

BREDHURST PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held via Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday 24th June 2020 at 6.30pm

Present: Cllr Vanessa Jones (Chair), Cllr Nichola Carr (Vice-Chair), Cllr Steve Bowring, Cllr John Merrick, Cllr Miriam Noble, Cllr Claire Sharp, Cllr David Till, Bex Ratchford (Clerk)

Public: 1

179. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Brindle (MBC) and Cllr Hinder (MBC).

180. Declarations of interests

Cllrs had no interests to declare.

181. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2020

The minutes were **agreed** as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed and dated by the Chair.

182. Matters arising (for information only) from meetings held on 4th March & 17th April

- a. AP1: village hall committee informed re tree work.
- b. AP2: Tidy Up Day postponed so email to residents not necessary.
- c. AP3: funding acceptance form returned.
- d. AP4: play equipment contractor informed; agenda item 183b and 185.
- e. AP5: field gate quotes obtained and work now complete.
- f. AP6: allotment holders contacted re ponds.
- g. AP7: website providers investigated; agenda item 183a and 187.
- h. AP8: all cllrs now set up with online banking.
- i. AP9: Barn now closed so booking page on website not currently required.
- j. AP10: water board, MBC and solicitor chased re the Barn; agenda item 183f and 190.
- k. AP11: remaining items for the Barn still to be purchased. **Action 1: working party to purchase remaining items when appropriate to do so.**
- l. AP12: hirers chased and all payments up to date.
- m. AP13: refund sent to The Geese Project.
- n. AP14: Barn currently closed so no new bookings taken.
- o. AP15: payment not sent as no address had been provided.
- p. AP16: cleaning contractors informed.
- q. AP17: Barge contacted.
- r. AP1: Terms of Reference published.
- s. AP2: monitor still to be wall mounted; agenda item 183g.
- t. AP3: letter of thanks sent.
- u. AP4: Mona Cleaning informed.
- v. AP5: grass cutting contractor informed.
- w. AP6: liaison with Kent Downs AONB ongoing.
- x. AP7: Lucanus Services informed.
- y. AP8: allotment holders informed.
- z. AP9: response to consultation sent.
- aa. AP10: D/D mandate completed and returned.

183. Report on decisions taken under the COVID-19 scheme of delegation

Decisions made by the clerk with delegated powers according to the COVID-19 scheme of delegation since the last meeting were:

- a. It was **agreed** to use Wix for the new website hosting and that the clerk would build the new website; agenda item 187.
- b. It was **agreed** to replace the trim trail step logs in the position suggested by Cllr Merrick; agenda item 185. It was **agreed** to repaint the play equipment in red and blue, as suggested by Cllr Merrick; agenda item 185.
- c. It was **agreed** to renew membership of KALC and CPRE at the cost of £188.42 plus VAT and £36 respectively; agenda item 190e.
- d. It was **agreed** to renew the insurance with AXA as per the long term agreement; agenda item 190e.
- e. It was **agreed** to ask the contractor to prioritise the necessary tree work within the one day's agreed contract. It was **agreed** to write to the builder regarding the beech tree at Blacksmiths Court as it appears to be dead. Both actions have been completed.
- f. The bill for the rates had been received from MBC and it was **agreed** to pay the bill for September 2019 to March 2020 (agenda item 190e), to investigate any rebate or grant that might be available to help with payment, and to set up a direct debit to pay this year's bill. Enquiries had been made of MBC regarding rebates and grants and it appears that BPC is not eligible. It was **agreed** that the clerk would submit an appeal and continue to investigate other sources of financial aid. **Action 2: Clerk to appeal and continue to investigate potential rebates and/or grants.**
- g. It was **agreed** to double the hours worked by the gardener between March and September (to 36 hours in total) and to ask the grass cutting contractor to cut the verge at the Barn as additional work when necessary, at an extra cost of £5 per cut. Both contractors have been informed. It was **agreed** to install the CCTV monitor in a cabinet, at a cost of approximately £70, plus £70 labour. **Action 3: Cllr Merrick to purchase necessary equipment and Cllr Jones to inform contractor.**

184. Coronavirus outbreak

The village WhatsApp group is providing a good sense of community and support to those who need it, and 33 people have now joined. There are 190 members on the community Facebook group, and feedback has been good.

