

BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

(Draft) Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 27th November 2019

The meeting commenced at 1930 at the Bedfield sports pavilion

11/19 - 01 Present

- Keith Frost (KF), Jenny Barham (JB – Vice-Chairman), Suzie Carr (SC) and John Dickson (JD).
- Geoff Robinson (GR), as Parish Clerk.
- Two members of the public (see also Items 11/09 – 03 & 05 below).
- Matthew Hicks- MSDC & SCC ward councillor (see Item 09 – 09 below).

11/19 - 02 Apologies for Absence

- None.

11/19 - 03 Public Open Session

KF introduced Celia Davies (CD) and allowed her to speak on behalf of Bedfield Church, which would be discussed later in “Any Other Business”, the salient points of which were:

- The Church was in great danger of closing as funding will run out in the Summer of 2020 and there was now only three PCC members. They are worried and lack of experience regarding fund raising etc, was another issue.
- Lack of members and church attendees was also a major problem, as was volunteers in fund raising and other activities. It was hoped that April 2020 would bring new members. Any help with fund raising is urgently required and would be very welcome.
- CD was unable to say how much would be required in 2020 to safeguard the Church as she did not have the figures with her.
- CD explained that she was not a member of the PCC and could not do everything herself but remained as a School Governor and would retain her “safeguarding role” in conjunction with other neighbouring churches.
- Overall the fabric of the Church remained in very good order.
- The Church is desperate for any help, both in a volunteer capacity or financially.

11/19 - 04 Declaration of Members Interests

- GR reminded the councillors of the need to occasionally review their declarations up to date.
- GR stated that he had resolved the issues with the on-line declarations of SC and RP.

11/19 - 05 Co-option to Fill Vacancy

- One application had been received and by a show of hands, Stephen Harvey (SH) was unanimously co-opted to the Parish Council. He signed the Declaration and joined the meeting. SH to complete the Register of Members Interests online within a month (GR to facilitate).

11/19 - 06 Minutes of the Last meeting (4th September 2019)

- These were agreed and signed by KF as Chairman, following previous circulation.

11/19 - 07 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- GR had liaised with Mark Howard regarding the welcome pack and produced the first draft (final) document. GR issued copies to the councillors and asked to be notified with a week of any errors or suggested amendments. He also stated that some of the information was now outdated and he would address this aspect. It was agreed that a picture of the village sign should be super-imposed on the front page and contact numbers should be added to each sub-paragraph as well as listed in the rear. GR to advise Mark in due course.

- KF stated that the 2018 play area repairs had been completed by Phil Mills. The required repairs following the recent 2019 safety report will now also be done by Phil.
- GR had advised Worlingworth PC that they did not want to join a Speedwatch Scheme at this stage.
- GR had contacted SCC Highways and they did not consider any action necessary regarding our complaint of rubble etc on the footpath from Bedfield School to Church Lane.

11/19 - 08 Police Report

- GR stated that Suffolk Police crime website checks for August to October 2019 had shown no recorded crimes in the village.

11/19 - 09 Report of District & County Councillor

MH attended and stated that:

- SCC Trading Standards continued to seize dangerous and illegal counterfeit tobacco products from retailers, especially with regard to the safety of children.
- A competition for children to name the 41 SCC road gritters had generated great interest. This culminated in some very amusing names and a stand at the Suffolk Show, which attracted large numbers of children to witness the naming of some of the gritters involved.
- SCC had introduced awareness training for new young drivers in terms of education and road safety, in the early days after passing their driving tests. This was specifically aimed at the coming winter weather conditions.
- £760,000 had been obtained to install or improve central heating in low income houses.

