

OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

2023/7
MINUTES

Ordinary Meeting held at the Village Hall, Oxborough
Wednesday 17 January 2024, starting at 7.30pm

PRESENT:	David Hotchkin	Chair
	Graham Allison	Councillor
	Martyn Cockerill	Councillor
	Jackie Lambert	Councillor
	Ian Sherwood	Breckland District Councillor

3 Members of the Public

Open Forum (questions regarding the Agenda)

A member of the public wished Cllr Willies a speedy recovery from his car accident and a timely return to PC duties. Concerning highways item (11.b) would willing villagers be permitted to carry out the work - the Chair will check back with NCC. Concerning items 13 and 20, will there be a Public Participation or not. The Chair responded with acknowledgement, as Cllr Willies had raised these agenda items and until he had returned to duties it would be discussed at a future meeting. Cllr Cockerill asserted that the PP would take place as per the agenda, but member of the public pointed out that the item had been cancelled by the Chair at the last meeting, so might it not happen again- perhaps the Open Forum would be preferable for the public to bring up any items for future meetings. Another member of the public then asked if the idea of a maintenance programme could be considered at the next meeting, as this had been suggested at earlier meetings, but nothing had come of it. His concern is the memorial bench for Kelvin Smith, sited closest to the playground and so probably most used - other councillors agreed with this.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Willies's wife had emailed apologies; Cllr Eagle had emailed apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Declarations of recording and social media use

None.

4. To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 15 November 2023

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

5. Matters arising

None.

6. District Councillor's Report

See PC website for Bedingfield Ward Report from Councillor Ian Sherwood. Cllr Sherwood pointed out that the council tax increase would be less than 5%, equal to an additional £4.95 per band D property. There are grants available to mark the occasion of the upcoming 80th anniversary D-Day. Penalties for fly-tipping on land owned by Breckland Council will be increased from £400 to £1000, while littering will carry a maximum penalty of £500 (up from £150). Mr. Le Clercq asked if the charges for taking DIY waste to the dump has financed a salary position, but Cllr Sherwood reported that NCC own the dump facilities.

7. County Councillor's Report

See PC website for report.

8. Planning Matters

- a) TRE/2023/0339/TCA Proposed work is to cut the tops down to approx. 3.5m above ground level and an appropriate trim to the width, Chantry House, Chantry Cottage (Mr. Howard-Vyse) - Approved.
- b) TRE/2023/0340/TCA T1 on application plan - goat willow - pruning to suitable points, reduce overhanging branches back approximately in line with the boundary, Hall Farm Barns, The Old Stables (Mr. Plant) - Approved.
- c) TRE/2023/0317/TCA (Oxburgh Hall) Indian Horse Chestnut, Car Park - Approved.
- d) TRE/2024/0004/TCA Oxburgh Hall: Sycamore (T1) - Dismantle to ground level, due to proximity to stables AND Sycamore (T2) - Dismantle to ground level, due to proximity to stables. (Tree Work App CA)
3PN/2023/0039/HR Location: OXBOROUGH AND COCKLEY CLEY, part Breckland/part Kings Lynn/West Norfolk, Proposal: Prior approval under Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitat Regulations) for assessment of the proposal's effect on the integrity of the statutory designated nature conservation sites (Habitat Regs).

9. Correspondence Received

- a) Norfolk Police: see website
- b) NCC: see website
- c) Breckland Council: see website
- 1. Precept requirement for 2023/24 - deadline 31 January 2024.
- 2. Land and Development Officer, Melanie Badman, email concerning parcel of land on St Johns Close.
 - i. This piece of land has been identified for disposal - "to offer Oxborough opportunity to purchase this site at market value before we look at entering it into a public auction. We are required to achieve 'best value' for this land and as such an independent surveyor was tasked with valuing the land. The market value for this land has been set at £15,000". Use would normally be restricted to amenity/community use such as allotments/community kitchens.
 - ii. "If the PC is not looking to purchase the land, then we will continue with our full consultation including awaiting comments from the local councillors regarding the disposal of the land. If the decision is made to continue with the disposal, then it will be placed into a public auction. The land would be sold as amenity land with an overage deed in place."
- 3. Kings Coronation Living Heritage Fund being delivered through DEFRA: offer to Town and Parish Council's as well as Community Groups to apply for grant funding (from £100 to £5,000), to plant community orchards within the Breckland District. Applications can be made using the webform Breckland Community Orchards Grant Application - Breckland Council until 5 January 2024.
- 4. Local Plan: Extra Consultation -Development Strategy Consultation will run from 8 January - 19February 2024. In Spring 2024, there will be a further opportunity to share feedback on the draft version of the new Local Plan - Preferred Options.
- 5. There are two D-Day Community Grants available to eligible groups in commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day in June. Please note these grants are open until 23rd February at 5pm.
- d) Mr. Howard-Vyse email: 'I have written to thank Bill Wells for playing his bugle at our Remembrance Service. I also passed him a token of appreciation on behalf of all those who attended'.
- e) Mr. Andrew Le Clercq email to the Chair '...re. your cancellation of the public participation at PC meetings: Include the public's ability to raise matters for future consideration in the Open Forum at the start; Get rid of the standing item for the District Councillor; Treat both exercises as part of tidying the agenda and streamlining meetings'. The Chair has responded.

