

BIRDBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**HELD ON TUESDAY 12 JANUARY 2021 AT 7.00PM
THE MEETING WAS VIRTUAL HELD VIA ZOOM OVER 3 SESSIONS**

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

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr David Finch
Mrs Debbie Hilliard (Clerk)

21/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr Diana Garrod

21/02 OTHER ABSENCES
None.

It was agreed that Cllr David Finch be asked to present his report.

21/03 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Finch presented his report. He referred to the serious situation we were all living in at present with the significant Covid outbreak including the new variant. Infection rates were very high. He emphasised the need for everyone to stay at home and only go out when absolutely necessary. It was noted that all 5 of the Essex hospitals needed additional mortuary facilities for excess deaths. Testing and vaccination was now been rolled out by the NHS, with vaccination centres in Braintree and work was underway to identify more local sites. A food and fuel poverty grant was available for parish councils for families who are struggling up to £2,000.

Budget 2021-22 – Income from Council tax would be reduced due to the impact of Covid, more people were on furlough or working on reduced hours. ECC has plans to deal with this. Council tax will not be increased for the year 2021-22 but the social care precept will increase by 1½%.

Election 2021 – It was possible the election scheduled for early May would be postponed until later in the year.

Questions were invited:-

Questions were tabled around the roll-out of testing. Cllr Finch confirmed the lateral flow test was being rolled out along with the swab test. However, the focus was on roll-out of the vaccination.

There were no further questions and Cllr Finch was thanked for attending and presenting his report.

Cllr Finch left the meeting.

21/04 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on Tuesday 3 November 2020 were approved.

21/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

21/06 ACTION LIST

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
3/11/20 20/95	<p>Pond – land ownership/registry. Clerk to contact EALC for legal advice.</p> <p>Parks – MG to visit and check barriers up and closed sign in place.</p> <p>Chair’s Report – Clerk to send copies of BCH invoices to Matt Unwin</p> <p>Communication – Clerk to look into setting up FB page for the village</p> <p>Highways – Clerk to write thank you to the Duke of Edinburgh student for the refurbished fingerpost sign at Old Mill Lane.</p> <p>2nd verge cut – agreed not required. Advise contractor</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>MG</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>Email sent to EALC legal advice. Response awaited. See below.</p> <p>Checked and completed. Will continue to monitor.</p> <p>Emailed 5/11</p> <p>Page set up 1 Jan 2021</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Emailed 9/11</p>
3/11/20 20/99	<p>Baythorne End Defibrillator – Steve to write to National Lottery to challenge their decision to refuse applications made by statutory bodies and seek an explanation.</p> <p>Agreed to proceed with purchase of defibrillator.</p>	SR	See Agenda item 12.
3/11/20 20/100	Finance – change bank mandate. Move to BACS payments/online banking	Clerk	5/11 spoke to bank. Link being sent. Forms printed and need signatures.
20/72 8/9/2020	Missing Footpath nos from Birdbrook definitive map – enquiry made to OS had simply referred us back to ECC. Contact ECC.	Clerk	ECC contacted. Footpaths team being notified and will call back. Footpaths rang 9/11 with info – they will email. Email received 9/11. Peter reviewing

21/07 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR/COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Finch’s report was considered under minute 21/03 above.

Cllr Garrod sent apologies to the meeting and had sent a written report which was considered and noted.

21/08 COMMUNICATION AND REPORT OF THE CLERK

There were two items to note:-

- Parish Council Facebook Page – it was noted that the page was now operational and appeared to be working well. The Clerk will continue to monitor and approve any posts to be added.
- Flooding at Station Road – a letter from a resident at Station Road sent to the Parish Council had been circulated and noted. The Clerk and Alan Cook had both separately telephoned the

resident to discuss the situation. It was noted that the resident was also in communication with Greenfields Housing Association and the landowner to try and resolve the matter. Cllr Garrod had also been assisting. The Clerk will contact the Environment Agency to see if they can help. **Action**

21/09 MEMBERS' REPORTS

- Pond – Martin reported. The pond remained in a poor state. No working parties to tidy the area could take place due to lockdown restrictions. It was noted that other ponds in the area were in a similar state.

Pond ownership – the Clerk had been in contact with the EALC legal helpline and received a response which was not helpful. After consideration it was agreed that the Clerk will contact the Land Registry again and endeavour to speak to someone for guidance. She will also make enquiries of the Diocese. **Action.**

- Parks – Martin reported. The parks remain closed. It was noted the dangerous tree had now been removed.