It was **agreed** not to consider face to face meetings at the current time. It was **agreed** to keep the play area closed until MBC open theirs, and that Cllr Carr would draft a risk assessment in readiness. It was **agreed** that at the current time, due to various factors including the strict cleaning regime required, the Barn would not yet be reopened to hirers but that this would be reviewed in August. It was **agreed** that Cllr Carr would draft a risk assessment for reopening the Barn. **Action 4: Cllr Carr to draft risk assessments for the play area and the Barn.**

185. Play area

The new tramlines and step logs are due to be installed in August and the painting of the swings is due to happen imminently. The paint on the railings is starting to flake off and it was **agreed** to repaint them. One quote had been received to sand and repaint. It was **agreed** to get two more quotes and then review. **Action 5: Cllr Merrick and/or Cllr Jones to get two more quotes.**

186. Noticeboards

The noticeboards need to be re-varnished, the one by the allotments is wobbly, and the locks are loose on the one on the village green. It was **agreed** that Cllr Bowring would re-varnish the boards and Cllr Merrick would check the wobbly one and the locks for possible repair. **Action 6: Cllr Bowring to revarnish boards and Cllr Merrick to check for repair.**

187. Website

The clerk had created a draft new website and cllrs gave feedback. Once the design is finalised, the content will need writing and some will need to be transferred from the old website. The current website is receiving approximately 150 visits weekly. It was **agreed** that due to the hours involved the clerk would proceed with the new site but with the bare minimum necessary to make it compliant. **Action 7: Clerk to continue with necessary content on the new website.**

188. LGA Model Code of Conduct consultation

It was **agreed** to discuss this at the next meeting and for cllrs to respond individually in the meantime. **Action 8: Cllrs to respond individually as desired.**

189. Planning

Planning comments submitted under delegated powers according to the COVID-19 scheme of delegation since the last meeting:

- a. 20/501664 – Bredhurst Lodge, The Street – erection of an outbuilding within the rear garden to be used for a bar/cinema room with a WC and a store room ancillary to the main dwelling – no objection but request the condition that the building only be used as ancillary and not for residential purposes.
- b. 20/501806 – New Cottage, Dunn Street Road – erection of a single storey rear extension – no objection.
- c. 20/501878 – 6 Bennetts Cottages, Dunn Street Road – erection of a single storey rear extension – no objection (Cllr Bowring declared a non-pecuniary interest and did not vote).

Other planning issues:

- d. 20/500795 – Gibraltar Farm – an email had been received from a resident with objections and it was **agreed** to reiterate previous objections and to speak at the planning committee meeting if possible. Residents were also urged to make personal objections online. **Action 9: Cllr Jones to draft speech and speak at committee meeting.**

190. Finance

- a. The end of year budget report for 2019-20 was reviewed and accepted. The financial statement and bank reconciliation for May were reviewed and accepted. The direct debit for the allotment water bill was not transferred when the bank account was changed so it was **agreed** to sign up for this in future. **Action 10: Clerk to sign up for D/D.**

Account	Balance as of 31/05/20
Unity Account	37,417.65

- b. It was **agreed** to send invoices to nominated cllrs before setting the payments up in the bank for approval.
- c. Internal Audit

- i. The Internal Audit report for 2019-20 highlighted three medium risk areas regarding the possible need for pension arrangements (due to increased hours and salary), the approval of two contracts (cleaner and gardener for the Barn) without due process, and the website functionality and email disclaimers. It was **agreed** that the clerk would investigate pension requirements and availability. **Action 11: Clerk to investigate pensions.** Cllrs felt the contracts that had been approved without due process were urgent and therefore warranted. Cllrs raised concerns over factual inaccuracies in the report regarding risk assessments for the Barn and playground checks. It was **agreed** that Cllr Merrick would circulate his inspection reports quarterly and that the clerk would ask auditor to amend the report. **Action 12: Cllr Merrick to circulate reports and clerk to contact auditor.**
- ii. It was **agreed** to investigate other auditors for next year and to get three quotes, including the current auditor. **Action 13: Clerk to get quotes.**
- d. Annual Governance and Accountability Return – end of year accounts for 2019-20
- i. The Annual Governance Statement was reviewed and signed.
- ii. The Accounting Statements for 2019-20 were approved and signed. **Action 14: Clerk to publish and submit to PKF Littlejohn, as, due to higher turnover, the council is subject to external audit this year.**
- e. Payments made under delegated powers were as follows:

