

Minutes of the Billingford Parish Council meeting held on Monday 18th December at 7.00 p.m. in Billingford Village Hall

Councillors Present:- Cllr A Lake, Cllr S Wilson, Cllr P Richardson,
Cllr K Crudginton and Cllr A Cutcher

Other Members Present:- Dist. Cllr G Bambridge, 4 Electors, Jason Cole, Zoe Futter,
Melanie Badman. and Mrs G Hubbard, Clerk

1. Welcome and to receive apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed those present. There were no apologies for absence received.

2. To declare any Interests re items on the Agenda.

Cllr Lake declared a personal interest in item 14. The New Town Proposal.

3. To confirm and accept the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2023.

The minutes had been circulated. Cllr P Richardson proposed the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Cutcher and carried.

4. To discuss any matters arising from the minutes of October (not on the Agenda).

There were no matters arising.

Matters Raised by The Public

Cllr Lake thanked those involved with the buying of and the installation of the defibrillator, which is available for use. He also wished for it to be minuted that the Parish Council thanks Mr Peter Walker for his involvement with the defibrillator. There are some residents who work very hard on community matters and the Parish Council is very grateful for their help.

Mrs Crudginton asked if there were any other parcels of land available for sale but the Parish Councillors did not think that there were.

5. To receive an update on the land sold behind Festival Road. Representatives from Breckland Council will be present for this part of the meeting.

Cllr Crudginton and Cllr Cutcher had a preliminary meeting with members of Breckland Council at their offices in Dereham to discuss the original sale of the land behind Festival Road. Following this meeting it was agreed that members of Breckland Council would attend this Parish Council meeting to answer any further questions that members of the public may have.

Cllr Cutcher read out a series of correspondence between former Billingford Parish Councillors and Breckland Council in which Billingford Parish Council repeatedly stated they wished to purchase or rent the land but were unable to progress the matter and Breckland Council finally ended the correspondence due to "staffing issues". Despite this, Breckland Council did not contact the Parish Council when the land did eventually come up for sale.

Cllr Crudginton once again expressed the Parish Council's concerns and disappointment in the way the sale of the land had been managed and preceded to interrogate the Breckland

Council Management present on various aspects of the circumstances surrounding the transaction and its aftermath. Members of Breckland Council present did make it clear that "The Local Planning Authority had been consulted on this site to see whether an alternative use would be acceptable in planning terms but that these sites were all deemed unacceptable for development/alternative use." The Breckland Council members also confirmed that the site is deemed 'unsuitable for use in Nutrient Neutrality off-setting'. Cllr Crudgington again expressed his disappointment with the answers that had been given at the meeting. The Breckland Council Management in attendance advised that policy had been followed but informed the Parish Council that should they wish to take the matter further, a formal complaint can be made. Cllr Crudgington explained that the Parish Council acts on behalf of its residents and will take feedback from them into consideration before it considers its next steps. In the meantime, Cllr Crudgington has reminded them that requests made under the Freedom of Information Act is still outstanding.

Cllr Crudgington wished to thank the 3 members of the Breck land Council Management Team for attending the meeting and further expressed his gratitude for them giving up their time during the evening.

Cllr Bambridge stated that he was not elected until 2011 so he did not know what had happened before that time and he could not add any further comments.

Mrs Crudgington asked what the Breckland Council representatives thought the people who bought the land wanted to do with it. It was for sale for £16,000 and then was sold again for about twice what was paid for it. They responded by saying that checks have to be carried out before the land is sold. Due diligence was carried out on the land before it was sold and every piece of land is independently valued. The electricity company stopped work when the stop notice was put in place.

6. To discuss any necessary correspondence received.

There was no necessary correspondence to discuss.

7. To discuss the quote for the work suggested by the RoSPA Play Safety Report.

The play equipment has to be inspected annually for insurance purposes. It has been inspected and the report showed that some work needs to be on the equipment. The metal slide has some structural work needed and there is a need for safety matting underneath. Also, some safety matting is required under a small climbing frame. NGF Play Ltd gave a quote for the safety matting under the slide at £1,500.00. The situation will have to be discussed some more and it will be a February agenda item. The Parish Council felt that £1,500.00 was a high quote. The Clerk will contact the Awards For All Big Lottery to see what funding is available through them.

8. To authorise any necessary Financial Payments.

Cllr Lake proposed the following financial transactions be authorised for payment, seconded by Cllr Crudgington and carried.

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| Clerk's net salary November and December | £526.52 | HMRC tax Nov. and Dec. | £72.29 |
| Clerk's expenses for Nov. and Dec. | £39.65 | Norfolk Parish Training & Support | £52.00 |
| Breckland Council – uncontested election | £75.00 | Cllr Crudgington – printing | £27.30 |

9. To discuss the Financial Update and raise any queries.

No one had any questions regarding the document which had been circulated.

