

## **Minutes of the Meeting of Broxton Parish Council on Thursday 20 October 2022 at 7.30pm at Broxton Village Hall**

*Present were:*

Cllr Wendy Adams, Cllr Andy Cousins and Cllr Rachel Kesterton (Chair), and Kate Rixson (Clerk). Also from 7.55pm Item 6 Cllr Tony Adams.

The meeting opened at 7.45pm.

### **22/10-1 Apologies for Absence**

It was resolved to accept apologies from Cllr Adams, Cllr Holt and Cllr Isham.

### **22/10-2 Declarations of interest**

None were made.

### **22/10-3 Public Open Forum**

No members of the public attended.

### **22/10-4 District Councillors' and County Councillor's reports**

Cllr Foley (Essex CC) was thanked for his email containing part 1 of his written report which had been circulated by email. District Councillors were unable to attend due to conflicting commitments.

### **22/10-5 Approval of minutes of the Meetings on 14 July and 8 September 2022**

The minutes of the meetings on 14 July and 8 September (which was inquorate) 2022 were signed by the Chair, having been confirmed as an accurate record.

### **22/10-6 Resolution to co-opt to fill a casual vacancy**

Agenda item 7.2 was taken next. No election having been called for by electors within the statutory time period, the council was free to co-opt to fill the casual vacancy created by the resignation of Olivia Smith. It was resolved unanimously to co-opt Tony Adams who was present at the meeting. He duly signed the declaration of acceptance of office, witnessed by the clerk, and was supplied with a form to record his interests for the Register of Interests. Notice of co-option would be sent to the principal authority. **Action: Clerk**

### **22/10-7 Reports received.**

#### **22/10-7.1 Clerk's report**

This had been circulated and placed on the website. It was taken as read and is annexed to these minutes. It was noted also that Uttlesford District Council's parish liaison meeting had been postponed from 12 September to 7 November. It was arranged that the clerk would attend and report. No one was available to attend the UALC AGM on 26 October 2022. **Action: Clerk**

#### **22/10-7/2 Finance**

##### **22/10-7.2.1 Report on balances and bank reconciliation, internet banking and payments made**

It was noted that four councillors and the clerk had been given internet banking facilities and that, although the Barclays website was not easy to use, it was possible to set up and authorise online payments in accordance with the procedures in the council's financial regulations.

Councillors reviewed and noted the balances to 30 September 2022 as follows:

<b>Receipts and payments</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Notes and total</b>
Receipts (i.e. income) to 30 September 2022	£ 20,051.13	Precept now paid in full = £20,000. Interest £1.13. Compensation from bank £50.
Expenditure to 30 September 2022 including VAT	£ 12,009.54 including VAT	As recorded in cashbook
Receipts less expenditure in current year. Includes VAT which can be reclaimed.	£8,041.59	Amount of VAT paid is approx. £1,000 but some charged on items billed to clerk (e.g. stationery) may not be reclaimed.
<b>Reconciliation of cash book with bank account</b>		
<b>Current</b> account as per bank statement 30 September 2022	£ 13,003.19	
<i>Less</i> cheques issued before 30 September 22 but not yet presented (including VAT)	nil	
<b>Current account available balance</b> at 30 September 2022	<b>£13,003.19</b>	
<b>Deposit</b> account as per bank statement at 30 Sept 2022	<b>£1,453.38</b>	Interest rate 0.2% p.a. from 7 Sept, 0.15% from 21 Jul 22
Available funds	£13,003.19 + £1,453.38	£ 14,456.57

Statutory and contractual payments having been approved as a group earlier in the year, a list of such payments made since the last meeting, and those due to be made before the next meeting, had been circulated and was taken as read.

#### **22/10-7.2.2 Comparison of bank statements and cash book**

The current account bank statements were reviewed by councillors in the meeting.

Arrangements will be made for Cllr Holt to check the cash book, bank reconciliation and chequebook against bank statements. **Action: Clerk**

#### **22/10-7.2.3 Quarterly report on differences between budget and actual spending and income**

An analysis of spending and income for the first half of the year had been circulated and was reviewed. It was noted that total income and spending was forecast to be just within the budget at the year-end but that it had proved very difficult to anticipate spending in 2022-23.

#### **22/10-7.3 Footpaths and highways**

It was noted that many footpaths were less well-maintained, following a change in ownership. Many direction signs on footpaths were damaged or missing. The route of

some paths had disappeared after ploughing or cultivation. The clerk continues to monitor faults which have been reported, and update these on her written report. **Action: Clerk**

The clerk had not received an answer from the County Council's land agents as to whether Essex County Council is responsible for maintenance of the footway and hedge which cut diagonally across the land across the road from the pub. It seemed the land had been acquired by the council for a traffic scheme but not used, and there were no plans to use it in the future. After discussion it was concluded that it would be best if volunteers could continue to cut the hedge and keep the path reasonably clear.

