



Minutes of the meeting of BLETSOE PARISH COUNCIL held on 23rd May 2023 at 7.30pm in Bletsoe Village Hall.

MINUTES

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

In attendance: David Brough (Clerk) and 15 members of the public.

1 **Election of Chairman**

Resolved to elect Clare Goduti as the Chairman for the coming year. Proposed/seconded: Cllrs Glanvill/Abraham.

2 **Election of Vice Chairman**

Resolved to elect Donna Glanvill as the Vice Chairman for the coming year. Proposed/seconded: Cllrs Abraham/Field-Foster.

3 **Apologies for Absence accepted:** Claire Woodward (Unwell).

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

5 **To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting** held on 28th March 2023.

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

6 **Public Open Session:**

- Smockers report: Already spoken about in detail during the Annual Parish meeting.
- Parishioner spoke to report that the CCTV sign on Coplowe Lane had been removed. Clerk to order a new one.
- Parishioner asked what happened to the memorial bench at the Memorial Garden. This has been removed as it was falling apart – the plaque has been kept in case the family request it.

7 **Clerk's report on actions**

- Village Hall Defibrillator: This was sent to the manufacturer to be fixed, who reported that it is beyond repair. The council has been offered a new defibrillator by a local fundraiser – eta July/August.

8 **Meeting dates**

To agree dates and locations of council meetings and the Annual Parish meeting for the coming year.

It was agreed to retain the current schedule of meetings: The 4th Tuesday of alternate months at Bletsoe Village Hall. Annual meetings to be held in May.

9 **Committee membership and representatives**

To agree councillor responsibilities for the year, if required.

It was agreed that councillor responsibilities would no longer be required, with any councillor able to bring items to council attention.

10 **Councillor training**

To confirm which councillors would like to attend BATPC Councillor Induction training, and approve the cost, when the dates are made available.

It was agreed that Cllr Binks will attend the training at a cost of £35.

11 **Financial Matters**

- The following payments were approved.

Date	Category	Payee	Description	Receipts	Payments Gross	Payments VAT
Not yet paid	Memberships	BATPC	Annual membership		97.00	
Not yet paid	Payroll fees	Essendon	Payroll costs - Mar/Apr		67.20	11.20
Not yet paid	Insurance	Gallagher	Mower insurance (paid by Clerk)		96.02	
Not yet paid	Grounds Maintenance	H and G	Orchard, Mem gardens, Play area		240.00	
Not yet paid	Smockers	Smockers group	Fuel costs for grounds maintenance		56.24	
Not yet paid	Village Hall Hire	Bletsoe VH	March & May		20.00	
Not yet paid	Staff costs	Multiple	April/May Gross Pay & WFH Allowance		777.40	

- *Annual accounts (2022/23): To receive the internal audit report and approve the end-of-year accounts and the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) form to be sent for external audit*

The Clerk had previously circulated the end-of-year accounts and explained the process to councillors. It was **resolved** to approve the accounts and the governance return for 2022/23 and send them to the external auditor.

12 Annual Insurance

To approve the annual insurance premium from Hiscox at £1,232.12.

Resolved to approve the annual insurance quote.

13 Highways

- a) *Proposal from Cllr Foster: To request Bedfordia Farms to repair the damage caused to the road edge and verge caused by large agricultural vehicles.*

Action: Clerk to contact Bedfordia to ask for a repair to the road surface on Coplowe Lane leading into their field.

- b) *Proposal from Cllr Margrave: To consider changing the location of the parish council speed sign.*

Resolved to move the speed sign closer towards the A6. **Action:** Cllrs Margrave/Abraham to relocate the sign.

- c) *Proposal from Cllr Woodward: To consider what can be done to stop vehicles over the weight limit from travelling through the village.*

Resolved to contact ABSS Skips to request that their skip lorry drivers are asked to use the A6/Thurleigh Road instead of the roads through Bletsoe, on which a weight-limit restriction applies.

- d) *Proposal from Cllr Woodward: To consider what can be done to stop traffic using Bletsoe as cut through.*

Further to the resolutions listed above, it was **resolved** to write to Serco at Yarl's Wood to politely request that their larger vehicles also use the A6/Thurleigh Road route rather than through Bletsoe.

14 Matters relating to parish council land

To consider a request to allow parking at the church end of the Parish Field for a wedding: 12.30pm to 2pm, Saturday 2nd September.

Resolved to allow access to the field for this event. **Actions:** Parishioner has offered to unlock the gate on the day – Clerk to send a reminder. Clerk to request that signs are added to direct traffic to the field to avoid cars parking on Coplowe Lane.

15 Fete insurance

To consider a funding request from the organisers of the Bletsoe Fete to cover the £386.32 cost of insurance.

Resolved to support the event by covering the cost of insurance to the amount requested.

16 Streetlights

To consider moving forward with the LED upgrade to the 19 parish-council owned streetlights.

Councillors considered the analysis prepared by the clerk and the following reasons for upgrade: Replacement parts for the current Mercury lanterns are no longer available. The reduced annual maintenance cost for LED and reduced electricity usage would result in approximately a £1,000 saving a year, with the added incentive of a reduced carbon footprint. Councillors therefore wished to benefit from the reduced costs and environmental improvements as soon as possible.

Resolved to approve the quote from Andy Muskett, with a buffer for light shields and other “unknowns”, to a total of £5,900.

17 **Planning applications & enforcement**

- Planning applications: *To consider any applications received since the last meeting, including any received after the agenda has been published:*
No planning applications received.
- Planning Enforcement: To note any updates in relation to 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 has been submitted, but it has not been validated and feedback has been given to the applicant by the borough.
20/00105/UNAUTU - Waiting For The Sun, Rushden Road, Bletsoe
A borough council report is awaited, which should contain the contents of a separate report by the Environment Agency in relation to their site visit.

18 **Business for future agendas (No actions can be taken on items not on the agenda)**

Proposal from Cllr Field-Foster: To consider providing funding for the maintenance of the churchyard.

19 **Date of next meeting:** 25th July 2023 – Bletsoe Village Hall