Refurbishment of play equipment – It was noted there had been no response so far to the letter sent to James Cleverly MP regarding funding. It was possible the Community House Trustees would support a plan for refurbishment. Peter will explore this further. **Action.** Martin will look into a CIF application in the new financial year 2021-22. **Action.**

The Clerk suggested:-

- The Parish Council agree a plan of exactly what equipment they want on the playing field.
 - Then agree to stage the refurbishment over a period of years, applying for funding for each stage.
 - It was hoped that over time there would be a return to normal grant funding arrangements as the pandemic eased.
- Chair's Report – Peter reported that the farmer who uses the land behind the playingfield had been unable to use the right of access over the playing field as the gates were locked. There was no record of who held the key for the gates. It had been agreed that the lock would be cut off.

(d) Highways – Alan reported. The following items were noted:-

- The dog waste bin by the playing field had been emptied and replaced with a larger one by Braintree District Council. The bin has also been relocated to a more appropriate site near the recycling point. Alan was thanked for his work on this matter.
- It was noted there had been a large increase in the numbers of people visiting the village to walk in groups and walk their dogs. There was a large increase in dog fouling.
- Katie advised that more parishioners had expressed interest in the speedwatch scheme and it was hoped the group could move onto the list for training later in the year.

The next Zoom session started. All rejoined.

21/10 HANDYMAN/CIF GRANT

The new noticeboards were now in situ and the bus stop had been cleaned. The refurbishment of the benches had not been started. The contractor had advised that they may be beyond economical repair. It was agreed to agenda this item to the next meeting for consideration. **Action.**

21/11 PLANNING

Application no 20/00454/TPOCON – The Bryce Foundation, Community House – was noted. No action required.

21/12 BIRDBROOK NEWS

The first issue of the new Birdbrook Parish Magazine had been circulated and feedback was positive. The second issue would be published shortly. Katie advised that there had been more interest for articles to go in. Advertising prices had now been finalised and agreed. Val Rhenius had confirmed she was happy to continue to work on the magazine alongside Katie. The Parish Council thanked Katie and Val for their work and support to get the new magazine underway.

The meeting restarted, all rejoined apart from Steve Rhenius. Due to time constraints it was agreed to continue with the agenda.

21/13 BAYTHORNE END DEFIBRILLATOR

Alan reported that the order for the defibrillator had been placed. It had been agreed that Alan will take delivery of the post and cabinet until they are able to be installed. It was noted there was a delay in delivery of the defibrillator. As soon as it was delivered the contractor and landowner will be contacted by Alan Cook to arrange installation. **Action.**

It was noted that the defibrillator in Birdbrook would need replacement batteries and pads. Alan was organising this.

Steve Rhenius rejoined the meeting.

21/14 FINANCE

The following points were noted:-

- Finance Report – noted and accepted.
- Budget 2021-22 – Peter had updated the budget form which was considered by the Parish Council. After consideration Alan Cook proposed and Steve Rhenius seconded with all in favour that the budget for 2021-22 showing a precept of £13,685 be agreed. Peter will adjust the figures as agreed and recirculate to all parish councillors. **Action.**
- Online banking and change of mandate – The Parish Council agreed to move to online banking to enable BACs payments to be made with the Clerk setting up the payment and 2 or more agreed users authorising. A form would need to be signed by those users and a change of mandate needed. It was noted that when the Clerk had accessed the form via Lloyds website, the website had linked to her own personal banking. It was agreed it was imperative that Birdbrook Parish Council's online banking should be entirely separate. The Clerk will contact the helpline to sort this out and update everyone of progress. **Action.**

Agreed users were confirmed as Peter Smart, Alan Cook and Steve Rhenius.

21/15 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 2 March

Tuesday 11 May

Tuesday 6 July

Tuesday 7 September

Tuesday 9 November

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

Signed:

Dated:

Action List

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
12/1/21 21/08	Flooding at Station Road – continue to monitor. Clerk to contact Environment Agency. <i>NB – clerk to ring again to check situation.</i>	Clerk	
12/1/21 21/09	Pond Ownership – Clerk to contact the Diocese and Land Registry.	Clerk	
12/1/21 21/09	Playing field refurbishment – Martin to look into CIF funding in new financial year 2021-22. Peter to explore if Community House Trustees will support a plan.	PS/MG	
12/1/21 21/10	Refurbishment of Benches – agenda for March meeting.	Clerk to agenda	
12/1/21 21/13	Baythorne End Defibrillator – Alan to contact landowner and contractor when the defibrillator is ready to install	Alan	
12/1/21 21/14	Finance A and J Lighting Contract – in place to 2023. Clerk to contact and see if there can be a reduction in monthly charge due to change to LEDs Budget 2021-22 – Peter to adjust figures as agreed and circulate. Online banking – Clerk to continue. Needs to contact Lloyds helpdesk to progress. Will report back on progress	Clerk Peter Clerk	