

# BOTESDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held Monday, 4 March 2024  
Botesdale Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr Des Bavington-Lowe  
Cllr Andrew Edwards (Chair)  
Cllr William Sargeant

Cllr Simon Dickinson  
Cllr Richard Lock  
Cllr Jack Stracey

Parish Clerk – Leeann Jackson-Eve  
County Cllr Jessica Fleming  
No Members of the Public

1. **Apologies for absence:** None. It was noted that Cllr Sally Jarvis had resigned, and the PC thanked her for her work on behalf of the community. It was agreed that the Chair would contact former Councillors Jarvis and Stanford about their experience as councillors.
2. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 5 February 2024.** The minutes, circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed as a true record.
3. **Members Declarations of Interests and Dispensations:** Cllr Russell declared an interest in item 6.3 as his wife was the Secretary of the PPG. He was not required to leave the room during the discussion.
4. **Public Forum:** County Cllr Fleming provided an update on the County Council's recent budget approval for 2024/25, highlighting the challenges posed by inflation and increased demand for services. She reported that last November an inspection of Suffolk's SEND services was carried out jointly for the first time by both Ofsted and the CQC (Care Quality Commission), revealing areas of improvement. A full report on their findings was available at <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50238584>. A 10-week public consultation on the County Council's proposed devolution deal with the Government would run from 18 March until 26 May. Details were available at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution). In major planning, the construction of a 15-ha reservoir and associated pipeline had been proposed for The Street, Brome and Oakley Part in The Parishes Of Yaxley, Eye & Hoxne. DC/24/00515.
5. **Planning:**
  - 5.1 **Planning Applications:** None.
  - 5.2 **Notice of Intent to prune/remove tree(s) in the Conservation Area:** None.
  - 5.3 **Notification of Planning Decisions by Mid Suffolk DC:**
    - 5.3.1 **Old Mill House, Mill Road.** Ref. DC/24/00126. Householder Application - Erection of a single storey rear extension. Planning Permission GRANTED.
  - 5.4 **Notification of other Planning Matters:** None.
6. **Correspondence:**
  - 6.1 **SALC:** It was agreed to accept the offer of a portrait of the King on behalf of Botesdale Village Hall. This was a Government-funded scheme.
  - 6.2 **Hedgehog Highway Project:** The PC considered the details of the initiative to establish hedgehog highway gaps in property boundaries. These gaps, designed to be incorporated into fences, aimed to facilitate easier movement for hedgehogs within the area. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to purchase 50 Hedgehog Highway gaps for £150, which would be available on a first come, first served basis at a future Farmers' Market.
  - 6.3 **Botesdale Patient Participation Group (PPG):** The PC reviewed a proposal for an extra defibrillator near the newly established housing developments. It was noted that a public building would be the preferred location. Although the Village Hall was deemed unsuitable due to its limited remaining lease, the Health Centre had expressed willingness to host the defibrillator. There was some discussion about whether another defibrillator was required at all and the substantial cost of approximately £3,000 was acknowledged. However, it was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to propose a three-way funding arrangement between the PC, the Friends of the Health Centre and the Health Centre itself.

- 6.4 **Parkview Chapel:** The PC took note of the feedback concerning participation in the Friday night Youth Club and complaints received about children wandering around the village after leaving the Club. It was acknowledged that the Chapel functioned as a 'drop-in' club, with attendees free to enter and exit at their convenience. The Chapel also talked to attendees about the importance of behaving considerately when leaving the Club. However, this was the limit of their responsibility.
- 6.5 **Resident:** It was noted that further to item 9.2 of the December 2023 meeting, Cherry Tree House, Cherry Tree Lane had incurred further lorry damage. It had been recorded by CCTV and this would allow the property owner to claim on losses. It was noted that a warning chevron had been attached to the barge boards as recommended by Suffolk CC Highways.
- 6.6 **Resident:** The PC considered the request for a dog bin in front of the Chapel of Ease. It was noted that there was a litter bin at that location, and it was agreed instead to make sure that residents knew that dog waste could be put in litter bins.

