

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Monday 7th December 2020 at 7.30 p.m. by Zoom Video Meeting.

PRESENT: J Fincham-Jacques (Chairman), M Wooderson, T Munson, D Warren, C Britton, D Hattrell (Clerk), J Finch (County Cllr), B Hurren (District Cllr) and 1 member of the public.

APOLOGIES: A Sargeant (Vice Chairman) had previously sent his apologies for not attending video conference meetings for medical reasons and this has been accepted. Apologies were also sent from P Edwards, H Phillips (Joint Chair of NP Group) and A Good.

CO-OPTION OF MEMBER: Charlotte Britton had applied to join the Parish Council and was invited to be co-opted. This took place and C Britton duly joined the meeting. The Clerk will email the relevant Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Register of Interest forms for completion - **Action Clerk.**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS: M Wooderson declared an interest in the Goodlands application (6 dwellings on land to the South of, Daking Avenue) as a neighbour.

MINUTES OF 2ND NOVEMBER 2020: Accepted as correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: Nothing was raised.

PUBLIC FORUM: Items raised included the handrail idea for near the entrance gates to the Cemetery, the outstanding lining in the Parish, the plans to maintain the Churchyard wall and the Catesby application challenge.

REVIEW OF ITEMS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC: The Clerk updated the meeting regarding the consideration of a handrail which is noted under the Cemetery heading item. J Finch agreed to continue to chase the lining. The Clerk is making contact with the Contractor in relation to the Churchyard wall maintenance. An update was given regarding the Catesby application challenge which is listed under the Planning heading item.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch attended and reported on the latest Covid 19 news including the local hotspots and pressure on hospitals being among the reasons Suffolk was placed in tier two local restrictions. In particular Ipswich and Hadleigh had higher numbers of cases than anticipated which in turn puts pressure on the NHS. In his report Cllr Finch reminded people of the tier two restrictions now in place in the area. On other news, an initial report was published about Special Educational Needs Development services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Suffolk County Council has also delivered its largest digital care support project allowing people with little or no technological ability to have two way video contact with care workers, family members and service providers. Virtual Fostering and Adoption sessions continue to take place. J Finch agreed to continue to chase the outstanding yellow and white lining in the Parish - **Action J Finch.**

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Councillor B Hurren attended and reported on the challenge the District Council has in setting a deliverable budget. Presently they have a large gap between what they have and what they would like to achieve with the available funds. The old car parking charges debate is now coming to the fore again which Cllr Hurren has

always opposed. The main problem is receipts are down because of the Coronavirus pandemic and will not pick up again anytime soon. Also, costs have risen due to extra duties. On a more positive note the new Joint Local Plan (JLP) is in final consultation before being examined by an appointed planning inspector in the spring and hopefully will be statute by the end of 2021. This JLP, as well as having allocated sites for residential dwellings, will also include environmental policies and requirements for biodiversity which they have been working on for the whole of this year. In his role as chair of the Audit and Standards committee, it is down to Cllr Hurren and the members of the committee to see that all of the money spent is properly audited and checked and that all of the contracts entered into are open for tender and transparent. Also, all appointments are required to be advertised and open to all. It also falls to his committee to see that standards in public life are upheld and all elected councillors follow a strict code of conduct. Since the last meeting, the national lockdown has taken place with all the hardship to our residents and businesses alike. The District Council has once again been given finance to distribute to residents through a hardship fund and also set amounts to business's who have had to shut down due to current restrictions regarding trading and safety.

The new business support grant is available to any business trading at w/c 2nd Nov and paying business rates. Businesses with a rateable value under £15,000 will receive £1,334.00 for the months closure and businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £50,999.00 will receive £2,000.00 and firms with a higher rateable value £3,000.00 all for a 28 day period. Babergh staff have been very quickly trained to do this work and hopefully this time keep all our other functions and duties running as well. A big success for the council is that the planning appeal against Babergh's decision that the two oversized houses at Cuckoo Hill, Bures should either be demolished or remodeled has been dismissed, any other decision by the inspector would have seen the Council having to pay costs which they can ill afford at the moment. It does also bring this scenario to a close and send a message that developers should only build what they have been granted permission for. Finally B Hurren confirmed the sweeping for Wash Lane and Butchers Lane. T Munson then asked for clarification on plans to remove the public access point in Sudbury. She made a strong case for keeping a local access point for residents. B Hurren agreed to take this away and keep members fully informed - **Action B Hurren.**

FINANCE: The Bank balances as at 1st December were **£64714.03** in the Community Account, **£13400.86** in the Deposit Account and **£55586.08** in the Reserve Account making a total of **£134000.97**.

