

## POLSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.30pm in Polstead Village Hall

**Present:** Councillors Andrew Wade (Chairman), John Flather, Christine Cheeseman, Kenneth Davey, John Engleheart, James Oxford, Stewart Sowman.

**Attending:** DCllr John Ward (Babergh District Councillor), CCllr Georgia Hall (County Councillor). Christine Hargan (Clerk) and 7 members of the public.

23101. Apologies for absence  
None

23102. Receive **declarations of interests** and **requests for dispensation** from Councillors  
Cllr Sowman has interest in all items pertaining to the Village Hall, Cllr Engleheart, has interest on item relating to Polstead Pond

23103. Agree **Minutes** of Polstead Parish Council (PPC) meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022. It was resolved that the minutes signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

23104.

a. Reports from District Councillor and County Councils previously distributed

### **CCllr Hall updated on**

- Warm spaces
- Devolution/Levelling Up Suffolk is one of the 9 counties across the country participating in the scheme which gains more power and money to invest into the community.
- Council tax, There will be an increase of 3% mostly toward adult social care and the council tax demand for a Band D will represent an increase of £57 a year.
- Potholes – the issues have been logged onto the SCC reporting system
- Following an accident last year further information is sought on a badger sett close to a public footpath, the council is trying to ascertain if it is active so that it can be managed.
- Electric charging points, Further information on funding to be relayed to the Clerk when received.

### **DCllr Ward updated on**

- End of term report online document
  - Recommencing Liaison meetings the first BDC liaison meeting will be held on 1<sup>st</sup> February
  - Bin lorry competition the named lorries are raising smiles in the community
  - Local elections in May the first elections that will need picture ID
  - Council Tax will rise by £5.30 per annum on Band D
  - Outstanding enforcement and appeals
  - Log cabins, appeal re enforcement Cackle Down Wood, Rockalls Road, Polstead
  - Cottage associated planning application on site, awaiting planning decision before proceeding. **check the name of the wood and the cottage**
  - Appeal pending against the refusal for 3 or 4 dwellings at Heath Farm, Hadleigh Heath
- b. Questions from Parishioners  
**Rockalls Road playground**, The gate has not been satisfactorily repaired and there is an issue with the fencing. Cllr Davey agreed to investigate and if possible to effect a repair. Action would be reported at the next meeting.
- c. Receive report from **Nature Citizen** and to Consider Proposed planting schemes in the Parish  
Lisa Matthews reported that the meeting had not happened in December and that the working party would like to commence work during March. It was agreed to meet on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February 10.30am at the allotment site. Following discussion the Clerk was asked to request £1,000 from DCllr Ward's locality fund toward creating a community woodland with seating at the allotment site.

23105 Correspondence relating to the **Community Pantry and Hardship Fund** a donation of £2,500 has been requested from each of the five villages to maintain the fund to keep going in the next year. Three members of the local Church including Rev. Javelle attended the meeting and explained that whilst they are members of the Church they operate a charitable fund:

- Who wishes to help the poor in the Parish that fall outside the social services parameters
- That 18 families from the Parish use the food bank
- The Community Pantry started in June, with a weekly cost of £20-30 following the budget demand increased to £120 with peaks in demand over the school holidays to £150 a week. The scheme

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users in Polstead are a mix between single elderly, single parent and multiple generational households.

- The Hardship Fund distributes cash funds to meet specific need to families who are not entitled to benefits, examples include help toward shoes and spectacles.
- This was not the only charitable project, another is to heat all churches as warm spaces all year around

It was pointed out that Locality Budgets are available, from both District and County Council.

It was agreed that the Parish Council were not in a position to make a decision at the meeting because the Precept level had not been set. Following the decision further exploration into expenditure next year would be made.

Thanks were extended to all three members of the Church.

