

# OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

2023/5  
MINUTES

ORDINARY MEETING held at the Village Hall, Oxborough  
Wednesday 18 January 2023, starting at 7.30pm

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Simon Willies	Chair
	Graham Allison	Councillor
	Ian Monson	Councillor
	Mike Nairn	Breckland Council Councillor
	Fabian Eagle	Norfolk County Council Councillor

4 Members of the Public

Before the meeting began, the Chair issued the usual reminder for everyone to keep comments relevant and be respectful of those in attendance.

## Open Forum (questions regarding the Agenda)

None

### 1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Lambert had informed the Clerk that she was unwell with a migraine and so would be unable to attend. And Cllr Chapman had informed the Chair that he could not attend due to a family emergency.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

None.

### 3. Declarations of recording and social media use

None

### 4. To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 23 November 2022

The draft Minutes had been circulated and displayed on the Notice Board (and PC website). Cllr Willies proposed that the minutes should be accepted, seconded by Cllr Monson - all in favour- the minutes were signed by the Chair.

### 5. Matters arising

a. Concerning the lime tree, the Chair observed that the remedial works had been carried out and seemed to be a good job. Cllr Monson thought that the tree had been very strongly crowned but that this should produce vigorous growth in the springtime.

b. There has been no progress made on re-establishing a hibernaculum, and resident Mr. A. Le Clercq reported that he was still waiting on a response from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust but that the works would not be carried out until the autumn.

### 6. District Councillors Report

Cllr Nairn advised that there is funding available to community groups (e.g., the village hall) to use for celebrating the King's coronation on May 6, plus match-funding for PCs to purchase and install a flagpole. He confirmed that concerning the call for building land, the outcome for Oxborough was no sites (although not the case for surrounding villages). The District Council is preparing to agree the new precept but advised that the increase for a Band D property would be £4.95 but that BC retains the lowest council tax for the UK.

Mrs. Pritchard asked a question about the Design guide for Breckland - the link email does not work. Cllr Nairn responded that he would supply the correct link.

### 7. County Councillors Report

Government funding is expected to be a little higher than anticipated but on the proviso that NCC council tax would increase by 4.99% -5%, which would include 2% for adult care. A target of £60m in savings has been hit for the current year, but another £40m must be made in the year ahead. Norfolk is in the process of applying for level 3 in the devolution process which would see the public election of a mayor, with an additional £20m funding. Neighbouring counties have already made this decision. The process will be ratified in December. There are

positives and negatives, but the additional income is extremely desirable. Cllr Eagle reported that he had just been appointed as the cabinet member for Growing the Economy. He pointed out that the condition of potholes on the highways had been worsened by recent extended bad weather - but urged the council and public alike to report incidents of potholes using the online highways feature of NCC website (<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads/road-maintenance/potholes>) and to register details as then updates would be efficiently (and promptly) sent to the individual.

The Chair asked how future savings of £40m will be achieved. There has been a strategic review carried out by consultants who have come up with the necessary plans. Cllr Willies asked about the effect of avian flu - and how much support has been given to those affected. Compensation has been paid, but it is the consequential losses which have caused further financial burden. The question of the swift tower was asked - and whether Oxborough was still in the running. Ashill had already received one (following on from last year's devastating summer fires which destroyed large areas of grass & field) but Cllr Eagle had decided to award a second swift tower, although to a small village (such as Oxborough). Cllr Monson questioned the public election of the inaugural mayor, and what might happen if the successful candidate is different from the main political party in NCC. The new mayor has no obligation to pick his cabinet from the main party. It was asked if NCC had asked to have a mayor (yes) and whether this public servant would be required to sign up to a code of conduct. Cllr Eagle confirmed that it would be up to the voters to scrutinize the candidate's ability to take up the role of mayor, but that candidates would know about the need to comply with certain basic standards. Cllr Monson asked if any members of NCC had not been in support of level 3. Yes, there were concerns over governance and what might happen if the new leader had a particular or strong dislike to the main party. The final question came from Mrs. Pritchard, and it concerned the state of the muddy road adjacent to the village telephone box, as the response from highways had this already handled and closed. The Clerk agreed adding that this was a recurring problem for the particular lane. Cllr Eagle promised to take this up with the highway department.

The Chair thanked both councillors for their reports and fielding questions, and they both took their leave of the meeting at 8.05pm.

