

Minutes of the meeting of Great Bealings Parish Council held on Tuesday 14th November 2023 at Bealings Village Hall

Present: Sue Prentice (Chairman) (SP), Colin Hedgley (CH), Sally Johnson (SJ), Regan Scott (RS), John Carter-Jonas (JCJ), Trevor Harris (TH)

In attendance: Mrs Dee Knights (DPK) - Clerk to the Council

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Caroline Saunders (CS) and Elaine Bryce (EB)

2. Declarations of Interest

Non-registerable Interest (NRI) - District Cllr – CH.

3. Declarations of Lobbying and Responses to Lobbying

None

4. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th September 2023

The minutes were approved and signed

5. Clerk/Councillor Updates not on agenda:

Village fete 2024 – The article for the Fynn Lark News and Grundisburgh News will be submitted for the February edition

6. Reports by:

- (i) **County Councillor Elaine Bryce** – A report has been received and circulated to Cllrs, and a full copy is attached to the minutes on the website.
- (ii) **District Councillor Colin Hedgley** – A report had been circulated to Cllrs and a full copy is attached to the minutes on the website. CH briefly spoke about the ESC annexe which is to be leased to SCC, the help available for households with prepayment meters, and the recent vandalism at the new toilets in Felixstowe. He also provided details of ESC's free parking scheme for Christmas shoppers.
- (iii) **District Councillor Dan Clery** – Two reports had been circulated to Cllrs and a full copy is attached to the minutes on the website.

7. Storm Babet

(i) Public Meeting 8th November

On the 8th November, Great Bealings Parish Council hosted a meeting in Bealings village hall attended by approximately 100 people from Bealings and neighbouring parishes to hear about the impact and causes of the flooding on the 20th October, and to consider possible outcomes.

Representatives attended on behalf of the Environment Agency (EA) and Suffolk County Council (SCC). Our local County and District Councillors were also present.

Aaron Dixey, the Environment Agency's Area Flood Risk Manager, said that large areas of East Anglia had experienced between 60 and 70 mm of rain falling during a 24 hour period on land which was already saturated from the above average rainfall during the previous few days. People reported much higher than usual run off from fields and rivers overflowing their banks.

Twelve houses in Great Bealings had water ingress to some extent. At the time of the meeting six were still uninhabitable. Matt Hullis, Head of Environmental Strategy for SCC, said the over 700 (since confirmed as 750) homes across Suffolk had been reported as flooded, and well over 50 flood investigations were already underway. This compares with the 2 or 3 a year during the past ten years.

Heavy traffic through small villages was identified as a particular problem, as motorists tried to avoid blocked roads including the A12, which was flooded near Farlingaye School. People reported

incidents of motorists: driving too fast, causing unnecessary spray; ignoring barriers erected by residents to prevent cars driving along blocked roads; and even attempting unsuccessfully to drive through very deep water, such that immediately to the west of Boot Street Bridge.

It seems unlikely, from the monitoring carried out by the EA, that Martlesham Sluice, which closes automatically at high tide, had any impact on the flooding in Great Bealings. Matt Hullis suggested that blocked highway drains were also unlikely to have been a contributory factor in Great Bealings because, had they been cleared, the water entering them would have fed into the River Lark.

NEXT STEPS

SCC, with the assistance of the EA, will carry out a flood investigation under section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 with a view to identifying a list of actions which could be taken by various people to reduce flood risk. Kate Lindsay, a Community Information Officer, had visited Great Bealings along with a colleague. They will work together with SCC and residents to get the best information they can. Everyone with any relevant information is asked to send it to the EA, together with photos and videos, via a survey form: <https://forms.office.com/e/WPfn1DAv8a>.

Following the flood investigation, the EA will produce recommendations which will have to be costed before they can be put into effect. The time scale is likely to be 3-5 years to complete but remedial actions can be carried out in the meantime. The EA can grant permits where these are necessary for certain community schemes, such as clearing affected rivers and water courses.

Applications usually take about 8 weeks to consider. (See Useful Information.)

The EA will monitor subsequent actions but does not have any enforcement powers other than in relation to rivers and watercourses.

The EA and SCC will speak to landowners regarding the reduction in flood risk. The Environment Land Management Scheme which is designed to encourage farmers to hold more water on their land may be a possible option.

Community Self Help Schemes such the installation of depth gauges along roads which are particularly prone to flooding might help to deter motorists from driving along flooded roads.

The SCC Highways Reporting Tool (search 'Report a Flood in Suffolk') should be used for all flood related issues affecting roads and footpaths, regardless of the cause of the problem. This can include reporting heavy traffic trying to get through flooded villages and motorists speeding through flooded water etc.

Everyone who might be affected by flooding should sign up to flood warnings and alerts.

Flood Resilience was addressed by CH, who advised that doors make better barriers than sand bags. Better still are Floodsax which are sandless bags, which are stored flat until they are activated by pouring water on them. They will then last for about 3 months. Advice can be found in publications such as 'Property Flood Resilience', accessible via the EA Home page and Homeowners Guide to Flood Resilience accessible via the internet on several websites.

