

# B a c t o n P a r i s h C o u n c i l

## MINUTES of the Parish Meeting

held at Bacton Village Hall, on

**Monday 8th January 2023 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors: Julie Bonner, David Chambers (Chairman), Vanessa Kingsley (Vice-Chair), John Kingsley, Graham MacAusland, James Steed, Gail Wigglesworth, and Paul Wigglesworth.

**In Attendance:** Suzy Lupin -Clerk, District Councillor Mellen, County Cllr Stringer and 15 members of public.

### **Jan 10-1. Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence

### **Jan 10-2. Declaration of Interest and Dispensation Considerations**

There were no declarations of Interest or request for dispensations.

### **Jan 10-3. Minutes of previous meetings**

**a.** The Council resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023 were a true record and that the chairman be authorised to sign them as such. An amendment was made for item 8, which should read, 'After discussion the Council approved to support Cllr MacAusland in applying to the County Council to pipe the ditch situated on his land'.

**b.** The Council resolved to agree the action log resulting from the minutes of 13th November.

### **Item 7 moved forward**

Patrick Barker who manages the Bacton Green land under the current Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) stewardship program came to inform the Council on the new SFI scheme, which will start in January 2025. After review the Council resolved to appoint the consultants, Oakbank Game and Conservation Ltd, at a cost of up to £300. Oakbank specialise in working with farmers and land owners to make the best use of agri-environment schemes to improve wildlife habitats. They will develop the new scheme alongside the current SFI program. A viewing of the land in July will be organised to show residents exactly how the land is being managed.

### **Jan 10-4. District & County Councillor Reports**

**a.** District Cllr Mellen had submitted a written report which was received by the Council. D Cllr Mellen concentrated mainly on the issues of flooding in the village particularly the Bellway development where it was noted that the continuation pond was overtopping. Due to the ineffectiveness of this sustainable drainage system, the excess rainwater from the site is flowing into Pulhams Lane adding to the flooding issues near the Village Hall. Cllr Mellen also pointed out that ditches around this area were blocked, he handed a map to the Clerk which indicated where rainwater should flow through the village, this map will be added to once each area has been identified.

The Cosy Homes initiative is encouraging eligible households to apply for free energy efficiency measures in their own homes, including if privately rented. Full details to be available via [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk). This initiative is in addition to a programme of retrofit for the Council's own housing stock. Also, particularly vulnerable households can continue to access help via the wider Suffolk scheme, [www.warmhomessuffolk.org](http://www.warmhomessuffolk.org).

MSDC is proposing to increase the amount of Council Tax payable on long-term empty homes. Currently these attract a levy of 50% on the Council Tax payable. The new policy will be levies of 100% for empty homes being left for one (to five) years, 200% for five (to ten) years and 300% for ten years or more. Exceptions will apply - such as property under probate or properties undergoing major repairs. If approved, this will be from April 2024. Additionally, it is proposed that second homes attract a 100% levy. If approved, this will be from April 2025 as a year's notice has to be given.

Locality awards are still open for applications. Any group or organisation can apply for amounts of £250 or more. Please contact D Cllr Mellen for an application form. D Cllr Mellen ended by reporting the state of the pavement on North Close, it was resolved to approach the Flagship development to request the repair of the pavement be undertaken by them.

**b.** County Cllr Stringer had submitted a written report which was received by the Council. C Cllr Stringer agreed with D Cllr Mellen regarding the problems of blocked ditches on Pulham Lane and informed the Council that only 20% of the ditching systems were working correctly. Once areas have been identified as being blocked, land owners will be contacted.

Details of a government-funded scheme from DEFRA whereby Suffolk residents can apply for up to £5,000 to help protect their property from future flooding can be found at this link, with applications from January 2024: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

The draft budget papers for 2024/2025 were made public on the 3.1.2024. The settlement this year from central government has been disappointing, and has lead the administration to draft a budget with a series of cuts, on top of a proposed maximum increase in council tax. The Budget scrutiny papers agree that despite the increased overall funding for adult social care, that complaints will rise, while we are proposing doing less for those not in education training etc., other than collect data on their number. Finding apprenticeships, helping finding work etc. will no longer be budgeted for.