**8. Planning - motion to consider whether the PC should respond to any of the planning applications, and if so, what to respond**

1. TRE/2022/0298/TPO for remedial works on the lime tree (The Pound) - permission granted to NCC
2. 3PL/2022/1223/HOU extension to Little Ox - PA approved (22-12-2022)

**9. Finance**

**a) To receive bank balance and reconciliation.**

The Councillors considered the statement (Appendix A) but Cllr Allison pointed out that he had not received a copy prior to the meeting. The clerk had emailed all councillors on Monday 9 January, attaching 5 documents (Agenda, Correspondence Received including Planning, Accounts and Highways, Budget vs. Actual (Appendix A), new Budget and Precept Planning for 2023/24 (Appendix B) and a copy of the Lease. The Chair confirmed that he had received this email and all attachments, pointing out that he had to scroll down to the end of the email to locate them. Cllr Monson had messaged the clerk on the morning of the meeting, to request these documents. The clerk advised that a second email had been sent on Wednesday 11 January with an updated Agenda and Correspondence Received. Perhaps this was noticed by some councillors, and the first email overlooked. But she urged councillors to contact the clerk to request attachments prior to the meeting. Cllr Allison asked a question on the draft accounts concerning £150 training that was re-inserted after it was agreed to omit it from the previous accounts. The clerk will remove it. The invoice from CGM was considered and approved for payment (proposed by the Chair and second received from Cllr Monson) and the cheque signed by Cllrs Willies and Allison. Cllr Monson commented on how the balance seemed healthy and he proposed to accept the accounts, which was seconded by Cllr Willies - all in favour. Cllr Monson proposed that the bank balance and reconciliation be accepted, seconded by Cllr Willies, all in favour, passed.

**b. To consider authorisation of payments and to sign cheques:**

Payment:

1. TSB bank fees -£5 each month
2. CGM- grass cutting- £365.65
3. St. John the Evangelist - annual donation-£175

Receipts: None.

**c) Motion to make the annual donation to St. John the Evangelist Church**

The Councillors agreed that this should be paid as usual, and the cheque was signed by Cllrs Allison and Willies.

**d) Set the budget for the year 2023/24**

Cllrs discussed the upcoming election cost- estimated at £951.28 for a contested election. It was agreed that this was significantly more than the figure charged 4 years previously and seemed very excessive. It was suggested that adding £1000 into the budget to cover this cost would be prudent as it was best practise to make a provision for the expense. Concerning a replacement accountant, the Clerk had received a quote from Ewing Accounts Services (in Flitcham) which was competitive: Although an initial one-off set up fee of £40 plus VAT would be payable, after that an annual cost of £120 plus VAT would be charged. The Chair speculated as to whether CGM might increase prices, as might the insurance company. Cllr Allison queried the expected income of £200 from the National Trust - the Clerk reminded the council that Oxburgh Hall pay in arrears each May (so at this point, they owe 8 months rent) and it would be unlikely that the land is returned to the church within the next 4 months. Cllr Allison questioned the village green hire proposed income of £260. This comprises payment from Ryston Runners and the Fox Terrier Garden Party (£100 each) and then £60 from the Open Gardens.

**e) Motion to consider the Annual Precept request - submit to Breckland Council by 31 Jan 2023**

Taking all the previous discussions into consideration, the Chair asked councillors whether the precept should be increased or remain at the same level. Cllr Monson pointed out that it might be acceptable to postpone the cleaning of the war memorial -as it appeared to still be in a good condition - and the purchase of a new park bench. But he urged the council to make a slight increase to the precept, to avoid any necessity for overly large increases in future years. Cllr Allison commented that even a small increase would see an additional monthly £1 charge to each household, due to rounding up. So Cllr Monson proposed an increase of 2% (£65.84) which was seconded by Cllr Allison - all in favour. The new annual precept will be £3358. The Clerk will complete the necessary Form B and submit to Breckland Council before the deadline.

**10. Correspondence Received**

- a) Norfolk Police (see website)
  1. Police and Crime Commissioner with re-scheduled dates for his drop in Q&A sessions in Dereham and Swaffham: Thursday 12 January 2pm - 4pm, Swaffham Community Centre, Campingland.
- b) Email Invitation to meeting - Liz Truss MP: "I am very keen to meet you for an update on local issues. Over the coming months I will be holding a series of meetings with local Town and Parish councils. If you would like to hold such a meeting, where I could come along and meet your council and discuss local issues with you then do, please come back to me and I will arrange to come and hold a meeting with you. A member of my team will also be in contact and work with you to organise this".
- c) NCC (see website)
- d) Breckland Council:
  1. Updated Register of Electors received (**Clerk will print copies for each Councillor**).
  2. Photo ID will be required to vote in upcoming May election. Accepted forms of ID include a UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth passport; a UK, EEA or Commonwealth drivers' licence; and some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass or an Oyster 60+ card. Voters will be able to use expired ID if they are still recognisable from the photo. **The Councillors discussed this briefly, and it was concluded that corruption and fraudulent factors had caused this new requirement to be put into place.**
  3. To mark the King's Coronation, Breckland Council are offering a match funding grant scheme for Parish Councils in Breckland who are looking to erect Flagpoles and Union Flags in their local area and are also offering a grant scheme for Breckland-based community groups and voluntary organisations who are looking to host community celebrations in line with the national celebrations in 2023.
  4. Breckland District Council are preparing a Design Guide for Breckland in order to inform future design of development within the district. Please respond by 13th February 2023. If you have any questions, please contact Planning Policy Team [Planning.PolicyTeam@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:Planning.PolicyTeam@breckland.gov.uk). Use this link: <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/20525/18-01-2023-Breckland-Design-Guide-Survey-and-Workshop-Dates-Announced>
- e) NALC- Payroll Service Pilot Scheme - clerk has submitted responses.
- f) Notification of external auditor appointment for the 2022-23 financial year for the 5-year period until 2026-27: Your appointed auditor will be PKF Littlejohn LLP. Scale of fees:
 

