

PAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of Pavenham Parish Council held on Wednesday 17th March 2021 held virtually by Zoom.

Present: Parish Councillors

Cllr. Steve Rice, Chairman (SR); Cllr. Jill Smith, Vice-Chair (JS), Cllr. Thomas Beazley (TB), Cllr. Brian Greenwood (BG), Cllr. Christine Holloway (CH), Cllr. Jim Russell (JR)
Cllr. Andrew Senior (AS)

Borough Councillor

Apologies for absence

Parish Clerk

Tricia Lennie (TL)

In Attendance

Fourteen residents

Discussion Period

a) A resident reported discussion that the telephone box in the centre of the village could be purchased by the Parish Council for £1 to prevent it being removed by BT. Residents do not want to see the telephone box removed. TB confirmed that the box has listed status and cannot be removed. Previously the Parish Council had discounted taking ownership of the telephone box so that BT would retain responsibility for maintenance costs. SR asked that the item be transferred to the Agenda for the next meeting and that specific proposals for the telephone box were brought forward.

ACTION AS via website News

b) A resident said that substandard pothole repairs to the highway at The Causeway had been reported to Bedford Borough Council (BBC) Highways department and, despite a team marking potholes and repairing them on the Pavenham Straight, the issue remains.

He was also concerned about spoil on grass verges, together with pipes, debris and tree trunks, near the 30mph sign on the Oakley side of the Straight. The daffodils were coming through, but the area is unsightly. TB explained that he had done the work before Christmas as his field had become waterlogged and BBC were not prepared to reinstate the ditch having previously piped it and filled it in. The flow had been inadequate. It had been too wet since to make verges good, but it is his intention to tidy as conditions allow.

ACTION TB

He also wondered why a meeting date had been added to the proposed dates. SR explained that there were difficulties with remote meeting legislation and that this would be discussed later in the Agenda.

c) A resident missed the first item and also raised the matter of the telephone box. SR explained the previously agreed action.

d) A resident raised the matter of noise pollution and potential unauthorised business use of a compound on agricultural land behind Earwig Lane. TB had allowed access to Network Rail during recent line upgrade work. That work had finished after nearly three years of lengthy delays during which residents nearby had suffered extensive disruption from heavy traffic and infrastructure work. They were dismayed that following the completion of Network Rail work, part of the compound appeared to be used by a separate company for work that again involves considerable HGV movement and associated noise as concrete pipes are assembled on site. He felt that there had been no consultation, that the land is designated as agricultural land and is not for business use, and that the current use both devalues his property and is unsightly.

Another resident agreed. He stated that the Network Rail work had gone on far longer than originally expected, that there had been extremely poor communication from Network Rail and there had been no compensation. He was aware that Network Rail had decommissioned their site. The new activity is extremely disruptive, a blight on the area and the lives of those living nearby. A resident mentioned that the noise and disruption was also affecting other neighbours. Those speaking tonight are not alone in their dissatisfaction.

SR stated that he had met a resident onsite to see the problem and was aware that the concern had been highlighted to BBC Planning Department. He asked if TB would like to speak now or would prefer to leave his comments to Item 10b).

TB was happy to speak about this item now. He had met with BBC Planning Department onsite 16th March. It had been a positive meeting. The tenant is from Felmersham and works for a company assembling pre-cast concrete structures for major infrastructure projects. TB reports that Network Rail have realised that access to the railway line is an asset and may wish to extend their lease. There is a suggestion that if the Northern Route (E) of East West Rail is chosen access may be needed again. Movement of the viaduct may also necessitate access to the railway line. The site cannot be improved until the weather improves and is also vulnerable. TB has repaired security gates and thought the current tenant would provide some security for the site. TB will speak to the current tenant and is waiting for BBC Planning department to respond formally. He will consider all options for future use of the site which could include a grain store but has committed to leaving access open for Network Rail for a period of 3-5 months. AS asked if there would be a retrospective planning application.

A resident asked for consideration of neighbours. Another resident had contacted Network Rail who suggested they want to retain access to a different compound than the one currently being let for non-agricultural, industrial use. SR asked that a meeting between TB and affected neighbours was arranged.

ACTION TB

A resident queried the delivery method of the proposed Newsletter and was reassured that there would be enough members of the Parish Council who were able to undertake hand delivery.

