



Minutes of the meeting of BLETSOE PARISH COUNCIL held on 25th July 2023 at 7.30pm in Bletsoe Village Hall.

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Donna Glanvill (Vice Chair was Chair for this meeting), Mark Abraham, Alison Field-Foster, Peter Margrave, Sue Binks, Claire Woodward.

In attendance: David Brough (Clerk) and 10 members of the public.

1 Public Open Session:

- Smockers report: Report was received and added to the council's website. Clerk to request a copy of the maintenance schedule for interest.
- *Request from developer to address the parish council in relation to a residential development on "Land North of the Old Rectory" (Site BNP4 – up to 3 dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan).*
Cllr Field-Foster declared a pecuniary interest and left the room for the duration of this item. Representative of Status Homes provided an information pack about the above proposal and confirmed that the intention was for a planning application (most likely a Pre-App) in the autumn, with the aim of starting development in 2024; development duration expected to take 10-12 months.
- Borough Councillor Martin Towler report: Martin reported that the new administration were settling in and promised a full update on progress for the next meeting. Also mentioned a scheme that was being rolled out for free parking in the town centre.
- Members of the public:
 - Residents spoke in relation to land not being included in the "made" Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Resident spoke in relation to the location of the speed sign, which Cllr Margrave had relocated further up The Avenue – there are a lack of possible places to locate the sign in this area as Western Power can/have, without notice, carry out work and leave the sign on the ground.

2 Apologies for Absence: Resolved to accept apologies from Cllr Clare Goduti (Away).

3 Declarations of interest in items on the agenda: Cllr Field-Foster declared a pecuniary interest in item 7 and left the room for its duration.

4 To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 23rd May 2023. Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting as an accurate record.

5 Clerk's report on actions

- Village Hall Defibrillator: Temporary defib is currently in place. The council has been offered a new defibrillator by a local fundraiser.
- Streetlight upgrade: Lanterns have been ordered – expected 8th August. Awaiting install date.
- Speed sign: Sign relocated along The Avenue. See Public Open Session above.
- Flytipping/CCTV signs: New signs have been added to Coplowe Lane to replace the missing ones.
- Request to Bedfordia Farms for Coplowe Lane surface repair: Inspected by Bedfordia Farms and considered to be a normal amount of tarmac degradation.
- Request to the following companies about not using Bletsoe as a cut through for large vehicles: Serco – noted request. ABSS Skips – asked parish council to report instances where their lorries are seen cutting through and they will check their vehicle telemetry as drivers have been informed not to use this route.

6 Financial Matters

The following payments were approved and the Clerk talked through the Budget Variance report and the council balances (available in the appendix). At this point in the year the spend is closely tracking the budget.

Date	Category	Payee	Description	Receipts	Payments Gross
13 April 2023	Precept Income	BBC		6,167.50	
17 April 2023	Streetlights: Elect	NPower			215.72
05 June 2023	Insurance	Came & Co			1,232.12
05 June 2023	Admin	BATPC	Cllr training		35.00
14 June 2023	Fete Insurance	Bletsoe Fete	Fete insurance		284.44
19 June 2023	Internal Audit	Julie Betts			150.00
Not yet paid	Streetlights: Maint	EON			132.60
Not yet paid	Staff costs	D Brough	June/July Staff Costs		414.70
Not yet paid	Grounds Maintenance	H and G	June: Orchard, Mem gardens, Play area		240.00
Not yet paid	Grounds Maintenance	H and G	July: Orchard, Mem gardens, Play area		240.00
Not yet paid	Play Area Inspection	Playsafety	Annual inspection		180.00
Not yet paid	Admin	D Brough	Printer ink		51.49
Not yet paid	Payroll fees	Red Shoes	Qtrly payroll fees		15.60
Not yet paid	Village Hall Hire	Bletsoe VH			10.00
Not yet paid	Smockers	P A Vine	Smockers expenses June/July		152.68

7 Neighbourhood Plan annual review

To confirm that the Neighbourhood Plan policies remain relevant. Clerk has circulated an analysis of each policy.

Councillors agreed that the policy analysis was accurate and **resolved** that the Neighbourhood Plan was still relevant and required no amendments.

8 Annual play area inspection

To receive the annual play area inspection report covering the village hall playground, the MUGA, and the football pitch.

Councillors discussed the inspection report and noted that the surfacing under the two sets of swings had been flagged as a concern. **Action:** Clerk to source quotes for adding wetpour under the swings.

9 Donation for churchyard grass cutting

Proposal from Cllr Field-Foster: To donate towards the maintenance of the churchyard at St Mary's Church, Bletsoe.

