

# **BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

## **(Draft) Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

The meeting commenced at 1930 at the Bedfield sports pavilion

### ***02/20 - 01 Present***

- Keith Frost (KF), Suzie Carr (SC), Ed Nesling (EN), Richard Pickard (RP), Steve Harvey (SH) and John Dickson (JD).
- Geoff Robinson (GR), as Parish Clerk.
- Nine members of the public.
- Matthew Hicks- MSDC & SCC ward councillor (see also item 02/20 – 08 below).

### ***02/20 - 02 Apologies for Absence***

- Jenny Barham (illness - approved).

### ***02/20 - 03 Public Open Session***

KF opened the session by welcoming members of the public and explaining that they were welcome to comment on any agenda item. Accordingly several members of the public and councillors commented on the agenda item appertaining to dog activity on the sports field. Salient points included:

- David Lee (DL) stated that for about four years he had been a “spokesman” for dog users, who in general had strived to keep the field neat and tidy and he had not noticed any recent increase in dog fouling. This was acknowledged by the meeting as being largely correct.
- He also stated that it had been unfortunate that an “accident” had occurred during which an elderly gentleman had been knocked over by boisterous dogs and that everything that could be done at the time had been done. There had been no indication the dogs in question had been out of control.
- GR explained how he had been contacted by telephone by the gentleman in question to complain about the incident and informed the meeting of the content of the call. He then said that having been made aware of this, the Parish Council and/or the Sports Club had no choice but to follow it up. KF added that as there had been an incident, there was a necessity to discuss it from a health and safety/risk assessment point of view to try and minimise anything similar happening again. He also added that not to do so would be to fail in our public duty as providers of the field. GR stated that he had since spoken to the owner of the dogs and reminded him of the need to keep them under control at all times.
- It was stated that dogs need to be allowed to run freely to exercise properly and to insist on them being on leads at all times would negate any point to the use of the field. Other than this unfortunate incident, no previous problems had been caused to any users of the field.
- The current new play area project centers on the field being promoted as the “Village Hub” and any restriction on users would be detrimental to this concept. In particular, families will be encouraged to visit the field, let the children play in the new (fenced) facility, whilst their parents exercised their dogs.
- It was accepted that when children were playing on the field, dogs must be kept on their leads. It was agreed by everyone this was the total responsibility of their owners to implement. Any owners not able to confirm to this requirement should simply not use the field. This was reiterated by GR on behalf of the Sports Club and KF on behalf of the Parish Council.
- KF stated that all the Parish Council wanted was for owners to keep their dogs “under complete control at all times” as the signs clearly state and to clean up after them.
- One proposal was to fence off any area of the field as a dog run free area. GR cautioned against the cost and also that any measures taken must be enforceable. This also applied to other ideas such as restricting dogs to certain hours of the day.

- CCTV will be installed in connection with the new play area but will also serve to monitor the use and security of the field. Whilst it was felt that CCTV may have limitations, it was generally thought that it would work as a deterrent and hopefully identify any failures to conform to the code of conduct associated with exercising dogs on the playing field.

KF closed the open session at 2010 and thanked everyone for their contributions. He emphasised that contrary to what has been rumoured, no decision had been taken to ban dogs or insist that they should be on their leads at all times. The matter would now be discussed by the Sports Club Committee regarding what action, if any, needs to be taken.

#### ***02/20 - 04 Declaration of Members Interests***

- GR reminded the councillors of the need to occasionally review their declarations and keep them up to date.

#### ***02/20 - 05 Minutes of the Last meeting (27<sup>th</sup> November 2019)***

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

#### ***02/20 - 06 Matters Arising from the Minutes***

- GR had liaised with Mark Howard regarding the welcome pack and Mark had produced the first draft document. Following the issue of draft copies to councillors, no suggested amendments had been received by GR, other than from KF. He had then included the contact details in each paragraph as agreed and updated the draft document, which had been notified to Mark. GR apologised for the delay but the play area project had taken preference. 200 copies would be initially produced and Mark was awaiting a picture copy of the village sign to superimpose on the original draft document. SC was still happy to co-ordinate ongoing amendments and GR will liaise with Mark about the possibility of electronic updates.
- SC updated the meeting regarding the ongoing funding difficulties mentioned at the last meeting by Celia Davies on behalf of Bedfield Church. Running costs in the coming year would be circa £5 to £6k, plus another £7.5k as part of the "Parish Share" and it was the latter that was causing the most problems. However, some fund-raising events were planned and SC requested that in the circumstances, the use of the pavilion could be provided free. GR to take the request to the Sports Club Committee asap

#### ***02/20 - 07 Police Report***

- GR stated that Suffolk Police crime website checks for November and December 2019 had shown one crime of "Criminal Damage & Arson" in the latter month, in Church Road, which was still under active investigation.

