PAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Annual Meeting of Pavenham Parish Council on Tuesday 4th May 2021 held virtually on Zoom.

Present: <u>Parish Councillors</u>

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	**Parish Clerk**
Jon Abbott (JA) Apologies for absence	Tricia Lennie (TL)

In Attendance

Ten residents

1. **Election of the Chair and Acceptance of Office**
   SR was Proposed for Chair by JS, Seconded by CH There were no other nominations for Chair. Agreed by all
2. **Discussion Period (15 minutes)**
   A resident was concerned about the condition of the fence at The Spinney which looks awful and is ineffective. The fence is the responsibility of Bedford Borough Council and made of roadside post and wire. TB suggested that a working party may be needed to repair it. The fence will be added to the list of items needing BBC response.
   ACTION JA
3. **Apologies for absence**
   JA had sent apologies
4. **Election of the Vice-Chair**
   JS was Proposed by AS, Seconded by TB. There were no other nominations for Vice-Chair. JR Abstained and BG was absent at this point in the meeting (as he was attending two Zoom meetings simultaneously) Agreed by SR CH. JS was elected as Vice-Chair by majority vote.
5. **Councillors Declarations for the Register of Interests**
   Blank forms, together with a copy of The NALC Good Councillors Guide, had been distributed to all Councillors in advance of the meeting. SR asked that Register of Interest forms were returned to the Clerk by 10th May. There is a legal requirement for them to be displayed on the Parish and Borough website within 28 days of the Annual Meeting. SR reminded Councillors that Conflicts of Interest can be difficult to understand. They relate to Councillors' interest in land or property that is owned, leased or any other commercial relationship within the Parish of Pavenham and include the pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests of a spouse, partner or cohabitee. If a Councillor has extensive interests within the Parish it would be helpful to have a map indicating the location of sites that they own, use or maintain. Councillors must declare their interests so that they are transparent to members of the public.
   JR asked if all Register of Interest declarations need to be updated and they do. TB was reluctant to provide a map and feels that this infringes his private business interests. He will take legal advice but does not feel it is appropriate to have sensitive business

information in the public domain. SR repeated that Parish Councillors' information needs to be declared. The Borough Monitoring Officer will be contacted for clarification.

ACTION Clerk

6. **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.**
   TB has a previous dispensation to participate in the meeting regarding discussion of the Neighbourhood Plan. He offered to step out of the meeting when the planning application for Land at East End Farm is discussed but wants to be present for a discussion of 16, The Bury. He declared a non-pecuniary interest in that planning application as the neighbour is a friend.
   Councillors felt it was appropriate for TB to hear the discussion of the planning application. SR JS CH AS JR Agreed that TB should be present for Item 13. BG was absent at this point in the meeting and did not vote.

7. **Consideration and Approval of the Minutes of the remote electronic meeting of the Council held on 22nd April 2021**

   The Minutes of the meeting on 22nd April were accepted with the following revisions.
   - The wording of the resolution at 5a) SR proposed that audio recording of the last meeting should only be retained until the agreement of the written Minutes.
   - Item 11. The finish date of the Interim Clerk contract is 18th July not June.
   - Open session. This will be deleted as the Chair had closed the meeting before this discussion.

AS raised the potentially defamatory statement made by JR during the meeting that he had corrupted the attendance figures for previous Parish Council meetings. He had already responded to JR by email, strongly refuting this allegation against his ethics. He asked for an apology and a correction. JR did apologise for causing offence and not being clear what he meant. He had meant that the figures as presented in the newsletter were not clear because of the use of two similar shades of blue for two lines. He felt that there may have been more attendees at Zoom meetings as there had been more meetings but had not meant to cast aspersions on AS's behaviour. This apology was accepted.

The Minutes as amended were Proposed by SR Seconded by AS and accepted by all present JS TB JR (BG was absent for this vote and CH's connection had dropped out of the meeting)

The next item considered at the meeting was **Item 13 Planning Applications,** as some residents had joined the public meeting specifically to hear this item. However, the Minutes follow the Agenda order.

8. **Update on Matters Arising**
   - The Spinney. TB offered to explore the Land Registry but documents had already been provided to the Parish Council by a resident who attended the last meeting. These show that BBC own the land. AS asked if the documents could be displayed on the Parish website. SR thought it worth checking copyright first. The broken fences and tree management plan will be added to a list of items for JA's attention. **ACTION Clerk/JA**

- Flooding. TB reported that the footpath causing concern had been dug up by a private contractor on behalf of Anglian Water. He confirmed that drains and sewage are Anglian Water responsibility and surface water is Bedford Borough Council. Melanie Bright, Senior Flooding Adviser for BBC could be invited to a site visit in Pavenham

  ACTION TB
- AS proposed that the August Newsletter is drafted by negotiating with each councillor a target for copy and space and that the proposed text comes back to the July meeting for approval.

