

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Blofield Parish Council Meeting held at Blofield Courthouse on Monday 9th March 2020 at 7.30pm – 10:00pm.

PRESENT

Rob Christie, Stuart Smith, Sarah Dhesi, Mary Moxon, Paul Culley-Barber, Yvonne Burton, Pat Wilson, Joseph Scholes, Stella Shackle, Sarah Osbaldeston (Clerk), Melanie Eversfield (Assistant Clerk).

1. Welcome and Introduction to the meeting by the Chair, Rob Christie.
2. **TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
 - 2.1. All councillors and clerks were present.
3. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
 - 3.1. Item 7 – Paul Culley-Barber declared a pecuniary interest.
4. **OPEN FORUM - FOR PARISHIONERS TO RAISE QUESTIONS ON AND/OR MAKE STATEMENTS ABOUT MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AND TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR**
 - 4.1. Two parishioners were present. Andrew Proctor, the County Councillor sent his apologies. Justine Thomas the district councillors sent her apologies.
5. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10th FEBRUARY 2020**
 - 5.1. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on the 10th February 2020. The parish council unanimously approved this proposal and they were duly signed by the chair.
6. **TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA**
 - 6.1. Item 22 – Broadland District Council advised that they have gone ahead with the developer's proposal for this new road, it will be called 'Dawsons Way'. The developer's suggestions take priority over the council's views.
7. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED NEW SCHOOL AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
 - 7.1. Andrew Proctor has advised the need for an early transfer of the Wyngates land from Norfolk Homes to Broadland District Council (under the section 106 agreement). Ideally at the same time the land can be transferred to NCC.
 - 7.2. He has confirmed that there are no highways issues about having a dual use access for the school and the doctors surgery.
 - 7.3. The council continue to be disappointed with the progress of this matter. The council agreed to email Childrens Services/Andrew Proctor for a further update. Clerk (ME) to action.
 - 7.4. Sarah Dhesi agreed to contact Aylsham Town Council to understand how they contributed to the school, and how the community facility is operated and works.
8. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REPORT ON CURRENT PROJECTS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
 - 8.1. Website – Melanie reported that she has had detailed training today on the new website and operating systems. Work will continue over the next two weeks with the contractor and Melanie adding further detail to the website. A meeting will take place on Tuesday 24th March to review the final draft of the website with the contractor; Melanie Eversfield and Stuart Smith to attend. It is hopeful that the new website can go live at the end of March 2020.
9. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PARISH PARTNERSHIP BID 2020/21 (FOOTPATH DIVERSION OF FP5 AND FP7) AND AGREE NEXT ACTION**

- 9.1. Melanie Eversfield provided a detailed summary of the position to date (items 9.2 - 9.6).
- 9.2. In December 2019 the Assistant Clerk, in consultation with the Vice-Chairman and Paul Sellick, Highways Officer for this area, submitted an application for £10,000 for legal submissions and works to redirect current Public Rights of Way (Namely FP5 & FP5) in order to mitigate risk to life on A47 crossing as a consequence of residential development of current agricultural land and recognise as revised Public Rights of Way divert footpaths FP5 and FP7 to Norfolk County Council as part of the Parish Partnership Bid.
- 9.3. In early December 2019 both the Assistant Clerk and Vice-Chairman met with Paul Sellick to show him what our issues and hopes were. He fully supported our intentions. A letter was also written to Ian Witham at the Open Spaces Society seeking their support.
- 9.4. On 3rd February 2020 a Kevin Townly, Asset & Capital Programme Manager at NCC, emailed to say that this project would require a legal order which can be problematic, may not be successful and may take in excess of a year to deliver and as such they are not in the scope of the Parish Partnership Scheme. An alternative funding option for the order could be considered; asking County Councillor Andrew Proctor to see if he would be willing to put some or all of his Highways Members Budget towards the order.
- 9.5. In 24th February 2020 when meeting with Highways England regarding the dualling of the A47 between Blofield and North Burlingham, the Assistant Clerk explained the situation to the representatives of Highways England and it was noted that they would take it on board and let us know in due course of any action that could be taken or supported.
- 9.6. On 28th February 2020 Ian Witham from the Open Spaces Society wrote to say that the Society could not support the closure of the existing path.
- 9.7. The council are very disappointed at the lack of support from the Open Spaces Society and have written detailing reasons to reconsider their position. In addition, the council agreed to continue requesting that the Highways England team look at option of closing this footpath as part of the A47 dualling work. They have indicated that all footpaths crossing the A47 will be closed within their dualling area (although this footpath lies just outside the dualling section of road).

