

**2023/3
MINUTES**

looking more likely that Swaffham will finally have a swimming pool. He pointed out that Cllr Eagle (NCC) has had his work cut out for him whilst the country-wide avian flu has been affecting many farmers in Norfolk, which would explain his absence from the meeting.

He invited questions. Mr. Le Clercq asked about the status of the Local Plan Review - this is ongoing but please do check the website for further information. The Chair thanked him for his report, and Cllr Nairn and his wife left the meeting.

8. County Councillors Report

None

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

- a. Ref No: TRE/2022/0176/TCA Oxburgh Hall. Proposal: T1 poplar and T2 sycamore - fell to ground level - it is proposed to remove the trees as part of a parkland restoration project (Tree Work App CA)
- b. Ref No: 3DC/2022/0132/DOC Decided 09-08-22 Decision DOC - COMPLETE. Location: OXBOROUGH Excavation Site, Oxborough Road, PE33 9QH. Proposal: Discharge of Condition No 11 on 3PL/2021/0248/F (Discharge Conditions).
- c. Ref No: TRE/2022/0240/TCA, Church Farm Swaffham Road: Removal of mature Walnut tree overhanging cart lodge which is also blocking light to solar panels on nearby barn roof. (Tree Work App CA). Cllrs discussed this briefly - it was agreed that the tree is within the conservation area.
- d. Cllr Monson noted that the old beech tree monolith remains under the existing TPO (confirmed by the tree officer, Mr Coggles).

10. Finance

a. To receive bank balance and reconciliation.

The Councillors considered the statement; Cllr Monson asked if the second half of the precept had been received - the Clerk confirmed this and added that the bank reconciliation for the next meeting would include this. 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:

a) Payment:

1. TSB bank fees -£5 each month
2. NGF Play Ltd - £90 plus VAT - tighten up bolts on monkey bar upright.
3. RoSpa Play Safety - £73.50 plus VAT - first playground Annual Inspection.
4. PKF Littlejohn external auditors- £200 plus VAT.

b) Receipts

1. HMRC VAT refund £2165.09
2. Oxborough Farm Ltd - £750

Councillors considered the payments - no objections, cheques signed by Cllr Monson and Cllr Willies.

11. Correspondence Received

a) Norfolk Police (see website)

1. Residents across the county are being invited to meet with Police and Crime Commissioner Giles Orpen-Smellie to discuss any issues they may have about crime and policing in Norfolk. Giles' next 'Time to Talk' session where people are given direct one-to-one access to him, is due to take place on Friday 2 September 2022. The 'surgery-style' event will be held virtually or over the telephone, with people being allocated 15-minute slots to raise any questions or concerns.

b) Breckland Council (see website)

1. Tree Office, Hugh Coggles, confirmed the following concerning the Beech monolith: "as the tree remains it is still protected and no need to re-plant".

2. Lorraine Varney (Community Enabler)- offering free Mental health courses, see link to access dates, locations and to book a space www.breckland.gov.uk/article/17868/Mental-Health-Training

3. Local Plan (Partial Review) Regulation 19 Consultation. The closing date is 16:59 on September 23, 2022. <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/local-plan-review>.

4. Sent on behalf of Breckland Chairman, Cllr Mike Nairn:

HM The Queen

To all parish and town council colleagues,

It is with great sadness that I must inform you that HM The Queen has died. On behalf of Breckland Council, I would like to express my sincere sadness at her passing. No other monarch has played such an instrumental role in British life and within the Commonwealth, all against a backdrop of monumental changes in society. History will show her contribution to our society has been transformative, and she will be truly remembered as one of Britain's greatest monarchs.

