

PAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of Pavenham Parish Council held on Thursday 22nd April 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

Jon Abbott (JA) Apologies for absence

Parish Clerk

Tricia Lennie (TL)

In Attendance

Ten residents

1. Discussion Period

- a) A resident raised the potential planning application at Tandy's Close. The newsletter had detailed an approach by BPHA (Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association) to build on this site. It had been rejected by residents in a previous consultation. SR explained that he had written in reply and had stated that there was unlikely to be support for the proposal for this reason. Without Parish Council support and a clear mandate from residents the test for a Rural Exception Site is not met and cannot pass. In the forthcoming consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan it is likely that the result will be the same.
- b) The resident further asked why the Neighbourhood Plan had been in development for 5 years without conclusion. SR replied that this matter would be addressed on the Agenda.
- c) A resident wished to raise some Highways issues, taking issue with Bedford Borough Council's assessment that the reinstatement of the 40mph speed signs was a 'lower priority'. The speed signs matter greatly to the residents living in the affected area. He has been raising the issue of the absent speed indicators since at least August 2020 and feels it has taken too long. SR will add this issue to other Highways matters to be discussed with the Ward Councillor.

ACTION SR/JA

- d) The resident raised again the matter of temporary pothole fills. He feels that the visits from Highways team are highly inefficient. Many potholes in the village are marked for repair when they have not been requested, yet when they are done it is temporary. If cost is the reason for temporary repairs, he questions the need for 4 staff members and two vehicles. He wonders why The Causeway has not yet had a more permanent repair.
- e) The resident asked for an update on a request made by a householder for Give Way markings in The Bury. SR will add these matters to the list of outstanding Highways issues that the Ward Councillor will be asked to help resolve.

ACTION SR/JA

2. **Apologies for Absence**

JA had been unavoidably detained at a Borough Council meeting. He has agreed to meet with the Chair to resolve items outstanding from tonight's meeting.

TB was involved in another meeting and would join later.

3. **Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

AS raised his interest in payment of expenses. As TB was delayed in joining the meeting SR raised his annually declared interest in potential planning sites within the village on his behalf. AS supported this, especially as the sites at The Maltings and at Earwig Lane are on the Agenda.

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.**

SR proposed that it would be helpful to have TB's input on items that are on the Agenda. All Councillors agreed.

5. **Consideration and Approval of Minutes of remote electronic meetings of the Council held on 17th March 2021**

The Minutes were proposed by SR, seconded by JS and agreed by all councillors. They will be signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

- a) **Councillors discussed the retention of audio recordings of digital meetings.** SR stated the previously agreed purpose of the audio recording was to aid accurate production of minutes and that they should then be deleted. This would accord with GDPR principles where data is held only for legitimate and time-limited purposes and would also mean that server space was not taken up unnecessarily for storage on the website. AS felt that due to the unprecedented social, cultural and historic situation of the pandemic there might be interest in these minutes as a historical record of what happened during that time. This would be in the interests of public democracy and social history. BG agreed that the written minutes were the legal record of the meeting and that when they were agreed previous audio transcripts should be deleted. JR agreed that deletion was prudent. JS does not have strong views either way but does not think that audio recordings should be permanently on the Parish Council website.

SR proposed that the audio recording of the current minutes only should be retained until the agreement of the written Minutes. Audio recordings of previous meetings should be deleted. **AS proposed that the audio recording of the current meeting should be promoted on the Parish Council website as News and therefore included in the automatic weekly emails sent to all subscribers.**

All Councillors agreed

6. **Updates on Matters Arising**

a) **Adoption of the telephone box**

This item was included in response to a public request at the previous meeting. As no suggestions had been brought forward for this meeting, AS will advertise the item via the News section of the website and the item will appear again on the May Agenda. CH reminded Councillors that the telephone box cannot be taken out of commission and can be retained as a telephone box if no other proposals come forward.

The following updates can be read in conjunction with Matters Arising document.

- Following BBC's estimate that £400k would be needed to build a footbridge over the marshes, a figure which makes it economically unviable, SR met with landowner re impassable footpath on John Bunyan Way (between Stevington and Pavenham). They explored diversion of the footpath to the

northern spur, which is marked on BBC definitive footpath maps on the Pavenham side. Landowner suggests that the rerouting is not feasible because another spring to the north of the SSSI meant similar measures would need to be taken to make the footpath passable at this point. The current footpath is passable in dry weather.

