

BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2024 IN THE ALL SAINTS CHURCH, BOUGHTON**

Present:

Parish Councillors: Cllrs Neil Matthew (Chair), Phil Boyle, Sarah Miller and Tam Payne.

Apologies – Cllr Sue Pogmore.

Parish Clerk – Mike Inder.

Borough Councillor – B Cllr Sue Lintern.

County Councillor – C Cllr Martin Storey.

Absences – Nil.

Public – 2.

62/24 **Opening and Apologies for absence:** Cllr Matthew opened the meeting and welcomed those present, apologies were given and accepted.

63/24 **To receive declarations of interest for items on the agenda.** None declared.

64/24 **Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2024:** Having been previously circulated, the minutes were proposed as an accurate reflection of the meeting by Cllr Payne, seconded by Cllr Boyle, and approved. Minutes signed by the chairman.

65/24 **To consider Co-option to fill Cllr vacancies.** A volunteer has expressed an interest but was unable to attend this meeting due to work commitments. Deferred.

66/24 **Reports from visiting officers:** County Cllr Storey provided a report of County Council business since the General Election, including the progress of the 1 Million Trees project, the 'County Deal', decision delayed until Dec 24 for updates to be incorporated and improved public transport bus services across the County. He also informed Council that should they have an urgent enquiry regarding finances between meetings that C Cllr Jamieson could be contacted.
B. Cllr Lintern provided a report on Borough Council news, this included the correspondence from B. Cllr Parish urging Town and Parish Councils to read into the implications of the Major Modifications to the Local Plan following the review by the Planning Inspectorate, of note is the loosening of restrictions on development adjacent to the Development Boundary. A consultation process for the LP runs until the 2nd of Oct. The new Police and Crime Commissioner has opened a consultation to inform her on public opinion of policing priorities. The annual BC Planning update in Sep will be focusing on Biodiversity Net Gain (Planning) and enforcement. A meeting with the NP is scheduled and Cllr Lintern invited Cllrs to forward any issues or questions that they would like her to raise with the MP. Concerns about the new MP's focus on the west of the constituency were raised and Cllr Lintern reported that there was an intention for him to open an office in Downham Market.

67/24 **To hear from the public:** 2 members of the public were invited to speak, neither of which wished to raise any matters.

68/24 Financial Matters:

- a. Reconciliation of accounts – Cllr Miller conducted a sample check of invoices/receipts, bank statements and cashbook summaries and countersigned the RFO's reconciliation check.
- b. Payments approved and paid since the last meeting:

PAYMENTS AUTHORISATION

Date	Name	Ref	Voucher		£ Total
10-Jul-24	Tamar Telecommunications	Virtual Phone Line 4015663	20	DD	6.94
18-Jul-24	HMRC	PAYE mth4	21	BACS	77.60
24-Jul-24	Clerk	Salary Mth4 and Home Work Allowance	22	BACS	127.22
14-Jul-24	ICO	ICO Annual Reg fee	23	DD	35.00
13-Aug-24	Tamar Telecommunications	Virtual Phone Line 4030928	24	DD	6.94
13-Aug-24	Hylton Gott Ltd	Mower fuel IN03260	25	BACS	15.20
18-Aug-24	HMRC	PAYE mth5	26	BACS	77.60
24-Aug-24	Clerk	Salary Mth5 and Home Work Allowance	27	BACS	127.22

- c. Decision to discontinue Parish Online (mapping) subscription: The renewal information was circulated between meetings, and it was decided not to renew, the decision was ratified.
- d. Annual External Audit: The RFO reported that the notice of conclusion of audit had not yet been received. However, there had been correspondence from the auditor regarding an apparent significant variance between FYs that was unexplained. The RFO had provided details of the significant income and expenditure variations, including the delayed and increased CSA payments, the new play equipment with associated grant funding and pond maintenance being the main reasons. He went on to explore the variances to the penny and provided further detail to the auditor beyond what would usually be required, and this still did not explain the variance completely and an 'Other matters' comment to that effect is expected on the conclusion of audit. The RFO explained that the Council would need to consider the matter and take action to resolve it at the next AGAR, he had circulated the accounts spreadsheet for cllrs to scrutinise in detail and no observations were raised. The key fact underpinning the consideration should be that the reconciliation between bank statements and income and expenditure accounts is accurate to the penny. The Chair thanked the RFO for the additional work and time expended in reviewing the accounts to respond to the query and statement that the Council continued to have full confidence in the RFO and fiscal management, a vote of thanks to that effect was given.

69/24 **Correspondence:** circulated between meetings requiring further consideration:

- a. Email from a resident regarding the pond maintenance. This was a repeat of an email received a few years ago and based on their opinion on how the pond should be perceived and used as a watering pit for animals and that flora introduced over the last couple of decades should be reversed. Cllrs considered the current pond management strategy, which was established following EA recommendations and provides a biodiverse habitat for flora and fauna which is producing an increasingly healthy balance due to the strategy and sensitive interventions.
- b. Offer to repair existing minor damage on the marquee by a hirer. The offer was accepted with thanks and the repairs have been made and the costs of £12.93 reimbursed with a vote of thanks to Mr Beeston.
- c. Request to support a Parliamentary Bill for Safety of ion batteries, e-bikes and scooters. Council considered that this was not PC business, and no opinion was expressed.
- d. Resident's road safety concern regarding agricultural and commercial vehicles speed. One of the tractors was identified and a Cllr had spoken with them to express the concerns and the issue was resolved. The Chair invited the resident to provide details of day and time of any future occurrences so that the SAM2 data could be reviewed to ascertain the speed, no further reports received.
- e. Report from resident of unsafe benches on the Green. Cllr Matthew reported that he inspected the bench and that the seat supports had been temporarily repaired by someone but that the timber supports were rotten beyond repair. The RFO reported that the item had been budgeted for replacement last year when it was deemed beyond economic repair. It was decided to obtain quotes for a like for like type replacement of both timber and recycled materials (but of a better quality than the park bench).