10. TO RECEIVE A REPORT OF CHURCHYARD WORKS AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

- 10.1. Melanie Eversfield provided a detailed report with recommendations. The council discussed these works at length in the meeting.
- 10.2. **Headstone repairs** - The stone mason has identified 46 headstones that need attention, with 2 requiring urgent attention. The cost of repair is £200 plus VAT per headstone, thus resulting in a total of £9,200 plus VAT. Regrettably, the parish council do not have an unlimited budget to spend on the churchyard and priorities on churchyard repairs must be made. Following detailed discussing, the council would like to make the proposal to arrange for all 46 headstones to be laid down. The council would give detailed public notice through Focal Point / Blofield News etc explaining the plans and reasons and asking any concerned local parishioners to contact the clerk if they wish to alternatively, pay for the repair of their family members headstone. Clerk (ME) to contact the Rector / Parochial Church Council to discuss the proposal.
- 10.3. **Churchyard Stile** - Melanie Eversfield reported that the Public Rights of Way Officer at Norfolk County Council has confirmed that the law states there should be no obstruction to the Public Footpath. As the current structure is not on the definitive map it is therefore causing an obstruction and as such, she cannot support any kind of change of structure and that the current stile should be removed. The Council agreed to take no further action on this matter.
- 10.4. **Churchyard wall** – The council has obtained one quotation for all work detailed by the church architect in the wall report. See detail below (10.4.1-10.4.3):
 - 10.4.1. **Priority B - Within 12 Months** - Paint the railings, check for loose sections and refix as necessary. Refix the loose flints on the north elevation facing the road and could cause a hazard when they drop off. Repoint copings, west Section 1. Remove moss. Quotation for £9,140.67 plus VAT.
 - 10.4.2. **Priority D - Within Five Years** - Repoint the north west corner pier. Refix loose flints and carry out repointing on the south side, Section 1. Replace loose flaunching to brick copings, Section 2, repoint half round bricks, remove moss. Fill holes, section 2, and refix loose flints. Repoint three buttresses, Section 3. Repoint areas of loose pointing on south elevation, Section 3. Deep point crack, north elevation and repoint open joints next to it, Section 3. Quotation for £8,975.23 plus VAT.
 - 10.4.3. **Priority E - Desirable – no time scale** - Provide tile creasing below half round brick capping. Quotation for £5,198.82 plus VAT.

- 10.5. The first quotation for the cost of these repairs is a shock. The council has not budgeted for this work in 2020/21. The council agreed to obtain 2 additional quotations for the work. Clerk (ME) to obtain quotations. This will allow the council to make an informed decision when considering the budget for 2021/22 to see if the urgent part of the work can be carried out.
- 10.6. It was noted that the metal railings may be owned by the adjacent land owner. Clerk (ME) to contact the land owner to establish ownership.
- 10.7. **Trees at Churchyard** - Treecare Consultants Ltd surveyed the trees in the Churchyard in January 2020 and a copy of the report was sent to councillors via email. Out of the 26 trees surveyed there were only 2 trees with recommended works within 18 months. The other trees had advisory notes on an as and when fully resourced works. The majority of the works was the removal of the epicormic growth on the lime trees which has since been completed by volunteers in February. Clerk (SO) to contact Garden Guardian request that the epicormic removal is continued and the position is maintained going forward with the growth is cut right back to the growth root.
- 10.8. The council agreed to obtain 3 quotes towards the end of 2020 so that it can be considered for the 2021/2022 budget and works take place in April 2021. In addition, the council agreed to obtain quotations for cutting the hedge to the west of the churchyard in October. Clerk (ME) to action.
- 10.9. **Churchyard wooden gates** - the new gates continue to stick. Clerk (ME) to contact the carpenter who installed them to request he resolves the issue.
- 10.10. **Ivy growth** – David Pilch has agreed to cut the ivy growth off the trees. Clerk (ME) to contact arrange with David Pilch.
- 11. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ONGOING WORKS AND MARTY'S MARSH FRIENDS GRANT APPLICATION AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
- 11.1. Working parties continue on a regular basis with a team of volunteers.
- 11.2. The next is Saturday 14th March to cut a footpath towards Cremers Meadow and prepare for a picnic bench area.
- 11.3. The Friends of Marty's Marsh have been successful in obtaining a grant of £175 from the District Councillor for a picnic bench. The funds have been paid to the parish council bank account to order the bench. Paul Culley-Barber proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council pay the remaining funds towards the bench (circa £125). The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal.
- 11.4. Yvonne Burton has written a brief update for the community to be published in Focal Point in April.
- 11.5. Another working party for May is planned, date to be set.
- 11.6. A free hedge trees package has been offered to the parish council from the woodland trust. The council agreed to apply for the free package for use at Marty's Marsh. Sarah Dhesi to action.
- 11.7. The council are still awaiting the ecological appraisal report, the flood risk report and the planning, design and access statement from Norfolk County Council to submit with the 'change of use' planning application for the Marsh. Clerk (ME) to chase the outstanding documents then submit the application to Broadland District Council.
- 12. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARTY'S MARSH CULVERT AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 12.1. A detailed survey on the Culvert has now been received. Using this document, Sarah Dhesi has been organising quotations for fencing and culvert work with 7 different companies. Detail of these will follow in the next couple of months.
- 13. TO RECEIVE A SMALL PROJECTS UPDATE AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 13.1. The Courthouse have reported that they are happy to display a weekly 'whats on' calendar in their noticeboard.
- 13.2. Margaret Harker Hall and Heathlands Community Centre will be approached by their representatives to see if they are interested in a new external noticeboard.
- 13.3. Clerk (ME) to discuss a 20mph limit on Mill Road outside Hemblington School with the Norfolk County Council Highways team. In addition, Clerk (ME) to chase up patrol signs with NCC.
- 14. TO CONSIDER AN ADDITIONAL READ ONLY SCRIBE LICENSE FOR £29**
- 14.1. The council agreed this would be beneficial. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council request one additional read only license. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (SO) to action.

