



Minutes of the meeting of BLETSOE PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 26th September 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, Claire Woodward.

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

1 Public Open Session:

- Seven members of the public were present. Items raised were not related to the current agenda or issues for the council to take forward.
- Borough Councillor Martin Towler's report was circulated to councillors and is available upon request. Of note was Cllr Towler's current concern over the borough council's finances – although he deemed this to be rectifiable.

2 Apologies for Absence: None.

3 Declarations of interest in items on the agenda: None.

4 To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 25th July 2023.

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

5 Clerk's report on actions

- Village Hall Defibrillator: Town Close Charity have kindly agreed to supply a new defibrillator – currently on order. Temporary defib is still in place. (Edit: The new defibrillator was installed following the meeting).
- Streetlight upgrade: LED streetlights were installed in August. One faulty sensor was replaced and Western Power were called out to reconnect one of the lanterns – no other issues.
- Clerk to seek a quote from H&G for next year's grass cutting (Memorial Gardens, orchard, play area etc.) – to be added to November agenda if received in time.
- Discussions with local groups about funding churchyard maintenance: Cllr Glanvill had initiated discussions with the Fete Committee, PCC, and Friends of St Mary's to attempt to work together to find a solution to funding the maintenance of the churchyard. The intention is to have a meeting with the leads of these groups prior to the next parish council meeting.
- Annual tenancy agreement for grazing on the Old Parish Field was signed by the current tenant and the rent and deposit transferred.

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 still closely tracking the budget.

Date	Category	Payee	Description	Receipts	Payments Gross	Payments VAT
17 July 2023	Streetlights: Elect	NPower			220.75	
01 August 2023	Wayleave Income	Western Power Dist	Annual wayleave income	16.40		
11 August 2023	Parish Field Rent	N/A	Grazing Field Rental 2023-2024	700.00		
14 August 2023	Streetlight LED upgrade	Andy Muskett Ltd			6,525.36	1,087.56
29 August 2023	Smockers	D Dyer	Lawnmower Parts		122.49	
04 September 2023	Resident donation	N/A	Parish Field donation	150.00		
	Not yet paid Payroll fees	Red Shoes	Qtrly payroll fees		31.20	5.20
	Not yet paid Smockers	P A Vine	Smockers expenses July/Aug		88.26	
	Not yet paid Staff costs	Multiple	Staff Costs - Aug/Sept Salary, July/Aug/Sept PAYE		1,140.10	
	Not yet paid Grounds Maintenance	H and G	Sept: Orchard, Mem gardens, Play area		240.00	

7 **Play area surfacing**

To consider quotes to install safety surfacing under the two swingsets at the play area – issue mentioned in the inspection report.

Councillors reviewed two quotes to install bonded rubber mulch surfacing under the swings with wet pour on the high-use areas. It was **resolved** to approach the borough council's new Rural England Prosperity fund and/or the Rural Grant scheme to part-fund the project.

8 **Memorial tree/plaque**

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

It was noted that a resident had kindly restored the bench and had offered to cover the cost of planting a new tree and setting the plaque in place. It was **resolved** for the parish council to cover the cost of the tree at £85.

9 **Memorialisation policy**

Proposal from Cllr Binks: To adopt a Memorialisation Policy, which includes the application process for memorial benches. Draft policy circulated.

Resolved to adopt the Memorialisation Policy, but with an amendment as follows: that in place of sections 5 and 6 – which stated that no other types of memorials would be allowed other than benches – other types of memorials **would** be considered, but on a case-by-case basis by the full council.

10 **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: 23/01897/FUL Full Planning Application

PROPOSAL: Single storey rear extension, repositioning of front door, raise flat roof to insulate and reposition air conditioning units.

LOCATION : Ashdown 26 The Avenue Bletsoe Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 1QF

Resolved not to comment or object to this application.

APPLICATION NO: 23/01711/FUL Full Planning Application

PROPOSAL: Replacement of fascia, soffit and cladding to front and side.

LOCATION : Herdsmans Cottage 8 Coplowe Lane Bletsoe Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 1QE

Resolved not to comment or object to this application.

- Planning Enforcement: Councillors noted the following updates in relation to planning enforcement:

22/00095/UNDEV - Land Adj Waiting For The Sun Farm, 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. Status: Planning application was submitted but not validated.

Awaiting update from the borough council – Clerk has chased repeatedly.

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

Borough council have visited the site in relation to environmental concerns.

Status: Environment Agency have given a Formal Warning to the site owner for the burning activity. Clerk has chased the borough council repeatedly for their report/update.

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

No items put forward for future agendas.

Date of next meeting: 28th November 2023 – Bletsoe Village Hall



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

<u>Income</u>		YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget	Budget (Part year)	Variance
Precept Income		6,168	12,335		
	Parish Field Rent	700	500		
	Wayleave Income	16	17		
	Resident donation	150			
Other Income		866	517		
VAT Refund			0		
CIL Receipts		0	0		
Bank Interest		0	0		
Total Income		7,034	12,852		
<u>Outgoings</u>					
Employment Costs	Staff Costs	2,332	4,800		
		2,332	4,800	2,275	-57
	Village Hall Hire	32	0		
	Payroll fees	95	0		
	ICO - Annual Data Protection	0	0		
	Memberships	97	0		
	Admin	35	700		
	Clerk Expenses	51	400		
	Internal Audit	150	0		
	Website running cost	0	200		
Admin		460	1,300	616	156
Insurance	Insurance	1,328	1,200		-128
	Smockers	420	800		
	Grounds maintenance	1,200	2,000		
	Repairs/Maintenance/Capital Exp	0	200		
	Play Area Inspection	150	200		
	Streetlights: Maint	111	0		
	Streetlights: Elect	436	1,300		
Highways and open spaces		2,317	4,500	2,133	-184
Grants out	Fete Insurance	284			
		284	550	261	-24
	Contingency	0			
	Streetlight LED upgrade	5,438			
Miscellaneous		0	500	237	237
Total Outgoings		6,722	12,850	5,522	-0
Year To Date Net P&L		312	2		-0

2022/23 - Balance - Sept 2023

	£	
Natwest Current Account Current Balance (Forecast)	22,687	
<u>Allocation of Balance Sheet</u>		
BRA Reserve	4,217	Set aside
BBC Highways Speed Survey	2,000	Set aside
Election costs (Estimate)	3,000	Set aside
General reserve (Balancing figure)	13,470	Unallocated
VAT refund due in (Approximation)	1,159	Unallocated - not yet received