  ACTION AS
- JS felt the Matters Arising are getting too long. SR said some items were due for removal **ACTION SR/Clerk**
- JS asked for a progress report on the footpath sign in the SSSI. TB said that Mark Blakemore had been busy but that the work could be completed next week.

  ACTION TB

9. **Review and Adoption of Policies, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment for 2021-2022**

The Disciplinary, Grievance, Documentation and Archive policies will be brought to the July meeting

ACTION AS

AS further proposed a Training policy as he had been unable to secure a place on the NALC course Encouraging Youth Participation. It had been full by the time he had gained approval to go at the last meeting. SR asked him to bring a Draft policy to the July meeting. He proposes that each Councillor is given a training budget.

ACTION AS

SR proposed that all other Core policies be rolled forward. This would include the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Risk Assessment, and all policies listed on the website. **Seconded JS Agreed by all.**

10. **Consideration of proposals for future meetings**

SR explained that remote meetings would no longer be legal from 7th May 2021 and that PPC would need to meet physically using Covid-safe guidelines. This presents challenges as the dates for the relaxation of Roadmap rules are conditional. Would the Village Hall be able to accommodate all members of the public wishing to attend if social distancing is observed? Would all Councillors feel comfortable attending? SR therefore proposed that the next Parish Council meeting is delayed to July, thus allowing time for a risk assessment to be undertaken.

He envisages that the Parish Council will meet physically in the Village Hall using social distancing and sanitising among other measures. Members of the public wishing to speak or participate will be accommodated in the Village Hall but those only wishing to observe should be able to do so by Zoom. In this way all members of the public can have access to Parish Council meetings.

JS asked if the Parish Council will be liable should anyone catch Covid, in the same way that care homes have found insurance cover unavailable. SR reminded her that BHIB, the Parish Council insurers, had issued guidance which was circulated at the March meeting. TL thought that the guidance might be time-limited and might change if the rules are relaxed. Social distancing rules may be relaxed on both 17th May and 21st June. BHIB guidance will need to be checked in June.

ACTION Clerk

AS was keen to allocate spend to hybrid meetings, but SR felt this was premature as the current law does not allow this flexibility.
TB felt residents were anti-Zoom. He offered his barn as a venue if it was larger and more convenient.
CH was concerned that those unable to attend in person and do not have an internet connection, could be effectively disenfranchised.
JR reported disappointment from residents following the Government's decision but wanted to do the right thing and hold legal meetings.
BG supported the delay to July and the proposed arrangements.

A resident was allowed to speak and reported that St. Peter's Church are able to accommodate 33 people sitting in a socially distanced way, with good ventilation, although services are shorter than PC meetings. Household bubbles can reduce the need for space.

After much discussion **SR's Proposal to hold a meeting on 7th July (including associated expenditure on sanitiser or similar) was Seconded by AS and Agreed by all.**
Public participation and the cost associated with remote access was discussed.
SR proposed that PPC agree a 'backstop budget' of £500 that could be spent, if no other suitable proposal emerges, on enabling digital access to the Village Hall.
A range of views were expressed but ultimately a budget of £500, that PPC hopes it will not need to use, was agreed, subject to SR contacting other PCs and BBC to see what they propose to do to enable public participation in meetings. **Proposed TB Seconded BG subject to email agreement between councillors. All agreed.**

11. **Consideration of archive storage at the Village Hall**
The Village Hall committee have offered to find lockable storage space for a Parish Council lockable filing cabinet for no cost. The Parish Council needs to purchase a suitable fire-proof storage cabinet and SR presented two quotations from Viking for four drawer fire-proof cabinets of varying depth. £1199 smaller/ £1500 larger.
A discussion of the amount of storage that would be needed was inconclusive, as some material will eventually go to the Bedford Borough Council archive once it has been logged.
TB suggested that an old Victorian safe, which might be found at Peacocks could be a better option.
SR suggested that TB produce a range of options for storage solutions in the Village Hall for consideration at the 7th July meeting.

ACTION TB

AS felt that the discussion about the archive had been ongoing for 9 months and needed a deadline for completion as the material should be with the Parish Council.
AS suggested that the archive documents should be brought to the Village Hall in July.
TB felt that was not the time or place to bring the documents. BG suggested that a **schedule of the documents could be produced**. AS asked that this was done by 7th July and TB agreed.

