

# Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the online virtual meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 from 7.40pm – 9:05pm.

## **PRESENT**

Rob Christie (left the meeting at 8pm), Stuart Smith, Sarah Dhesi, Mary Moxon, Paul Culley-Barber, Yvonne Burton, Pat Wilson, Stella Shackle, Sarah Osbaldeston (Clerk), Melanie Eversfield (Assistant Clerk).

1. Welcome and Introduction to the meeting by the new Chair, Stuart Smith.
- 2. TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
  - 2.1. Joseph Scholes sent his apologies which were duly accepted by the council.
- 3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
  - 3.1. Item 9 – 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. No parishioners were present. Andrew Proctor, the County Councillor sent his apologies and provided an NCC report for circulation to the councillors.
- 5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2020**
  - 5.1. The parish council unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and they were duly signed by the chair.
- 6. TO REVIEW THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020**
  - 6.1. The parish council reviewed the minutes and had no amendments to make.
- 7. TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (of March 2020) NOT ON THE AGENDA**
  - 7.1. Item 7.4 – Sarah Dhesi suggested contacting Aylsham Town Council regarding their new school. Nothing has been actioned due to COVID-19.
  - 7.2. Item 11.6 – Sarah Dhesi has now secured 135 tree samplings that will be delivered in November; to be used in Marty's Marsh.
- 8. TO APPROVE ALL (NON-FINANCE) DELEGATED POWERS DECISIONS (ME)**
  - 8.1. Melanie Eversfield provided a detailed report (see Appendix A) of all non-financial delegated powers decisions that had been made over the last 3 months. Email discussion has taken place for each matter. The Council unanimously resolved to approve these retrospective decisions.
  - 8.2. It was also noted that in the last couple of days under delegated powers an 8 yard skip has been ordered for use at the Allotments at the end of July. This is to assist with the clearance of waste/clutter off the site, this is larger than last year as a 'one off' to ensure significant amounts of waste are cleared which will improve the pest issues on site. The pest controller will attend the Allotments AGM when it takes place to ensure all plot holders understand the best ways to reduce pests on site.
- 9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED NEW SCHOOL AND AN UPDATE ON THE BLOFIELD COMMUNITY PROJECT AND APPROVE NEXT ACTIONS**
  - 9.1. Melanie Eversfield provided the detailed report:
  - 9.2. **Blofield Community Project** - On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 the Parish Council presented to committee members and leaseholders of Margaret Harker Hall, Heathlands and Blofield Courthouse the outcome of the public consultation and also showed various ways in which the project could move forward. Each entity was given until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to come back to the Council with how they

could, if they wanted to, work with us in ensuring that the project moved forward. Due to Covid-19 this deadline was extended. On 9<sup>th</sup> April the clerk (ME) emailed the Parish Council with the responses to that exercise from each entity.

- 9.3. **Proposed new school for Blofield** - since the meeting with Andrew Proctor, Leader of the County Council, on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020 no progress has been made regarding the proposed new school. Until Broadland District Council are happy with the works Norfolk Homes are to undertake the S106 Agreement cannot be implemented and due to Covid-19 this works has been delayed. It is understood that this work is now taking place. In the meantime, the council have contacted Norfolk County Council Children Services with the following points:
1. to discuss adaptations to deliver proper community use of the new facilities and the associated costs that the PC would meet, so the council can establish viability;
  2. to discuss the southern boundary of the new school site and the viability of community use of the remaining land - is it of real use, can it have a play area or is it more of a buffer zone? Where does ownership best lie?
  3. to discuss the area to be transferred to the Parish Council in lieu of the S.106 land and the legal arrangements necessary to protect the parish council's position.
  4. to hear how the design facilitates expansion of the medical practice and how community use of parking is delivered.
- 9.4. The council unanimously resolved to appoint a working party (Stuart Smith, Sarah Dhesi, Rob Christie, Stella Shackle, Sarah Osbaldeston, Melanie Eversfield) to progress this project further and work up a couple of viable solutions to be able to take back to each entity and finally the public.
- 10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REPORT ON CURRENT PROJECTS AND APPROVE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
- 10.1. Melanie Eversfield provided a written report summary of all progress on projects to date.
  - 10.2. Some village gateway signs have been installed. There is an error with the one at Bay Bridge. Clerk (ME) to contact Norfolk County Council.

