



Minutes of the meeting of BLETSOE PARISH COUNCIL held on 28th March 2023 at 7.30pm in Bletsoe Village Hall.

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Clare Goduti (Chair), Donna Glanvill, Mark Abraham, Alison Field-Foster, Peter Margrave, Claire Woodward.

In attendance: Borough Cllr Martin Towler, David Brough (Clerk), and 4 members of the public.

Public Participation:

- Parishioner spoke in relation to the litterpick date falling on the Easter weekend. Cllr Goduti will check with the borough council for all available dates for the equipment and revisit the date.
- Borough Cllr Towler spoke in relation to highways issues, including a missing vehicle weight restriction sign at the junction of The Avenue/Bletsoe Road
- Parishioner thanked the parish council for removing a set of email communication from the council website

1 **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Jason Peace.

2 **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:** None.

3 **To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting** held on 24th January 2023.

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting as an accurate record.

4 **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

- **Thurleigh Road – Cazoo**

Cllr Goduti met with PC Kerry Jones about the verge parking, who agreed to speak to Cazoo. The issue has not been noticed since. Issue to be monitored with a possible request for “No Verge Parking” signs if it reoccurs.

5 **Clerk position**

To note the resignation of the Clerk, Diane Robins, and agree to the appointment of a new Clerk.

Resolved to appoint David Brough as Clerk/RFO and to amend the bank mandate accordingly.

6 **Smockers report**

Report was received, with thanks, and added to the parish council website.

7 **Faster broadband for the village**

Cllr Goduti read out an update from the borough council, who have been involved in the government’s rollout of “superfast broadband”. The full statement can be found in the appendix.

8 **Neighbourhood Development Plan reviews/revisions**

To receive an update from the borough council workshop attended by Cllrs Goduti and Glanvill.

The meeting heard that the workshop recommended an annual review, ratified by the full council, to ensure that the NDP policies are still relevant. This can strengthen the defence against rogue development and also assists in keeping policies in mind when responding to general planning applications.

Action: Cllrs Goduti and Glanvill to prepare a policy review for ratification at the May 2023 council meeting.

9 **Planning applications**

To consider the following planning applications and any received between the date of issuing the agenda and the meeting:

The following planning applications were acknowledged without comment or objection unless noted otherwise:

- 23/00223/TPO Tree Preservation Order Application: Cupressus spp (T3) – fell. Cupressus spp (T4) – fell. 4 x Cupressus spp (between T3 & T4) – fell

- 23/00230/LBC Removal of horizontal timber cladding on dormers and reinstatement of fish scale tiles; retention of replacement windows in the dormers; retention of patio doors to rear elevation; retention of alterations to ground floor layout and retention of converted garage as ancillary residential accommodation at The Old School, 45 The Avenue, Bletsoe
- 23/00231/FUL Erection of agricultural barn for storage at land at rear of New House, Long Haydons, Rushden Road, Bletsoe

10 **Village litterpick**

The existing litterpick date is on the Easter holiday weekend, which could be poorly attended.

Action: Cllr Goduti to check with the borough council when the equipment is available, to enable another date to be chosen.

11 **Election process**

The date of the local elections is 4th May 2023; there will only be an election if there are more applicants than open councillor roles (7). The last day for submitting application forms to the borough council is 4th April 2023.

12 **Financial Matters**

- *To approve payments and note income.*

Resolved to approve the payments in the appendix

- *To consider an annual donation to the church*

The Clerk gave advice on the legal ambiguity of funding churches in relation the Local Government Acts of 1894 and 1972. Spending on the “affairs of the church” is prohibited in the former, but there are general spending powers in the latter that could be applied, but no reversal of the prohibition.

There was no agreement from councillors to provide a donation, however it was requested to add this item to future agendas so it can be considered against available budget.

13 **Matters arising from correspondence**

- Requirement for residents to bring photo ID to vote in person for the 4th May 2023 elections.

Action: Cllr Goduti to prepare a poster and flyers for distribution to the village.

14 **Councillors’ Reports/Concerns**

Councillors request updates on two items of planning enforcement:

- 22/00095/UNDEV - Land Adj Waiting For The Sun, Rushden Road, Bletsoe
Planning contravention notice served by the borough council. A Change of Use planning application is expected to be submitted by the landowner – not submitted as yet.
- 20/00105/UNAUTU - Waiting For The Sun, Rushden Road, Bletsoe
Borough council have visited the site in relation to environmental concerns and the report is awaited.
- The surface condition of the Old Village Playing field was discussed. No actions.
- Bletsoe Village Hall defibrillator: This is currently out of action and being repaired – potentially for more than 8 weeks. Clerk to investigate responsibilities and future maintenance costs for the defibrillator.
- Verge parking on Coplowe Lane was discussed. No actions at this stage.
- CCTV for flytipping: Clerk to find status of this request to the borough council.
- Playground inspection: Councillors wished to progress with the annual playground inspection. Clerk to book this with Wicksteed unless Playsfety are more cost effective.

15 **Date of next meeting:** 23rd May 2023 – Annual Parish/Annual Parish Council meeting – Bletsoe Village Hall

Appendix

Update from Bedford Borough Council on “Superfast broadband” rollout

“Although not a statutory Local Authority service, the Council agreed to support the Central Government rollout of broadband infrastructure. The Government’s policy is to provide funding to support the roll-out of superfast broadband to those areas of the UK where commercial roll-out is not economically viable.

We are now at the end of the Council’s superfast project. Going forward, the approach to deploying the full fibre infrastructure will be different. Whilst local authorities will still need to provide knowledge, data and assurance, Central Government will be managing and paying for all the full fibre contracts centrally

(via BDUK). 80% of the national full fibre deployment will be completed commercially by OpenReach and other providers, the remaining 'harder to reach' 20% will be addressed, in parallel, via this central BDUK programme – commercial deployment is already getting going nationally and the first deployment for BDUK is likely to happen soon. Initial plans from BDUK suggest much of Bedford Borough will be picked up commercially with any BDUK deployment in the Borough starting in 2024.

I have had a look through the data I have from BDUK and it looks like some of Bletsoe may be picked up under Project Gigabit. The procurement was launched last month and BDUK are hoping to award the contract by the end of the year. I'm afraid that's the only information I have at the moment..."

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS

MARCH 2023

Date	Drawer	Description	Receipts	Payments
10/02/2023	ICO	Annual data protection fee		£ 35.00
21/03/2023	D Robins	Expenses - 4th Qtr		£ 52.10
21/03/2023	D Robins	Salary - 4th Qtr		
21/03/2023	HMRC	Tax & NI - 4th Qtr		
21/03/2023	E.ON	Streetlight maintenance - 4th Qtr		£ 71.24
Total				£ 1,453.34