INCOME/EXPENDITURE BAND (£)	FEE FOR LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW (£)	
0 - 25,000	0	(if a Certificate of Exemption is submitted)
0 - 25,000	210	(if a LAR review is required)
25,001 - 50,000	210	
- g) Norfolk and Waveney Mind: email from Jay Harrison (Suicide Prevention Facilitator) reaching out to the community to identify need and support communities affected by suicide with services, training and any other appropriate help. Links added to website.

- h) HM The King - acknowledgement of letter of condolence sent following the death of his mother (see website).  
**The Clerk passed this card around the council and will display it on the Notice Board.**
- i) CHANCES project- search for work, help is available, supported by NCC.
- j) Email from Mrs Bar Pritchard concerning the ongoing muddy conditions on The Green (roadside closest to telephone box) - the clerk has already made a second report of this to NCC Highways and is waiting for an update. Cllr Allison pointed out that the road was much worse this year because he had not shovelled it away (as in previous years) and the hedge cutting had been delayed by 3 months, which meant that the leaves had dropped on the verge, adding to the mulch. An Email from Mr. C. Howard-Vyse (received too late to include in Correspondence Received) was considered, as it was suggested that the PC might write to Mr. D. Hotchkin, as his sycamore trees overhang the lane and leaf-fall adds much to the general mulch. **The Chair asked the Clerk to prepare the email and circulate to the council for review.**
- k) Email from Julie Shirley: "a Public Leadership MA student at De Montfort University, and my dissertation is looking at the success rates of youth councils as a tool for engaging with young people. It would be very helpful if you could spare a few minutes to complete my online survey, it doesn't matter if your council has a youth council or not: <https://forms.office.com/e/8xcuzaWJhC>."
- l) Lee England requested permission to book the village green (and village hall) for the Fox Terrier Rescue Garden Party to be held Sunday 14 May 2023.
- m) Clerks & Councils Direct - unique and personalised mugs to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III on 6 May 2023. Box of 36 mugs = £295.20 (including VAT). **Cllrs considered the offer - it was thought that £8.20 per mug was excessive (nett cost £6.83) but that it could be discussed at the next meeting - Add to Agenda.**

## 11. Highways

1. Anglian Water Mainlaying Scheme: 23 January 2023 in Chalk Road, replacing approx 1km of the existing 3inch water main with a new 180mm HPPE, the replacement and upsizing of this asset will increase pressure in the area and also mitigate the frequent burst mains we have down this road. Road closed until 17 March 2023. **The village will have no water on the morning of Thursday 26 January.**
2. Upcoming temporary road closure in the Parish of Foulden to facilitate UKPN pole replacement works - 1 Feb 2023.

## 12. Consider the Lease between OPC and the National Trust

Cllr Monson suggested that the NT should receive at least one year's notice and Cllr Allison agreed that it would be inappropriate to expect the Trust to relinquish the land in under a year. The Clerk confirmed that she was waiting for either Donna Baldwin (General Manager) or Eloise Balcombe (Estate Manager) to respond to the request for a meeting. The Chair reminded the Clerk to contact Charles Ashley (PCC) to determine the date which would be considered for the return of the land.

## 13. Discuss Conservation area duties and responsibilities of the PC and householders

The Chair asked the council for their views. Cllr Allison stated that the actual Conservation Area for Oxborough should be made clear and Cllr Monson responded that he had a map (as did various members of the public). The Chair noted that there are various conditions imposed on residents living within the area (e.g., concerning tree works and demolition). Mrs. Pritchard volunteered placing information about it in the village newsletter and Cllr Allison suggested that the link to BC website should be included in the minutes. The Chair agreed, adding that this should be added to the PC website. Clerk will action.  
[https://bdc.dynamicmaps.co.uk/MapThat\\_BDC\\_Public/Default.aspx?zoomlevel=16](https://bdc.dynamicmaps.co.uk/MapThat_BDC_Public/Default.aspx?zoomlevel=16)

## 14. Planning on event and commemorations to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III on 6 May 2023

Cllr Willies noted that there is funding on offer, but that it is match funding, and so may be beyond the means of the limited budget. The Councillors discussed the proposition of buying and installing a flagpole. Would it be worthwhile just for a single day's use, bearing in mind how many years the Queen ruled without any flagpole in the village. Cllr Monson suggested that maybe a village flag could be designed, or with a nod to patriotism, the St. George flag rather than the Union Jack might be preferable. After a little more discussion the consensus was that there would not be a need for a flagpole. However, the Councillors were in support of the village hall planning an event, offering the use of the village green (no charge) and Cllr Monson further offering the use of a large quantity of red, white and blue bunting.