**23106. Receive reports and questions from Councillors**

Cllr Engleheart reported on the Pond desilting project 200 carp temporarily relocated 2 large eels 60 swan mussels and many small roach. The excavation should be complete by the end of January. A variety of traffic cones, beer bottles and other rubbish had been removed and metal detectorists may be allowed to explore the dredged material at a later date. The pond has a solid bottom but the edging is worse than expected. Further grants would be applied for in the next financial year to complete the pond edges. Some residents asked about placing rails around the pond and repairing the concrete fence. Cllr Engleheart to explore ownership of the fence with a view to repair.

**23107. Actions required on emails distributed by the Clerk**

No actions were requested.

**23108. Actions required following the Clerk's report**

No actions were requested.

**23109. Planning**

**a. Consider Planning application no DC/22/06375:**

The detailed design of one house on the former Green Lawns Bonsai Nursery  
Resolved to raise no comment.

**b. Consider any planning application received** since the agenda was posted requiring a response before the next scheduled meeting.

**c. Consider the status** of planning applications, appeals, enforcement referrals and any potential planning issues

**d. Boxford Fruit Farms**

Mr Robert Rendall spoke to the meeting outlining that the company are farmers, who have been in place for 80 years, the business is farming fruit. The land is often hit by hail and previously the crops have been destroyed. The enclosures are to protect the crop as insurance in untenable due to high costs. The Company is intending to reduce the height of the enclosures, by reduction of the crosswires and anchor wires which will allow the nets to be rolled up for half a year and the trees to be netted rather than the enclosures.

The company had gained advice from BDC Planning Department and DCllr Ward said that if there was a challenge relating to Planning Law that it should directed to Babergh District Council and not Boxford Fruit Farms. Thanks were extended to Mr Randall for attending the meeting and explaining his situation.

**23110. Finance**

**a. Receive the RFO Report**

Acknowledged

**b. Reconciliation of accounts against budget**

Acknowledged

**c. Resolved to authorise payments made since the last meeting and payments to be made as per the attached schedule.**

**d. Note income received**

A bank statement had been received from Barclays Bank showing an interest payment of £1.06. The account should already have been closed. Resolved to write to the bank instructing them to transfer the money to the equivalent Unity Trust Bank account and to close the account. The letter was counter signed by the three existing signatories. It was further resolved to add two additional signatures to the Unity Trust Bank Accounts

**e. Budget 2023-24**

Precept

It was noted that the increases in Precept from Babergh District Council on a Band D property were £5.30, or 2.99%, Suffolk County Council were £57, or 3% and the Police although not yet finalised were expected to be £15 per year.

Option 1 is a standstill Precept of £22,500

Option 2 is an increase of £2,000 to the effect is that it will increase a Band D property by around £5 and represents an increase of approximately 10%

Option 3 is an increase of £4,500 will increase a Band D property of about £10 and is an increase of about 20%

Following discussion Cllr Cheeseman proposed to take Option 1, a Precept of £22,500 seconded by Cllr Oxford, three votes were counted

A proposal was heard from Cllr Flather that option 2 was adopted a Precept of £24,500 seconded by Cllr Davey, 4 votes. Therefore the Chair and Clerk signed the Precept demand for £24,500.

f. Clerk salary/cost of living allowance

Resolved to honour clerk's contract and to pay the cost of living increase backdated to 1 April 2022 and to pay an incremental point on 1 April and an additional point for gaining the Certificate in Local Council Administration when it is awarded.

23111. Consider update to Polstead WI's plans to convey their land in Polstead

Invoices have been received from solicitors acting for both the Women's Institute and the Village Hall Committee, the Clerk reported following a discussion with the Solicitor acting for the WI that the only outstanding action is for the Village Hall Committee to forward the charity name and number to the solicitor and thereafter the matter will be completed. The firm anticipated one hour's work remains on the matter.

23112. Consider any issues raised regarding **Highways and Footpaths**

Footpath No 35 has now been cut.