*Rob Christie left the meeting*

- 11. TO APPROVE A CONTRACTOR FOR A SURVEY ON BLOFIELD COURTHOUSE**
- 11.1. Melanie Eversfield provided a detailed summary of three quotations obtained for this work. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) appoint company C to undertake a building survey and maintenance plan. This includes a fire reinstatement valuation figure for general insurance purposes (subject to the insurance company being happy with this format for the valuation). This will cost £1,728+VAT. The council unanimously resolve to approve this proposal. Clerk (ME) to instruct.
- 12. TO APPROVE A CONTRACTOR FOR MARTY'S MARSH CULVERT REPAIRS**
- 12.1. **Culvert and Fencing works** - Over the past 6 months a lot of work has been undertaken by various councillors to seek quotes namely for the works to the Culvert and also the fencing, turning area and bridge at the Marsh. Several companies have been contacted and were given the NPS Engineer's report that details what and how the work should be done to the Culvert. Although a lot of work has gone in to trying to seek three quotations for this work it has not been forthcoming.
  - 12.2. The council unanimously resolved to establish a working group of Melanie Eversfield, Sarah Osbaldeston, Sarah Dhesi and Yvonne Burton be given dispensation to move forward with the main contractor that has quoted for all works and liaise on the works proposed up to a fixed budget. This will be subject to independent references for the contractor and a fixed price quote will be obtained. This would get all the work done by a local company who have so far been very efficient. Melanie Eversfield to arrange a meeting with the contractor to discuss detail further.
  - 12.3. Consent from the Environment Agency is required to work on the Culvert. Melanie Eversfield will liaise with them and ensure that all consents are applied for.
  - 12.4. **Friend's of Marty's Marsh – Working Parties** - The Parish Council unanimously approved working parties at Marty's Marsh recommencing from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020. The council agreed these could take place in small family groups working together on different sections of the Marsh, providing their own tools, gloves, and equipment. Each separate group must always maintain a 2 metre distance due to COVID-19. Melanie Eversfield will undertake risk assessments on site and for each working party session. Yvonne Burton to organize the working party dates.

**13. TO APPROVE THE FINANCE REPORT FOR MARCH – JULY 2020 INCLUDING ALL INVOICES PAID AND FUNDS RECEIVED**

13.1. The clerk (SO) provided a detailed finance report for March-July 2020 (Appendix B). All payments have taken place online with double authorisations. All payments have been circulated to the finance working party. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the approval of the report content. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. The accounts were reconciled on 3 July 2020 showing a balance of £582,857.75. (Appendix C). Payments made April 2020 – June 2020 total £15,872.60. Income received 1 April 2020 – 3 June 2020 totals £190,788.06.

**14. TO APPROVE THE MARCH AND REVISED JULY DELEGATED POWERS DOCUMENTS**

14.1. The council unanimously resolved to approve both the March and revised July delegated powers documents.

**15. TO NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

15.1. The council noted the internal auditors report. Clerk (SO) to action small amendments to the finance regulations and ensure regular adhoc bank balance checks are made against the bank statements.

**16. TO APPROVE BLOFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2019/20**

16.1. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Paul Culley-Barber) the council approve this report. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal.

**17. TO APPROVE THE 2019-20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

17.1. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Paul Culley-Barber) the council approve the 2019-20 Annual Governance Statement. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal.

**18. TO APPROVE THE 2019-20 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

18.1. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Paul Culley-Barber) the council approve the 2019-20 Statement of Accounts. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal.

**19. TO NOTE RECEIPT OF CIL FUNDS FOR THE PERIOD OF 1 OCTOBER 2019 TO 31 MARCH 2020 OF £144,154.88 AND APPROVE INVESTMENT INTO THE BDC PARISH SCHEME**

19.1. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council invest this CIL sum with the rest of the CIL received to date in the Broadland District Council Parish Deposit Scheme. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (SO) to action. It was noted by the Parish Council that funds with Broadland District Council are not covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

**20. TO CONSIDER A SMALL FUNDING REQUEST FROM MARGARET HARKER HALL FOR £300 TOWARDS A COMMUNITY BENCH**

20.1. Following a detailed discussion, Paul Culley-Barber proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council provide a small grant of £300 to the Margaret Harker Hall towards a community bench. The council resolved to approve this proposal (for – 7, against – 0, abstention – 1).

**21. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE COURTHOUSE**

21.1. The following update has been received from the Courthouse Chair:

21.2. The Courthouse has basically shut down since March. There has been work completed in painting all windows, doors etc. The gutters and valleys have been cleaned; rainwater now flows freely into drains. Further assessment will need to be undertaken to check drains are clear and establish where they run to.

21.3. All hirers have been contacted to establish a timescale of possible return to use. To date no users are in a position to resume functioning in the building. When we get users wishing to resume we will instigate plans for use that will be in line with Government guidelines at that time. I have avoided purchasing signage etc until we get to that stage.

21.4. We have taken advantage of no users and completed a cleaning regime of all chairs. The cell block has had a good clean with all items being removed to enable the clean. Likewise, the witness room where chairs are normally stored has had a good clean while the chairs were in the main hall being cleaned. We have even cleaned the outside prisoner toilet attached to the cell block.