The Precept Working Sheet had been prepared and circulated to members ahead of the Meeting. It was noted that the final tax base figures would not be available until early January, so the District Council have requested that the Precept is not set until the January Parish Council Meeting.

Attention turned to consideration of the Annual Grant for insurance costs of the Church. It was noted the annual cost of insurance of the church is in the region of £3400. The Parish Council resolved to support the Church by increasing our contribution for this year only to £2500 as a goodwill gesture in tough times.

The Covid-19 Grant will remain on the Agenda for future Meetings.

The following pre-agreed payments were made: -

Cheque No.	Payee	Amount	Details
<u>As at December</u>			
Funds Tr	R J Osborne	2300.00	Cemetery trees
Funds Tr's	Employment Costs totalled	1241.64	Salary, ERS NIC & Pension
Funds Tr	Babergh District Council	997.45	Bin Empty Charges
Funds Tr	DHA Planning	1152.00	Highways Assessmt
Funds Tr	Compass Planning	1084.50	N/Planning Fees
Funds Tr	M A Crighton	185.00	Cemetery Contract
Funds Tr	Teacher Stern	624.00	Solicitors Fees
Funds Tr	PKF Littlejohn LLP	240.00	External Audit Fee
Funds Tr	J Fincham-Jacques	80.00	Christmas Tree

The Chairman explained that his bank card failed to work when trying to authorise the payments. The Bank has been contacted to replace the card and in the meantime the payments are delayed.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: H Phillips (joint Chair of the Neighbourhood Planning Group) gave his apologies, however, advance notice of the Planning Policy ideas had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting giving an opportunity to give feedback ahead of the public engagement. An invoice for Consultants fees had been recommended for payment by the Neighbourhood Planning Group and is listed with the above payments.

CORRESPONDENCE: The correspondence report had been circulated ahead of the Meeting. It was noted the Community Wardens sourced and erected a Christmas Tree in the Churchyard upon our behalf. The lights are on loan from the Community Wardens this year. They will dispose of the Tree on our behalf after Christmas. Future years will enable them to order a larger tree by putting the order in sooner.

CEMETERY: A Sargeant had investigated the feasibility of a handrail near the Cemetery gate and noted it is feasible and a good idea. He has spoken to a contractor who will email some prices and options. He completed the risk assessment in the Churchyard and Cemetery and had to lay down a gravestone for safety. It is the same as in previous years and he suggests we liaise with the family as the stone is not safe to be standing in its current condition. The ditch that borders the Cemetery and Stone Street Road needs clearing. Various routine burial and memorial enquiries continue between meetings. The ordered tree work to the sycamores (bordering with neighbouring houses) and the yew tree (behind the Village Hall that was overhanging graves) has now been completed and the Invoice is listed with the Payments.

UPDATES FROM THE COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE: The Chairman had on-going dialog with the Community Response. The Chairman had previously agreed to check whether further financial support is needed and if so, the treasurer should liaise with the Clerk as before. The Village Hall had secured reimbursement of their claim from Insurers in respect of damage to the roof.

REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS: D Warren has inspected the tunnel under the by-pass and felt it would be passable with work to improve the access to it. T Munson discussed the report from a resident between meetings of rain damage to the footpath between Cox Hill and Fen Street. This was investigated by T

Munson and the Footpath Warden and it was not considered to be serious enough to pursue improvements at this stage, however, it should be monitored regularly.

The meeting closed at **9.46 p.m.**

Planning Meeting Held by Boxford Parish Council by Video Conferencing on Monday 7th December 2020

The following decisions were advised from the Planning Authority: -

A) Listed Building Consent had been granted to create a first floor shower room at 5 Church Street - DC/20/04379

B) Work can proceed to remove dying branches and reduce canopy of 2 birch trees at 16 The Causeway - DC/20/04343.

C) Work can proceed to reduce birch, amelancher and cherry trees at 3 The Causeway - DC/20/04441.

D) Prior Approval has been given for change of use from office to dwelling at 2 Cygnet Court, Swan Street - **DC/20/03680**. The Parish Council had objected to this change of use in the absence of evidence that continuation of business use had been properly marketed.

The following were discussed: -

1) Between Meetings the following responses were given: -

a) **DC/20/03482/3** - 30 Swan Street. Part retrospective application to reconstruct existing shed, existing garden wall and construction of new garden boundary walls (retention of).

