

Minutes of the Meeting of the Broxted Parish Council

Thursday 11 November 2021 at 7.30pm at Broxted Village Hall

Present were:

Cllr Andy Cousins, Cllr Lesley Holt, Cllr Adam Hume, Cllr Vere Isham (Chair), Cllr Rachel Kesterton, and Kate Rixson (Clerk).

21/11-1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Adams and Cllr Smith.

21/11-2 Declarations of interest

Pecuniary interests were declared in relation to the planning application UTT/21/3200/OP. Dispensations had been granted to Cllr Holt, Cllr Hume and Cllr Cousins by the Proper Officer for a period of twelve months as otherwise there would be no quorum and the business could not be conducted.

21/11-3 Public Open Forum

One member of the public attended and commented in relation the planning application UTT/21/3200/OP.

21/11-4 District Councillors' reports to be heard

District Councillors and County Councillor could not attend but were thanked for information passed on via email.

21/11-5 Planning application UTT/21/3200/OP – land next to Pear Trees known as Jennings Field – eight semi-detached houses

This item was considered next as a member of the public wished to address the council.

The location and access to the proposed development was discussed and noted. It was reported that residents of neighbouring properties objected to the proposal and that the county council's conservation officer had expressed concern about threats to the preservation of the Brick End crossroads environment. It was agreed that the council would object on the grounds of the design and layout of the development, site access, highway safety, the effect on neighbouring listed buildings and on the protected land UTTLANE98, the effect on the countryside protection zone established by local planning policy and the risk that drainage was likely to be difficult. **Action: Clerk to draft and circulate for comments before submitting (deadline 26 November 2021).**

21/11-6 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 October 2021

The minutes had been circulated. They were approved as accurate and were signed by the Chair.

21/11-7 Reports received

21/11-7.1 Clerk's report

This had been circulated and no questions arose.

21/11-7.2 Finance

21/11-7.2.1 Report on balances and bank reconciliation:

Receipts to 31.10.21	£16,318.19	
Expenditure to 31.10.2021	£ 12,092.39	Including cheques written but not yet presented
Receipts less expenditure	£4,225.80	
Balances/Reconciliation		
Current account 31.10.2021 as per bank statement	£7,985.49	
<i>Less cheques issued but not presented by 31 Oct 2021</i>	(1,550.00)	SAW £1,500 Gt Easton PC £50
Current account available balance	£6,435.49	
Deposit account 31.10.2021	£5,451.96	
Available funds	£6,435.49 +£5,451.96	£11,887.45

21/11-7.2.2 Cash books

The cash book entries for current and deposit account had been circulated with bank reconciliations.

21/11-7.3 Footpaths

No reports were made of additional problems or progress.

21/11-7.4 Village Hall

Reports for September and October had been circulated. At 31 October 2021 the bank account held £17,268.95 with no outstanding cheques. Bookings are continuing for weekly exercise classes and monthly coffee mornings, with extra bookings for community activities.

A grant has been obtained to help with costs of replacing two windows and three double doors. A further grant application has been made for the balance and contractors instructed, as approved by the council as trustee in October 2021.

The council expressed its gratitude and appreciation for the hard work and commitment of the volunteers managing the hall so successfully.

21/11-7.5 Planning

Progress on applications to date had been circulated. It was noted that the council's solicitors had reported that no inspector had yet been assigned to hear the appeal against refusal of UTT/19/1777 (caravan site at Brick End). See items 21/11-5 and below for new applications.

Cllr Isham reported that the enforcement team had opened a file following the reported possible airport-related parking activity at The Warehouse, Pledgdon Green Road.

21/11-7.6 Neighbourhood plan

Cllr Isham reported that it was unlikely that a response would be received soon from Chickney Parish Meeting on their involvement in a combined neighbourhood development plan, so the application to proceed should go ahead.

21/11-7.7 Airport working group

See item 21/11-9.4 below.

21/11-8 Decisions to be made

21/11-8.1 To compare bank statement with cash book entries and confirm accuracy

This was carried out by Cllr Holt who reported no issues.

21/11-8.2 To consider and approve budget proposal for 2022-23

The draft had been circulated and publicised by being placed on the website. It was noted that costs and expenditure had risen each year but the precept had remained the same at £12,000 except for a £1,000 increase for 2021-22. Particular costs increases were noted for planning matters (reflecting the greatly-increased number of planning applications affecting the parish which needed consideration and comment), for professional advice, mainly on planning issues, and staff costs. Donations to charities and other voluntary groups acting for the benefit of residents had been maintained. It was anticipated that by the end of the current financial year expenditure would be approximately £21,000 which exceeded the budgeted expenditure for the year by about £3,500, due to additional staff costs and additional professional advice.