#### ***02/20 - 08 Report of District & County Councillor***

MH attended and stated that:

- The Ipswich Northern Route had been placed on hold due to opposition from the district councils over the government requirement for them to allow house building to make it cost viable. However, this decision needed to be confirmed by the SCC Cabinet.
- The Care Quality Commission had rated Suffolk care locations at 89.4%. which was a tremendously good result.
- The annoyance of the public regarding unnecessary and prolonged road diversions was to be tackled by the introduction of a permit system. They would also have to display a contact telephone number. The scheme would fine utility companies for over running diversions and road closures.
- A review of children's centers was to take place but its likely that only two closures would occur. In addition, any savings would be put back into the system which would help establish outreach locations in village halls, etc.

- MH explained that he had been pleased to continue to support the village whenever possible and had arranged grants towards the gazebos, play area, school projects and other items. KF wished to record that everyone greatly appreciated the interest and support that he continued to give to Bedfield, without which some activities would be difficult. This was unanimously supported by all the councillors.

#### **02/20 - 09 Financial Update**

- GR explained that there had been problems with an update for this meeting as the January bank statement appears to have been lost in the post. He has contacted Barclays and a new statement will be sent as soon as possible. However, this means that his report could only be verified at this stage up to and including December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- Expenses since then have included £90.40 for the playground inspection (MSDC), and £243.60 for grass cutting in the play area (MSDC). Also anticipated was the Clerk's second half salary & PAYE (£432.00) and expenses (£93.05). All were approved for payment. Also anticipated was a payment of a £60.00 donation towards the parish magazine for 2020.
- Income for the same period have included a grant of £500 from The Adnams Trust towards the new play area. Other grant payments in the current financial year are also expected.
- After a brief discussion, it was also agreed to pay an agreed £18 for Fred Clayson to improve the village website.
- Following the agreement at the last meeting regarding an increase in the Clerk's salary from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, GR had prepared a new contract for consideration by the Councillors, which had been circulated. This included revision of the HMRC tax free homeworking allowance from £4.00 a week down to £2.00 and for three hours per week salary. The total cost of this was £1531.00 per annum. After a brief discussion this was unanimously approved and the new contract signed by GR and KF.

#### **02/20 - 10 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. MSDC had responded but the councillors felt that little could now be done.

#### **02/20 - 11 Progress of MSDC New Joint Local Plan**

- GR stated that there was no update on this, but an ongoing consultation period was planned for the Summer of 2020.
- Little of practical use had been gleaned from the recent Parish Liaison Meeting in Stowmarket

#### **02/20 - 12 Relocation of the Play Area to the Sports Field**

AM and GR updated the meeting regarding the progress so far of this project, the salient points being:

- GR stated that a grant for £500 had been received from The Adnams Foundation and whilst it was very welcome, it was £1300 less than we hoped. This money will need to be obtained elsewhere.
- The National Lottery had rejected our bid for a grant of £10,000, but AM and GR had since spent considerable time submitting a new application, after discussions with the National Lottery representative. The result of this is still awaited
- MSDC had raised the issue of the need for Safeguarding Policy in connection with our application for grants from their Community Fund. It also has become obvious that this must be in force for the existing play area, irrespective of the outcome of the grant application. Again, AM and GR had spent a large amount of time producing a draft document which is hoped will satisfy MSDC. All councillors and sports club officials will need to acknowledge that they have read the final document and will abide by its requirements. Its adoption, subject to the minor amendments that are still required by MSDC, was adopted with immediate effect.

**20/20 - 13 Sports Club Matters**

- GR also stated that additional gazebos had been purchased and would be very useful for events and in particular, the planned Spring Fair on the field. This had been made possible by the ongoing support of Councillor Matthew Hicks by a grant from his Local Amenities Fund. Matthew was thanked yet again for his ongoing and tremendous support for the village.

**20/20 - 14 AOB and Correspondence Etc**

- GR stated that he had today phoned Barlow and Sons who said that our wayleave application was with Network Power but that they would chase it up. They were reminded that this has been in progress for over three years.

**20/20 - 15 Date of the Next Meeting**

- The next meeting will be the AGM to be held at Bedfield sports pavilion, commencing 1900 on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, followed by the Annual Village Meeting at circa 2000. GR invited subjects for the latter to be suggested as soon as possible.

The meeting closed at 2045.

**Chairman .....**