2 Apologies for Absence

None

3. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Declarations have been made by relevant councillors, filed and are applicable for the parish year between AGMs. TB has made declarations regarding land ownership within the village and potential planning sites. He declared interest in Items 10b and 10c.

4. Consideration of applications from Councillors for a dispensation to enable them to participate in consideration of items on the agenda in which they have declared an interest.

It was agreed that TB should continue to participate in the Agenda items having declared an interest. **Proposed SR Seconded JR Agreed by all.**

5. Consideration and Approval of Minutes of the remote electronic meetings of the Council held on 18th November 2020 and 20th

The Minutes of 18th November were raised for discussion and approval. BG reported that he was happy with the set of minutes currently proposed. JS proposed a slight amendment to the wording of Item 6 to suggest that the ‘overall advice received was inconclusive’ as the advice was not unclear.

AS proposed a slight amendment to clarify that JS ‘has asked’ rather than ‘would have asked’ for help with the listed building consent.

Proposed as amended TB

Seconded SR All agreed.

The Minutes of 20th January 2021 were raised for discussion and approval.

AS asked that the following words were inserted under Item 11, Precept, ‘Cllr Senior pointed out that there was no record of a resolution to that effect, and that a current council cannot be bound by the decisions of a previous council’.

Minutes Proposed with this amendment SR

Seconded JS Agreed by all

6. Updates on Matters Arising

For detailed updates on 'open' items see the March 2021 Matters Arising document.

Highlights include:

- The cost of remedial work on The Moors footpath is estimated at £400k by Bedford Borough Council. An alternative solution to keeping the Bunyan Way circular footpath open will be explored.
- Footpath signs will be erected outside the Village Hall and at the SSSI in Mill Lane as soon as ground conditions allow and the necessary permissions are received.
- BHPA will be invited to a subsequent meeting to outline proposals for additional houses and alternative parking provision on the Close Road site
- Interim measures to mitigate parking problems at Close Road are being actively explored.
- The speed control measures are progressing well and should be 'live' within weeks. Residents already report a beneficial effect on driving speeds from the installation of the cameras.
- Solutions are being sought to parking issues near Mill Lane.
- Solutions are being sought to enable hybrid physical/digital meetings of the Parish Council if necessary.
- Solutions are being sought to flooding problems in the village. A map on which all drainage systems can be plotted will be requested from Bedford Borough Council.

7. Correspondence

The detailed Correspondence List is available in the meeting papers on the website. Two further planning applications for had arrived on the day of the meeting. An updated Planning List will therefore be sent to councillors. All correspondence was up to date and there were no items that had not been covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

8. Financial Update

a) Appointment of internal auditor

The appointment of Ms Julie Betts as internal auditor 2020-2021 was confirmed at a cost of £140

Proposed SR Seconded AS Agreed by all

9. Payments for Approval

a) Grass cutting contract 2021-2022

SR reported that three contractors had declined to give quotations. Quotations had been received from Agriplant Ltd and Chris Horne Gardens to cover verge cutting and Churchyard maintenance, respectively. The charges had remained the same or similar to 2020-2021. Six

cuts of the verges and eight cuts of the Churchyard during the growing season had been agreed.

Proposed SR Seconded JS Agreed by all

TB raised the cutting of the grass verge opposite The Cock which has in recent times been cut by a resident. SR will contact him to thank him and see if he is happy to continue this year.

b) Proposal for Pavenham Village Hall to host hybrid meetings

David Smith reported that he had undertaken investigations using a 'mobile hotspot' supporting two laptops, one with a high-definition webcam, with a view to running a Zoom meeting at the Village Hall. The Village Hall has a public address system and both a hand held and a clip-on microphone. These can be connected, via the Village Hall PA system, to a laptop. There had been no 'dropouts' during the test which used a mobile phone as a wireless hot-spot.

Another option is to provide a broadband connection through a 4G router which would support up to six laptops. David Smith has one that could be used. Tests in the past had shown a 35MB download speed and a 15/20MB upload speed. The ongoing running costs involved are mainly the cost of providing a mobile broadband connection. Supporting a single laptop attending a Zoom meeting generates around 1.5Gbytes of broadband data traffic per hour.

The equipment would take approximately 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after a meeting to set up and take down. The more robust option would allow residents at home to see those Parish Councillors who were physically present in the Village Hall and vice versa.

