

Brisley Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Brisley Parish Council held virtually at 7.00pm on Wednesday 3rd February 2021.

Present: Cllr Henry Collinge (Chair)
Cllr Tony Irons (Vice Chair)
Cllr Nicola Curl
Cllr Bobby Green
Cllr Richard Savory
Cllr Peter Dennis
Cllr Brigid Fairman

County Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
District Cllr Bill Borrett
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, there were no apologies received.

2. To receive declarations of interest.

The following declarations were received and the councillors will be removed from the meeting whilst their respective item is being discussed:

- Cllr Tony Irons – the overflow car park (item 11 – Correspondence).
- Cllr Richard Savory – planning application 3PL/2021/0003/F (item 7a).
- Cllr Bobby Green – Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Grant (item 8c).

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2020.

Cllr Irons proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Green and agreed by Council. The Chairman will sign the minutes in due course.

4. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris had circulated a written report and this is attached. In addition he reported that it was hoped the new Highway Engineer would be in post soon, together with an additional two new members of the Highways Team.

He also reported that the County Council are considering the option of making more money available for the maintenance etc of footpaths.

A query was raised re the Woods Lane flooding but Cllr Dennis was able to report that a digger had arrived on site today and it was hoped the issue, which was caused by a blockage in the adjoining field, would be resolved by the farmer this week.

A query was raised re flooding in Gateley Road where, apparently, there used to be a drain but this was covered up some years ago during road repairs. C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris will investigate.

He also reported that he attended a meeting with George Freeman MP, to try and resolve the issues regarding the many agencies involved in flooding issues to better work together, and with more legal powers to enforce action.

D/Cllr Borrett reported that Breckland staff continued to support residents during this covid pandemic but this did mean that some services were short-staffed, with longer waiting times. However, rubbish continues to be collected and the service maintained. Some staff have been diverted to the Test and Trace system, visiting people who have not responded.

He also reported that the Breckland precept will be increased by £5.00 for a Band D property but Breckland remains the lowest in the country due to the income from commercial property and no borrowing debts to repay.

Currently, senior management is shared with South Holland District but other Norfolk Councils are being approached with a view to share closer to home.

The Chairman thanked both Councillors for their reports and D/Cllr Borrett left the meeting.

5. Open Forum: an opportunity to hear from members of the public.

There were no members of the public present.

6. Highways

a) To receive an update on matters reported to Norfolk and Breckland Councils.

- Speed Limit request – B1145 from Mileham direction – the C/Cllr will take this forward once a Highways Engineer is in post.

b) To receive a report from the Public Rights of Way Warden.

Cllr Fairman reported that the sign on the Hill, for the footpath that runs towards Harpers Green, has fallen over and is lying on the ground, rotted from the base. It seems no restoration work is currently being undertaken and the reporting system refers to the covid emergency. The countryside access officers have currently been co-opted to help with the short-staffed Highways Department.

Maintenance of stiles was made the responsibility of the landowner under the Highways Act 1980. They should be maintained by the landowner in a safe condition and to the standard of repair required to prevent unreasonable interference with the rights of users. There is potential liability under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 if anyone is injured because of a defective stile. So, if a problem is encountered, the best initial recourse is to take it up with the landowner personally, and then, if he or she is not cooperative, the council can be asked to get involved.

7. Planning

a) Applications for consideration.

- 3PL/2021/0003/F – 2 No Metal framed open sided agricultural buildings – Maltings Farm, Gateley Road – Cllr Collinge proposed a ‘no comment’ response, this was seconded by Cllr Irons and agreed by Council.

b) To note any planning decisions.

Council noted the following two planning decisions:

- 3PL/2020/1228/F – Manor Farm, Elmham Road - proposed extension and alterations to Manor Farm house including demolition of some out buildings and conversion and extension to barns to form 2 holiday lets – APPROVED.
- 3PL/2020/1204/F – Hawthorn House, School Road - change of use of detached ancillary building, currently being used as a guest bedroom and office to a holiday let - APPROVED

8. Open Spaces

a) To receive an update regarding the long-term plan for the Jubilee Wood.

Cllr Dennis will obtain quotes for a long-term contract for the annual works which will be required and these will be considered once available. The tree thinning/felling must be carried out by contractors but there may be some works which the volunteers can do.