10. Accounts

a). To receive bank balance and reconciliation

The councillors considered budget vs. actual (Appendix A), there were no questions, so Cllr Lambert proposed acceptance, seconded by Cllr Hotchkin, all in favour, passed.

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

i. Breckland Council recharge for election held 4 May 2023 -£596.64

ii. CGM- grass cutting (x5) - £500 plus VAT (gross £600)

Councillors considered the invoices, the Chair proposed the payments, seconded by Cllr Lambert, all in favour - passed. The cheques were signed.

- c. **Motion to make the annual donation of £175 to St. John the Evangelist Church.** The Chair proposed the payment, seconded by Cllr Cockerill, all in favour, passed. The cheque was drawn up and signed.
- d. **Consider renewal of NALC membership at a cost of £103.55.** Cllr Hotchkin proposed accepting the renewal, seconded by Cllr Allison, all in favour - passed.
- e. **Set the budget for the year 2024/25.** Councillors considered the draft budget prepared by the clerk, the Chair proposed acceptance, seconded by Cllr Cockerill- 3 in favour and 1 abstention - passed.
- f. **Motion to consider the Annual Precept (submit to Breckland Council by 31-01-2024) and request a six percent increase for OPC.** The Chair spoke about the fact that the PC is running behind in terms of inflation (particularly as the previous year had seen a precept increase of 2%), the consumer price index has increased by 22% since 2021 and the PC cannot afford not to increase in line with inflation: 6% is £202 extra (last year £3558). Cllr Allison suggested that the PC could raise this amount by organizing a fund-raising event, (from information from NALC concerning permitted ways to increase income) and that the PC has a duty of care to residents. The Chair proposed that the precept be increased by 6%. Cllr Cockerill considered his own opinion not relevant as he does not live in Oxborough (and so would not be affected by the increase). Cllr Lambert expressed a similar opinion but agreed to second the proposal- 3 in favour and 1 against- passed.

The Chair brought forward Item 17. Mr. Watkins was asked to join in the discussion and respond to questions.

17. **To consider that OPC will approve the letters concerning electricity supply to the telephone kiosk, prepared by the Clerk and Mr. David Watkins, for sending to npower Business Solutions and Sonex 3.**

Cllr Allison raised his concerns, citing inconsistencies between the report prepared by Mr. Watkins presented at the previous meeting) and the PC minutes. Mr. Watkins and Cllr Allison discussed at length the details of the matter. Cllr Cockerill and Cllr Lambert suggested sending the letters as prepared, waiting for the outcome. Cllr Allison disagreed, that the letters would not help. The Chair cited the Nolan principles (notably honesty and openness). There was further discussion after which the Chair proposed that the letters should be sent (no changes), seconded by Cllr Lambert - 3 in favour and 1 against- passed.

11. Highways

- a) NCC informed the clerk on 5 Dec that the charge for repainting the SLOW sign (Swaffham Road, opposite the village hall) would be £500. Match funding of £250 is available but the deadline is 8 Dec. **Cllrs discussed this for a time, pointing out that there was a second 'slow' sign which had nearly eroded, located close to the Red House, so if this was considered again, both locations should be included in any future application.**
- b) ENQ900251504 (verge with blocked ditch alongside the telephone box) -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.

12. Report from PC representative to the Village Hall Committee

The New Year has started off well, with another Mexican Evening event enjoyed by everyone who turned out on a cold January evening. CafeOx also started up again and attendance numbers are increasing as local ramblers groups have taken to dropping in after rambling in and around the village. The next quiz night is 31 January, so please feel welcome to come along and join in. And the weekly table tennis club is open to everyone- look at the website for further information.

13. To consider making the Public Participation agenda item (separate from the open forum) a standard item for every general OPC meeting

The Chair pointed out that this had been addressed during the Open Forum.