In light of this event, protocol London Bridge has now been implemented. Members are asked to wear appropriately sombre colours during the period of mourning over the coming 30 days, particularly when attending official meetings and conducting council business. Flags at Elizabeth House in Dereham will be flown at half-mast until 8am on the morning following the funeral. The flags will remain at half-mast until the new sovereign is proclaimed at 11am on Proclamation Day. Books of Condolence will be made available at Elizabeth House, in Dereham, and Breckland House, in Thetford. They will be opened from tomorrow and remain available until 4.30pm on the day following the funeral. An e-Book of condolence is expected to be made available online at www.royal.uk.

c) NCC (see website)

d) Pensions Regulator: confirmation that OPC has completed the re-declaration of compliance for OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL with The Pensions Regulator under the Pensions Act 2008 (or, for employers in Northern Ireland, the Pensions Order 2008) on 11/07/2022.

e) Email from Bar Prichard concerning a damaged tree on the boundary of the green: 'The branch snapped off completely in wind a few years back and hooked itself over another branch. It is very close to live power lines and, I would suggest, is not a job for well-meaning volunteers. It will progressively rot and will inevitably fall at some point. The tree's root appears to be in the verge.'

f) Geoffrey Morley, facilities manager Oxburgh Hall, requested a meeting to discuss the condition of the verges adjacent to the wall.

f) Email from David Hotchkin: Raised ticket with NCC Highways: OPC has placed 'temporary' fencing on the triangular junction, on the grounds that the exhausts of vehicles parking there could set fire to the mown grass on the site. Initial small (ineffectual) placing on Wed 20 July '20 (1 day after Ashill fire) was removed on Sun 24 July and replaced on Mon 25 July by barrier around almost all of the site. I consider the Parish Council has acted 'ultra vires' and contrary to the Road Traffic Act 1980.

g) Councillors Allison, Chapman and Monson met at the Tea Room Oxburgh Hall with Geoffrey Morley (Facilities Manager NT) on 3 August. The discussion was primarily about the state of the road verge adjacent to Oxborough Hall along the Stoke Ferry Road and also secondarily along other sections of their boundary. BC Showed photos of the long grass and weeds with ivy growing up the walls and said that this was in great contrast to the neat practices of past years when the verges were regularly cut. The Head of outdoor operations said that for a number of reasons the NT have had to make changes to priorities and their management of the verges over the last two years since Covid in 2020. She said that the verges were in fact the County Council's responsibility, but they will tidy them up when they get a chance this Autumn. She also said NT policy now favours more natural wilding and as Oxborough is a rural area it was appropriate allow more natural growth. In reality the Trust is short of resources and staff since Covid and cannot sustain the same level of grounds maintenance as before. They would welcome local volunteers. It was agreed the NT would try and keep the verges at least tidy by the occasional flailing of the tops of the longer grass and wildflowers probably every 3 to 4 months if they could. Email (extract) from Head Gardener, Dea Fischer "As a compromise, we have agreed: (a) an Oxburgh volunteer will rough cut the entire width of the verge on the same schedule as the County Council would follow, being four times between May and September. (b) The first cut will be carried out once the current extreme dry conditions are relieved, which should be within the next two weeks. Otherwise, with our flinty soil, we risk striking a spark and causing a fire. (c) Cllr Chapman confirmed if we would top the verge in this way, he would volunteer to mow it at times in between".

h) The Clerk contacted NGF Play Ltd requesting advice on maintenance issues - response received "...The loose screw should have a nut attached so worth checking. On the video it looks like Torx heads which as mentioned previously are easy to obtain and are supplied in a lot of toolkits these days". The Clerk supplied RoSpa report and then Geoff responded with "All of the items are low risk and could just be monitored. The loose timbers are an unfortunate side effect of this hot weather but once tightened shouldn't cause any further issues. However, the bolts on the fencing although low risk ought to be cut down. As such we will attend to all of these issues probably next week. There will be no charge for this".

i) Kay Wells from Gooderstone requested permission to take away a quantity of the wood chip left over from the beech tree felling.

j) The Clerk contacted Norfolk Community Foundation to enquire about the Household Support Fund - this had already been spent out, but there is the possibility of another round, and someone will send an update when this is known. However, "Parish Councils cannot distribute monies or goods to individuals unless the PC has the General Power of Competence. Eligibility criteria for this includes...having elected members, a qualified clerk and holding

an annual meeting. If your Parish Council is not eligible, households may be able to be supported through your local Village Hall, church or community centre, as long as they meet our eligibility criteria”.