The precept proposal was for £20,000 for 2022-23. This would cover anticipated expenditure of £20,890 if £890 of reserves were used and expenditure did not exceed the budgeted amounts. Reserves are lower than the recommended level currently and projected to remain at about the same level if the budget proposal and precept are approved.

It was noted that the budget proposal included no purchases except the interpretation board which had been planned for 2021-22. Earmarked reserves of £1,000 (district councillor's grant) would be used for this. Allowance had been included in the budget for contingencies including

- advice and further work on the tree at Cherry Green, which may be required to avoid property damage, and
- significant charges for legal professional advice on the upcoming planning appeal relating to the application to create a caravan site on land at Brick End. It was agreed that ensuring that residents' interests were properly represented in this planning appeal was essential for the benefit of the community and should be given high priority.
- staff costs continuing at the current level which was considered as a necessary expense and representing value for money.

However the likely amount required for these items was uncertain and may be less than budgeted.

It was assumed that the cost of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan would be met in full from earmarked grant-funding so this was not included in the budget.

Councillors noted the effect of the budget proposal on the precept, and therefore on council tax. Using the most recent ready-reckoner supplied by Uttlesford District Council, the precept would result in an annual payment of £80.84 for 2022-23 for a Band D household, compared to £52.54 for 2021-22. Although this was a large percentage increase the

additional payment for the average household would be £28.30 for the year. It was noted that as yet parish councils are not bound by the limits on percentage increases affecting district and unitary councils.

After discussion Cllr Hume proposed and Cllr Kesterton seconded the motion to approve the budget and set the precept at the levels in the proposal. The budget of £20,890 and precept at £20,000 for 2022-23 were unanimously *approved*. It was noted that the precept demand to Uttlesford DC was due after the January 2022 parish council meeting.

Action:Clerk

21/11-8.3 To consider motion to create a Village Hall working group and terms of reference

As draft terms were not yet ready for consideration this item was deferred until the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

21/11-8.4 To consider the report from the local planning authority on the technical aspects of the call for sites

Uttlesford District Council had supplied a small map and outline technical assessment of each site in the parish which had been submitted (by landowners) for consideration for development, during the recent “call for sites”. The parish council was asked to check UDC’s assessment of each site’s suitability (classified red, amber or green on a number of criteria) and other factual information about each site such as its physical boundaries and access, transport links and biodiversity.

It was noted that one site in the parish, at Chapel End, appeared as part of a group of sites named “Bambers Green” and was described wrongly as being in Takeley Parish. The distances to amenities including schools and shops were not correct and greatly understated (although it was considered that they might be accurate in relation to the centre of the combined area, which was in Takeley). It was agreed that the clerk would respond accordingly. **Action: Clerk**

21/11-8.5 To consider any schemes to be proposed to the Local Highways Panel of Essex County Council

It was proposed that Pledgdon Green Road should have a weight limit of at most 7.5 tonnes and a speed limit of 30mph from Brick End to the B1051. It was noted also that many road-signs needed cleaning – e.g. the metal fingerposts at Church End and Sucksted Green – and new potholes needed repair – e.g. at the T-junction at Church End. Applications for a scheme needed to be passed to the county councillor. **Action:Clerk**

21/11-8.6 To consider planning applications:

UTT/21/3080/FUL – Elmswood

The application was for alterations to the previously-approved applications 20/0083 and /0084 to raise the roof height and alter windows. It was *agreed* to support the application.

Action: Clerk

21/11-8.7 Payments were approved as follows:

Payee and purpose	Amount £
K Rixson for November Clerk's salary (net) for hours worked in October 2021	690.34
CPRE subscription 2022	36.00
K Rixson to reimburse for office expenses: Mythic Beasts renewal of domain name ownership for 2 years to 23 Jan 2024 £60 +£12 VAT	72.00
K Rixson to reimburse for donation to Royal British Legion for poppy wreath (under s137 LGA 1972)	20.00
S E Parker for clearing site around Jenny's Bench	80.00
The Hundred Parishes Society membership to 18 Oct 2022	10.00
Total payments authorised	908.34

21/11-9 Matters to be noted and for future consideration

21/11-9.1 That the council will not meet in December and the precept will be notified to the district council by the due date in January 2022

21/11-9.2 That the scope, cost and contractor for grass-cutting and hedge-trimming in the parish will be reviewed by the clerk (under general delegated powers) and reported to the council before renewal.

21/11-9.3 The clerk would contact the UDC electoral services manager to confirm that the council had discussed the Community Governance Review at its October meeting, as minuted, and had no view as to any request for changes to the parish boundaries.

21/11-9.4 The council had been represented by the airport working group at the recent consultation on the future of flight paths around Stansted Airport. Cllr Kesterton reported that the airport was starting a four-year process of review and was currently validating the process it had decided upon for this review. However it appeared that Broxted would not be affected by any changes, as there was no intention of altering the routes for arrivals and departures around the airport.

21/11-10 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 13 January 2022 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15 pm.