

BIRDBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 28 JULY 2020 AT 7.00PM
THE MEETING WAS VIRTUAL

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

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr David Finch
Mrs Debbie Hilliard (Clerk)
One member of the public

20/52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Diana Garrod (BDC).

20/53 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

20/54 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2 June 2020 were approved as a correct record.

20/55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Peter Smart declared an interest in agenda item 11 – Planning – application no 20/00141/TPOCON.

It was agreed to move to item 7 – Report of District Councillor at this point to allow Cllr Finch to attend another appointment at 7.30pm.

20/58 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Finch had two items to report:-

- Update on ECC reaction to Coronavirus – a full report will be sent to the Clerk by Cllr Finch. Parish Councillors asked if he was proud of what the Council achieved? Yes. ECC is the second most efficient in the country and in the top 10 of all councils in the country. The Parish Council commented that ECC appeared to have been proactive rather than reactive to the situation and had overall done a good job.
- Local Government Reform – National government has increased commitment to reform. This will take the form of unitary councils rather than the current two-tier level (district and county). Several other authorities are going forward with this reform but ECC does not qualify at the moment as it is too big. Focus will be on what is the impact on and how residents will benefit from better services and lower taxes. Information is currently being shared across the county on this.

Cllr Finch can be contacted on David.finch@essex.gov.uk if anyone has further questions.

There were no further questions and Cllr Finch was thanked for his report and he left the meeting.

20/56 ACTION LIST

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
3/6/20 20/46	Verge Cutting quotes – agreed to accept the quote from M&N Pyman. Clerk will notify	Clerk	Mr Pyman has carried out first cut and submitted invoice.
3/6/20 20/48	Pond – Order aquaplankton for the pond. Footpaths – nos 5,6, 9, 19,28 not shown on definitive map. Why? Clerk to explore and report back.	Clerk to order	Ordered and invoice paid 22/6. Ongoing
3/6/20 20/49	Birdbrook News – to consider options to continue. Clerk to check whether AB will continue and report back. EALC Clerk's Forum – Clerk to attend and get ideas on magazine and social media communication.	Clerk. Agenda next meeting Clerk	AB has confirmed no longer continuing. See agenda item 12 below. Waiting to hear when next forum will be.
3/6/2020 20/50	Clerk's Actions – Finance Report Contact A&J Lighting to see if work was completed on the light by the Swan including whether traffic control was needed. Contact Eon to seek reduction of electricity bills for streetlighting now that LEDs are fitted. £10,000 is to be moved to the Reserve account as soon as lockdown restrictions ease and the Clerk can visit the bank. Richard Walker is a signatory for the bank accounts and will need to be removed. <i>Baythorne End Defibrillator</i> – Alan Cook proposed that if there was no progress on the grant application for this item by September 2020, the Parish Council consider funding this item in order to ensure it was completed. Agenda for September meeting. Action.	Clerk Clerk – agenda Sept meeting	Work completed and invoice paid June 2020. Letter sent 5/6. Account now in credit by £239.36. Completed. Completed. Ongoing. Agenda Sept meeting.
3/3/20 20/35	Finance -CIF Grant to consider best way of using the grant	Agenda next meeting.	Agenda item 10 below.

Action List noted.

20/57 PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Councillors welcomed Katie Gentry to the meeting and thanked her for her interest in becoming a parish councillor. Ms Gentry advised she has lived and worked in the parish for a number of years and was committed to bring some improvements and cohesion to the village. She expressed an interest in being involved with improving the play areas as she has young children.

Ms Gentry was also advised of plans to set up a General Committee for the Community House and this may also be of interest.

After consideration Martin Gilbert proposed and Steve Rhenius seconded with all in favour that Katie Gentry be co-opted to the parish council. **Action.**

20/59 REPORT OF THE CLERK

Two items to note:-

- BEARS – scan and circulate to parish council. **Action.**
- RCCE – Community Profile application. Original form sent to RCCE on 18 June 2020. Reminder issued 27 July 2020.

20/60 MEMBERS' REPORTS

(a) **Pond** – Martin reported the Aquaplankton had been delivered and was stored in the garage. Pond was looking quite clear now. There was one concern – plans to form a work party to trim back vegetation around the pond area had to be cancelled due to coronavirus. The vegetation is now overgrown. He will continue to keep under review until restrictions ease. It may be possible to ask local farmers to help with this.

(b) **Parks** – Grants for funding to refurbish and replace the play equipment continue to be refused due to coronavirus. It was also apparent that some organisations will not accept applications from Parish Councils as they are seen as a government body. This was a frustrating situation. Estimates for refurbishment could be as much as £50,000. This may be an item which the General Committee of the Community House Trustees could take up. Peter (as Chair of the General Committee) is establishing membership and will call a meeting. Katie will approach neighbours who may be interested in supporting or joining this committee. **Action.**

Swing – Peter will circulate the Fenland Leisure report for the swing and circulate to councillors before a decision is made on Graham Downer's proposal to replace the x-pole. **Action.**

(c) **Chairman's Report** – Nothing to report.