15. TO CONSIDER RENEWAL OF THE NPTS MEMBERSHIP FOR 202021

15.1. Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Stuart Smith) the council renew the NPTS membership for 202021. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (SO) to action.

16. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT

16.1. Paul Culley-Barber proposed (seconded by Joseph Scholes) the council approve all payments totaling £8,157.19 (see Appendix A). The council unanimously approved this proposal. Clerk (SO) to issue cheques.

17. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING REVISED DOCUMENTS DRAFTED BY THE FINANCE WORKING PARTY

17.1. The clerk (SO) advised the council of changes / adjustments to the governance documents. Minor changes have been made as needed. Where significant changes have been made, they are detailed below. Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Paul Culley-Barber) the council approve these documents for the forthcoming financial year. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (ME) to upload to the new website when it is up and running.

- Standing Orders
- Finance Regulations – New NPTS document adopted for consistency.
- Risk Assessment – amendments made to carry out regular health and safety inspections of the allotments communal land, orchard, Marty's Marsh, Town pit pond and courthouse with an easy recordable check list. Clerk (ME/SO) to action.
- Freedom of Information Scheme
- Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Control
- Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit
- Duties of the Responsible Financial Officer
- Investment Policy – new NPTS document adopted for consistency.
- Business Continuity Plan – up to date paper copies issues to Stuart Smith and Rob Christie incase of emergency.
- Communications Policy – new NPTS document adopted for consistency.
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct– this document has been revised and merged with the NPTS document to include a little more information on pecuniary interests. A copy has been printed and provided to each parish councillor at this meeting.
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Filming and Recording Policy
- Lighting (dark skies) Policy – this has been revised using detail from the neighbourhood plan and the old policy to make it more robust and user friendly.

18. TO NOTE A MEETING OF THE DATA PROTECTION WORKING PARTY, REVIEW OF GDPR DOCUMENTS AND PROCESSES AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

18.1. A meeting of the Data protection working party took place on Thursday 27th February 2020. All data protection documents and matters were discussed. The GDPR policy and GDPR terms of reference were reviewed with minimal changes. Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Paul Culley-Barber) the council approve these documents for the forthcoming financial year. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal.

18.2. The following actions were identified. Clerk (ME/SO) to ensure all old allotment personal data is deleted timely. Establish if Marty's Marsh friends' group have received any 'use of their data' forms.

19. TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL SUPPORT TOWARDS A YOUTH SUPPORT WORKER AT ACLE MEDICAL CENTRE AND ACLE ACADEMY

19.1. Paul Culley-Barber proposed (second by Stuart Smith) the council do not support this funding request. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (ME) to advise the Acle medical centre.

20. TO CONSIDER ANY FURTHER GNLP COMMENTS

Following a brief discussion, the council agreed to make these additional comments (20.1-20.3) on the GNLP. Clerk (ME) to submit.