12. Highways

- a) ENQ900211398 - broken footpath sign on Oxborough Road (verge of Oxburgh Hall wall). Status update from NCC: We are investigating the problem - Defects are investigated by local teams as soon as possible and, if action is required, prioritised for repair taking into account the defect size, location and usage of the road or path in question.
- b) Several emails sent to BC and NCC regarding the poor condition of the Lime Tree on The Pound - both Councils stating they are not responsible - Clerk has reapplied for remedial works to be carried out by NCC and another tree inspection has been programmed. Email received from NCC on 31 August: “We are unfortunately slightly behind time with inspections, but the information has been re-circulated today and I have advised that you have requested an update for your next Parish meeting. Following inspection, a report with recommendations will be forwarded to the Highway Engineer who will arrange for any necessary works to be carried out and I will ask that a copy of the report is sent to you for information. Apologies for the delay and I hope this is helpful to you”. (Sharon Bland, Arboricultural and Woodland Technician). **Cllr Chapman stated that he had seen a Highway’s inspector maybe 3-4 weeks earlier. Cllr Monson asked what might need doing - the dead wood needs to be removed at the very least - but he advised that if the tree was not a danger to users of the highway, that NCC would not carry out any work.**
- c) Temporary closure of C42 White Hart Street in the parish of Foulton - UKPN pole replacement works (STRO6978)
- d) Email from Mr. D. Hotchkin “...taken 3 years to be unresolved”: ENQ900145417 (received by NCC 05/05/2019)
New Status: No action has been taken at this time, but we will continue to monitor the problem -We have assessed that the defect does not currently meet our intervention criteria. We will continue to monitor as part of normal scheduled inspections. 9 metres from Eastmoor Road. Split in two at fork in trunk - damaged section of trunk over 3 m long and all on South side. North side could now fall onto Swaffham Road in high wind. South fork of tree fell into Village green and has been tidied up. Tree is narrow leafed Ash.
- e) ENQ900201804 (received by NCC 14/02/2022). The public foot finger post is broken off at the bottom - the sign is leaning against the hedgerows. Outcome: No action has been taken at this time, but we will continue to monitor the problem -We have assessed that the defect does not currently meet our intervention criteria. We will continue to monitor as part of normal scheduled inspections.

13. **To consider the proposal for a volunteer to take on the verge mowing adjacent to the wall of Oxburgh Hall**
Cllr Chapman has volunteered to carry out the mowing, for which the Councillors thanked him. Cllr Allison queried whether NCC Highways permission should be sought - the Clerk will write. Cllr Allison asked the Clerk to check with Oxburgh Hall if the PC has permission to publish the email, as there is a disclaimer in the footer which states that the email is confidential to the recipient. The Clerk will check this.

14. **Proposal concerning the Remembrance Sunday service held at the War Memorial**
Mr. Charles Howard-Vyse was invited to speak. He noted that there is a small military presence in Oxborough and that he has always welcomed the yearly ceremony carried out by the PC. He aims to organise a similar dignified event, this year on Sunday 13 November (no Church service on that weekend in Oxborough) which he will promote and hopes there will be a bugler this time. Cllr Monson expressed his delight in the suggestion, adding that it was always a very worthwhile ceremony and how pleased he felt that this year it would be run by those with military experience. Cllr Chapman, Cllr Lambert and Cllr Willies agreed to the suggestion and Cllr Allison added that he knew of a bugler and would be willing to ask whether he would participate. Mr. Howard-Vyse thanked the council for the support and acknowledged that the PC would handle the usual acquisition of the poppy wreath supplied by the Royal British Legion.