11/19 - 10 Financial Update

- GR explained that income since the last meeting consisted of the 2019/20 second half precept (£1,800.00) and a CIL payment of £3094.78 paid in error and appropriate to Beddingfield PC.
- Expenses during the same period had been the Clerk's first half salary (£432.00), PAYE (£82.00), expenses (£125.50), the annual insurance renewal with Came & Company (£575.28), Long Green hedge cutting (M&M Stacey £50.00), repairs to the play area by PGM Home & Garden Services (£150.00) & the balance of the dog-bin emptying service, undercharged by MSDC (£27.60).
- Also paid but not yet shown on the bank statements was the return of the £3094.78 incorrect CIL payment to MSDC.
- At previous meetings the subject of the Clerk's salary has been raised in the context of current Local Government rates and conditions. Accordingly, GR had produced a discussion paper based on a similar one for Monk Soham Parish Council regarding the history of the current Clerk's salary and the national requirements under Local Government rules. This had been circulated to all the councillors for consideration. The salient points of the paper were that whilst the Clerks contract had remained the same since 2009 and was for 125 hours per year, a detailed analysis of the current workload showed that a conservative total of 216 hours per annum was required to provide the service required on an on-going basis to the Parish Council. In addition, there had been no increase to his salary of £1028 since that date, whilst 216 hours on the National Association of Local Councils SCP scale should equate to circa £2110. The councillors were unanimous in agreeing that this situation could not be allowed to continue and in addition, it would make any replacement for the current Clerk difficult, if not impossible to achieve. In addition, GR was thanked for his excellent work over the past ten years in what appears to be a considerably underpaid role. It was therefore unanimously agreed to increase the Clerk's salary to £1500 with effect from the 1st April 2020 and then review it on an annual basis.
- The 2020/21 precept was set at £4,100.00 and the forms were signed accordingly for MSDC.
- GR produced an estimate for the rest of 2019/2020 which showed a potential surplus of £7354 at 31st March 2020, without prejudice to any unforeseen expenditure during the rest of the year.

11/19 - 11 Planning Update

- DC/19/02172 - (Erection of dwelling at Edale, Long Green) – As instructed, GR had contacted MSDC regarding the removal of the hedge at the front of the plot and received an acknowledgement but no explanation. He will follow-up the matter.

- DC/19/03838 - (Erection of Cart-lodge at 9 Greenlands) – Approved by MSDC.

11/19 – 12 Progress of MSDC New Joint Local Plan

- GR explained that he notified the Project Team in line with the decisions taken at the last meeting and their acknowledgement has been received. GR to copy the document.

11/19 - 13 Sports Club Matters

- CCTV is still to be installed but will be done in conjunction with the proposed new childrens play area.
- GR stated that grants totaling £1400 had been received from MH for the purchase of new marquees and were in the course of procurement. The total cost excluding VAT was circa £1750. Thanks were expressed to Councillor Hicks for his ongoing support.

11/19 - 14 Relocation of the Play Area to the Sports Field

GR updated the meeting with a progress report, the salient points of which were that:

- KOMPAN had been asked to provide a revised price for some of the ancillary works, which could be sourced locally. This discussion is ongoing. They had also provided quotes for an additional item of equipment. The overall ballpark figure remained at £32,000 and that included an element for fencing, which would be resourced locally.
- KF produced an estimate for the fencing materials from Oakfield UK Ltd which totaled £2465.00 (excluding VAT). After a brief discussion it was agreed that other quotes would be obtained and that extra funding would be required beyond the £32,000 currently being sourced. However, it was agreed that the 2020/21 precept plus current Parish Council & Sports Club reserves (and possible other income) could be available to meet any additional requirements.
- Grant applications had been submitted to MSDC (Communities Grant Fund £10,666), MSDC (CIL Fund - £2,534) the Nationally Lottery (£10,000) and The Adnams Charity (£1,800). The results were awaited and would probably not be know until circa February 2020.
- Already committed was £5,500 (from the Parish Council & Sports Club) and £1,500 (from Councillor Matthew Hicks).
- GR had updated the Bedfield Town Estate on the proposals and received a letter of approval from MSDC.

11/19 - 15 AOB and Correspondence Etc

- GR stated that Barlow and Sons had still to respond to the wayleave application despite being supplied with the requested photographs of the pole.
- KF stated that he had been the Bedfield representative on the Eye Grammar School Fund Trust for a number of years, which had made many grants for diverse educational purposes, including some in Bedfield. He explained that it consisted of attending occasional meetings. KF stated that it was time for a new representative to take over the role and asked other councillors to consider taking it on board.
- A discussion took place regarding the presentation by CD during the Public Open Session and the future of Bedfield Church. CD was thanked for bringing it to the attention of the Parish Council and overall the councillors expressed great concern. However, it was felt that as a Parish Council there was little that could be done other than to try and raise public awareness about the issue. It was also suggested that the PCC should use the parish magazine to achieve this aim.

11/19 - 16 Date of Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be held at Bedfield sports pavilion, commencing 1930 on Wednesday 12th February 2020.

The meeting closed at 2045.

Chairman