

Bacton Parish Council

MINUTES

of the meeting held at Bacton Village Hall, on

Monday 13th March 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: David Chambers (Chairman), Robert Black, Bernard Coxhead, Philip Jeffries, Vanessa Kingsley, Graham Macausland, Gail Wigglesworth and Paul Wigglesworth

In attendance: Maximilian Clay - Clerk to the Council
County Cllr Stringer

Mar23-1. Apologies for Absence

All Members were present and so there were no apologies.

Mar23-2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation considerations

Cllr Jeffries declared a pecuniary interest in item 6.a.iii of the agenda.

Mar23-3. District & County Councillor Reports

- a. District Cllr Mellen reported that election rules mean that, after the District Council meeting due to be held the following week, no major policy decisions will be made until after the 4th May election. A single depot for the two councils (Mid Suffolk and Babergh), currently spread over four locations, is under consideration but while a formal merger of the two councils is still a possibility, the composition of the council after the 4th May will shape whether there it is likely to be progressed during the next district council term.
- b. County Councillor Stringer had submitted a written report and highlighted the fact that the County Council had now agreed its budget for the coming year and that the Definitive Map of public rights of way has now been updated and digitised. He also reported that a new Highways Service contract with a new contractor will take effect from the coming Autumn. In response to a question from Cllr Jeffries, CC Cllr Stringer reported that whereas the current contract disincentivises proactivity in relation to the repair of potholes, the new contract will address the problem of potholes in a more flexible way. This will avoid the situation where 'new' (i.e. as yet unreported) potholes are not repaired when nearby 'old' (i.e. reported) ones are repaired.

Mar23-4. Public Forum

A resident spoke to express concern about the tree work carried out at Cow Green which she felt had taken the advice of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust too far by being too severe. In response it was pointed out that Cow Green had always been maintained as it is now until the death of a resident who had previously undertaken that work. Since then maintenance had been neglected. It was noted that the Council had apologised for not communicating with residents about the planned works before they were undertaken but also that more positive comments had been received than adverse comments. Maintenance will now be kept up regularly

Mar23-5. Planning

a. Planning Application Consultations

i. DC/23/00566 - Kerrys Farm House, Kerrys Farm Lane, Bacton:

Erection of a single storey pool house building including 18 No solar panels to South East corner of the site.

In discussion it was noted that the proposed site was well screened by a brick wall. The council resolved to offer no objection.

ii. DC/23/00679 - Taylors Green House, Taylors Green, Bacton:

Erection of two storey front extension

In discussion it was noted that there had been no objections from neighbours and that the proposal was fairly simple and modest. The council resolved to offer no objection.

Councillor Jeffries left the meeting.

iii. DC/23/00929 - Jeffries of Bacton, Broad Road, Bacton

Change of use from sale of new cars Class E (a) (Display or retail sale of goods) and Class E (b) (Sale of hot and cold food and drink for consumption on the premises and off site for takeaways). Alterations to parking area.

The Chairman invited a representative of the applicant to speak to the application. Amongst the points made were that that Jeffries of Bacton had been trading since 1951 and the existing business will be unaffected. The proposal site is a building adjacent to the existing main showroom that has been largely unused for the past two years. It was felt that, as the village has grown and continues to grow, there is a demand for the proposed use. Although there is poor pedestrian access to the site, she felt that with about 4,000 vehicles passing by every day, many people would choose to drive to such a facility anyway and that generous parking provision is proposed.

In discussion it was highlighted that it was important to support sustainable local businesses and new uses for redundant buildings. Parking was felt to be a serious consideration and this included the ease of on-site manoeuvrability to ensure that the road was not used for parking - which it was felt would represent a serious safety concern. Concern was also expressed about hours of operation but on balance there was clear support for the principle of the application and it was resolved to offer no objection.

Councillor Jeffries re-joined the meeting.

b. Updates on Applications Considered at Previous Meetings

There were no updates on specific applications but the Clerk reported that progress on replacing the whole of the concrete section of the A14 is moving ahead and extensive deviations will be in place, mainly at night time, for about 18 months.

Mar23-6. Finance

a. Receipts and Payments - The schedule of receipts and payments was received and it was resolved to approve the payments.

Mar23-7. Grant Application

A grant application had been received from Bacton Football Club to support the digging of a borehole as part of their irrigation project. It was noted that the Council had previously agreed to underwrite £5,000 of grant had an application to other bodies not been successful but that this funding had not been called upon.

After brief discussion, during which the possibility of such a grant from CIL funds was raised, the Council resolved to agree the grant of £300. The Clerk will establish whether the funds can come from CIL funds and allocate the payment accordingly.

Mar23-8. Working Group Reports

a. Events - Cllr Jeffries reported that the flyers for the Coronation events on the 6th May 2023 had now been printed and arrangements were made for distributing these to all houses in the parish. Advertising boards would be going up shortly. The Temporary Event Licence and all other arrangements were in progress and going to plan. Mugs for distribution to young people would be available for a sum of £450 including VAT and Cllr Coxhead was delegated to commission these, with the special coronation emblem, in conjunction with the Clerk.

A question was raised as to whether another village group may wish to use the Marquee, subject, to all the necessary permissions, and so feelers will be put out to explore this.

b. Recreational and Play Area Working Group - New See-Saw and Roundabout

Cllr Macausland had submitted a written report reviewing the available equipment from a range of suppliers and recommending the purchase of a see-saw and roundabout from Yates Play Equipment at a total cost of £15,312.00

The issue of disabled access was discussed and it was confirmed that, although not fully accessible, the roundabout could be used by wheelchair users with assistance. This was felt to be acceptable in the light of the site in general and the prospect of a purpose-built play area elsewhere in the village in the medium term.

The Council resolved to go ahead with the purchase from Yates.

c. Village Greens - The Chairman noted that while there had been some controversy over the work at **Cow Green** many supportive comments had been received and the area will soon start to look more natural again, as spring growth takes hold. It was felt that AI Trees had done a good job.

The pond at **Shop Green** will be re-stocked with fish in the coming weeks, although rules forbid the stocking of a natural pond with gold carp so these will not be included.

The large, dead tree at Shop Green is due for removal and there will be works to other trees at the same time to remove damaged parts. The idea of planting a replacement tree on Shop Green to mark the coronation of the new King was proposed and was supported - a formal proposal will come to a future meeting.

Representations had been made to Taylor Wimpey about the depth of the drainage ditch alongside the area that will become **Beacon Green**, as well as the gradient because these were felt to represent a danger, especially as young children will be using the green. The response had not been very positive, with the suggestion of a fence being made. However, it was noted that this would not represent a real safety measure and that it would also make maintenance of the ditch more difficult. It was resolved that the matter should be followed up, with a request to have the ditch piped over.

The grass cutting contract had not been renewed yet and so the Clerk would work on this between meeting and report back to the working group and the Council.

d. Work of the Warden

The Warden had submitted a report, highlighting that a great deal of gritting had been carried out as well as the normal round of duties. The Chairman reported that he had been congratulated by a resident on the all the work that the Warden had carried out recently; the Clerk will report this to the Warden.

Mar23-9. Councillors' Items for Future Agendas and Reports Relating to Meetings

Cllr Macausland suggested that new, smaller, goalposts be installed on St Mary's Playing Field and this will be placed on a future agenda.

Reserved Business

Mar23-10. Staffing

The Council was informed that there are two definite candidates for the Clerk and RFO role and the possibility of a third. The Staffing Working Group, with the Clerk, was delegated to conduct interviews and make a recommendation as to appointment.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chairman

Date