21.5. All other projects have been on hold due to contractors being unavailable to progress for a multitude of reasons falling out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**22. To note all information in the Clerks correspondence report for March 2020 – July 2020 (SO)**

- 22.1. The following correspondence was provided to the parish council in a written report.
- 22.2. To note the minutes of the meeting March in Acle with MP Jerome Mayhew have been circulated to councillors.
- 22.3. A public consultation on the Norwich Western Link and its effects on local roads and public transport improvements required, scheduled to take place between Monday 6 April and Monday 11 May 2020 was postponed. A new date has not been set yet.
- 22.4. The Annual Waste Transfer note for MW Whites was signed by the clerk.
- 22.5. The Parish Council have been successful in obtaining a free community tree pack, due for delivery in November 2020.
- 22.6. We have paid an invoice for £30 for 6 months doctors surgery bus shelter cleaning.
- 22.7. A letter of thanks was received from the Bure Valley Conservation Group following our donation for the work they carried out at Marty's Marsh on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
- 22.8. Heathlands community centre thanked the council for the recycling and maintenance cheques.
- 22.9. Margaret Harker Hall thanked the council for the maintenance grant.
- 22.10. In March the council received a request for CIL funds to maintain the Blofield tennis club tennis courts for 2020. The council declined the funding request.
- 22.11. We have a successful application with The Woodland Trust who have offered us 30 saplings as a hedge pack to be delivered in November. Sarah Dhesi has been successful in increasing this number to a total of 150 saplings which will cover 40 meters of double row hedging this would include dog rose, hawthorn, hazel, crab apple and dogwood varieties and will come complete with the canes and rabbit guards.
- 22.12. The village sign on the 4 cross ways junction in Blofield Heath has been damaged, possibly by the recent grass cutting mower. The bottom right hand corner has broken and is held on by the cover map print. A parishioner has kindly temporarily repaired it.
- 22.13. Broadland District Council have provided support to businesses through the disruption caused by COVID-19. The Court House have successfully received a Small Business Grant of £10,000.
- 22.14. Yarmouth Road parking (road narrowing) - The NCC Highways design team reported.....they have no issue in providing double yellow lines on both sides of Yarmouth Road, although this will require the TRO to be advertised again, to allow further comment from local residents and businesses, which will delay implementation of the proposals. We are not able to re-advertise the proposals during the Covid 19 lockdown period, but I will be back in touch in due course.
- 22.15. The courthouse annual accounts have been received.
- 22.16. The Department for Transport (DfT) has now approved the Strategic Outline Business Case for the Norwich Western Link which means the project has conditional entry into DfT's 'Large Local Majors' project funding programme.
- 22.17. Thanks has been received from the Focal Point Editor for the annual grant of £1300.
- 22.18. At the virtual Full Broads Authority meeting on 22 May 2020, the Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Document was adopted.
- 22.19. The Mobile Library has started a new scheme for parish clerks to sign their respective parishes up to become a 'Parish Friend of the Mobile Library' – Blofield Parish Council have joined this scheme.
- 22.20. Thank you cards have been sent to Pat Seckerson for her work as bookings secretary to the courthouse and to Paul Batchelor for his work as treasurer to the Margaret Harker Hall for many years.
- 22.21. Footpath 12 – beyond the churchyard – this footpath had some damage and this has now been repaired by NCC.
- 22.22. The council are aware of some parishioners interested in requesting with NCC that the private lane formally known as Dawsons Lane, is made a public right of way.
- 22.23. Bus service changes - there is no bus service during the week coming from BH into Blofield until around 9.45am, the earlier buses go via Plumsteads, but after 9.30 from BH the service is hourly.
- 22.24. The tree wardens have brought to our attention that a start has been made with cutting another BMX track in Plantation Wood. They have placed a notice on the site to discourage this. The tree warden has contacted Broadland District Council to see if there is anything that can be done to afford this ancient woodland remnant some protection.
- 22.25. A 'virtual' local authority cluster meeting is planned for the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020, Brundall is hosting the meeting. No Blofield Parish Councillors attended the meeting.

- 22.26. A47 Dualing update - We are currently carrying out archaeological trenching surveys along the proposed Blofield scheme. We are currently finalising our design both with Cadent and our supplier, we plan to reengage with all stakeholders involved towards late summer/early autumn once the design has been finalised. Once we have finalised the design we can also show you the definitive red line. The likely start date for the project is currently under review and once the design has been finalised we can further advise on this.
- 22.27. The allotments have a significant rodent problem this year (but this is common place around the country). Two possible reasons are the mild Winter, and more recently the Covid lockdown - which effectively removed traditional food sources for rodents, and meant they had to look elsewhere. The pest controller has provided a detailed report of improvements that can be made across the site to reduce the rodent problem. He emphasised that a tidier site will help a lot.
- 22.28. Sarah Dhesi attended an allotments training session in March. Various actions will be worked on between Sarah Dhesi and Melanie Eversfield.

**23. OTHER REPORTS AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

- 23.1. Dawsons Lane planning application (possibly on BDC planning committee on the 12/8/2020)
- 23.2. Heathlands Management Committee funding support request – email sent for further detail

**24. TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

- 24.1. Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 online at 7:30pm. Please contact the clerk Melanie Eversfield if you wish to attend this online meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:05pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....