## 7. Ongoing Items:

- 7.1 **Recreation Ground:** The Construction Contract had achieved Final Completion on 29 February 2024 and the final valuation and accompanying Final Account and Final Completion Certificate were submitted by James Blake Associates. As part of their Contract Administration responsibilities and obligations, JBA had also produced a Final Account Report. The PC noted these documents as circulated. It was reported that the two-year Maintenance Contract with Urban Forestry had been signed in the format and for the price as set out in the February 2024 Report to the PC. The PC noted the Report following the inspection of the Recreation Ground by Play Inspection Limited and were please that all of the inspected items achieved a very low or low risk score. There were minor findings which had been addressed with JBA and UF and where appropriate any additional work required would be incorporated as variations to the Maintenance Contract. It was noted that a new tree had been vandalised and would need replacing. This would be reported to the Police.
- 7.2 **TRO for Back Hills, Chapel Lane and Mill Road North:** The design work had been completed for the introduction of parking restrictions to improve safety for pedestrians, deal with nuisance parking and aid flow of vehicular traffic at these locations. This was as agreed by the PC. A letter had gone out to residents soliciting comments to Suffolk CC Highways by 27 March.
- 7.3 **TRO for extension of 30mph on B1113:** The design work for a proposed speed limit extents change for Hall Lane had been completed and agreed by the PC. A letter had gone out to residents soliciting comments to Suffolk CC Highways by 27 March.
- 7.4 **Parking Bay on Chapel Lane:** Following Bennett Homes proposal to devise a scheme at the edge of their new development, they had prepared a rough plan for the parking bay. Once the PC had a layout which was in principle acceptable to Suffolk CC Highways, Bennett Homes would review it and begin the process of conveying the land over to the PC. The information had been passed to Highways to determine whether they could undertake the design work.
- 7.5 **Flooding:** The Chair and the Clerk had met the Public Rights of Way Officer from Suffolk County Council at Bridwell Lane to discuss continued flooding and the resulting erosion of the byway surface. The history and source of the flooding were discussed at length. The PRoW Officer had concluded that the source of the flooding was a Highways issue and confirmed that advice would be sought from their legal team about responsibility for repair of the damaged byway. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Suffolk came with some funding which it was thought could be obtained for the repair work if Highways did not accept responsibility. It was noted that Llanover had been contacted again about ditch clearance after silt had washed off the byway. The tenant had agreed to review the situation. Back Hills had emerged as another area prone to flooding. The drainage system was poorly situated and posed challenges for improvement. However, it was agreed that fixing the potholes in the passing places would make the road safer to navigate when flooded. The Clerk would initially report this to Highways and also clarify Highways' responsibility by requesting a map of the maintainable highway.
- 7.6 **Village Appraisal:** There was no update.

7.7 **Digital Exclusion:** As mentioned at the previous meeting, the article approved by the PC had been featured in the parish magazine and shared on Facebook. However, only one response was received, and subsequent efforts to follow up on this matter yielded no progress. Cllr Bavington-Lowe reported that a discussion with the Citizen's Advice Bureau had confirmed that this was something that they regularly dealt with on behalf of their clients. It was agreed to signpost anyone experiencing this problem to the CAB.

7.8 **Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan:** There was no update.

7.9 **Sarah's Wood:** As agreed at the last meeting, the Clerk had written to Burgess Homes to begin the process of ownership transfer. Burgess Homes had confirmed that there were only two vacant homes remaining on the development, due to be occupied over the next couple of months. With regards to the transfer of the wood, they had instructed a tree surgeon to carry out a review of the trees and deal with any at risk issues prior to handover. They would report back once this was complete. They explained that the intention was to transfer the wood to the Parish Council once the site was fully complete (including top surfaces to all roadways) and they estimated that this would be by mid-year at the latest. In terms of fencing, they would be completing the fencing on the entrance into the wood from the development, complete with both a pedestrian gate and an agricultural sized gate to enable future maintenance. They would also be liaising with the school to check their requirements. It was noted that the school had indicated informally that they were no longer interested in taking on part of the wood. The PC agreed that the fencing of the perimeter needed to be complete before transfer, and this expectation would be conveyed to Burgess Homes.

7.10 **Community Self Help:** Cllr Lock was in the process of scheduling training sessions which would allow Councillors to work on the Highway for sign cleaning.