This impasse will be referred to Local Access Forum Secretary

Boblaf.secretary@bedford.gov.uk

- JS has reminded BBC three times about the fact that the parish council is still waiting for the licence needed to erect the footpath sign on the grass verge outside the Playing Field entrance. Andrew Prigmore has delegated progress to a colleague who has not responded. JS has installed eight of the agreed smaller A4 footpath signs in the village. TB reports that he and Mark Blakemore will erect the signs on the SSSI at Mill Lane within 2 weeks.
- TB had seen David Cox and informally discussed with him the repairs needed to the bench at Close Road as part of the VE Day Commemorations. **A quotation of £200 was obtained to strip and treat the wood and metal. TB will supply materials. TB Proposed JR Seconded All agreed**
- The presentation from Paul Richards BPHA regarding Close Road developments was deferred to May 2021 as he was unable to present tonight.
- The interim solution to parking problems in Close Road needs more detailed proposals, including drawings. A proposal exists for shared costs between BPHA, BBC and Pavenham Parish Council but this cannot be agreed until detailed specification has been provided. **Action JA**
- AS will propose an Archive policy at the May meeting. TB suggests the addition of fireproof storage for some documents. Clerk to ask for costings related to use of space in the VH. **Action AS/Clerk**
- The Spinney. CH reported that The Spinney is a County Nature Reserve and a Land Registry search confirms that the land is owned by BBC. Restrictive covenants apply and these may need to be explored to resolve the overhanging trees and future maintenance plan. TB has offered to get Lockhart and Garrat involved and thinks grants may be applicable.
- In the absence of a definitive date from BBC, average speed cameras are assumed to be live now or imminently.
- The traffic counter device is with Anna Simmonds who is liaising with Oakley PC for help in setting it up. Clive Just from Felmersham has offered to help analyse the data when it is available.
- Stevington PC had replied asking for a proposal to share the traffic counting device for 2 months per annum. SR explained costings of £125 per annum. AS asked about the insurance and SR agreed that subject to a suitable license being drawn up regarding use of the devices, they are covered by insurance. On this basis **SR Proposed JS Seconded and all agreed to offer Stevington PC use of the device for 2 months per annum.**
- AS was thanked for his work in preparing the Newsletter which had been distributed in April 2021. JR raised a concern over editorial control later in the meeting.
- Declarations of Interest will be reissued to all Councillors at the May Annual Meeting and will subsequently be displayed on relevant websites.
- All policies, including Disciplinary and Grievance, will be updated in May.

- SR is in ongoing correspondence about Mill Road parking and will speak to residents involved.
- Clerk updated Councillors regarding remote meetings after 6th May 2021. The High Court case to determine legality of remote meetings was heard on 21st April and is due to report by the end of April. Until then PPC do not know if virtual meetings will be legal. The difficulties presented by physical meetings were discussed. Numbers permitted to be present could be limited if social distancing is observed. Hybrid meetings have a cost implication. SR suggested that PPC should wait until the decision is made to resolve the issue. JS reminded Councillors that her husband would allow the parish council to use some of their own equipment but that other items need to be purchased to enable hybrid meetings and that this cost could be resolved in principle, to enable purchases to be made if necessary. A contingency of £325 was suggested, covering a data SIM card at £6 pcm; six radio microphones @£35, totalling £210; a mini-mixer £35. JR suggested that Pavenham Village Hall should buy the equipment rather than the Parish Council, but JS stated that the village hall has no foreseeable use for the items in question. SR suggested that an Extraordinary digital meeting of PPC could be called before 6th May if virtual meetings are not judged legal after that date. The 4th May has been reserved for a quorate meeting, with a Notification date of 28th April to allow 3 clear days' notice (avoiding Sunday and the Spring Bank Holiday on Monday 3rd May). If the High Court report is released after 28th April the plan will need hasty revision.
- Surface water: SR has asked BBC to run a camera between The High Street and The Leys to survey drainage. There has been no reply to date. This issue will be raised via the Ward Councillor.
- SR will liaise with David Cox regarding the central Pavenham noticeboard.

7. Neighbourhood Plan Update and feedback on Draft Plan

a) Receipt of any minutes

BG supplied the latest Minutes of the Pavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group after supporting paperwork had been distributed for this meeting. Two sets of Minutes will therefore be circulated for the May meeting. He reported that the working group had met and gone through the NP page by page assessing and attributing the actions required by the BBC response. The working group will meet again next week.

AS asked if there were other sets of Minutes that should be in the public domain. All sets of Minutes and the Draft Plan will be circulated to Councillors.

b) Consideration of any recommendations

A questionnaire for residents is being prepared by the working group and proposals for Regulation 14, six-week consultation will be presented to the May meeting. A decision needs to be made regarding virtual and/or physical consultation methods. The mechanism for responses to Regulation 14 consultation needs PC agreement as any comments received during the consultation period must be considered conscientiously and documented by the responsible body (Pavenham Parish Council).