Council noted that the paths were getting very muddy but agreed there was little could be done and that they would soon recover once the weather dries up.

b) To receive a report regarding trees and maintenance on Harpers Common.

Cllr Dennis reported that the conifers had been removed by the householder but the other works had not yet been carried out by the contractors, due to the poor weather. If works cannot be completed in the next four weeks, they will have to wait until autumn.

c) To receive an update regarding the application for a Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Grant.

Cllr Dennis reported that the grant application had been approved, meaning an annual grant of nearly £10,000 per year for the next ten years, which would allow essential maintenance works on the common to continue to go ahead for many years. The chairman thanked both Councillor Dennis and the Clerk for their work to achieve this.

In addition, it was reported that the scheme cannot commence without the agreement of all Grazing Rights Holders, both active and inactive. Currently not all signatories have been received which puts the funding in doubt. The council has requested an extension to return the necessary paperwork which has been temporarily granted. It was agreed to hold an urgent meeting with the Grazing Right Holders to update on the situation and try to obtain the remaining signature.

d) To consider an application for a RSPB TD Feed Plot grant, to be located on the Amenity Area.

Cllr Dennis reported on a two-year scheme run by the RSPB to provide seed rich feeding plots in areas where there were already turtle dove 'hot spots', Brisley being one of those.

The scheme was a reverse bid auction and, if an application was approved, would be a cost-neutral project for the Council although the 0.25 hectare of land on the amenity area would become a weedy patch, rather than the current grassland. There would be no impact on public access.

Cllr Savory proposed that Council submit of bid of £3,500 for the 0.25 hectare, this was seconded by Cllr Dennis and agreed by Council.

e) To consider a request to remove some overgrown trees from within a Pond on the South Green.

Council approved the request to carry out some maintenance works on pond no. 4 on the South Green.

f) To consider alternative arrangements for the planting of 2021 Christmas Trees.

The trees had arrived but the school children will not be able to plant them as planned, due to Covid. However, it was agreed to wait a week or so for the weather to improve and there are likely to be enough volunteers to assist.

9. To receive reports on the regular checks.

- North Green (Cllr Bobby Green) - nothing to report.

- **South Green (Cllr Nicola Curl)** - South Green is being used for walking a lot, both by villagers and those coming by car, often bringing dogs. The Green is saturated, very wet indeed, and the heavy 'foot traffic' shows by the creation of muddy pathways. Dog walkers are reminded to respect the properties surrounding the Green as some dogs are being allowed to intrude into people's gardens. Some dog walkers are not disposing of their dog-poo bags in the official receptacle but either are leaving bags on the Green and footpaths or putting the bags in peoples' wheelie bins.

The sheep have been grazing in sections from outside Pond Farm up to the road. The fencing has been removed from those areas no longer being grazed.

- **Churchyard (Cllr Tony Irons)** - nothing to report except that two more moles have been removed from the site and the fallen wood will be removed.
- **Play Area (Cllr Tony Irons)** - nothing to report.
- **Patch Corner (Cllr Peter Dennis)** - waiting for a dry spell to cut back the bank and willows. Highways have been contacted regarding the state of the trees adjacent to the Old Rectory. They are leaning over badly and across the telephone and electric cables there.

Cllr Green queried the level of the pond and whether the overflow valve was working, it was confirmed this had been checked relatively recently and the valve was on the list of Highways checks. Cllr Dennis reminded Council that the pond was not parish property but the responsibility of the County Council.

- **Allotments (Cllr Peter Dennis)** – this is the first time the site has flooded, consequently little activity. The site is prepared for the next tranche of Christmas trees to be planted.
- **Amenity Area (Cllr Peter Dennis)** - it is as wet on the area as ever seen before. The chain on the Gateley Road entrance is missing about 1.5 mt of its length so it needs to be replaced.
- **Harpers Green (Cllr Peter Dennis)** – see item 8b.

At this point, Cllr Curl left the meeting.

10. Finance & Governance Matters

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2021.

There were no issues raised and the report was noted.

b) To note a £50 donation from a parishioner.

A parishioner had kindly made a £50 donation to the general fund and Council were grateful.

c) To review and consider approval of the following policy documents.

Council noted there were only minor amendments to some policies and Cllr Irons proposed that all seven documents be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Dennis and agreed by Council.