It was noted that a new council officer for Uttlesford highways matters had been recruited at Essex Highways. It was agreed that she should be contacted about the Local Highways Scheme for Brick End Lane/Pledgdon Green Lane requested in October 2021, keeping Cllr Foley copied in. **Action: Clerk**

#### **22/10-7.4 Village Hall**

The Clerk reported that she had one fee quote from a specialist solicitor to deal with first registration of the land and was expecting a second and possibly a third, which she hoped would be lower. Formalities needed to be completed before an application for registration could be made. The clerk has been advised that as land to each side of the hall plot is already registered, with boundaries which match what has been assumed to be the limit of the Village Hall land, there should be no need for a survey. **Action: Clerk**

#### **22/10-7.5 Planning**

**Progress** on applications to date had been circulated. The report was taken as read.

The planning appeal hearing relating to The Rise, Brick End Road, heard on 11 October, was discussed. The Inspector's decision is awaited.

**New applications:** none.

**Enforcement:** It was noted that two investigations into possible breaches of planning consent had been started within the last two weeks. Details could not be circulated as these were confidential.

**Amendments and discharge of conditions:** It was noted that the parish was not normally informed about applications for "non-material amendments" to plans which had been approved, nor about applications for the discharge of conditions. They were shown on the weekly planning application list and the clerk would draw attention to these when sending councillors the link to the weekly list. **Action: Clerk**

#### **22/10-7.6 Condition of physical assets**

The clerk had circulated a schedule of physical assets and recommendations for repair and renovation. It was agreed that quotes for work should be obtained as necessary. **Action: Clerk**

#### **22/10-7.7 Neighbourhood Plan Action Plan**

In the absence of Cllrs Isham and Hume, this was deferred until a later meeting. It was noted that Great Easton and Tilty had also been designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area and that the parishes could work together.

#### **22/10-7.8 Common land responsibilities and management**

At a recent training course the clerk had been advised that the council's current approach, of ensuring safety and preventing encroachment onto the common, while not carrying on any

active management, was the right one, since the council was not the owner of the land. Contact in recent months with local residents was noted.

## **22/10-8 Decisions made**

### **22/10-8.1 Payments were approved as follows:**

1. Auditor (internally-appointed) for 2022-23 audit in due course - fee approximately £125
2. S Smith for pruning lime tree (paid) – £50
3. Royal British Legion for poppy wreath - £20 (s137 Local Government Act 1972)
4. Clerk's office expenses: £127.21 – to reimburse K Rixson
5. Mythic Beasts web/email hosting to 22 August 2023 £25.62 plus £5.12 VAT = £30.74 – to reimburse K Rixson
6. Clerk's membership of SLCC professional association in 2022: £134 – to reimburse K Rixson
7. SEP Gardens for hedge-cutting and weed control at the Hall: £320 (to be reimbursed by Hall charity account)
8. Community Heartbeat Trust invoice 14111 dated 3 Oct 2022 for replacement defibrillator pads: £60 including VAT £10.

It was agreed to consider, with Mr and Mrs Clark who check the defibrillator, a different supplier for pads, to avoid carriage charges, when they were next due for replacement.

#### **Action: Clerk**

It was noted that contractual payments for salary (October) and grass-cutting (invoice 7) were due and the amounts were approved. **Action: Clerk**

### **22/10-8.2 Resolution to co-opt**

See item 22/10-6 above.

### **22/10-8.3 Management of trees on common land at Cherry Green**

Quotes were considered and checked to ensure the same work was included in each, and that this matched the arboriculturist's recommendations. It was resolved to engage Acer Tree surgeons. **Action: Clerk**

### **22/10-8.4 Interpretation Board/Information panel**

A draft from Acorn Workshop had been circulated and was considered. The design was approved and it was agreed the firm should be asked to go ahead and produce the board.

#### **Action: Cllr Kesterton**

### **22/10-8.5 Approval of salary budget for 2023-24**

A draft had been circulated and was approved. This would be incorporated in the council budget which would be available at the November meeting. **Action: Clerk**

### **22/10-8.6 To consider quote for legal work for first registration of Village Hall land**

As two further quotes were awaited this item was deferred.

### **22/10-8.7 Storage or disposal of road salt**

It was noted that eventually the three tonnes/6 pallets of road salt in bags needed to be moved from the barn where it was stored on private land. A number of options for disposal or storage had been investigated and rejected. On balance it was concluded that space needed to be found at the front of the village hall, but that the disabled access must not be

obstructed. If the pub could keep some in its car park this would be helpful. Grants would be available for basic storage. **Action: Clerk**

**22/10-9 Matters to be noted and/or for future consideration**

The budget would be considered at the next meeting.

**22/10-10 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 10 November 2022 at 7.30pm.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.