After the responsible body has agreed the Draft Plan and the consultation mechanism it will be available to residents on the website. For a more detailed description of the

process see https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/NP_Roadmap_online_print_friendly.pdf

Margaret Telfer will apply for the remaining Locality grant of approximately £4,500. Detailed quotations are needed to justify the application. External consultants may be needed for Habitat Regulations Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and the necessary compliance statements (Basic Conditions Statement).

In the Discussion Period a resident requested a timescale for completion of the Pavenham NP. BG thinks that completion to Regulation 16 is possible within 2021. At that stage, and not before, Bedford Borough Council take charge of the Plan, arrange for inspection to take place and the Plan starts to carry weight in planning decisions. Following successful inspection of the Plan it will go to Regulation 18 Referendum.

AS requested that a detailed timeline of the remaining stages of the NP are published on the website.

CH asked that the protected status of The Spinney is included in the Plan.

c) Update regarding The Cock Inn (this item was moved from Agenda Item 8d to 7c as a general item as it is not the subject of a planning application)

SR reported that although Covid restrictions had lifted, allowing the opening of The Cock Inn for serving outside and takeaway, it had not opened due to Health and Safety concerns related to the outbuilding on the right-hand side of the garden. It is in a poor condition. A survey completed in 2016 had established this but no further work had been completed and the building has deteriorated. The tenant's insurers have confirmed that cover is not in place as a result. The Cock Inn remains listed as an Asset of Community Value although it is not a Listed Building.

SR will raise this with Jon Abbott

ACTION SR/JA

8. Planning Applications

a) Presentation from Paul Richards BPHA, Close Road

This item was deferred to the May meeting as the speaker was unwell.

b) Consideration of joint parking proposal in Close Road

This item was deferred to the May meeting in the hope that a detailed proposal can be considered.

c) Update on continued non-agricultural use of land off Earwig Lane

This item was delayed as TB had been called away from the meeting temporarily. Finance items were considered until he returned.

BG asked for clarification of the Notification of Planning applications from the Borough Council. In the past, envelopes containing plans had been received. Clerk confirmed that since Covid-19 restrictions no planning post had been received. Notification of a planning application is received by email and supporting documents are available on the BBC website. Notifications are distributed to all Councillors by email and the Planning List updated.

Items on the Planning List were considered. Three current items were considered.

- **The Maltings, barn conversion to three residential dwellings.** AS questioned the access arrangements which are via the farm entrance. TB said that use of the access had changed and that, apart from delivery to the

workshops, the entrance was not now needed for agricultural access. JS raised the issue of the proposed dwellings being for rental, one of which may be for an elderly family member. This arrangement was confirmed and explained on the basis that it is so close to the farmhouse it would be unwise to sell freehold. BG observed that this site had been a preferred development in the previous NP consultation. JS questioned the capacity for off road parking and was reassured that there is ample parking on site. On this basis Councillors will respond with **No Objection**.

- AS asked why TB's previous barn conversion application had been turned down. TB does not understand the logic and will appeal the decision. The delay may have cost him a £170k EU grant which may not be available later following UK exit from the EU. The Case Officer's report will be visible on the BBC website. TB suggested he might need to build a road to service the field and could use permitted development rights.
- **Garage at West Cottage.** JS expressed support. TB supported and approved of work done previously. SR asked if there were any objections and there were none. On this basis Councillors will respond with **No Objection**.
- **10 Orchard Close TPO.** SR suggested that the Parish Council should defer to the opinion of the Borough Tree Officer. TB endorsed this approach as the work involves cutting out dead wood. On this basis the Councillors will respond with **No Objection**.
- A resident asked permission to speak. SR granted the request. The resident wondered why TPOs were taking so long to be decided. The Clerk confirmed that other villages were finding similar discrepancies between applications submitted on the same dates. SR will raise the issue with the Ward Councillor

ACTION SR/JA

- **Land off Earwig Lane.** SR asked TB if he had responded to the neighbours who had raised concerns at the previous meeting. TB apologised that he had not as he was still waiting for Railtrack and PowerGen to respond to him. He sympathised with the neighbours regarding noise and disruption which had been caused by Railtrack while they were occupying the site. This was the reason that the compound exists. TB had met with the Planners on site and has now submitted a Retrospective Planning Application which should arrive with the Parish Council shortly. TB had offered the site for use as a short term economic arrangement while the longer term plan was established but agreed that if noise was an issue there could be no longer term arrangement. However, the current occupier needed time to vacate.

TB outlined the legal argument for retaining the compound. He could apply for permitted development of a straw shed on the site of the compound, in which case the development would be sited on the compound and it would remain.