- Financial Regulations
- Asset Register
- Risk Assessment & Management Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Information & Data Protection Policy
- Publication Scheme
- Retention and Disposal Policy

d) To approve the following payments.

Cllr Collinge proposed the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Fairman and agreed by Council.

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| • Clerk (February Salary & Expenses) | £355.98 |
| • Wave (Allotment Water) | £21.73 (DD) |
| Subject to satisfactory works being completed: | |
| • Contractor (Works at Harpers) | £590 (+VAT) |
| • Contractor (Poplar at Harpers) | £385 (+VAT) |

11. Correspondence for circulation.

- 2 x Applications to amend the Definitive Map – Council noted the two applications and their progress will be monitored, however, these are decisions for the County Council.
- The Armed Forces Covenant Pledge – Cllr Irons will attend the webinar on this subject and report back to the next meeting.
- A request to assist with the cost of aggregate for the overflow village car park – it was agreed that the car park was in a poor condition and works were required in the Spring. Council approved this request in principle but will need to know the cost before firm approval can be given.
- To consider a letter to our MP to request extending remote meetings legislation – Council agreed that, although it was the ideal to hold meetings in person, it may still be necessary beyond May 2021 to hold virtual meetings and Cllr Collinge proposed a request to Mr Freeman to support this request, this was seconded by Cllr Irons and agreed by Council.

12. To note the meeting dates for 2021.

Council noted the meeting dates for 2021.

- 3rd February
- 3rd March
- 5th May (Annual Meetings)
- 2nd June
- 7th July
- 1st September
- 6th October
- 3rd November
- 1st December

13. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

The following two items were received for the next agenda:

- To consider the option of exploring a joint village initiative to replace septic tanks.
- To investigate the low power supply available in the village and any problems arising from this.

- 14. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 7.00pm.**

The date of the next meeting was noted and the meeting closed at 8.36pm.

Signed:

Date:

County Councillor for Necton and Launditch Division Report February 2021

Committee Meetings: A reminder that all County Council meetings are streamed live on You Tube and can be viewed as recordings on the same channel later.

Budget: The Council will set its budget for financial year 21/22 at a meeting to be held on 22nd February. The settlement from central government is broadly neutral; there has been a small increase in the Rate Support Grant and the Rural Services Delivery Grant but a reduction in the payment from new homes bonus. Despite this the Council will set a balanced budget which maintains the current level of services. However, inevitably there will be an increase in council tax; a 1.99% increase in the general rate and a 2% increase in the adult social care precept (up to 3% is permitted). As with all local authorities the Council must set a budget which is balanced over a 3-year period; the projection for 22/23 is for a tax rise of 1.99% plus 1% for adult social care.

Flooding: The heavy rain that occurred on the 23rd, 24th and 25th December caused over 180 dwellings in Norfolk to be internally flooded, roads were flooded and damaged, and blockages to highway and other drainage systems were caused due to silt run off from surrounding fields. Norfolk County Council is the Local Lead Flood Authority and has a duty under the Flood and water Management Act to investigate flooding which puts lives at risk or causes serious structural harm to buildings; causes dwellings to be inundated or causes a highway (above Cat 3) to be impassable. The work of the Water Management Team has been put under severe pressure investigating these incidents. NCC has allocated £650k from this years budget to assist with flood investigation work, urgent repairs to highway damage and clearing of blocked drainage systems. A reserve of £1.5m has been created for 2021/22 to fund flood investigation and maintenance work. A Norfolk Strategic Flood Board has been established under the Chairmanship of general Lord Dannatt to coordinate a Norfolk wide response to flooding with the 36 organisations within Norfolk that have flood risk management responsibilities.

Census: Every 10 years Office for National Statistics (ONS) carry out a census of the population of the United Kingdom. 2021 is census year and the census will ask for responses on Sunday 21st March. Census population estimates are vital in helping to shape the communities in which we live and work. Census 2021 will be “digital first” which may be challenging for some but there will be a large range of backup services available to help residents respond to the census in a different manner wherever they live.

Highways: Please continue to report highway matters as they arise and encourage members of the public to report highway problems either directly to NCC via the website or via the parish clerk. Items “saved” for reporting at the PC meeting only delays action by the highway team.

Mark Kiddle-Morris.
Member for Necton and Launditch.
Norfolk County Council.