The draft budget also proposes Suffolk County Council closing two records offices, one in Bury St Edmunds one in Lowestoft, centralising all Suffolks records in The Hold in Ipswich. It also includes the withdrawal of £500,000.00 from the Arts.

**Jan 10-5. Public Forum -** A member of the public stood to explain that the ditches off Pulham Lane have historically been unable to cope with rainfall and with the new Bellways development has only made it worse. The question posed, could the contractor not pipe the water from the site instead of relying on ditches? Cllr Chambers suggested that the Council should consider forming a Flood Working Party to answer this question and to identify areas of blocked ditches and how flooding could be prevented in the future.

A member of the public stood to stress yet again, that the leisure facilities for teenage children in the village is non existent, they were disappointed that any future planning in regards to this had not been actioned. Cllr V Kingsley did assure that now we were coming to the end of the road traffic project, that this very issue will now be looked at. A survey will be designed to identify which types of leisure facility the residents want and be distributed by the end of February.

Cllr G Wigglesworth pointed out that to build a skate park as suggested, the Parish Council would need to own the land for such an expense to be justified for fear of being asked to vacate land that was leased such as St Marys field. Cllr G Wigglesworth suggested using the Community Infrastructure Levy funds awarded from the new building developments to be used on projects such as this and to look at available land to purchase.

A member of the public pointed out that the dog park had many holes in the grass which were becoming deeper, concerns were raised that a dog could potentially be injured while running in the area. The Clerk will liaise with the Parish Warden to fill in the holes with topsoil and grass turf.

#### **Jan 10-6. a. Planning**

**i. DC/23/05077** - The Council resolved to approve Bidwell's request to attend the March meeting to update on the Middle School Site application.

**ii. DC/22/05376** - Following many years of legal uncertainty, local authorities can now provide grants for parish churches. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill clarifies that "the Local Government Act, 1894 does not prohibit Parish Councils from funding the maintenance and upkeep of churches and other religious buildings". Therefore, a licence with the PCC or any responsibility for the footpath will not be required. After discussion the Council resolved to carry out the repairs to just the bridge up to a cost of £15,000 in accordance with the planning permission that had already been submitted.

**iii. DC/23/05095** - Mildmay Lodge, Pound Hill, Bacton, IP14 4LP  
*Full Planning Application - Severance of garden and erection of single storey dwelling.*

It was resolved to object to the application on the following grounds:

- The restricted area where the property is to be built is far too small to incorporate ideal living with current and future adjacent neighbours.
- Parking area not sufficient, which would lead to vehicles parking on Pound Hill causing additional congestion for oncoming traffic.
- Over development.
- Outside area (potential garden space) too small.
- Long standing objections to garden infills.
- The potential for the onsite ditch to be covered leading to more flooding issues.

**iv. DC/23/05583** - Mallards, Pound Hill Bacton  
*Householder Application - Erection of triple bay cart lodge/garage including solar panels on roofslope* - It was resolved to support the application.

**b.** None received

**Jan 10-7.** After item 3.

## **Jan 10-8. Working Group Reports**

**a. Events:** Cllr Chambers reported that once the soil levels are restored, the plinth for the Beacon can be built on Beacon Green. A date for the lighting of the beacon to be arranged.

National celebrations of the 80th anniversary of D Day to be arranged. Cllr P Wigglesworth to include the lighting of the beacon at the event. The Clerk will contact Bacton's Royal British Legion to request their involvement and invite Bruno Peek D-Day Pageant Master to the event.

**b. Village Greens:** Cllr V Kingsley reported that 'No Parking on the Grass' signs are being sourced for installation at Shop Green and Cow Green.