15. **Review the agreement for the ongoing lease of churchyard land to the National Trust**
The Clerk had prepared a summary of the history of the land (burial ground) leased to National Trust for use as a carpark. The purchase of the land occurred in 1955 (0.28 acre), price of £176, mortgaged by way of a loan from NCC and repaid by October 1970. Lease between the PC and Oxburgh Hall was signed on 6 May 1987 for a term of 10 years. In 1997, the rent increased to £40, in 2001 it was £45, in 2004 it was £50. It was noted that in Nov 2006 the PC wrote to PCC to ask if they required the burial land (the response was no) so in 2007 the rent was increased to £100. A large number of years lapsed and then in 2018 the rent was increased to £150. Recent PC meeting saw a discussion on this, and it was agreed that the rent should be increased to £200 (to be collected later on in the financial year). The National Trust has been informed of this (no response). Cllr Monson suggested

that the PCC should be asked if they are anticipating the need for this land to be returned to the Church. Cllr Allison added his concern that he has learnt that only 11 plots remain in the current churchyard and what might be the implication if the Church requested the return of the land at some point during the year (would the PC need to reimburse the National Trust). The Clerk will write to the PCC.

16. Proposal to include all of the village green trees in a 3-yearly inspection.

The beech tree must be inspected after 3 years since the monolith was established, but Cllr Monson suggested it seems prudent to inspect the other trees in the very near future. Cllr Allison added that routine pruning of the trees would prevent the unnecessary branch falls which have occurred. Cllr Monson agreed adding that raising the crown on some of them would be beneficial and that the right time of the year has arrived to do this, offering to remove the cuttings. Cllr Chapman applauded this idea, noting that this sort of inspection might cost the PC £400-£500, therefore the PC should make these inspections as soon as possible (Councillors will liaise on setting a date for a walk-around). The Clerk will check with the BC tree officer concerning permission to carry out works.

17. Update on flooding at the bridge by the sewage works

Cllr Monson had previously reviewed the area which falls under his ownership and carried out repairs at his own expense. Cllr Allison pointed out that rainfall accumulates in the ditch of the Mason's side and that a further channel dug at that location would rectify this. Cllr Lambert suggested that Highways should be requested to carry out the remedial repairs and Cllr Monson agreed to liaise with the Clerk (take photos of the precise location) so that the enquiry ticket can be raised.

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

The annual village breakfast has been planned for November 20; prices are £7.50 and under 11's are charged £3.50. Places are limited so please book soon. The annual Christmas event for the children is 17 December and the invitations have been sent to all households. The committee is very busy in preparation and fundraising continues, with the sale of home-made jams, bread, birthday cards and ornamental light bottles. Please feel welcome to come along to the weekly coffee mornings every Wednesday - lots of cake for everyone. The recent event raised funds which were donated to the MacMillan Cancer Support. The coffee morning set for October 19 is in aid of Breast Cancer Now, so please do support this, as the work this charity does is just invaluable. The village hall continues to benefit from refurbishment and improvements, with a newly created picture window (adorned with vinyl stickers of flowers to prevent bird strikes) and a soon to be installed replacement fire door which will also be fully glazed.

19. A.O.B.

a) Cllr Allison advised that he had been asked by some villagers what the policy had been when The Pound had been cordoned off during the severe drought conditions, as at first only a portion had been affected, then this had been replaced with additional stakes and tape to include the entire area. But after some rainfall, the cordon had been removed, in spite of further high temperatures. During this time the owners of the pub had complained to him that parking was no longer available on The Pound and he added that a BBQ had been held at the village hall. The Chair responded that there had been a health and safety issue, bearing in mind the number of spontaneous grass fires that had occurred (locally and nationally) the temporary action taken was with good intentions, to prevent any damage to people and property. The initial cordon was because there could only be found a small number of stakes/hazard tape, and that after these were pulled out and left on the ground, a member of staff from the pub had seen some Councillors re-installing the equipment and temporary notices around the entire area, and came over to apologize for the disruption, which had been carried out by pub visitors wishing to park on The Pound. The PC had subsequently received an email from Mr. D. Hotchkin which detailed his written complaint to NCC Highways at the illegal installation of the stakes/hazard tape, as of course The Pound is not owned by the PC. Cllr Monson supported the Chair in taking action in the first place, as there had been a definite fire risk and he congratulated the Chair for organizing it, as clearly he had considered the wellbeing of villagers/visitors.

b) Cllr Monson commented on the 2 quotes received for hedge cutting (CGM £287.23 plus VAT and Treelink £900 plus VAT), the first by tractor and flail and the second by hand. Cllr Lambert advised that Treelink would probably take 3-4 days to carry out the job - in a safer fashion as well -but that it would come down to how much the PC could afford to pay. The Councillors agreed to wait until the 3rd quote was received (the Clerk had contacted a firm (MP Dennis & Sons Hedge Cutting) from North Pickenham a week back but was still waiting for a call back). The Clerk will circulate this to the Councillors who all agreed that the decision on which firm to select could be agreed upon via email.