## 8. Other Items:

8.1 **Internal Controls Review:** Cllrs Lock and Edwards had carried out the review based on the internal controls checklist provided by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils and had signed off on the accounts. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to accept the review.

8.2 **Mapping:** Following a brief discussion at the last meeting, councillors considered a proposal to produce a map of land ownership within Botesdale parish. It was agreed that it could be useful but putting it together would be labour intensive. It was noted that the information would have to be updated regularly and some Land Registry information was out of date or non-existent. Furthermore, there was a wealth of local knowledge available when needed. It was agreed to continue with the practice of obtaining the information on an ad hoc basis.

8.3 **Suffolk County Council Devolution Deal:** The PC noted the information about the upcoming consultation on the proposed deal which would "see Suffolk handed control of over half a billion pounds of investment over the next 30 years".

8.4 **Cost of Living Forum:** The PC noted the information on the effects of the Cost of Living crisis from a recent CAB Forum. There was a related proposal to provide detailed information of the available support on the PC website. It was agreed that this would focus on signposting to organisations which were actively providing support. It would include local grant-funding organisations such as the Fairstead Trust and the Bacon Exhibition Trust. It was also agreed to approach the Rural Coffee Caravan to see whether they could schedule a stop in Botesdale.

8.5 **Village Hall:** The PC noted that the Pre-School was considering erecting a larger log cabin and re-designing the 20-year-old garden, including a bigger canopy. It was agreed to ask them for a written proposal. It was RESOLVED, with all agreed, to apply to designate the Village Hall as a Community Asset in light of the upcoming end of lease in 2027. Finally, it was noted that Cllr Sargeant would be stepping down as Treasurer and the intention was to hire someone to take over that role within the Management Committee. Cllr Edwards would organise a separate meeting of the Committee to discuss this further. He would also circulate the governance documents to Councillors.

## 9. Village Status Reports:

9.1 **Chair's Report:** Cllr Edwards reported that the Fairstead Trust had accepted him as its new Chair and the first meeting was on 15 March. They currently struggled to give away funds.

9.2 **Clerk's Report:**

- The railing to the steps up to the Marketplace from Back Hills had been repaired, with a small amount of brickwork still to be repaired.
- The proposal to establish some formal parking in front of the school had been passed to Suffolk CC Highways for initial review.
- Burgess Homes had indicated that providing a light at the top of the site footpath would not be their responsibility. The PC agreed that a light wasn't necessary given the likely significant cost.

9.3 **Local Organisations:**

- Streams and Footpaths – The Clerk reported that the information board had been erected near the Bowls Club entrance and had been well received.
- Village Hall – The AGM would be held on 25 March 2024. It was noted that the District Councillor had offered Locality funding for the redecoration of the Hall.

9.4 **Village Assets:** None.

9.5 **Public Rights of Way:** None.

9.6 **Highways Issues:** None.

9.7 **Welcome Packs:** 2 to Cllr Lock.

10. **Finance (as of 29/02/24):**

10.1	<b>Account Balance:</b>	£ 138,320.00	
	<b>Bank Balance:</b>	£ 138,320.00	
	<b>Income:</b>	£ 406.38	MSDC Street Cleaning Grant 3 <sup>rd</sup> qtr
10.2	<b>Accounts for Payment:</b>		
	Admin Payments	£ 1,486.22	Not itemised due to GDPR
	Street Sweeping etc.	£ 345.14	St Clean etc March 2024
	S Green	£ 50.00	Clean bus shelter/signs/boards
	G C Joinery	£ 560.00	Botesdale Brook Sign
	Keep Britain Tidy	£ 442.80	Rec Ground: Green Flag Application
	MSDC	£ 118.00	Rec Ground: Garden Waste Collection
	James Blake Associates	£ 3,190.80	Rec Ground: Maint Contract Admin
	Urban Forestry	£ 9,561.49	Rec Ground: Quarterly Maint Invoice
	RESOLVED, with all agreed, to approve payment of the accounts above.		

11. **Matters to be brought to attention of the Council:** It was noted that there were no proposed events for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day celebrations.

12. **Next Meeting:** 8 April 2024

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.45pm.