Details of how to make a claim for payment and other useful information is on an information sheet attached to the minutes on the website.

(ii) Emergency Plan

CH stated that, although this was still relevant, in circumstances such as this, a paper based system is not the answer. There is a need to explore, on a District and County wide level, whether there is a more appropriate method that can be used. He will put this matter on the agenda for the next Community Partnership meeting in January. In the meantime, a WhatsApp group has been set up by a group of local residents who were most affected.

RS will make a Freedom of Information request to SCC to ascertain exactly what is in the new Highways contract with Milestone Infrastructure with respect to flooding prevention.

8. Planning Applications:

- (i) **DC/23/2887/FUL – Little Oaks, Lower Street** – single storey extension

It was **RESOLVED** to support this application

- (ii) **DC/23/3783/FUL – Seckford Rise, Seckford Hall Road** – single storey rear extensions, side garage/carport extension and various alterations to existing dwelling

It was **RESOLVED** to support this application

- (iii) **DC/23/2787/VOC – Barn C, Former Wood Barn Cottage site** – revised plans re variation of condition No. 2 of DC/21/1591/VOC

It was **RESOLVED** that there are no objections to this application.

- (iv) **DC/23/0319/LBC – Seckford Hall** – Revised plans re erection of new dining hall extension and greenhouse

It was **RESOLVED** to support this application

- (v) **DC/23/0363/FUL – Seckford Hall** – Revised plans re demolition of ancillary buildings and erection of new buildings

It was **RESOLVED** to support this application

- (vi) **Any other applications** – None

(vii) **Decision Updates :**

DC23/2127 – Land north of Lavender Cottage – application refused by ESC

DC/23/2788 – Barn C, Former Woodbarn Cottages – heatpumps – application permitted

9. Other Planning Matters:

(i) **Review of Neighbourhood Plan**

SP reported that this is currently with ESC who have to do some environmental assessments before it can be circulated to residents for a formal consultation before being put to the Planning Inspector for approval

(ii) **Other Planning Matters**

Draft Playford Neighbourhood Plan – the PC has no comments on this

10. Highways and Footpaths

- (i) **SAVID/SID**– CH said that the SAVID AGM will be held this week, there are two more PCs wanting to join.

JCJ reported that the new SID has been erected and set up and is working fine. DPK confirmed that there are sufficient funds remaining to allow for purchase of a dedicated laptop on which to download the data, JCJ will pursue this.

JCJ said that there are now 4 spare batteries, brackets and a charger for an old-style SID which can be offered to other PCs. CH will pursue this.

- (ii) **Other Highways matters** – JCJ said that there is no “bend sign” at the area of the SID and it would be ideal if one could be affixed to the SID post. CH will ask EB to raise this with SCC.

JCJ said that the gulleys are blocked on the stretch between Lodge Road and Brook House, he will report this on the SCC Highways reporting tool.

- (iii) **Footpaths** – RS will report the broken stile and presence of barbed wire on the footpath from Hall Farm Road to St Mary’s Church

11. Environmental Issues

- (i) **Trees** – JCJ has approx. 200 small trees that can be donated to residents and he suggested asking for a small donation to go towards village hall repairs. A notice will be put on Facebook and in the Fynn Lark News
- (ii) **Other matters** – none

12. Finance and Admin:

- (i) **Authorisation of payments** – The following payments were authorised; proposed by CH and seconded by JCJ

Chq No	Payee	Description	Amount £
-	Mrs D P Knights	Office expenses	35.39
-	Mrs D P Knights (dated 28.11.23)	November salary (new rate)	300.38
036	HMRC (dated 06.12.23)	November PAYE	75.00
-	Mrs D P Knights (dated 28.12.23)	December salary	300.38
037	HMRC (dated 06.01.24)	December PAYE	75.00
-	Westcotec	Speed Indicator Device	4108.80

(ii) Draft Budget

The Clerk had circulated a draft budget which showed a shortfall of income over proposed expenditure of £270 if the precept remains the same. SP said the PC may also need some start-up funds for next year’s village fete.

(iii) Provisional Precept discussion

The Clerk has circulated the council tax base figures supplied by ESC. Following the suggestion from SP re the fete, the Clerk will circulate some figures showing the impact of a small increase of the precept. A final decision will be made at the January meeting.

(iv) Other Finance and Admin matters

- (a) The Bank Reconciliation was approved and signed
- (b) Other matters – Cllrs agreed to implement the recent national salary award for 2023/24 in respect of the Clerk’s salary.

13. Correspondence - none

14. Dates of Meetings in 2024 in the Committee Room at 6.30pm unless otherwise stated

- Tuesday 9th January
- Tuesday 12th March
- Tuesday 7th May in Village Hall at 7.00pm – Annual Parish and PC Meetings
- Tuesday 23rd July
- Tuesday 3rd September
- Tuesday 12th November

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Signed.....
Chairman