

OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

2023/4
MINUTES

ORDINARY MEETING held at the Village Hall, Oxborough
Thursday 23 November 2022, starting at 7.30pm

PRESENT:	Simon Willies	Chair
	Bernie Chapman	Vice Chair
	Graham Allison	Councillor
	Jackie Lambert	Councillor
	Ian Monson	Councillor

5 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)

Mr. A. Le Clercq and Mr. M. Wood both asked a question concerning the precept for next year, but this will be on the next agenda and discussed at the meeting in January 2023.

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Declarations of recording and social media use

None

4. To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 29 Sept 2022

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

5. Matters arising

a. Concerning the lime tree, and the proposed remedial action by NCC, Cllr Monson asked if this would include removing the dead wood - yes.

b. The Chair asked if the TSB had updated the signatories - this had finally been accomplished that very day, so Cllr Allison and Cllr Chapman were both now included on the bank mandate.

c. The Chair also asked about whether the clerk had made any progress on finding a new accountant - potentially yes, and this was in the correspondence received.

d. Open Reach has inspected the tree opposite the pub (19 October 2022) and although it is clear that the cables are tangled, they are first seeking permission from NCC to carry out work on the verge: this may take some time. Works reference EA5PGM03.

e. Cllrs had yet to agree a site meeting on the village green (to inspect all the trees and agree any remedial works).

f. Cllr Willies asked if any beech tree chippings remained on the green - yes, but only a small amount and mostly unobtrusive.

g. Cllr Allison asked if any further action had been taken concerning the flooding at the bridge by the sewage works. Cllr Monson advised that he would get around to taking some photos of the problem, which the clerk could then use to report the issue to NCC Highways.

h. Concerning the hedge cutting, the Chair commented on how long this was taking, that M.P. Dennis seemed reluctant to carry out the job. Cllr Allison pointed out that Chris Dennis had informed the clerk that he would not be hand-cutting any areas of the hedge which the tractor and flail could not reach, and Cllr Monson agreed that this was always a problem.

The Chair closed the meeting.

Cllr Willies suspended Standing Orders so that the councillors could further discuss and agree a way forward to getting the hedge cut satisfactorily. As the quote from CGM made clear 'to cut all the hedges around the village green using a tractor and flail, this is to be followed up with a clear up team to tidy areas the flail cannot reach' Cllr Chapman proposed that the PC accept this quote, seconded by Cllr Monson - all in favour. The clerk will contact CGM to make the necessary arrangements.

The Chair re-opened the meeting.

6. District Councilors Report

None

7. County Councillors Report

None

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

- a. Clerk asked the tree officer whether there is a need for tree works application concerning village green trees: "you can remove dead wood or damaged/hanging branches without making an application. Anything else you will need to apply for."
- b. TRE/2022/0240/TCA, Church Farm, Walnut - Fell (Tree Work App CA) - decision is permission granted.
- c. 3PL/2022/1223/HOU: Little Ox (Single Storey Side Extension)- Mr. & Mrs. Madden. **Councillors had considered the application and had no objections.**

9. Finance

a. To receive bank balance and reconciliation.

The Councillors considered the statement. Cllr Monson commented on how the balance was very healthy - this was because of the VAT return recently received (on the beech tree costs). Cllr Willies pointed out the unexpected £240 paid to the external auditors, as the PC turnover had been excessive compared to previous years and so had fallen into a higher category which required auditing. Cllr Monson thought that maybe the PC could actually consider the replacement of one of the benches and Cllr Willies suggested that the cleaning costs of the war memorial should be reinstated for the upcoming year, although Cllr Chapman commented on the good condition of the war memorial - the clerk confirmed that she had carried out the annual cleaning of the monument, prior to Remembrance Sunday. Cllr Willies noted that Breckland Council had estimated the cost of the upcoming election in May and their advice that this should be considered when calculating the precept requirement as it may be almost £1000 for a contested election. Cllr Monson commented on how BC seem to charge an unfair amount to parish councils and Cllr Allison added that the true cost would only be known after the election had taken place. Cllr Chapman pointed out that inflation was impacting the figure and that the PC would need to think carefully when the time came to set the precept.

Cllr Monson proposed that the bank balance and reconciliation be accepted, seconded by Cllr Chapman, all in favour, passed.

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

a) Payment:

1. TSB bank fees -£5 each month
2. The Poppy Appeal - Donation request of £20 - **Cllrs agreed on £30 as per the budget and Cllrs Monson and Willies signed the cheque.**

b) Receipts

1. BC- Precept £1646
2. National Trust - £200 (annual hire charge, May 2021-May 2022)

10. Correspondence Received

a) Norfolk Police (see website)

- (1) Q&A session Chief Constable Sanford and Police and Crime Commissioner Orpen-Smellie will be hosting on 13th December 2022 in Kings Lynn.

