

## **Minutes of the Meeting of Broxton Parish Council on 14 November 2024 at 7.30pm at Broxton Village Hall**

*Present:*

Cllr Vere Isham (Chair), Cllr Wendy Adams, Cllr Andy Cousins, Cllr Rachel Kesterton and Cllr Van Haaren.

Kate Rixson (Clerk).

The meeting opened at 7.30pm. The chair welcomed councillors and a member of the public, a District Councillor for Stansted.

### **24/11-1 Apologies for absence**

Cllr Hume had prior family commitments and Cllr Tony Adams was unable to attend due to unexpected work demands. The reasons for apologies were accepted.

### **24/11-2 Declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **24/11-3 Public open forum**

The council was asked on behalf of the district council to limit its comments on planning applications to matters which were based on planning issues. The chair referred the district council to the comments submitted by the parish council over many years. He advised that these quoted local planning policies by reference number and title and did not stray into irrelevant objections. The district councillor was assured that the parish council reviewed applications and appeals with regard to their effect on the parish area and its residents. Its predominant aim was to represent local views and concerns.

The council was asked to consider illustrative plans for development of a site in Church End, part of which has outline planning permission for up to seven dwellings. The council made no comment and asked the developer to engage with residents in the first instance. The council confirmed that if and when an application was made, it would consider it carefully as a consultee.

### **24/11-4 District and County Councillors' reports.**

Ward District and County Councillors had clashing council engagements and were unable to attend. Written updates and reports had been received and circulated.

### **24/11-5 Approval of minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting**

It was resolved that the minutes of the council meeting on 10 October 2024 were an accurate record and they were signed by the Chair.

## **24/11-6 Reports received**

### **24/11-6.1 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.

Councillors asked the clerk to check whether a location had been found for the Dick Knowles commemorative bench which was being stored at Broxted Hill Farm. The clerk advised that the bench should not be returned to its previous position on Garrolds' Farm land without the new owner's agreement, as it would become the property of the landowner. **Action: Clerk**

It was noted that a decision had still not been received on the nomination of the pub as a community asset despite the extension granted to the district council to 30 August 2024. The clerk was in touch with the planning policy team which was dealing with the nomination and would check progress. **Action: Clerk**

### **24/11-6.2 Financial Reports**

These had been circulated and made available on the website. Bank statements had been sent to the councillors to review and were available in the meeting.

#### **24/11-6.2.1 Bank balances and reconciliation between the cash books and bank statements for 1 April to 31 October 2024**

##### **Cash book records:**

**Income:** 1 April to 31 October 2024: **£21,133.18**

Made up of Precept £20,250, £212.35 bank interest and £670.83 VAT refund

**Spending:** 1 April to 31 October 2024 (not including transfers between bank accounts): **£8,071.75**

Made up of £7,871.77 and £199.98 VAT. VAT is normally recoverable.

At 31 October 2024, for the current financial year income has been greater than spending. Reserves have therefore increased by £13,061.43 since 1 April 2024. The council is required to keep between 3 and 12 months' expenditure in reserve. It was noted that reserves are at the right level.

##### **Reconciliation of cash book with bank account:**

**Unity Current** account as per bank statement 31 October 2024:

**£8,820.53**

**Unity Current** account as per cash book at 31 October 2024: **£8,820.53**

Bank statements match cash book.

**Unity Deposit** account as per bank statement and cash book at 31 October 2024, **£21,249.42**

**Available funds (current plus deposit account balances less any unprocessed transactions), £30,069.95.** This includes £17,008.52 reserves brought forward from 2023-24.

#### **24/11-6.2.2 Payments made since last meeting and those due under contractual or statutory obligations**

A list of payments made and due (contractual, statutory and previously approved), including salary of £596.38 for November, had been circulated and was tabled.

#### **24/11-6.2.3 National agreement on clerks' new rate of pay**

Schedules of pay rates for 2023-24 and the new rates agreed nationally for 2024-25 (taking effect on 1 April 2024) had been circulated and were publicly available. The new rate was noted and backpay was due for 1 April to 31 October 2024. This was included in the November payroll.

#### **24/11-6.3 Planning update**

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.

Councillors expressed concern that activity continued at The Warehouse, in breach of planning permission for the site, and that progress on clearing untidy sites was very limited.

#### **24/11-6.4 Footpaths and highways issues**

No new issues were raised.

#### **24/11-6.5 Reports from councillors**

None.

### **24/11-7 Decisions**

#### **24/11-7.1 Payments for approval**

A request from CPRE to increase the annual membership payment to £60 (the rate paid by new members) was proposed and unanimously approved. **Action: Clerk**

#### **24/11-7.2 Approval of Budget and setting the Precept for 2025-26**

The draft budget with explanatory notes had been circulated and added to the website. A copy is attached to the hard copy of these minutes. Projected expenditure was estimated at £25,759 allowing for contingencies and known costs.

It was noted that the tax base for 2025-26 was not yet available and would be issued by the district council on 6 December 2024. An assessment of the effect of the precept on council tax payments was therefore based on the current, 2024-25, tax base.

Taking account of the reserves required, it was proposed (Cllr Cousins) and seconded (Cllr Kesterton) that the draft budget be approved and the precept kept at the 2024-25 level of £20,250. It was agreed that this would allow the council to retain sufficient reserves and also avoid an increase in council tax to meet the precept. It was approved unanimously.

The clerk was asked to report on the effect of the precept on council tax at the January meeting, by which time the new tax base would be available. **Action: Clerk**

### **24/11-7.3 Donation to Village Hall charity**

It had previously been decided to meet the cost of decoration of the Village Hall and work was now partially complete and continuing. It was resolved unanimously to donate the sum of £6,290 to cover invoices already delivered and paid, and the estimated costs of completion. (Powers used: powers to contribute to the expense of providing a community building and provide assistance of any kind for social or recreational groups and activities.) **Action: Clerk**

### **24/11-7.4 To consider a final grass cut in the parish**

After discussion the council decided this was not necessary.

### **24/11-7.5 To consider commenting on planning applications and appeals**

**24/11-7.5.1 UTT/24/2678/HHF – Rodings Rise, Molehill Green** – to extend house and add dormer windows. The boundary between Takeley and Broxted parishes cut across the garden to the property, the house being in Takeley parish. It was observed that Takeley council had no objection. Councillors did not wish to comment.

**24/11-7.5.2 UTT/23/17432/FUL – Tudor Hall, Pledgdon Green – 3 dwellings on paddock.** The refusal of the application by Uttlesford District Council was now being appealed under ref APP/C1570/W/24/3353759 and would proceed by written representations with no hearing. It was noted that the council's objections had been forwarded to the Planning Inspector. The council did not wish to add anything further. It was noted that another application for the same site was under consideration by the planning authority.

### **24/11-8 Matters to be noted and/or for future consideration**

The clerk drew the council's attention to the government consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings, which runs until 19 December 2024.

### **24/11-9 Next meeting date**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 9 January 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

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