70/24 Planning Consultations.

- a. Applications: None.
- b. Decisions since last meeting: None.

71/24 Highways Matters: Cllr Matthew reported that the latest SAM2 data from Mill Hill Rd was available to view on the PC website and that typically the average was below 30mph but there were several exceptions up to 42mph on a variety of days and times without a discernible trend.

72/24 Cllr and Clerk's report on ongoing matters:

- a. Pond maintenance. Cllr Payne reported that there had been a green bloom for about 3 weeks in July, but a heavier dosing of the barley straw liquor had cleared it. He also reported that a recent wade indicated that the Siltex treatment appeared to have had a noticeable effect on the depth of the silt. Fish were seen and the vegetation was largely within the scale and areas accepted in the strategy. He suggested preventing further encroachment of the Flag Iris rhizomes on to the 'beach' section of the pond, all agreed.
- b. Update on post replacements around the Green. Cllr Payne provided a report that proposed to purchase 19 posts that were of a 4in diameter and 3.4m long from a local supplier, the posts could be cut into 3 equal sections allowing a consistent height of 75cm (higher than average post height currently to permit easier grass cutting) with approx 45cm below ground. The cost would be £256 for the timber and then an additional cost of £60 for ironmongery and preservative (cost not obtained yet). Council agreed to the scope of the proposal and a budget of £500 from the reserve for Pond and Green maintenance of £1500.
- c. Update on the development of the Biodiversity Plan. Cllr Boyle stated that the development of the plan was still in progress and that his focus was currently on community education and awareness.
- d. Update on events to promote biodiversity. Cllr Boyle reported that he had obtained bat detector equipment on loan and that a survey of bat types and frequency of visits in 6 areas put forward by volunteers to host the survey was underway. He will provide the reports to Cllr Matthew for publishing on the website and village social media. The interest shown was encouraging. B. Cllr Lintern asked if the BC could contact him as they are conducting case studies into communities actively promoting their biodiversity policy, Cllr Boyle agreed.
- e. Update on 'dot Gov' email migration. The new emails were all reported as up and running, albeit there are limited technical features compared to other platforms.

73/24 Play Park:

- a. Cllr Boyle reported that he had carried out repairs over the summer in line with the decisions at the last meeting, Cllrs gave a vote of thanks, particularly for the painstaking work to prepare and repaint the entire fence. The action plan has been updated at annex A.
- b. Cllr Boyle proposed to replace the gate chain to prevent it chafing on the new paint. Cllr agreed and it is added to the action plan at annex A at item 13 for follow up.
- c. Smoking in the play area had been observed by visitors staying at Grassmoor, they became confrontational when asked to stop by a Cllr and pointed to the lack of signage prohibiting smoking. Cllr Boyle proposed purchasing a sign to prohibit smoking for £9.57, seconded by Cllr Matthew and agreed.
- d. The Clerk asked the Council for authority to let the contract with the Play Inspection Co Ltd for next year's annual inspection, agreed.

74/24 To receive new reports from cllrs and propose agenda items for the next meeting on 5th Nov 24:

late correspondence was received by Cllr Boyle with respect to the condition of the wishing well and suggestion that the roof supports were unstable. Cllr Boyle reported that there were a series of options, and it was agreed for Cllr to seek wider public opinion on the repair/replacement of the

wishing well. The donations found in the wishing well were reported to be less than £15 over the last few years by Cllr Matthew.

75/24 The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 8.14pm.

Chairman

Prepared by
Mr Mike Inder
Clerk to Boughton Parish Council

Date

Annex A

Ser No	Equipment Item	Comment/Recommendation	Risk	Proposed action	Action taken	Review Date
1	Notice Board	slightly loose in foundation	L	Monitor - NFTR	Monitor	Monthly inspections
2	Fence/Gate	Paint flaking on metal work	L	repainted - Cllr Boyle	Complete	Closed
3		Gate gaps adjust to 12mm		Cllr Miller to review		01-Nov-24
4		Homemade chain gate latch remove	L	Leave in-situ	NFAR	Closed
5		Gate closing too slow (>8 secs) target 4-8 seconds	VL	timed as 9 seconds	NFAR	Closed
6		Fence damage	L	monitor	Monitor	Monthly inspections
7	Litter Bin	Litter Bin liner not secured	L	It is to allow a bag to be easily installed and emptied	NFAR	Closed
8	Springer	Grass tile matrix compacted	L	Grass is an acceptable surface	NFAR	Closed
9	Slide	Grass tile matrix compacted	L	Grass is an acceptable surface	NFAR	Closed
10	Multi-play	Missing component (plank bridge)	L	leave as is.	NFAR	Closed
11		Algae/Moss - clean	L	Monitored and not deemed of a level requiring intervention.	Monitor	Monthly inspections
12		Loose fixings	L	Tighten/replace - Cllr Boyle – Unable to tighten but considered that integrity not affected	Monitor	Monthly inspections
13	Gate	Chain is chaffing the new paint.	L	Identify a suitable replacement		1 Nov 24