

BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 7th JANUARY 2025 IN THE ALL SAINTS CHURCH, BOUGHTON**

Present:

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

Apologies – N/A

Parish Clerk – Mike Inder.

Borough Councillor – B Cllr Sue Lintern.

County Councillor – C Cllr Martin Storey.

Absences – Nil.

Public - Nil.

- 1/25 **Opening and Apologies for absence:** Cllr Matthew opened the meeting and welcomed those present.
- 2/25 **To receive declarations of interest for items on the agenda.** The clerk explained that Cllrs had a dispensation to participate and set the budget and precept, no other declarations.
- 3/25 **Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 5th Nov 2024:** Having been previously circulated, the minutes were proposed as an accurate reflection of the meeting by Cllr Pogmore, seconded by Cllr Boyle, and approved. Minutes signed by the chairman.
- 4/25 **To consider Co-option to fill Cllr vacancies.** No candidates present, deferred.
- 5/25 **Reports from visiting officers:** County Cllr Storey provided a report of County Council business including the NCC budget, where the public consultation comments are being considered ahead of the setting meeting in Feb. The new devolution bill, which the NCC will debate and decide on 10th Jan; the plan would see a new 2-tier system with a 'Strategic Authority' which would likely be a combined Norfolk and Suffolk area, with the County and District/Borough Councils combining in area groupings. The NCC supports the farmers in their opposition towards the Inheritance Tax changes. NCC Highways has the best results in national surveys compared with KPIs and has an additional £57M in funding for repairs etc. The Western Link has been delayed again but it is hoped to progress soon. A £1.5M dentistry school is being started at the UEA. All this and more can be found on the NCC website.
- B. Cllr Lintern provided a report on Borough Council news; The new Devolution Bill being the most significant item, she provided further details on the County Cllr's report on devolution with the role of the Parish and Town Councils likely to have more services and responsibilities devolved down, however there is no detail at this juncture on what that would involve or how councils would be helped to deliver; Cllr Lintern has asked the BC to ensure that Parish Update briefs are provided on a regular basis. Both BC and NCC are behind the bill with the view that it is better to engage and get the best deal, rather than to have it imposed on them with a lesser deal.
- 6/25 **To hear from the public:** None present.
- 7/25 **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: Proposed by Cllr Miller, seconded by Cllr Pogmore and agreed.

Date	Name	Ref	Voucher	£ Total
07-Nov-24	Sustainable Furniture UK Ltd	Picnic Bench 116606	41	BACS 545.00
12-Nov-24	HMRC	PAYE mth8	42	BACS 105.60
24-Nov-24	Clerk	Salary Nov + arrears and HW Allowance	43	BACS 168.45
24/11/24	Tamar Telecommunications	Virtual Phone Line 4076751	44	DD 6.94
10-Dec-24	Hylton Gott Ltd	Mower fuel IN03523	45	BACS 28.28
18-Dec-24	HMRC	PAYE mth9	46	BACS 81.20
23-Dec-24	Clerk	Salary Dec and Home Work Allowance	47	BACS 131.86
10-Dec-24	Tamar Telecommunications	Virtual Phone Line 4092056	48	DD 6.94
Income				
02/12/2024	Barclays	Interest	4	Direct 45.08

- c. **Budget and Precept:** The RFO having updated and published the draft budget was asked to provide a summary by the Chair. The RFO explained that in light of the report by Cllr Payne regarding the diseased Cherry Tree on the Green and likely costs involved in dealing with it, that he had added an additional £750 to that budget line. There being no other questions or comments the budget and Precept requirement of £7993.00 was proposed by Cllr Payne, seconded by Cllr Boyle and voted in favour unanimously.

8/25 **Correspondence:** circulated between meetings requiring further consideration:

- a. An email request from a resident for elements of the dilapidated and removed wishing well were asked for as he had supplied them. This having been researched was found that the person had been reimbursed for the supply of materials when he voluntarily repaired the wishing well, as such the wishing well was the PC's property to dispose of as it deemed appropriate. No further action.

9/25 **Planning Consultations.**

- a. Applications: No new applications.
- b. Decisions since last meeting: None.
- c. Ongoing applications: **24/01891/F** relating to 'Variation of condition 2 attached to planning permission 21/02247/FM: Use of land for standing of shepherd's huts for holiday use with a reception hut, recycling/waste storage and bike storage, landscaping and water treatment plant'. The objection was submitted, as was one from Stoke Ferry PC, and the B. Cllr has consulted with the case officer to state that if it was supported by the officer then she would request that it is called into Ctte. The Case officer stated that it has changed significantly and that the applicant would be advised to withdraw the application, and if minded, then to resubmit a new application. That has not happened to date and strong objections have been lodged by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Ecology Officer in the last month.