(d) **Highways** – Alan reported:-

- Mill Road repairs CO9 4GE – There was uncertainty whether the repairs had been carried out but noted that the road appears to be in good order. Peter will follow this up. **Action.**
- It was noted that Birdbrook Road will be closed early August for several days due to work by Anglian Water.
- Missing fingerpost sign at Birdbrook Road – it was noted that Stambourne Parish Council had advised this was being repaired as a community project by a Duke of Edinburgh volunteer. The Clerk will check progress on this item. **Action.**

- Road closure signage – reports have come in of roads being shown as closed when they are actually open. This is causing inconvenience and confusion for traffic. It was agreed to contact ECC Cllr Finch on this item. Clerk to **Action**.

20/61 HANDYMAN/CIF GRANT

The Parish Council considered how to use the CIF grant of £2,825.00.

- Noticeboards – It was agreed to replace the noticeboards with new as per the quote from The Acorn Workshop submitted by Grahame Downer at a cost of £2,790.00 (ex VAT), cost of materials £30.00, Grahame Downer’s labour £320.00, disposal £50. Giving a total cost of £3,190.00 (ex VAT). The balance of £365.00 to come from Parish Council funds.
- Cleaning of bus stop by Grahame Downer £95.00 – approved.
- Swing – see minute 20/60 (b) above.

Clerk to contact Mr Downer and ask him to proceed. **Action**.

20/62 PLANNING

- Application no; 20/00141/TPOCON – This application to carry out work on trees in his garden, was submitted by Peter Smart in early June. It would appear that the parish council did not receive any notification of this application. The Clerk has communicated with BDC Landscape Services and they confirmed that email notifications were sent in the usual manner but were not received by the Clerk. BDC IT would need to check if the correct email address was used. The application has now passed and no further action can be taken. Noted.
- Work carried out on a Monkey Puzzle Tree at The Street, The Street – The Clerk has contacted BDC Landscape Services who confirmed no application had been received. The Clerk has sent an email to Landscape Services who will contact the household.
- The Street, Birdbrook – verge grass taken up and replaced with stones – Peter will send a photograph to the Clerk. This will be reported to ECC Highways. **Action**.
- Application no: 20/01095/LBC – Baythorne Hall – After consideration, it was agreed to support the application.

20/63 BIRDBROOK NEWS

Mr Baxter had confirmed that he would no longer be involved in editing the Birdbrook News. The Parish Council thanked Mr Baxter for his input and support for the magazine. **Action**.

Mrs Rhenius has offered to re-start the magazine on a revised format. She had asked if any e-copies of the magazine were available for information. Martin sent a copy through.

20/64 FINANCE

- Finance Report – The report was considered. Steve Rhenius proposed and Alan Cook seconded with all in favour that the finance report for July 2020 be accepted.
- Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 – the Clerk reported the AGAR form had now been signed by the Chair and sent to PKF Littlejohn, the auditors. The Clerk had obtained a signature from the Chair and used the minute reference from the June meeting. It was not possible to physically sign the form as current parish council meetings were held virtually by Zoom due to coronavirus. Parish Councillors have been sent a scanned signed copy of the AGAR for information by email.

20/65 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 8 September 2020 (location to be kept under review – it may be necessary to hold a virtual meeting)

Tuesday 3 November 2020

Tuesday 12 January 2021

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at approximately 8.00pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Action List

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
20/57 27/7/20	Co-option of parish councillor – send Katie SO’s, Finance Regs and Policies. Dec of Acceptance and Register of Interests. Advise BDC and EALC. Look at EALC training	Clerk	Email sent 30/7. Completed and returned by KG and sent on to BDC by Clerk 23/8.
28/7/2020 20/60(b)	Parks – Play Equipment – Peter to call a meeting of the General Committee of Community House Trustees. Katie to approach neighbours who may support/join. Swing – Peter to circulate Fenland Report to councillors and then a decision be made on swing and Graham Downer’s repair proposal	PS/KG PS	
28/7/2020 20/60 (d)	Highways – Mill Road repairs – Peter to follow up whether this is completed. Missing Fingerpost, Birdbrook Road – Clerk will check with Stambourne PC progress. Road closures – inaccurate signage. Contact Cllr Finch.	PS Clerk Clerk	Email sent to Chair of Stambourne PC 30/7 – reply received – work is underway but delayed by Covid. Hope to complete soon Email sent 1/9
28/7/2020 20/61	Handyman/CIF grant – notify Mr Downer to proceed with noticeboards and bus stop.	Clerk	Emailed 30/7
28/7/2020 20/62	Planning – The Street – verge grass removed and replaced with stones. Peter to send photo to Clerk to report to ECC Highways.	PS/Clerk	Reported to Highways 31/7 Ref No; 2673646.
28/7/2020 20/63	Birdbrook News – send a thank you letter to Albert.	Clerk	Emailed Richard 11/8 for address