picnic to be held.

#### **20/33 GRASS CUTTING**

Three quotes were invited for the new grass cutting contract. Only one quote was submitted. After discussion it was agreed to accept the quote from Mr Shears for 3 years.

#### **20/34 VERGE CUTTING**

The Clerk advised there were two options available:-

- Braintree District Council can take on the contract and pass it to their own sub-contractors.
- A local farmer has expressed interest in taking it on. They already verge cut for another parish.

The Clerk will continue to explore both options and report back. **Action.**

#### **20/35 FINANCE**

- Finance Report – The report was agreed and accepted.
- CIF Grant – The grant has been received. The Parish Council need to consider and agree the best use of the fund. Carry forward to May meeting. **Action.**

#### **20/36 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

None.

#### **20/37 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

None.

**20/38 TIME, DAY AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Tuesday 12 May (APA and AGM)
- Tuesday 7 July
- Tuesday 8 September
- Tuesday 3 November
- Tuesday 12 January 2021

All meetings to start at 7pm in the Community House.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at approximately 8.50pm.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
3/3/20	<b>Swings</b> – order orange mesh to take swing out of commission until way forward on play equipment refurbishment agreed.	Clerk	Mesh ordered, received and swing now fenced off. 23/3/2020
3/3/20 20/27	<b>Neighbourhood Watch</b> – an article to go in Birdbrook News for volunteers. The local co-ordinator could be invited to an informal meeting.	TRW	
3/3/20 20/29(a)	<b>Pond</b> – C/f to May meeting. Consider outcome of Land Registry enquiry, pond ownership, dredging and Aquaplankton.	Clerk to agenda	
3/3/20 20/29(b)	<b>Park refurbishment</b> – continue to explore funding options and report back to May meeting.	MG/Clerk to agenda	
3/3/20 20/34	<b>Verge Cutting</b> – Clerk to continue to explore both options and report back	Clerk	
3/3/20 20/35	<b>Finance -CIF Grant</b> to consider best way of using the grant	Agenda next meeting.	