10. To receive an update on the bank signatory situation.

The document had been completed and returned to Barclays Bank. According to Barclays Bank, who have been contacted recently, they are still waiting for the paper work to arrive.

11. To discuss the budget and set the precept for 2024 – 2025.

The budget document had been circulated and was discussed. Cllr Cutcher proposed the precept be set at £4,750.00, seconded by Cllr Wilson and carried. Cllr Cutcher stated that the Breckland Parish Council was low compared to many comparable parishes and if the Parish Council want to start some village improvements, then a modest rise would be sensible.

12. To receive an update on forthcoming events at the V. Hall and events that have taken place.

A successful Quiz took place in December and the Village Interlopers won with the Beck Farm Bandits being only half a point behind. In total 45 people attended, which was a good turn out.

Regarding forth coming events, a Carol Service will take place on December 21st at 3.30 p.m. in the Old School Room, followed afterwards by mince pies, tea and coffee and mulled wine in the Village Hall. Cllr Lake has been asked about the possibility of having a Whist Drive event and a Crib Night has also been suggested, so they may be events for the future. Cllr Lake thought a Crib Night might be well received.

13. To receive an update on St. Peter's Church.

Good progress has been made on the Church. One grant has been secured for £5,000 from the Norfolk Churches Trust. One of the windows has gone for repair and a donation for £6,500.00 has been received for this. Sometime next year the window will be put back and fully replaced in its original glory, possibly January. There is also a possible donation to repair two more windows. The pigeons are all out now and the other broken windows have been securely boarded up. The Church will be cleaned up, £20,000 was quoted to deal with this, and the £5,000.00 grant will go towards this. The cracks in the south western wall have not been dealt with yet but they will be soon. Subsidence has to be checked for first and damp looked at. The metal water butt needs to be moved to the School House. Cllr Crudginton is hopeful that it could be open for Easter and that long term the church will be self-funding. A professional Business Plan can be put together for using the Church for a variety of events in the future. The exterior wall is still an on-going issue and there is some money ring fenced for that.

14. To receive an update on the New Town Proposal.

The threat of the New Town has now receded but it has not completely gone away. If a planning application is now put in, it is thought unlikely to succeed. There were 2,000 objections to a New Town in this location. The Breckland Council reported that they thought this proposal would not be worth further consideration. However, a brownfield site in Swanton Morley may be considered for up to 2,000 dwellings when the Army vacates the premises. There are some further consultation meetings arranged for the future, which some Parish Councillors will wish to attend. Cllr Cutcher thanked Cllr Bambridge for opposing the New Town proposal.

15. To discuss any Planning Issues, if any.

There were no new planning applications to discuss. Cllr Lake reported that there are a couple of potential places that could be used for houses but they have not been put forward at the moment.

16. To discuss the appointment of a tree Warden.

The Parish Council thought this was a good idea, so Cllr Lake proposed Cllr Cutcher for the position, seconded by Cllr Crudginton and carried.

17. To discuss the SAM2 sign and Community Speed Watch.

The SAM2 sign needs to be replaced, so this is in hand. The speed watch exercise has taken place monthly. Three narrow road signs are now in place. One of the signs is in the wrong place, it needs to be put near the playing field so the Clerk will try to get it moved.

18. To receive an update on the Dog Fouling and Fly Tipping Signs and possible siting of them,

The Parish Council had decided to buy one of each sign but to date the Clerk has not had an update on this, so she will chase up the situation.

19. To set a date for the Village Litter Pick.

Cllr Lake and his wife have done some litter picking in the village. They carried out some litter picking but a few days later there was litter there again. The Parish Council decided to have a community litter pick on Sunday February 25th starting at 10.00 a.m. with everyone meeting at the Village Hall. Afterwards refreshments will be served in the Village Hall. The Clerk will organise the equipment through Breckland and pick up 2 bags from Breckland on Friday 23rd.

20. To discuss the Restricted By Way Sign, which has toppled over.

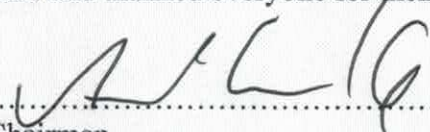
The sign is lying on the grass verge. Cllr Lake will deal with it by digging a hole and putting it in it.

21. To receive items for next agenda.

To discuss the old notice board

22. To set date and time of next Parish Council meeting.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 19th February at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall. There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:05 p.m. and thanked everyone for their attendance.


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Chairman

19.2.2024
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Date


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Clerk

19-2-2024
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Date