ACTION TB/Peter Sharpe

12. **Neighbourhood Plan Update**

BG had delayed the planned Working Group meeting in order to finalise the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. This was now done and the meeting would be held tomorrow (5th May). The Draft Plan will then be circulated to the Parish Council. Discussions about the proposed questionnaire continue and plans will be reported back to the Parish Council before the July meeting.

ACTION BG

13. **Planning Applications**
    - **Wayside Cottage**. **All Councillors voted No Objection this planning application** (BG and CH were not present for this vote)
    - **Vine Cottage**. TB suggested that the Parish Council **support the advice of the conservation officer**. All agreed. **No Objection** (BG was absent for this vote)
    - **16, The Bury**. JS had no objection to the extension but concerns about the car port which would be positioned on to the pavement. The Bury is noted for its open wide roads and open front gardens. She felt this might set a precedent and change the nature of the estate. AS agreed. TB felt it was a total overdevelopment of the plot as the garage had been incorporated into the larger house. The proposed car port seems too dominant. It is also on rising ground and on a corner. CH felt it might spoil the open and attractive aspect and the character of the development. JR also felt the plot was overdeveloped. SR agrees that there is little space left around the house and that there is nothing else like this proposal in The Bury both in location and construction.
      The Parish Council voted to Object to this planning application unanimously (BG was absent at this point in the meeting).
    - **Retrospective application for Change of Use of Land at East End for agricultural hardstanding with 2-year temporary consent for part commercial storage**. TB, as landowner, offered to step out. SR invited him to stay. AS suggested TB mute his microphone.
      AS had visited the site with TB prior to the meeting. JS had also attended physically and CH remotely. He expressed misgivings about the application on several grounds.
      a) It seemed to contain more than one proposal: to grant the compound a 3rd party commercial licence and to affect the wider area which should have been returned to agricultural use.
      b) He felt that the wording of the retrospective application was designed to give the greatest possible liberty to the site owner. He felt there would be nothing to stop TB having 20/30 storage containers on site if the application passed and that it needed looking at very carefully as a result.
      c) He went on to highlight the noise and disruption that had been caused to neighbours because of the unlicenced letting of the site for commercial use following the departure of Network Rail.
      d) He expressed his disapproval that a serving Councillor would use a site in this way without planning permission and felt it was wrong not to stick to the letter of the law. He had concerns that the access road around the perimeter also remains when it should not. He felt the site should return to agricultural use.
      e) TB had suggested that to mitigate noise a permanent electricity supply could be installed from a transformer in a neighbour's field – to allow use inside storage containers rather than allow the generator to work in open air. AS asked if this would affect the neighbour's electricity supply and wanted assurance that this would not affect the supply to neighbours. He questioned

why, if an electricity supply was needed, TB could not run one from his own site at Stafford Doors.
As a result of these concerns, AS would Object

JS said that the site visit had been for two hours on Saturday. That there had been three letters of objection, emotively written, showing the considerable distress of neighbours and residents. These factors would additionally influence her decision to Object.

JR felt that there was no application to comment on as there is nothing physically present on the site. SR remined him that the application was for a change of use to part commercial storage. JR did not feel that commercial storage was a problem and would reserve his judgement.

A resident was given leave to comment. He reminded Councillors that there had been fabrication and commercial activity on the site since the day Network Rail had vacated it. TB had written to the affected neighbours today (4th May) but had not addressed the problem of activity, noise or the damage that large lorries are doing to the private road.

BG was present for this item. He felt that AS had made reasonable points and sympathised with the neighbours. He explained that Planning Authorities need to assess applications on planning merits. He felt that the application, as phrased, was for temporary use and provided that the Borough would impose tight controls, such as hours of working on weekdays and possibly on Saturday to midday, noise, or height of containers he would not object. He felt the Parish Council should ask for conditions to be imposed if the permission was granted, for example that the containers were fitted with noise insulation. He thought the Parish Council should recommend approval subject to conditions.

CH shared other Councillors concerns. This is agricultural land, and she is not happy about Change of Use even if it is temporary. The unauthorised use is causing distress and she will Object.

SR highlighted the disruption to residents and felt that the agricultural land should be reinstated. He will Object.

BG repeated his suggestion that if approval is granted by Bedford Borough the Parish Council should suggest strict conditions are imposed.

AS JS CH SR OBJECT; JR Abstain; BG Supports if conditions are applied.

The Objection was carried by majority vote.

Decisions are to be notified to Bedford Borough Council by the due dates.