- b) Email from West Norfolk Council (Michael Burton Principal Planner) regarding Stoke Ferry Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036: consultation; refer to the Stoke Ferry Neighbourhood Plan web page, deadline is 11 November 2022.
- c) NALC: Working with Central Digital & Data Office at the Cabinet Office, hope to be able to setup a pilot scheme offering Parish and Town councils a .gov.uk domain name/ email addresses starting from early 2023-the aim is to offer this either for free or at cost only. Deadline to respond is 16 December 2022. Clerk has responded.
- d) NCC
 - (1) nplaw is considering the effectiveness of our current approach to our Legal Subscription Service and would appreciate input from our Parish and Town Council colleagues - whether you have been a customer of nplaw previously or not. Please provide your comments by 31st October 2022 to Nicky.mcdowell@norfolk.gov.uk
 - (2) Cllr Fabian Eagle supplied posters for displaying concerning Avian Flu : “ I cannot emphasise enough that this is not just a disease of farmed poultry but wild birds as well, 57 different species of wild birds have been found to have bird flu”.
 - (3) Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Pre-Submission. Deadline for representations on the soundness and legal compliance of NM&WLP has been extended until 5pm on 19 Dec 2022. Where possible NCC would prefer representations to be made directly to <https://norfolk.oc2.uk/> however, responses by post and email will also be accepted.
- e) Fox Terrier Rescue - request from organiser Mrs. Lee England to hire the village green 14 May 2023.
- f) Clerk contacted St. John the Evangelist Church wardens to ask if the PCC has a need for the area of burial ground which is leased to the National Trust to be returned to the PCC. Charles Ashley confirmed that the “remaining space for new graves within the churchyard is becoming increasingly limited. As a result, the PCC has had to resolve not to allow any reservations of future burial plots in case this locks up the few remaining space and ... discuss this issue with the National Trust and confirm what arrangements could be made for releasing all (or perhaps part) of the land for the purposes of extending the graveyard sooner rather than later”.
- g) Quote requested for preparing Clerk’s PAYE
 - (1) from accountant David Steel - £150 plus VAT
 - (2) from Judith Taylor - £50 (possibly plus VAT)
- h) Transport East Summit- Rural Mobility Survey. “This survey will reveal a wider picture of the connectivity challenges and opportunities in our region as well as understanding the baseline for transport in rural areas.” The survey is now live and can be filled out at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/TERural/> -one response from each Parish, deadline 16 Dec. Clerk completed the survey.
- i) Breckland Council
 - (1) Precept requirement for 2023-24: deadline 31 January 2023. “You should include in your parish precept calculations an amount for the Parish Elections scheduled for May 4, 2023. We have estimated the cost of the parish election to be in the region of £ 951.28”. Uncontested election cost is £75.

11. Highways

- a. Temporary Traffic Order affecting the C42 Oxborough Road from 30m west of its junction with Chalk Row Road for 210m westwards in the PARISH OF GOODERSTONE because of HV polling works. 25- 27, 3 days.
- b. ENQ900195546 received on (28/10/2021) regarding Public Rights of Way (footpath sign on Eastmoor Road: New Status: ‘This problem has already been reported and action identified to resolve the issue - It is likely that the defect was identified as part of our routine scheduled inspections and already prioritised for repair’.
- c. Lime Tree - inspection by NCC, report states “Remove branch(es) - remove significant deadwood - carefully - inspect large sections of deadwood in upper crown for bats before cutting. Remove epicormic shoots - as specified - from around base and stem and main scaffold branches to a height of 4m. Essential - 3 months.

12. Consider the request from the PCC to confirm what arrangements could be made for releasing all (or perhaps part) of the land leased to the National Trust for the purposes of extending the graveyard

The Chair referred to the email received from PCC Church Warden, Charles Ashley (Correspondence Point 10.f above). Cllr Monson suggested that it would best to make arrangements for the entire area to be returned back to the Church, rather than a part and Cllr Chapman agreed although he warned that many years before, when the area had been fenced around, it had been allowed to fall into a very poor state. Cllr Allison questioned whether the NT should still need access, and Cllr Willies suggested that the PC meet with the NT to discuss the issue. Cllr Allison added that he was aware of the location of marker stones which had been laid down when the fencing had been removed and Councillors questioned whether the NT would be required to replace the fencing. Cllr Chapman suggested that the original lease document should be examined closely in regard to this. Further discussion

followed concerning the timings and it was agreed that the PCC should be asked to supply a date for this to be accomplished. The clerk will arrange a meeting with the NT for some time in the new year.

