

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Broxted Parish Council on Thursday 9 May 2024 at 7.30pm at Broxted Village Hall

Present were:

Cllr Vere Isham (Chair), Cllr Tony Adams, Cllr Wendy Adams, Cllr Andy Cousins, Cllr Adam Hume, Cllr Rachel Kesterton and Cllr David van Haaren. Kate Rixson (Clerk). Six members of the public attended including three ward district councillors and the ward county councillor.

The meeting was opened at 7.35pm by the retiring chairman Cllr Isham, following the Annual Assembly. The chair welcomed councillors and members of the public.

24/05-1 Election of the Chair of the Council and chair's declaration of acceptance of office

Cllr Isham was proposed and elected unopposed and made a declaration of acceptance of office.

24/05-2 Election of the Vice-Chair of the Council

Cllr Kesterton was proposed and elected unopposed.

24/05-3 Apologies for absence

None.

24/05-4 Declarations of interest in matters on the agenda and declaration of acceptance of office

No declarations of interest were made.

24/05-5 District Councillors' and County Councillor's reports

Cllr Bagnall reported that the Local Plan panel had received expert advice relating to the Countryside Protection Zone as an aspect of the new draft Local Plan. Outside consultants had advised retaining the existing boundary in the Broxted parish and extending it southwards of the B1256. Plans and the presentation made to the panel would be available with the minutes of the panel meeting. Cllr Bagnall hoped that this would strengthen the importance of the CPZ in the future and officers had advised that the timetable for delivery of the final plan would not be delayed by adjusting it to reflect this advice.

In the meantime with the approval of several large housing developments in the district in the last year, the total new houses to be included in the Local Plan had decreased.

Ward Councillors were aware that the parish council wished to apply for the Prince of Wales pub to be registered as an asset of community value and advised who to contact within the district planning department.

24/05-6 Public open forum

A member of the public wished to raise issues concerning Essex Highways so the public forum was deferred until the arrival of County Councillor Martin Foley at 7.50pm. A question was put concerning Highways' press release in April which had stated that overgrown vegetation and drainage ditches were the responsibility of land-owners, not

Essex Highways. The member of the public had asked the parish council and/or Highways to ensure that land-owners dealt with these matters. Cllr Foley confirmed that he was rigorously following up reports of potholes and flooding and that the Highways department had powers to enforce clearing of ditches and vegetation (while the parish council did not). If the clerk could forward reference numbers for the defects in Church End (Clay Lane) he would raise these specifically again.

Cllr Foley has compiled a petition to Essex Highways which he is hoping the 18 parish councils in his division (including Broxton) would support. The parish council confirmed that it did support this petition. Cllr Foley was putting a motion to the county council to review its arrangements with its contractors. In Cllr Foley's view the contractors' work was not inspected properly and the additional funds for highways, recently announced by the county council, would make very little difference.

With reference to the recent abrupt cancellation of the 316 bus service through Broxton, Cllr Foley said that the bus should now be running to the previous timetable under a new bus company. Inquiries were being made into how the previous bus company had reached the point of cancelling the service (and other bus routes).

24/05-7 Approval of minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting on 11 April 2024 were an accurate record and they were signed by the Chair.

24/05-8 Reports received

24/05-8.1 Clerk's Report

This had been circulated and made available on the website so was taken as read. A copy is annexed to the hard copy of these minutes.

The clerk confirmed that she was preparing a response to the Department for Transport's consultation on night flights restrictions in time for submission by 22 May and that she was working with the vice-chair on the application for ACV status for the pub.

24/05-8.2 Financial Reports

These had been circulated and made available on the website. Bank statements had been sent to the councillors to review. The new auditor (internally-appointed) would soon be reporting for the Annual Governance and Accounting Report.

24/05-8.2.1

Bank balances and reconciliation between the cash books and bank statements for 1 to 30 April 2024 (first month of the new financial year)

Receipts and payments	£	Notes and total
Receipts (i.e. income) 1 to 30 April 2024	£10,125	First half of precept paid
Expenditure 1 to 30 April 2024	£ 817.51	As recorded in cashbook.
Receipts less expenditure in current year. Includes VAT.	£9,307.49	This is the increase in reserves since 1 April 2024

Reconciliation of cash book with bank account		
Unity Current account as per bank statement 30 April 2024	£14,278.94	Statement no. 9
Less unprocessed payment requests at 30 April 2024	None	
Unity Current account as per cash book at 30 April 2024	£14,278.94	
Unity Deposit account as per bank statement and cash book at 30 April 2024	£12,037.07	Statement no. 7
Available funds	£26,316.01	Includes £17,008.52 reserves brought forward from 2023-24.