10/25 **Highways Matters:** Cllr Matthew reported that the SAM2 seemed to be working ok again and the latest data for Chapel Rd showed an average off 28mph with one suspect max indication of 57mph at 3.15pm on 20th Nov. The annual data, even with a missing period showed an annual traffic increase to c100,000, this was thought to be primarily due to a number of diversion periods where traffic from the A134 didn't follow the approved, but long, diversion and passed through the village instead, HGV will not have been able to divert through Stoke Ferry due to weight limitations on the bridge. This created a tripling of traffic to c1,000/day.

11/25 **Cllr and Clerk's report on ongoing matters:**

- a. Norfolk ALC AGM and restructuring: The clerk attended the online meeting and had provided a detailed report to Cllrs that was summarised: The AGM did not go well, members were not content with the lack of detail and clarity in the financial report, nor the lack of a budget/business plan that demonstrated how Norfolk ALC would manage with reduced membership (down to c66% of potential member councils), the withdrawal of County funding for the Wellbeing and Training Officers in the last 2 years and the previously notified withdrawal for the County Officer funding in 25/26. In addition there are potentially significant liabilities for an HMRC dispute and an appeal for unfair dismissal of the previous County Officer, these were dismissed with an optimistic attitude

that they would be found in favour of the Norfolk ALC. There was positive news and refreshing statement that a change of structure, to be voted on in Feb/Mar 25 with Clerks having some representation in an advisory role to the Board. The Clerk stated that the website and email hosting was provided by Norfolk ALC and was working well, however, training has been hit and miss lately with it being outsourced and some sessions cancelled at the last minute. The Chair supported the clerk's view that it was better to try and help Norfolk ALC reset and improve rather than to change supplier for training and IT at this point and proposed that the PC continued its membership this year, it was agreed.

- i. Nomination of PC's Norfolk ALC representative to vote on the Council's behalf: Cllr Miller volunteered to fulfil the role and it was voted in favour of her appointment.
- b. Picnic bench: the replacement bench was built by Cllr Matthew and the old one removed and replaced with assistance from Cllr Boyle, a vote of thanks was given.
- c. Biodiversity Plan: Cllr Boyle provided an update that was approved with 2 amendments which were made as follows:
 The Churchyard: the phrase 'Parish Council Committee' for abbreviation PCC was corrected to Parochial Church Council to clarify that it remains the Church's responsibility until the Churchyard is closed when full and potentially transferred to the PC.
 The Built Landscape: There being no Neighbourhood Plan it was decided to refer to the PC's Approach to Planning Policy instead as it provides the same focus on biodiversity, environmental factors and sustainability.

12/25 **Pond & Green Maintenance.**

- a. Cllr Payne reported that he was continuing with the agreed post replacements around the Green on an as required and opportunity basis. Cllrs commented favorably on the progress and effect.
- b. Report on pond condition: Cllr Payne stated that the pond was in good condition overall and that the irises and reeds were comparable with the Google images from earlier years, and they seem to have found a natural balance. The Siltex application is due again and he and 2 volunteer cllrs agreed to proceed at the next suitable opportunity before mid Feb. Cllr Payne, supported by Cllr Boyle suggested that a sign to politely ask visitors not to feed bread to the ducks would be beneficial to both the ducks and the condition of the pond. Ideas to provide a duck food station had been previously considered but ruled out due to the potential to attract rats. Cllr Boyle will draft a sign for approval.
- c. To consider commissioning a tree health report from an arboriculturist. The Clerk explained the requirement for insurance and liability purposes to have the survey conducted. However, in light of the Cherry Tree disease it was agreed to consult the BC Arboricultural Officer first and determine the action required for that issue.
- d. Wishing Well: having become unsafe and it was removed and scrapped after attempts to repair it, the ground will be reseeded to grass by Cllr Boyle and if there is a proposal put forward from anyone, through the PC, in future it will be considered.

13/25 **To receive new reports from cllrs and propose agenda items for the next meeting:** Cllr Pogmore asked the clerk to enquire with Highways regarding the long overdue and much needed repairs to the Barton Bendish road.

14/25 The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 8.33 pm.

Chairman

Date

Prepared by
Mr Mike Inder
Clerk to Boughton Parish Council