

# BENHALL & STERNFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council Meeting, which took place at Benhall Ex-Servicemen's Club on  
Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr Riven Brace – Acting Chairman, Cllr David Secret, Cllr Beverley Barclay, Cllr Sue Nicholson, Cllr Alan Woods, & Cllr Deborah Dann.

In Attendance: 9 members of the public, East Suffolk Councillor Katie Graham, Suffolk County Councillor Andrew Reid.  
The Responsible Finance Officer and the Clerk.

Cllr Brace welcomed all to the meeting. He is standing in as acting Chairman until Dr Hilary Graham has recovered. All wished him a speedy recovery.

## OPEN FORUM

Member of the public would like to bring to the attention of the PC the 41 property development proposed for Shotts Meadow. Cllr Nicholson informed that the PC is aware of this and that she has seen the architects new plans and has spoken to the planning officer. There is shortly to be a whole new complete consultation.

Member of the public asked if the PC has seen the latest leaflet about the Lion Link interconnector sites proposed for Walberswick and Southwold. Cllr Secret advised that the PC is aware of this new proposal.

**Report from Suffolk County Council Andrew Reid** has been circulated to all prior to the meeting. August has been a quiet month for the council. But he has been busy promoting the work of the Suffolk Trading Standards and is hosting the national intelligence scheme. At the end of August SCC unveiled the “No Cold Calling Scheme” regarding scam calls. The Gull Wing bridge in Lowestoft is steaming ahead, within budget and on time to open in 2024. An extension to the training facilities for the Suffolk fire & rescue services at Wattisham.

Cllr Nicholson informed that the road alongside the village green is closed for 10 days. The diversion route takes vehicles through the Ford. Anglian water tankers are unable to get through the Ford and have to reverse back up the road through the village. This is not ideal, can the Clerk contact Highways and report this. Copy in Cllr Reid.

Cllr Reid left the meeting at 7.15pm.

**East Suffolk Council Katie Graham** introduced herself for the first time, her report will be circulated to all. New funding is available from the Rural England Prosperity Fund as part of the governments leveling up campaign. Grants of between £15/30,000 are available towards halls, sports & the arts. Cllr Dann suggests that the club could put forward an application for funds to help complete refurbishments in the hall. Consultation to take place for the Lion Link, underground cabling, coming across the channel and in via Walberswick/Southwold. A new working group has been set up to look at cycle routes and 8 principle routes to link across the area are being considered, however none come through Benhall. Cllr Graham is keen to get Benhall included in the route and will keep the PC updated.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE and to approve.** Dr Hilary Graham Chairman – health reasons, Cllr Archie Bhatia – personal reasons. Cllr John Slade – prior engagement. Cllr Chris Durrant – prior engagement. The Parish Council approved the absence. ESC Cllrs Tom Daley & both at the ESC full council meeting.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.** None.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023 - To consider the approval.**

The minutes were approved correct, proposed Cllr Woods, seconded Cllr Dan, signed by the Acting Chairman.

## 4. ACTION POINTS

**a/p 2 Open Forum** Cllr Barclay to research with the club possibility of “Beware of Cyclists” sign. Quote received for £207 inc post, money to come out of CILS. All agreed to go ahead with this, proposed Cllr Nicholson seconded Cllr Woods.

*Chairman's initials.....*

**5. FINANCE a. Statement of Accounts & Finance Report.** The RFO reported the bank balances as at 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023, HSBC £2,745.16, Suffolk Building Society £20,782.52. Read out the receipts and payments since the last meeting.

The statement of accounts was signed by Cllr Woods.

**Spend against budget** very little to say which hasn't been covered in previous meetings.

**Running costs** slow to pick up against budget, but other invoices expected soon.

**CILS** holding is £6,506.08. The first deadline to spend some of this sum is 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025. £3K CILS is earmarked for the repairs to the footpath alongside the B1121.

**6 Monthly Internal Audit** Cllr Nicholson will carry this out.

**b. Annual Renewal of Parish Council Insurance Policy.** The RFO informed that the 5 year fixed term comes to an end this year. The current insurer CAS is unable to renew the policy. A review of the PC insurance has been carried out and a resident within the parish kindly gave considerable help to the PC when completing the Insurance questionnaire, explaining the terminology and exactly what was required and to what level. The PC very much appreciated this help. A quotation has now come back from a broker, Ansvar being the preferred insurer, £439.68. All agreed to go ahead with renewal.

**c. Clerks pay and expenses.** Clerks pay £730.25, expenses £5.40.

**d. RFO Pay** – £134.95.

The above invoices were approved for payment, proposed Cllr Barclay seconded Cllr Nicholson.

## **6. PLANNING a. Applications and Report**

Cllr Nicholson reported the following Benhall – 2 Applications

Listed Building Consent - Proposed Replacement Windows Open for comment 55 Stockhouse Cottages Main Road A12 Benhall Saxmundham Suffolk IP17 1JY Ref. No: DC/23/3519/LBC - PC response no objection.

Prior Notification - Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion - Change of use of agricultural building into a dwelling Cottage Farm Silverlace Green Benhall Suffolk IP17 1JH Ref. No: DC/23/3029/P3Q - PC response no objection

Sternfield – No Applications and no decisions on outstanding Application for Watering Farm holiday lodges.

No further info on Shotts Meadow or South Sax Garden Neighbourhood.

## **7. REPORTS FROM PARISH REPRESENTATIVES**

The Wadd - Cllr Brace reported that the grass has been cut. He will arrange a tour of The Wadd

Village Green – Cllr Durrant informed that the green is soon to be cut.

Trees – Cllr Brace nothing to report.

Cemetery – Cllr Barclay in Cllr Bhatia's absence reported that there has been one burial.

Newsletter – No report.

SALC – No representative.

Website – Cllr Durrant had nothing to report.

Emergency Planning – Cllr Dann is going through the list, there is not a representative from Shotts Meadow so will try to get this covered. Would like to review more of the equipment which can be loaned out. Equipment needs to be stored in a central location for easy access.

Benhall Club – Cllr Slade did not send a report.

Police Liaison – Cllr Durrant had nothing to report.

## **8. CORRESPONDENCE.** None.

## **9. ENERGY PROJECTS.**

Cllr Secret advised that despite the proposed Lion Link the other energy options are still on the table.

There is a statutory consultation to take place regarding the Sea Link. PC should look at this in November and decide how to respond.

A survey of the land at Wood Farm, Saxmundham is currently being carried out. The PC should be aware that the access route may come through Benhall.

He also advised that it is very important that the PC keeps an eye on all of the proposed energy projects in the area and to be aware what is happening.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**a. Cycle Routes** Cllr Nicholson will send ESC Cllr Katie Graham a detailed explanation

*Chairman's initials.....*

**b. The Lillies, Benhall Geen** Cllr Brace reported that the owners of The Lilies had cleared a piece of ground at the front of the property adjacent to the road. This piece of land is in fact owned by the Estate and must be left as a wildlife corridor. He has been to advise the owners of this and they have agreed to reinstate the land. He has also drafted a letter to the owners to confirm this, Clerk to send.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.  
The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

**List of Action Points:**

- a/p 1.7** Cllr Brace to arrange a tour of The Wadd
- a/p 2.10a** Cllr Nicholson to send ESC Katie Graham a detailed explanation regarding Cycle Routes
- a/p 3.10b** Clerk to send a letter to the owners of The Lilies to reinstate the wildlife corridor

Signed ..... (Chairman)                      Date .....