24/05-8.2.2 Payments made since last meeting and those due under contractual or statutory obligations

Payments as approved at the 11 April 2024 meeting had been made. A list of payments made and due (contractual, statutory and previously approved) had been circulated and was tabled.

24/05-8.3 Planning update including conservation area

24/05-8.3.1 Conservation area – Place Services’ report was awaited. This would be an assessment of whether the Brick End to Pledgdon Green area had potential to be considered as a conservation area by the local planning authority (Uttlesford).

24/05-8.3.2 Meeting with Uttlesford Head of Development on 8 May 2024

The outcome was summarised to councillors:

Mr Brown had said that preventing airport-related parking in Broxted (and other parishes near the airport) was the Enforcement team’s top priority and that the parish would not have to accept such development in the long-term. Various options were possible to prevent developments which were against local planning policy. Mr Brown had visited several sites in the parish with councillors and this seemed to have brought home the issues the council had been raising.

Councillors had been frustrated by the lack of response and information from the planning authority. Mr Brown had recognised this but emphasised that this did not mean the enforcement team was not taking action over issues reported. Breaches were prioritised, however. We should always receive a substantive email response within three working days (not an auto-response) and this standard was monitored.

After hearing this report and discussing the outstanding issues the council agreed that after allowing three months for improvement, the council should again ask for explanations.

24/05-8.3.3 Planning tracker - A schedule of outstanding and decided planning applications and progress on enforcement matters had been circulated and put on the website. This was taken as read.

24/05-8.4 Footpaths and highways issues – there were no issues to note.

24/05-8.5 Reports from councillors – see report at 24/05-8.3.2 above

24/05-9 Decisions

24/05-9.1 Approval of payment

Payment of the electrician's invoice of £117.36 for connecting the defibrillator to the Village Hall electricity supply instead of the Prince of Wales pub's was ratified. Mr Clark was thanked for organising this so quickly. It was noted that he had advised Webnos, and thereby the ambulance service, of the new location.

24/05-9.2 Suspension of Financial Regulation 6.20 for the current financial year

This regulation prevents the clerk from using a personal debit or credit card for any purchase on behalf of the council. The council's bank cannot issue a debit/credit card due to the complex mandate, therefore the council agreed to suspend the regulation for the current financial year. This will enable the clerk to use a personal card for council transactions where no other suitable means of payment is available.

24/05-9.3 To insure with Clear Insurance (formerly BHIB)

The council is entering the final year of a three-year commitment) to insure with BHIB/Clear in exchange for a discounted premium. The premium (plus insurance tax and administrative charge) for the policy for 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025 is £1,077.42. The premium for 2023-24 had been £1,055.43.

The cover is the same as last year except for an increase in the value of the village hall which reflects property value inflation and increases in the cost of rebuilding. The hall and its contents are insured by the council on behalf of the Village Hall charity.

The council agreed to insure with Clear on the terms offered and approved payment of the cost of £1,077.42. **Action: Clerk**

24/05-9.3 Response to new planning applications

UTT/23/1732/FUL(revised) – Tudor Hall, Pledgdon Green – change of use of paddock to build 3 dwellings. The council agreed to repeat its previous comments objecting to this application. **Action: Clerk**

UTT/24/0418/FUL – Moor End Farm, erection of agricultural barn. The council had no comments to make.

UTT/24/1116/FUL – Walnut Tree Cottage – erection of a 2-bedroom bungalow.

After discussion the council agreed that objections should be raised in line with those made for application 24/0117/FUL for the same site. The two applications were identical but the previous one had been withdrawn. **Action: Clerk**

Appeal APP/C1570/W/24/3338824: Re refusal of UTT/23/2210/OP – Land East of Pear Trees, Brick End – outline application with all matters reserved, for 3 new dwellings. Appeal start date was 2 May 2024 and further comments could be made before 6 June. It was noted that the council had referred to the CPZ and other policies for development in rural areas in objecting, and that these comments would be forwarded to

the planning inspector. The appeal would proceed by written representations (no hearing). It was agreed that no further comments should be sent.

24/05-10 Matters to be noted and/or for future consideration

None raised.

24/05-11 Next meeting date

The next meeting will be on Thursday 13 June 2024.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.20 pm.