Letter from resident re mud on Holly Hill, Cllr Davey to agreed to respond as per Cllr Engleheart's report that the Contractors clear the road, multiple times a day and the anticipated end of the phase is at the end of January 2023.

23113. **Asset, allotment, playground or playing field issues**

Memorial bench will be refurbished at no cost to the community

Purchase of outdoor gym equipment. Deferred to the next meeting

23114. Additional defibrillators

Deferred to the next meeting

23115. Review Grit, Litter and Dog bins

There had been no agreement to reinstate the dog bin in Heath Road however, it was suggested to resite the dog bin in Martens Lane, Cllr Oxford to investigate.

23116. Christmas 2022 feedback

a. Carol Service on 17<sup>th</sup> December at the Church, the whole event was a great success, Boxted Methodist brass band were very well received. 121 people attended and filled the church the majority being parishioners but not the regular church congregation and it was tentatively agreed to rerun next year on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

b. Christmas Tree

The Peck family were thanked for erecting and decorating the tree. It has now been dismantled and the decorations stored under the stage in the village Hall. Cllr Wade volunteered to cut the tree and remove it.

23117. Future **agenda items**

The Cock Inn.

Coronation.

Community Pantry and Hardship fund.

Village Hall.

- Funding for heating
- Events, should be advertised in the Brewers Arms, Cllr Sowman to investigate with the committee

23118. **Questions to the chair**

None

23119. Time date and place of next meeting 7.30pm Thursday 17th February 2023 at the Village Hall, Polstead.

Meeting closed 9.45pm

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## Appendix to the minutes

### Clerk Action list

23104	Forward information on vehicle charging points to the clerk when it is available	GH	
23104	Investigate repair to Rockalls Road playing field gate and fencing and to repair if possible and report back to the next meeting	TD	✓
	Meet with Nature Citizen at the allotment site on Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> February at 10.30am	all	
	Request a £1000 grant from BDC's Locality budget toward the creation of a community woodland with a seating area, investigate the cost of benches	Clerk	✓
23106	Explore ownership of the concrete fence around Polstead Pond and request repair	JE	
23109	Planning comments to BDC	Clerk	✓
23110	Pay suppliers	Clerk	✓
23110	Send instruction to Barclays bank to transfer interest to Unity Bank and thereafter to close the account	Clerk	✓
23110	Send Bank Mandate form to Unity Bank	Clerk	✓
23110	Send Precept demand to BDC	Clerk	✓
23110	Contact SALC to action Clerk cost of living rise	Clerk	
23112	Respond to correspondence received re the Pond	TD	✓
23115	Explore siting the redundant dog bin in Martens Lane	JO	
23116	Editorial to LSPN news	Clerk	✓
23116	Cut and dispose of Christmas tree superseded but disposed of	AW	✓
23117	Agenda items for the next Summons	Clerk	
23116	Confirm to the Parish Church that we would like to go ahead with the combined Parish Service on 16 <sup>th</sup> December	Clerk	✓

### Finance Report

**Approve payments** Cllr Davey proposed that all the payments be made and they were unanimously agreed

#### Payments since the previous meeting

£3,518.13 JD Palmer, contract for grass cutting  
 £112.00 Clerk Christmas tree  
 £94.95 Cllr Davey Football net and associated fittings  
 £376.48 Clerk Salary  
 £144.00 CO10 Gardening  
 £50.00 to Village Hall Committee donation toward warm Fridays  
 £272.71 Cllr Flather expenses toward Carol concert refreshments

#### Payments to be made

£376.48 Clerk Salary for December  
 £136.66 Contribution to Chilton Parish Council toward the CiLCA training for Clerk  
 £221.00 Ben Patrick CO10 Gardening  
 £50.00 to the Village Hall for warm Fridays  
 £1,584.00 Holmes and Hills Solicitors part payment for work undertaken in transfer of land to the VH committee  
 £1500.00 payment to Holmes and Hills

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£135.00 to Cllr Wade 3 x hot rings and printing

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