SR asked for costings. David Smith recommends a SIM unlimited broadband contract at approximately £26 p.c.m. An option was suggested that contracts could be taken out and then cancelled, thus providing one month's broadband rather than a longer commitment. A lower capacity SIM would save minimal cost.

A discussion about the number of microphones needed considered the cost of individual clip-on microphones or one with a bigger range. If councillors sit in a socially distanced way one microphone might not work optimally.

Individual clip-on microphones might cost @ £50 and would need 'channel separation'.

JR questioned the need for hybrid meetings, as no more than 16 residents typically attend meetings and he feels this could be accommodated physically in the village hall. JS spoke in favour of continued digital access to support those who were shielding or preferred remote access.

SR asked for research to continue before the next meeting of the Parish Council. **David Smith was asked to submit two costings for the next meeting, one to meet minimum requirements and another to enable high quality interaction.** TB felt that sound quality would be more important than picture quality if a choice had to be made.

ACTION DS

c) Proposal to set up a Standing Order to pay the Clerk for the remaining duration of the six-month contract to 18th July 2021

SR reported that to save monthly double signatures on cheques and any difficulty paying these into the bank a Standing Order was proposed to be set up for the four remaining months of the Interim contract.

Proposed SR Seconded AS Agreed by all

10. Planning Applications

Discussion of all outstanding planning applications started with 21/00517/FUL & 21/00563/AGR for two agricultural barns. TB reported that he had spoken with the applicant and it is likely that this application will be withdrawn, to be replaced by an application for one barn under Permitted Development. A response can still be made as this is a live planning application at today's date.

AS questioned whether the Permitted Development legislation could be used twice, and TB replied that potentially it could, there being a need to keep cattle and hay separate.

Pavenham Parish Council had No Objection to this planning application and asked the Clerk to let Bedford Borough Council know.

ACTION Clerk

a) Update on Tree Protection Order applications in The Bury

The Parish Council had No Objection to the proposed tree work 21/00684/TPO at 25A The Bury and asked the Clerk to let Bedford Borough Council know.

ACTION Clerk

b) Business use of land near Ear Wig Lane

This item had been discussed under the public discussion period.

c) Future development at The Maltings

TB was invited to briefly outline the proposed development at The Maltings. Applications made by a Councillor will be discussed at a Parish Council meeting and although it has not yet been validated by Bedford Borough Council TB was keen to be transparent about the proposal.

Plans had been submitted showing a conversion of two barns and the reconstruction of one, to form three new, single storey residential dwellings. These would be offered for rent.

SR asked if these were part of the brownfield site put forward as part of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. TB confirms that they are. They are also within the conservation area and within the village envelope.

11. Neighbourhood Plan Update

a) Parish Council consideration of Call for Sites

SR asked BG to advise on procedure. In a previous Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire to the village, each of the Call for Sites had been included and the Parish Council had given its view on the suitability of each site for development. A new Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 is now under consideration and the Pavenham sites recently identified by landowners for consideration within it deserve to be considered by residents. Should the Neighbourhood Plan working group or the Parish Council discuss each site and give a view?

BG replied that it would be a Parish Council matter and suggested that the sites be included as part of a community engagement questionnaire, without comment, to gauge resident support for each one. The sites identified are 'outline offers of willingness to consider development' at this stage and, so far, no specific developers have applied for planning permission.

It is optional, not a requirement, for the Parish Council to take a view at this stage. However, good community engagement in the Neighbourhood Development Plan process is essential to its success. Other councillors agreed that this was an appropriate way forward. Transparency in the process is vital and the Parish Council will promote a Neighbourhood Development Plan based on verifiable resident support. CH commented that residents had been asked to rank order their preference for proposed sites in the previous consultation. This was agreed as an appropriate method.

Although a Parish Council is not constrained by the views of residents, in practice, it would be unwise for a Neighbourhood Development Plan that did not meet residents' needs to be put forward for Referendum.

One site, Site 514 at Tandy's Close, is being actively pursued by BPHA as a Rural Exception Site. SR raised it as he did not want to undermine residents' wishes by not stating a Parish Council view at this stage. BG confirmed the criteria used to grant a Rural Exception Site and these include meeting identified needs within the Parish and having identified support from residents and the Parish Council.

The Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2030 (adopted) policy is inserted here for clarity:

Policy 7S – Development in the countryside

Development outside defined Settlement Policy Areas and the built form of Small Settlements will be permitted if it is appropriate in the countryside in accordance with:

Policy 65 - Reuse of rural buildings in the countryside

Policy 66 - The replacement and extension of dwellings in the countryside.

Policy 67 - Affordable housing to meet local needs in the rural area.

Policy 68 - Accommodation for rural workers.

Neighbourhood Development Plans which have been ‘made’ by Bedford Borough Council.

In addition, exceptionally development proposals will be supported on sites that are well-related to a defined Settlement Policy Area, Small Settlements or the built form of other settlements where it can be demonstrated that:

It responds to an identified community need; and

vii. There is identifiable community support and it is made or supported by the parish council or, where there is no parish council, another properly constituted body which fully represents the local community; and

viii. Its scale is appropriate to serve local needs or to support local facilities; and

The development contributes positively to the character of the settlement and the scheme is appropriate to the structure, form, character and size of the settlement.

Where a community building is being provided, users of the proposed development can safely travel to and from it by sustainable modes and it is viable in the long term, ensuring its retention as a community asset.

All development in the countryside must:

Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and

xii. Not give rise to other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others; and

xiii. Not give rise to other impacts that would have a significant adverse effect on the environment, biodiversity or designated Natura 2000 sites.

AS commented that he was not convinced there was a need within Pavenham for this development or that Pavenham was a suitable location. This was supported by other councillors.

TB noted that the proposal by BPHA to add houses at Close Road might mitigate against a 'need' argument for a development at Tandy's Close. BG agreed.

SR raised the three TPO planning applications in The Bury which had arrived on the day of the meeting. As councillors had not had a chance to consider these applications before the meeting, it was proposed that a decision was deferred. Replies are due by 14th April. Councillors were asked to send their comments digitally. It was proposed that TB undertake a site visit. He suggested that the Parish Council should support the decision of the Bedford Borough Council tree officer. Comments will be sent to the Clerk digitally.

ACTION ALL

SR invited BG to give an update from the Pavenham NDP working group

BG had received the Draft copy of the NDP from Kim Wilson at Bedford Borough Council. There were revisions to consider. He proposed to take these comments to the NDP working group in the first instance and then report back to PPC.

BG suggested that the Green Space policy may be problematic. BG will review the document accepting revisions where they are straightforward and then circulate any comments regarding policy comments to the working group for consideration.

A meeting will be arranged within the next 10 days or so.

BG reports that work by members of the working group on a potential questionnaire is continuing.

BG raised the question of Locality grant funding for the Neighbourhood Plan and asked for permission for Margaret Telfer to speak. She reported that there was an amount of approximately £4k remaining that could be applied for. The website is not yet open for applications for the 2021-2022 financial year. Hopefully, applications will open soon. In order to apply for grant funding, the Parish Council would need a detailed list of exactly what was needed under the various headings. Prospective consultants would need to supply quotations.

SR asked if these details could be confirmed in the working group meeting. BG agreed.

SR asked how the grant was accounted for and Margaret Telfer confirmed that the grant is paid to the Parish Council and spent from their account. A separate spreadsheet of the Neighbourhood Plan expenses had been kept by both Dr Peter Sharpe and Margaret Telfer. She confirmed that the Parish Council would be able to reclaim VAT amounts on these expenses and that the Parish Council are the decision-making body.

12. Arrangements and Dates for Future Parish Council Meetings

SR proposed the date of 21st April for the AGM and Annual Parish Meeting as this is before the expiry of legislation allowing remote meetings. It may be possible to present Year End accounts 2020-2021 in April but JPAG guidance on the Audit process has not yet been received.

SR asked that the Clerk seek advice on whether the AGM and Annual Parish Meetings need to cover 2019-2020 as well as 2020-2021 and any legal guidance on holding meetings after 6th May 2021 when THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020 terminates.

ACTION Clerk

Dates for forthcoming meetings were confirmed as 21st April, 19th May, 21st July, 15th September, 17th November, 19th January 2022

Date, Time & Place of next meeting of the Parish Council

Wednesday 21st April 2021, 7.30pm by Zoom

Meeting closed at 10.03pm

TL 23/03/2021