- 20.1. The council fully supports the decision made on the sites that are deemed unreasonable.
- 20.2. The one site for Blofield Heath - GNLP1048 between the Council Houses and Renenergy, part of that site has now been taken up with the extension of Renenergy and we would question if there is sufficient space to deliver the minimum number of dwellings required to make it an allocated site. Looking at the plan and comparing to the works in progress, it would seem that around 25 - 33% of the site has been lost.
- 20.3. GNLP and Blofield Heath - as the Bennetts site on Blofield Corner Road was recorded in the planning committee minutes of 27/11/19 that it should not have been passed as the drainage strategy was into a blind ditch it would be useful to link that evidence to this response. Bennetts have not done much on site because of this drainage strategy. Similarly as the Jenkins site beside Heathlands on Woodbastwick Road also proposes to link up to this drainage path, a local resident has raised the issue of whether that also renders this site unworkable because of drainage. The drainage strategy passed for Dawsons Lane is non-compliant and site specific for 12 properties and a small section of adoptable road, rest to be porous brick within the development itself. However this is now back with a new planning application to increase flow rate from 1.5l/sec to 18.8l/sec ie much changed drainage rate. For the GNLP it may be worth noting the site will not hold the 43 for either drainage or access reasons, as the road type 6 will only cover a max of 25 + possible 1 and the 12 plus 4 Dawsons Lane dwellings and the access of number 80 now onto this road and not Blofield Corner, there is not the capacity to go for more than a further 9 on the rest of the field, unless another access is made, and the drainage strategy would then need to be pumped uphill if it is to keep to the currently dug system.

21. TO RECEIVE A BLOFIELD FUEL CHARITY UPDATE

- 21.1. A committee meeting took place on the 25th February 2020 where Sarah Russen was formally appointed as the new clerk. David Pilch is the new chairman for the year.

22. TO CONSIDER JOINING A COUNTY ALLOTMENTS FORUM FOR NATIONAL ALLOTMENT SOCIETY MEMBERS

- 22.1. The council and allotment association have discussed this matter and decided not to take part in this forum at this time. Sarah Dhesi reported that the recent allotments training was very useful. Sarah will report and liaise with Melanie on any requirements.

23. TO NOTE CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REGARDING A SURVEY AND RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING PLANNED BUILDING WORKS IN SUMMER 2020 AT THE COURTHOUSE

- 23.1. The courthouse management committee have requested a full survey is carried out on the property. The council agreed this was required and the clerk (ME) are already in the process of obtaining quotations for this.
- 23.2. The courthouse management committee has obtained a quotation for urgent works on the gutters to the rear of the courthouse. This is work urgent as the drains have been leaking for sometime causing damage to the brick work and adjacent wooden window frame too.
- 23.3. Paul Culley-Barber proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council agree to pay for these repairs at the cost of £920.40. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (SO) to contact the management committee to arrange.

24. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

- 24.1. The courthouse management committee provided a copy of their recent meeting minutes.
- 24.2. The committee is happy to hire the hall for a mother and toddler group but do not have the manpower to run such a group itself.
- 24.3. The courthouse garden is available for hirers and it would be difficult to operate public open hours alongside hirers use. The management committee suggested the Witness room could be used as a parish council office if the idea was taken forward.

25. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE JEROME MEYHEW MULTI-PARISH MEETING

- 25.1. Rob Christie provided an update from the multi-parish meeting with Jerome Meyhew. The council agreed to arrange their own meeting with Jerome for a couple of councillors to discuss some key parish issues. Clerk (ME) to arrange the meeting.

26. TO NOTE ANY CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- 26.1. The Courthouse Management Committee meeting on 11 February agreed to transfer surplus funds of £3,000 for use in the parish.
- 26.2. Heathlands Management Committee would like to thank the Parish Council for paying for the metal fencing which has been erected around the Under 6's play area.
- 26.3. HMC meeting minutes circulated from 4 February 2020.
- 26.4. Hemblington Parish Council would like to hire a VAS speed reduction sign. The council agreed to loan the sign to Hemblington Parish Council.

27. OTHER REPORTS AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- 27.1. Yvonne Burton – Heathlands have requested a litter bin in the layby on Woodbastwick Road, near Holly Lane.
Melanie Eversfield - halls feedback on the 6th of April agenda.
Sarah Dhesi - Martys Marsh fencing / gates / culvert planned works

28. TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

- 28.1. Thursday 12th March 2020 at 7:30pm at the Heathlands.

29. TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING

- 29.1. Monday 23rd March 2020 at 7:30pm at the Courthouse.

30. TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

- 30.1. Monday 6th April 2020 at 7:30pm at the Courthouse.

31. TO RESOLVE TO PASS A FORMAL RESOLUTION (UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES AND ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS ACT 1960) TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC FOR THE REMAINING AGENDA ITEMS

- 31.1. The council unanimously resolved to approve this resolution.

32. TO REVIEW THE CLERK AND ASSISTANT CLERK PERFORMANCE AND REMUNERATION

- 32.1. The Council noted the report presented by the Chair and unanimously agreed to award the Clerk and Assistant Clerk a pay progression from 01 April 2020, to the new Pay Point 22. The Chair will continue to act as line manager. The councillors expressed their appreciation of the Clerks' efforts during 2019.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....