ACTION Clerk

Finance

a) **Signature of AGAR**
Parish Councillors confirmed that they wish to exempt themselves from the Part 3 AGAR because both receipts and payments have been under the £25k limit this year.
Proposed SR Seconded AS All agreed

Councillors had agreed to request an exemption from Part 3 audit for 2020-2021 at the 22nd April meeting (Item 9c)
The period for the inspection of public rights must be set for a period of exactly 30 days, must be no later than 1st July and begins exactly one day after the AGAR has been published on the Parish website. Only working days of Mon-Fri are counted.
The period 7th June to 16th July is proposed. The AGAR and internal audit report will be published on 4th June.
Proposed SR Seconded AS All agreed

The part completed AGAR including Accounting Statements had been circulated to all councillors with supporting paperwork for the meeting.
SR explained that to meet the dates for the Part 2 audit, the AGAR would need to be signed at the 4th May meeting. The internal audit has not yet concluded but needs to be published before 1st July, a date that is before the next meeting on 7th July.
TB proposed that the Part 2 AGAR is signed by the Clerk/RFO and Chair subject to a satisfactory internal audit being completed.
Seconded BG All agreed.

b) **Scheme of delegation – to be considered in the light of Item 10**
c) **Forward payments**

Scheme of delegation: Budgeted and agreed payments, including those listed below will be authorised by the Chair for payment when due, in conjunction with two authorised signatories of the Pavenham Parish Council bank account and the Clerk/RFO

Item	Date	Invoice	Amount £ NET	VAT £	Total £	Notes
Insurance payment BHIB 2021-2022	13 April	LCO00391-506830		0	£322.41	Effective date 1st June
Clerk Salary payments March to May			32 x £11.53 = £368.96 pcm March/April/May	0	£368.96 x 3	32 hours per calendar month The hourly rate for SPS 22 is £11.53 Jan/Feb paid by cheque.
						Total £1,106.88
Grass cutting contracts Agriplant - verges	May		£185+VAT	£37	185.00 Carriage Net 0.00 Total VAT Amount 37.00 Invoice Total 222.00	£185.00 + VAT per cut Six cuts per year April cut paid for Second cut imminent. Five payments outstanding
Chris Horne - Churchyard					£110+VAT	£110.00 + VAT per cut Eight cuts during the 2021 growing season No invoices received to date
Betty Scoley – plants at war memorial quarterly						£50 agreed for the next quarter
Kirsten Rimmer	22 April		£6 per Land Registry search	0	£6	Title for The Spinney
ICO subscription					£35/40	£35 if a Direct debit can be set up

The list was discussed and adjusted as follows:

- TB asked that PPC check that the bus shelter and war memorial are covered on the asset list. The asset list had been updated for the payment of the annual insurance payment and now includes speed cameras. **ACTION Clerk**

- The Interim Clerk finishes on 18th July and will be paid to end May
- A payment to the ICO will be set up **ACTION JS/Clerk**
- Despite the correct procedure of agreeing expenses before incurring them not having been followed in the case of the expenses claim for a resident who had provided Land Registry details, the £6 claim was agreed in retrospect.
- Agreeing the Survey Monkey costs will be brought to the July meeting.

Proposed SR Seconded AS All agreed

14. **Correspondence List**

SR outlined the procedure for dealing with a Formal Complaint. The policy states that these are discussed at a full Parish Council meeting. Supporting documents must be made available seven days before the meeting. There had therefore not been enough time to discuss the complaint at the 4th May meeting but it will be on the Agenda for 7th July. The Clerk was asked to let the complainant know.

ACTION Clerk

Paul Richards of BPHA had been due to present plans for Close Road at the April meeting but had been unwell. SR suggested that he is contacted and asked to make the plans available to councillors and on the Parish website.

ACTION Clerk

BG raised the East/West rail consultation which had not been notified to the clerk@pavenham-pc.gov.uk address. SR highlighted the website which explains route options and that there had been a booklet delivered to affected addresses in Bedford. SR will contact Bletsoe PC to see if there is an update on the co-ordinated response.

TB asked to raise a point of policy. He had been surprised that a member of the public had joined the site meeting at East End. He was concerned about this. He did not know if this had been intended. AS and JS assured TB that it had been serendipitous. He was concerned that this was disallowed in future as there is the potential for conflict. SR asked that site visit policy was **added to a future Agenda**. Clerk asked to research protocol on site visits.

ACTION Clerk

15. **Determine time and place of the next ordinary meeting of the council**

Only the date of 7th July, in Pavenham Village Hall at 7.30pm is agreed at this stage.

SR will draft a statement for the website explaining in general terms the decisions that have been taken regarding future meetings. AS will post to website. **ACTION SR/AS**

The meeting closed at 21.50pm

TL 4th May 2021