- c) Cllr Chapman asked the Clerk to chase up the matter of the overhanging shrubs/trees on the Swaffham Road, which are on the property of the Parkers.
- d) Mr. & Mrs. Martin have asked permission for use of the village green for parking, on Saturday 1 October, as they have a concert that evening, and there is also a Wine Tasting Event being held at the village hall, so parking may be tight. Councillors considered this request and agreed to allow the use of the green for parking.
- e) Cllr Monson expressed his thanks to the Clerk for organizing the Book of Condolence which has been placed in the Church for the duration of the mourning period, following the death of HM The Queen. A letter of condolence was also sent to the Private Secretary (Buckingham Palace).
- f) It was noted that Oxborough's oldest resident, Sybil Rutterford of St. John's Close, passed away recently at the age of 102.
- g) Concerning the next meeting, as the Chair and the Vice-Chair cannot attend, although there remains a quorate, it was suggested that an alternative date be agreed upon. Cllr Monson agreed to liaise with his fellow Councillors.

Public participation

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

Mrs. B. Pritchard pointed out that BC's official book of condolence had closed once the funeral had been held. Concerning the tree referenced under Correspondence (Point 11e) the branches have been entwined around the BT cables- the Clerk will contact Openreach to request a solution. Mr. Le Clercq asked when and how the decision to move the 3 piles of cut branches and other vegetation was made. The Clerk explained that when Jamie Tuckwell removed the remaining wood from the beech tree, that she asked him to push the said piles closer to the base of the monolith stump - rather than to leave them where they were which was going to make it difficult for the grass contractors (CGM) to cut and maintain the grass in this area. Unfortunately, they were pushed much further than expected (actually into the gaps on either side of the stump). Put on Agenda for next meeting. Mrs. J. Freeman asked if the damaged fingerpost on Eastmoor Road will be replaced. The Clerk explained that NCC Highways considered it adequate as it was still visible (although merely propped up against the hedgerow). Concerning re-instating the footpath across the 'onion field', Cllr Lambert explained that this land belonged to her son, Ben Lambert, and that she will ask him to take the necessary action. Ms. M. Forde expressed her concern at the quantity of nettles growing up in front of the vehicular gate closest to the village hall - these would be troublesome for younger people and smaller dogs.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and bid all, goodnight. The meeting closed at 8.59pm

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APPENDIX A	Meeting 14 Sept 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	0.00	86.40		
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	3.73		
Village Hall Hire / Zoom meeting	84.00	0.00	84.00		
Bank charges	60.00	30.00	30.00		
War memorial cleaning	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Village Green bench	380.00	0.00	380.00		
	3833.76	756.79	3076.97		
Estimated Receipts					
Village Green Hire	90.00	60.00	30.00		
National Trust Lease	200.00	0.00	200.00		
Precept	3292.00	1646.00	1646.00		
VAT Refund	170.00	2165.09	-1995.09		
Donation towards the Beech tree project	0.00	750.00	-750.00		
	3752.00	3871.09	-869.09		
Bank Reconciliation					
Bank Balance b/f	3260.87				
Add Receipts:					
Oxborough Farms Ltd donation- pay for the beech tr	750.00				
VAT Refund	2165.09		1493.11		
				estimated	
sub-total	2915.09			balance end	
Less Payments:				of financial	
Bank charges (Aug/Sept)	10.00			year 2022/23	
CGM (grass cut x 8 + herbicide treatment x1)	403.80				
Community First Insurance	322.99				
sub-total	736.79				
Bank Balance @ 5 Sept 2022	5439.17				
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.					