No.	Details	Amount	VAT*	Total	Auth
10	Barge – grounds maintenance (April)	241.82	48.37	290.19	SB, DT
11	Mike Searley – Barn grass cutting (10 th & 24 th April)	30.00	-	30.00	SB, DT
12	Rachel Ford – gardener (April)	70.00	-	70.00	SB, DT
13	Cllr Merrick – hasp for field gate	10.99	-	10.99	SB, DT
14	Cllr Jones – top soil for Barn	48.00	-	48.00	SB, DT
15	Clerk – wages and office rental (May)				SB, DT
16	Clerk – expenses (phone calls & stapler)	42.50	-	42.50	VJ, DT
17	KALC – membership	188.42	37.68	226.10	VJ, JM
18	Came & Co – insurance renewal	643.64	-	643.64	VJ, JM
19	CPRE – membership	36.00	-	36.00	VJ, JM
20	Ecotricity – Barn electric (01/03-04/05)	164.88	8.24	173.12	VJ, JM
D/D	Bytes – Microsoft Office (April)	8.82	1.76	10.58	-
D/D	Onecom – Barn internet (April)	23.10	4.62	27.72	-
21	Rachel Ford – gardener (May – labour compost & plants)	106.00	-	106.00	JM, DT
22	Cllr Jones - plants	14.00	-	14.00	JM, DT
23	Barge – grounds maintenance (May)	241.82	48.37	290.19	JM, DT
24	MBC – Barn rates (Sept 19- Mar 20)	485.77	-	485.77	JM, DT
25	Mike Searley – Barn grass cutting (8 th & 22 nd May)	30.00	-	30.00	JM, DT
26	Clerk – overtime (March, April & May)	269.28	-	269.28	JM, DT

* VAT to be reclaimed.

- f. Payments to be made by BACS unless specified otherwise:

No.	Details	Amount	VAT*	Total	Auth
27	Clerk – wages and office rental				VJ, DT
28	Lucanus Services – field gate installation and removal of shrub	748.34	-	748.34	VJ, DT

29	David Buckett – internal audit	300.00	-	300.00	VJ, DT
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* VAT to be reclaimed.

191. Reports from parish councillors

Cllr Noble reported that the police are investigating ongoing issues regarding the churchyard.

Cllr Merrick had repaired the damaged bollard at the village green.

Cllr Carr highlighted a recent successful catch of a fly tipper.

Cllr Jones reported that the PCSO will be in the village soon to check on speeding traffic, following a number of comments from residents. It was **agreed** that more repeater signs would be helpful. **Action 15: Cllr Carr to enquire at KCC.** Signs on bins are also a possibility although it was noted that the bins are the property of MBC. **Action 16: Cllr Bowring to investigate signs for bins.** The police are also investigating drug use near the churchyard and the allotments. Cllr Jones is in conversation with Boxley PC regarding Fourwents (the junction of Dunn Street Road and Lidsing Road), following a number of accidents there. KCC is planning work there. Cllr Jones now has the keys to the padlocks on the field gates. An incident took place yesterday with rocks being thrown through windows in the village. The police attended and it is believed that an arrest was made.

192. Correspondence

All correspondence was noted.

- a. An email had been received enquiring about vacant allotments. The enquirer has been put on the waiting list.
- b. An email had been received asking for a landowner’s details so fence panels could be replaced. The landowner had been contacted but there was no response as yet. **Action 17: Clerk to inform enquirer.**
- c. Information had been received from KCC regarding the availability of family art packs. Details had been posted on the community Facebook page and several residents had asked to receive one. KCC had been informed and further details were awaited. **Action 18: Clerk to chase KCC and update Facebook page once more information was available.**

193. Staffing (closed session)

Members of the public and the clerk left the meeting for this agenda item. It was **agreed** that the clerk would monitor the hours worked and inform the council when it reached 40 hours in the month. It was **agreed** that all overtime must be authorised by the council in advance. It was also **agreed** that the clerk’s salary would not be authorised and post dated at the beginning of the month, but would be set up and authorised nearer the actual payment date.

194. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 9.21pm.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

Signed.....

Date.....