13. Discuss the action taken to move the hibernaculum from around the beech tree

The clerk repeated what she had said at the end of the last meeting (minutes dated 29 Sept 2022, Point 20). Cllr Allison expressed his concern that the PC had allowed this action and that there was a legal aspect to consider. Cllr Chapman added that the action had been taken now and that it would not be a good idea to move them again, as the wildlife habitat would be disturbed. Cllr Willies thought that they had not been well constructed in the first place and suggested that they might be reinstated, but closer to the stump and he asked Andrew Le Clercq to look into some options, to which he agreed.

14. Consider the BC inspection made on the Lime Tree and the action proposed by NCC .

Cllr Lambert noted that the tree needed tidying up and Cllr Chapman agreed adding that there is a lot of dead wood. Cllr Monson made it clear that the height of the tree should be maintained. Cllr Allison suggested that the area beneath would need to be cordoned off during the operation.

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

The annual village breakfast was a lovely occasion last weekend and raised £271.75. This will be put towards funding the annual Christmas event “Oxborough Magical Christmas 2022” being held on Saturday 17 December. In a few days’ time, on Saturday 26 November, there is the inaugural Christmas Craft & Gifts Fair, between 2pm -6pm. There will be refreshments available all afternoon. Everyone is invited to come along and do a little Christmas shopping; all funds will support our children’s Christmas event. Cllr Monson commented on our festive the hall was looking.

16. A.O.B.

None.

Public participation

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

Mr. Le Clercq pointed out that the financial statement and correspondence received had not been uploaded to the website on this occasion. He asked about the pilot scheme offering Parish and Town councils a [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) domain name. The clerk confirmed that the questionnaire had comprised simple questions (such as size of electorate, precept, how many staff, how many councillors, what website platform is used). Mr. William Chapman noted that this domain name protected councillors and offered a level of security (as opposed to a private email address). Mr. Le Clercq raised his concerns over the proposed site meeting on the village green, when councillors would be inspecting and then pruning trees, adding that no healthy branches should be cut. Cllr Monson responded that they would not break the law. Mr. William Chapman spoke about Planning Applications and how these should be in keeping with the appearance of the village - so how could a portaloo be allowed to remain in place on a property for several years. Mr. Le Clercq immediately responded that he is putting in a PA for works to be carried out by the end of the year or early 2023 at the latest. Mrs. Elaine Willies asked about the tangled telephone cable and the chance that the line might actually come down - how would that stand with the PC. The clerk confirmed that as the damage had been reported, the responsibility lies with Open Reach. Cllr Allison repeated his questioning (discussed during the meeting held 13 July 2022) concerning the electric supply to the decommissioned telephone box and why the supply was left connected. The clerk responded that she had supplied all the information and could not add any further reasons.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and bid all, goodnight. The meeting closed at 8.40pm

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APPENDIX A	Meeting 23 Nov 2022				
Report: Accounts reported against the budget quarterly					
IAW Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control (section Financial Reporting)					
BUDGET 2022/23	Budget	Actual	Outstanding		
Estimated Gross Payments					
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)	612.00	365.66	246.34		
CGM (herbicide treatment -twice)	66.00	38.14	27.86		
Hedge maintenance (1 cut)	334.64	0.00	334.64		
RoSpa	86.40	88.20			
St. John the Evangelist donation	175.00	0.00	175.00		
Royal British Legion donation	30.00	0.00	30.00		
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	40.00	20.00		
War memorial cleaning	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Village Green bench	380.00	0.00	380.00		
External Auditors	0.00	240.00			
	3833.76	1094.99	2976.84		
Estimated Receipts					
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			
	3752.00	5817.09			
Bank Reconciliation					
Bank Balance b/f	5439.17		3662.13		
<u>Add Receipts:</u>				estimated	
BC Precept	1646.00			balance end	
sub-total	1646.00			of financial	
<u>Less Payments:</u>				year 2022/23	
Bank charges (Oct/Nov)	10.00				
RoSpa	88.20				
NGF Play Equipment	108.00				
PKF Littlejohn (auditors)	240.00				
sub-total	446.20				
Bank Balance @ 16 Nov 2022	6638.97				
Note 1: There was an additional insurance for the playground items/fencing: £164.51 which was paid by a villager. The Budget has been updated to include this for the current year.					