The Parish Council had **No Objections** to this part retrospective application providing the Heritage Officer approves the materials and design of the work within the confines of the Listed Property which is also set in the Conservation Area.

b) **DC/20/04217** - Gray Gables Cottage, 2 Stone Street. Notification of works to trees protected by a Preservation Order and in a Conservation Area - The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

2) 30 Swan Street, Boxford - Listed Building application for internal alterations - **DC/20/05025**.

The following response was agreed: -

"The Parish Council has No Objections providing the Heritage Officer approves the design and materials."

3) 23 Stone Street - Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - **DC/20/05196**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

4) Wynne Ho, Swan Street - Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - **DC/20/05217**. The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

5) The Old Manse, Swan Street - Application to install air source heat pump and construction of solar panels to garage roof slope - **DC/20/04924**. The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

6) Homestead, Hadleigh Road - Application for dwelling and double garage - **DC/20/04286**. The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

7) 28 Cox Hill - Application of works to trees in a Conservation Area - **DC/20/05292**. The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

8) Land adjacent to The Brewers Arms, Bower House Tye, Polstead. Application for 6 dwellings and 5 holiday cabins including access and car park - **DC/20/04417**

The following response was agreed:

"Please note that Boxford Parish Council Objects to this application in its current form.

Whilst members were in favour of the holiday cabins, they did not feel the location merited retirement homes in terms of access to services and facilities."

9) Land to The South of, Daking Avenue. Application for 6 dwellings, outbuildings and access - **DC/20/05283**. M Wooderson abstained from voting due to his declared interest.

The following response was agreed:

*"Please note Boxford Parish Council **Objects** to this application as there is considerable evidence that Swan Street (the main route from Daking Avenue) cannot cope with the current traffic demands before considering the increasing demands due to already approved development."*

The Planning Inspector, Simon Warder, was clear when dismissing the Appeal for a proposal of up to 24 dwellings on the same site (Decision date 30th October 2018 APP/D3505/W/18/3197391)

Paragraph 21

"The appeal proposal would generate few, if any, HGV and LGV movements and the number of additional car movements would be relatively low. However, in the context of a situation where the affected highway is currently unable to cope, and the available evidence indicates that traffic levels along Swan Street are rising, I consider that the additional vehicle movements would place an unacceptable burden on the road. They would increase incidence of conflicts between vehicles travelling in opposite directions along Swan Street and, in turn, the likelihood of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles."

Paragraph 22

"...I have also noted that vehicles have been observed to mount the kerb.....I am also mindful that people using this route would include vulnerable groups such as elderly, those with reduced mobility, children and push chair users. Having regard to these considerations, I find that the proposal would lead to a significant reduction in highway safety for vehicles and pedestrians using Swan Street."

We note that double garages are proposed on the bungalow plots, which further highlights the increase in vehicle movements along Swan Street (the only route to the A1071 out of the village) that would be anticipated if this development went ahead. The A1071 is the route to Ipswich, Sudbury, Hadleigh and Colchester and the residents would need to drive the length of Swan Street and then Church Street (alongside the School to School Hill) to access the A1071. This route gets considerable congestion as evidenced above. Just to put this into further context, you need to understand the medieval nature of Swan Street (narrow road, narrow footpaths, Grade 2 Listed properties immediately on the road which allows no capacity for provision of new and enhanced infrastructure.

This Parish Council notes that this application goes against Policies CS2, CS11, CS15 and HS21 of the current Local Plan. In the emerging Joint Local Plan, whilst Boxford is identified as a Core Village, the capacity of the School has been identified as an issue and very little expansion is recommended. The Neighbourhood Plan in Boxford is moving forward, however, not at a stage to identify specific sites.

We would urge you and Suffolk Highways to follow the clear authority set by the Planning Inspector in relation to this specific site and refuse this application. Regrettably this Parish Council has lost faith in the Highways Authority in failing to understand the unique nature of Boxford and the pattern of traffic from surrounding villages."

10) Richmond Lodge, Calais Street. Application for single storey rear extension, front boundary wall and entrance gates and erection of extension to annex - **DC/20/05346**. The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

11) Box Edge House, 3 Rules Yard. Application to convert garage to annex ancillary to main dwelling - **DC/20/05307**. The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

12) Any other urgent planning matters: Following a report from County Highways in respect of the Catesby application, a further letter dated 25th November was issued to the Chief Executive of the District Council urging full consideration of our points ahead of issuing the Decision Notice. The letter referred to our previous letter to the Chief Executive which at the time of the meeting remained unanswered.