**15. Village Hall Report by Susan Hernandez (PC representative)**

The "Oxborough Magical Christmas 2022" for the children of Oxborough was a lovely festive occasion for those who attended, even though the evening was very cold and crispy. Thanks to funding of £2000, a Warm Spot for Oxborough has been put in place every Wednesday between 12.30 and 3.00pm, when anyone in need of warmth, Wi-Fi, company and lunch can come along to participate -totally free to all. The new fire door has been installed and quotes for the refurbishment of the lobby area have been received - the committee will now make a decision on which contractor will be asked to carry out the works

**16. A.O.B.**

The Chair mentioned the proposal to purchase commemoration mugs, which will be added to the Agenda. The following meeting dates were agreed: 15 March (Ordinary Meeting), 19 April (Parish Meeting) and 10 May (AGM and Ordinary Meeting).

**Public participation**

**17. To receive information or suggested items for consideration at the next meeting**

Mrs. Pritchard mentioned the deteriorated condition of ditches alongside the Old School House, suggesting that NCC Highways should be contacted to made good this area. And she questioned whether the estimated election cost is legitimate and with transparency in mind, how the figure of £951.28 had been calculated, whether it was per capita or simply a standard charge, in which case it is unfair. The Chair advised that there are fixed costs to holding the election, whatever the size of the electorate, but the Clerk will ask the question of the Elections Team at BC. Mrs. Stapleton asked more questions concerning the upcoming election. The number of councillors for Oxborough is 5, and if just 5 candidates are received by BC this would result in an uncontested election (which would incur £75 in election costs) but if 6 or more candidates are received, this would cause a contested election (and the estimated election cost as discussed earlier). The successful candidates serve for 4 years. Mr. Le Clercq asked if the hedge cutting had been completed - yes - in which case does he have permission to trim up some scraggly areas - yes, with thanks from the council. Cllr Monson added that he will remove the broken branch from the tree within the hedge (on the main road).

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and bid all, goodnight. The meeting closed at 9.23pm

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APPENDIX A	Meeting 18 January 2023				
Report: Accounts reported against the budget quarterly					
IAW Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control (section Financial Reporting)					
<b>BUDGET 2022/23</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>		
<i>Estimated Gross Payments</i>					
Accountants	25.00	0.00	25.00		
Training	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Clerk's wages	1430.00	0.00	1430.00		
Clerk's expenses	224.00	0.00	224.00		
HMRC	0.00	0.00	0.00		
CGM (grass maintenance - 15 cuts plus herbicide)	676.00	403.80	365.65		
Hedge maintenance (1 cut) (see Note 2)	334.64	0.00	344.68		
RoSpa	86.40	88.20			
St. John the Evangelist donation	175.00	0.00	175.00		
Royal British Legion donation	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Insurance	162.21	162.21	0.00		
Insurance for playground (see note 1)	164.51	160.78	0.00		
Village Hall Hire/ Zoom meeting	84.00	0.00	84.00		
Bank charges	60.00	50.00	10.00		
War memorial cleaning	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Village Green bench	380.00	0.00	380.00		
External Auditors	0.00	240.00			
	<b>3801.76</b>	<b>1104.99</b>	<b>3038.33</b>		
<i>Estimated Receipts</i>					
Village Green Hire	90.00	160.00			
National Trust Lease	200.00	200.00			
Precept	3292.00	3292.00			
VAT Refund	170.00	2165.09			
Donation towards the Beech tree project	0.00	750.00			
	<b>3752.00</b>	<b>5817.09</b>			
<b>Bank Reconciliation</b>					
Bank Balance b/f	<b>6638.97</b>		<b>3760.64</b>	Estimated	
<b>Add Receipts:</b>				Balance end	
National Trust Lease	200.00			of financial	
<b>sub-total</b>	<b>200.00</b>			year 2022/23	
<b>Less Payments:</b>					
Bank charges (Dec 2022 / Jan 2023)	10.00				
Royal British Legion donation	30.00				
<b>sub-total</b>	<b>40.00</b>				
<b>Bank Balance @ 9 January 2023</b>	<b>6798.97</b>				