When Railtrack left the site and decommissioned their use of the compound, TB had not given permission for them to disassemble the compound in case they damaged the field. He had preferred to do this himself but has since decided it is an asset.

TB said he would write to the residents. The PC response to the retrospective planning application will be decided at the next PC meeting.

AS expressed disappointment that a sitting councillor would change the use of agricultural land without consent and asked why TB thought this was appropriate. TB hopes that Railtrack will need to use the access again, states an economic argument and does not see the use of the compound for industrial assembly as a long-term solution. Nothing physical has been built but noise is an issue. He suggested use for a portacabin, container or welfare unit without machinery. TB may wish to add an electric transformer as the current supply is insufficient.

9. Finance

a) Review and approval of end of year accounts 2020-2021

SR presented the Year End figures 2020-2021 in Excel spreadsheet format. An independent councillor had been asked to check them. AS found the format user friendly.

Proposed SR Seconded AS All agreed (TB re-joined the meeting at this point)

b) Reserves policy 2021-2022

At March 2021 there were £21k of uncommitted reserves. This is 170% of Precept.

SR proposed that PPC does not keep unearmarked reserves in excess of 100% of Precept. JS agreed that this is in line with best practice. **AS Seconded. All agreed.**

c) Signature of AGAR

As PPC has both receipts and payments under the £25k limit in 2020-2021 it is proposed that a **Part 2 AGAR is submitted**, this will remove the £240 fee to Mazars as external auditors but does not change any other aspect regarding the detail required, transparency and public rights.

Proposed SR Seconded JS All agreed.

d) Forward payments

The forward payments were taken in sections. **Reimbursements to Councillors for Parish Council expenses incurred** were discussed and explained. Only councillors who were not being paid could support the payments. **Proposed TB Seconded JR All agreed.**

Invoices to be paid were discussed and explained. Proposed TB Seconded AS All agreed.

It was proposed that Survey Monkey should be changed to an annual payment rather than a monthly subscription to save money £361.612 p.a rather than £99 pcm. This preserves the data from the first NP consultation, can be used for Regulation 14 consultation and potentially for other consultations too.

Proposed SR Seconded JS All agreed

e) Councillor training requests

AS requested £30 is allocated to a **NALC webinar** course about engaging younger people in Parish business. **Proposed SR Seconded JS All agreed.**

JS is keen to do Councillor training but no BATPC courses are currently on offer. Item deferred until there is a definite proposal.

The Clerk raised two items that had arrived since the supporting paperwork was distributed. The insurance payment for 2021-2022 is due by 1st June 2021 £322.41.

There will be time to consider this at the May meeting if councillors want to research alternative quotations.

The April Precept payment of £5,250 (50%) has been released to the bank account.

10. Correspondence List

SR reported that a complaint had been received from a resident. The Parish Council will follow its complaints procedure and discuss at a public meeting in May. Documents relevant to the complaint will be circulated to all Councillors and the complainant in advance of the meeting.

There were no other items that had not been covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

11. Recruitment of a permanent Clerk

SR explained that Tricia was unable to sustain the workload of two Parish Councils beyond the Interim agreement but would be as supportive as possible to her successor up to her finish date in June 2021 and beyond. The Parish Council are in a strong position with a job description and process in place.

The recruitment panel of SR, TB, AS suggested that the addition of a female Councillor to the interview panel could be helpful. Both JS and CH would be willing to help. The panel will make a recommendation to the full Council.

AS suggested that paid for advertising might be useful as well as local channels. He suggested £32 to advertise in the Bedford Independent newspaper. **SR Proposed a capped budget of £50, Seconded JS All agreed.**

12. Update regarding ability to meet remotely after 6th May 2021. Determine time and place of AGM and ordinary meetings of council 2021-2022: suggested dates AGM 19th May, ordinary meetings 21st July, 15th September, 17th November, 19th January 2022.

Councillors will wait for the High Court ruling on meetings after 6th May. If virtual meetings are not legal after 6th May, they will convene an Extraordinary meeting before that date to deal with urgent business. Tuesday 4th May is the suggested date for an Extraordinary meeting if necessary.

Open session: JR raised a concern that the Newsletter needed more clearly defined editorial control. He was not in favour of AS's proposal that, in order to save time, he should have delegated authority to make final changes. Points were raised that comments on the website purported to be the view of Pavenham Parish Council when they were not and that the Newsletter had been criticised for proof-reading. SR asked that the decision on reporting is deferred to the May meeting. TB asked the opinion of the Clerk regarding editorial control of the website. The Clerk suggested that the Council delineate the responsibilities of the Clerk and the Councillor with portfolio for Culture and Communication during the appointment process.

Meeting closed 10.18pm

TL 26/04/21