Following a discussion of how to support both the village fete and the churchyard maintenance from the pot of grant money in the budget, councillors agreed to approach the Fete Committee to determine if some of the funds raised from the fete could be directed to the churchyard maintenance. This year the parish council funded the Public Liability insurance for the fete.

10 Cut of BPHA open space grass

Proposal from Cllr Glanvill: To consider any actions to remediate the issue of BPHA open spaces grass not being cut.

It was noted that BPHA's contractor is having staffing issues and are very behind on their maintenance of public spaces across the borough. It was agreed that Borough Cllr Towler would attempt to use his contacts to flag the issues at Bletsoe. Following this, should the grass remain uncut, then the Clerk will approach BPHA to determine if they would consider paying a different contractor.

11 Memorial tree/plaque

To consider planting a tree at the Memorial Garden and relocating the plaque that was removed from the bench for safe keeping.

Councillors agreed to approach the family who own the memorial plaque to determine if they would contribute to the cost of a tree and plaque install. **Action:** Clerk to add this item to a future agenda once a costed proposal is prepared and input has been received from the family.

12 Planning applications & enforcement

- Planning applications: To consider any applications received since the last meeting, including any received after the agenda has been published:

APPLICATION NO: 23/01414/FUL Full Planning Application

PROPOSAL: The demolition of an existing four bed dwelling and the erection of a five-bedroom dwelling.

LOCATION : Fernleigh Cottage Bourne End Lane Bletsoe Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 1QS

Resolved not to object to, or comment on, this application.

- Planning Enforcement: The following updates on planning enforcement were noted by councillors.

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 and the borough are considering their options.

Update July 2023: Planning application was submitted but not validated. Awaiting update from the borough council, which the Clerk will chase up.

20/00105/UNAUTU - Waiting For The Sun, Rushden Road, Bletsoe

Update July 2023: Borough council have visited the site in relation to environmental concerns and their report is still awaited. Environment Agency have given a Formal Warning to the site owner for the burning activity.

13 Old Parish Field agreement

- It was **resolved** that, under Section 1 Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the next item of business due to commercial sensitivity around the tender/contract for renting out the Old Parish Field. All members of the public left the meeting.
- *To agree any changes to the terms of the leasing of the Old Parish Field for grazing purposes.* It was **resolved** that the current tenant would be encouraged to remain for a further year at £500 rent but with an amended lease agreement that contained the following amendments:
 - £200 deposit to be held by the council to enable the land to be returned to a grazeable state if the tenant did not carry this out themselves at the end of the lease.
 - That fencing be maintained in good (strong) condition.
 - That the field is picked over on a regular basis to maintain the condition of the land.

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

No items raised.

15 Date of next meeting: 26th September 2023 – Bletsoe Village Hall

2023/24 P&L (Adjusted for VAT) - As at July 2023

<u>Income</u>		YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget	Budget (Part year)	Variance
Precept Income		6,168	12,335		
	Parish Field Rent	0	500		
	Wayleave Income	0	17		
Other Income		0	517		
VAT Refund			0		
CIL Receipts		0	0		
Bank Interest		0	0		
Total Income		6,168	12,852		
<u>Outgoings</u>					
Employment Costs	Staff Costs	1,192	4,800		
		1,192	4,800	1,525	333
	Village Hall Hire	30	0		
	Payroll fees	69	0		
	ICO - Annual Data Protection	0	0		
	Memberships	97	0		
	Admin	86	700		
	Clerk Expenses	0	400		
	Internal Audit	150	0		
	Website running cost	0	200		
Admin		432	1,300	413	-19
Insurance		1,328	1,200		-128
	Smockers	56	800		
	Grounds maintenance	960	2,000		
	Repairs/Maintenance/Capital Exp	0	200		
	Play Area Inspection	150	200		
	Streetlights: Maint	111	0		
	Streetlights: Elect	216	1,300		
Parks and open spaces		1,492	4,500	1,430	-62
Grants out		284	550	175	-110
	Fete Insurance	284			
Miscellaneous		0	500	159	159
	Contingency	0			
Total Outgoings		4,730	12,850	3,702	173
Year To Date Net P&L		1,438	2		173

2022/23 - Balance - July 2023

Natwest Current Account Current Balance (Forecast)

£
30,344

Allocation of Balance Sheet

Remainder of non-project budgeted expenditure	-8,120	Assumes full budget spent
Second half of precept still to arrive	6,168	
Streetlight upgrade	-5,900	
BRA Reserve	-4,217	
BBC Highways Speed Survey	-2,000	
Election (Guess)	-3,000	
VAT refund due (Approximation)	66	
General reserve	-13,340	Balancing figure
TOTAL	0	