14. To consider what action OPC can take to clean out and improve drainage of ditches in the parish, initially focusing on those around the green

The Chair will approach NCC highways to get permission for volunteers to carry out the work, to which Cllr Cockerill agreed.

15. To consider that OPC will adopt the biodiversity policy statement edited by the Chair (NALC model), in compliance with the Environment Act 2021

The Chair had circulated the policy prior to the meeting. There were no questions, so he proposed the motion, seconded by Cllr Allison, all in favour, passed.

16. **To consider that OPC will accept the gift of a replacement memorial bench, in honour of Mike Solomon, from the Solomon family and the Chair**
The Chair declared that he would abstain from the decision. After a short discussion, Cllr Lambert made the proposal, seconded by Cllr Cockerill - 3 in favour and 1 abstention - passed. Cllr Allison asked if the existing plaque would be removed by the PC or the family and the Chair suggested that he would remove it as he would continue to liaise with the family. Cllr Cockerill volunteered to remove and replace the benches if the Chair could provide the information on the dimensions in regard to using the necessary fixings.
17. **To consider that OPC will approve the letters concerning electricity supply to the telephone kiosk, prepared by the Clerk and Mr. David Watkins, for sending to npower Business Solutions and Sonex 3**
See above.
18. **To consider that OPC will write a detailed, formal letter to the Parochial Church Council of Oxborough, regarding the current status of the proposed burial plot**
Cllr Hotchkin pointed out that there should be at least three councillors in any meeting with the PCC. He added that the PCC need to take into consideration the research carried out by Cllr Allison, the question of the covenant on the land, plus the quoted costs for necessary works, beyond the financial capability of the PC. Cllr Hotchkin proposed the action, seconded by Cllr Lambert, all in favour, passed. The clerk will draft a letter.
19. **To consider that OPC will adopt the revised Standing Orders (V4), in conformity with the model currently issued by the NALC and as edited by the Chair**
The Chair pointed out that Section 19: Handling Staff Matters would need to be addressed as there is no actual policy, and that of course all sections can be reviewed as and when necessary. He proposed the adoption, seconded by Cllr Allison, all in favour, passed.

Public participation

20. **To receive information or suggested items for consideration at the next meeting**
Mr. Watkins asked if the PC website could be looked at, since he could not open a document and Mr. Le Clercq agreed, adding that there were some anomalies which needed sorting. The clerk will handle this. Mr. Le Clercq suggested that the existing burial ground could be extended towards the area close to the front of the Church, rather than any land in proximity to water.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

APPENDIX A	Meeting 17 Jan 2024				
Report: Accounts reported against the budget quarterly					
IAW Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control (section Financial Reporting)					
BUDGET 2023/24	Budget	Actual	Variance	Outstanding Estimate Y/E	
Estimated Gross Payments					
Accountants	158.40	0.00	158.40	158.40	
Clerk's salary	1430.00	0.00	1430.00	1510.60	
Clerk's expenses	165.64	0.00	165.64	195.82	
CGM (grass cutting x13 plus herbicide) Note 1	769.45	840.00	-70.55	840.00	
Hedge cutting (x1 cut)	344.68	0.00	344.68	540.00	
RoSPA annual playground inspection	88.20	94.20	-6.00	0.00	
St. John the Evangelist donation	175.00	0.00	175.00	175.00	
Royal British Legion donation	30.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	
Insurance	322.99	283.42	39.57	0.00	
Bank charges	60.00	50.00	10.00	10.00	
Village Hall Hire	84.00	0.00	84.00	90.00	
Village green bench	380.00	0.00	380.00	0.00	
Cleaning of the war memorial	546.00	0.00	546.00	0.00	
Election Costs	1000.00	0.00	1000.00	596.64	
E.on Electric	0.00	70.35	-70.35	0.00	
Westcotec maintenance check	0.00	102.00	-102.00	0.00	
	5554.36	1469.97	4084.39	4116.46	
Estimated Receipts					
Village Green Hire	260.00	260.00	0.00		
National Trust Lease	200.00	200.00	0.00		
VAT refund on usual expenditure	140.00	398.90	258.90		
Precept	3358.00	3358.00	0.00		
	3958.00	4216.90	258.90		
Bank Reconciliation					
Bank Balance b/f	6599.52		2643.06	Estimated Balance end of financial year 2023/24	
Add Receipts:					
National Trust Lease	200.00				
sub-total	200.00				
Less Payments:					
Royal British Legion donation	30.00				
Bank charges	10.00				
sub-total	40.00				
Bank Balance @ 7 Jan 2024	6759.52				
Note 1: (6 x cuts + 2 x herbicide outstanding)					