**Cow Green :** Patrick Barker confirmed that the vegetation around Cow Green pond didn't need to be cut back until 2025/26, the pond is developing very well since its renovation. Pot holes were reported on the track, there is a question of whose responsibility it is for financing the repairs.

There is an issue with a damaged pipe under the road next to the pond which services the septic soak aways of the surrounding houses, there is a concern that there may be a potential for the pond to be contaminated. The Clerk will file another report.

**Tailors Green:** The Clerk reported that new 'Tailors Green' and Shop Green signs have been ordered through the District Council.

**Bacton Green:** The Clerk to look through the files to find the lease for the field currently rented out to graze horses.

**c. Recreation and Play Area:** Cllr MacAusland reported he now had the materials to install the new fence to be connected from the main entrance to the entrance of the dog area, to avoid owners walking onto the playing field with their dogs.

**d. Road Safety:** Cllr V Kingsley was pleased to report that on reviewing Josh White's (Highways) report outlining the potential road calming measures, that they matched very well with what the residents wanted for Bacton. The Road Safety group will meet with Josh on Friday 12th January to move forward with the suggestions to be designed and sent to Suffolk County Council.

**e. Cemetery:** The cemetery regulations and fees need to be reviewed. The Clerk will arrange additional quotes for the development of the Garden of Reflection.

**f. Neighbourhood Plan:** Councillors met with Ian Poole, an experienced consultant in Neighbourhood Planning. He advised that the plan will be at a nil cost to the Council with Grants of up to £10,000, which needed to be applied for via the Clerk by the 29th April 2025. After discussion it was resolved to appoint Ian Poole as consultant to develop the Neighbourhood Plan. A working group was formed to oversee the project to include Cllrs Bonner, Chambers and Steed and one member of the public. It was noted that more members of the public would be welcome to join to have their say in the future of Bacton. Have your say on what new buildings should look like, choose where you want new homes, shops and offices to be built and grant planning permission for the new buildings you want to see go ahead. Please contact the Clerk if you are interesting in joining.

**g. Staffing Group :** Cllr G Wigglesworth was appointed as a new member of the Working Group.

**h. Streaming :** None to report.

## **Jan 8-9 Finance & Governance**

**Receipts and Payments** - The schedule of receipts and payments was received and it was resolved to approve the payments.

- i. It was resolved to approve the Clerk joining the Workplace Pension scheme at the standard 3% contribution rate.
- ii. It was resolved to approve the application of a credit card for general office costs of up to £100.
- iii. It was resolved to approve the finalisation of the 2023-24 National Salary Pay Award backdated to April 2023.
- iv. It was resolved to approve the budget for 2024 to 2025. - It was noted there was a question of how many litter/dog bins there were in the Village. The Clerk will liaise with MSDC to confirm the numbers, currently payment is being made for 14 litter bins and 10 dog bins.
- vi. Pride in your place grant - It was resolved to approve using the 'Pride in Your Place' grant towards the cleaning of village speed signs. The Clerk will approve a risk assessment before Cllr J Kingsley and the Parish Warden carry out the work. Cllr P Wigglesworth suggested that waterproof high visibility jackets been worn.

**Governance : (Policies & Procedures in Risk Assessments) :** Working groups to read through current risk assessments and report back to the Clerk with any amendments.

## **Jan 10-13. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agendas:**

Cllr MacAusland stated that the Christmas tree to be planted at Tailors Green still needs to be sourced and suggested two trees be budgeted for, one a slower growing variety and the other a faster growing specie to be able to dress for Christmas 2025. A budget of up to £400 was suggested to ensure a substantial enough tree is planted.

The Chairman for Haughley has invited all Councillors to attend a meeting on Tuesday 23rd January to discuss common issues. The Chair, Vice-chair and the Clerk to attend.

**The meeting closed at 21.03pm**

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chairman

Date