

GREAT BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Gt Blakenham Parish Council meeting held Thursday 12th January 2023 in the Parish Room,
Stowmarket Road, Gt Blakenham at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Steve Plume (Chairman), Cllr Eoin McNamee (vice chair), Cllr Deborah Kemp, Cllr Will Durrant District Cllr. John Field, Suffolk County Cllr Chris Chambers, Karen Grimwood Parish Clerk, and 1 member of the public

The Chairman welcomed all and opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

MINUTES

1. To receive and approve any apologies for absence.

None

2. Declaration of any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

- a. Councillor's declaration of interest appropriate to any item on the agenda – None.
- b. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interest (if any)- None.
- c. To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate - None.
- d. Co-option of parish councillor(s) / to sign declaration of acceptance – None.

3. Public Forum

To receive the report from District Councillor John Field

- a. Service Charges - Mid Suffolk Council has reviewed the charges it makes for services it has no duty to provide but that residents need. Recycling bin collection and dog waste bin emptying are examples. Here it is allowed, and administration wants to recover its costs. The total of these fees and charges for 2023/24 will be £5.407m, an increase of £256k on last year. The proposed increases range up to 73.8% but the overall average is 5%. Bulky Items collection up 10% to £49.50 and new Garden Waste collection up by 15.9% to £69, (renewals increase by 8.3% to £59) will perhaps affect us most. It is concerning that these increases will impact on people struggling to make ends meet and give an additional twist to inflation. I will be pushing for this increase to be put back a year or to introduce some form of discount.
- b. Tenancy - Some years ago the Council was persuaded to introduce "flexible" fixed term tenancies. It has never actually used these, and they are largely ineffective in reducing housing waiting lists. Managing and administering these tenancies has proven to be costly and time consuming for landlords, and unsettling for tenants, particularly vulnerable tenants, and those suffering with mental illness Suffolk and Babergh have produced a new tenancy policy and consulted tenants on its features. It provides information on how their occupation of council homes will be managed. It is consistent with the current political agenda for social housing and prioritises long-term security. The councils will create a new, separate policy encouraging tenants to downsize. It may include financial incentives, advice, and practical support to assist and encourage tenants to free-up larger homes for families.
- c. New Bin Lorries - The councils carried out the biggest upgrade to their 35-strong waste fleet in almost 10 years, investing some £2 m. You will have seen the publicity about the competition to name them. Twenty-two environmentally friendly bin lorries replace most of the current fleet which has emptied around 40 million bins over their working lifetimes They will be fuelled by certified sustainable Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) produced from waste cooking oil, after Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils became the first rural UK council to switch to the fuel last year. The change cut our carbon emissions by around 90%, as well as reducing other pollutants. A good news story but it is a bit surprising that we have changed the fleet just ahead of the Government's changes to waste collection strategies. The need to collect glass and food waste separately may well demand a different vehicle configuration. Jumping early may delay the move to new rules or just block progress.

- d. Council to protect frontline services and increase funding in budget proposal - Adult care services and children's services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget proposals, published today. Despite an incredibly challenging economic climate, the council has been able to produce a balanced budget. This will protect the services that people rely on the most and continue to care for the most vulnerable, which accounts for 75% of the whole budget. Adult care services will have £34m more in their budget, and children's services will have a further £13m. This will help with the extra expense needed to meet the huge increase in demands for services, as well as higher costs due to inflation. Some of the service areas where people also said they wanted to see more money spent, will receive additional funding: £700,000 for SEND services to support new recruitment, which is on top of the £1.1m invested this year.
- £500,000 for Highways: to use environmentally friendly weed treatments and stop using glyphosate which can damage wildlife.
 - £110,000 for tree management: to support the 'right tree right place' policy, having an appropriate inspection regime and supporting the resulting tree management requirements.
 - £45,000 for Citizens Advice: to support work during cost-of-living challenges.

A budget gap for next year - the difference between what money is available and what needs to be spent - had already been identified, resulting in savings of £15.5m for next year. Under the proposals, the council's budget would increase by 9.6% (from £625.3m to £685.3). Additional funds would come from a total 3.99% increase in Council Tax, and an increase in funds from the Government for adult and children's social care. Regarding Council Tax, the proposed 3.99% increase would be made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care.

Question to Cllr Chambers re planning application from Suffolk County Council that relate to waste management centres in the parish – the Parish Council doesn't appear to be receiving them all. Cllr Chambers to investigate.

4. To approve the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 22nd November 2022 - Approved and signed.

5. To note the Clerk's update from previous Meetings - None as all items included in agenda items.

6. Planning

- a. To consider the following planning applications.

Consultation Request - DC/22/06288	Port One Business and Logistics Park, Bramford Road, Little Blakenham, Part In The Parish Of Great Blakenham	Full Planning Application. Erection of 3no warehouses and new vehicular access. Extension of estate roads, boundary landscaping, nature reserve and SUDS. 2. Outline Planning Application. (Access and Landscaping to be considered) for further estate roads and 6no warehouse plots.
		Cllrs and Member of public requesting a greater understanding on how high these buildings will be and how visually they will sit within the landscape. Concerned about how much woodland would be lost and the effect this has on wildlife. Enquired how many more buildings will be erected and how far towards Somersham they would go. Would mature trees be planted within the development? Cllr Field advised that Vincent Pearce (Mid Suffolk Planning Officer) had emailed an invitation for a meeting to discuss any issues concerning the application. Clerk advised that the email had not been received. Cllr field

- d. To note commemorative English Oak Tree has been planted – Noted.
- e. To note concrete base for tree bench has been completed – Noted.
- f. To note tree bench to be installed by end of January 2023 - Cllr Plume advised that the bench should be installed on 16th Jan 2023. Once completed plaques can be purchased and installed.
- g. To discuss adoption of roads within Gt Blakenham due to Highways reporting tool issues - Cllr Plume/clerk raised concerns over when reporting an issue to highways the number of roads that have not been adopted in Gt Blakenham

8. Governance

- a. To note response awaited from (www.realtas.co.uk) for purchasing software licence and training dates available - Clerk confirmed that purchase going ahead and then installation and training dates can be agreed.
- b. To note application for new bank account with Unity Trust Bank in progress - New account has been set up and transfer from Barclays account going ahead on 1st February 2023.
- c. To note Acronis software has been purchased and installed - Noted and a reminder for all council members to update data a minimum of once a month.
- d. To note order and receipt of new mobile phone for use by the Chairperson. Noted
- f. To note order and receipt of salt spreader for use on Chequers Rise - Confirmed that resident has agreed to use the equipment. PC to provide safety equipment and resident to sign a disclaimer. Cllr Field advised that resident may have to attend a safety course/form through SCC which would ensure liability coverage. Cllr Chambers would enquire if such a course/form was available.

9. Allotments.

- a. To note 100% occupancy. Noted
- b. To note that shades will be installing water butts by the end of January 2023 - Clerk to contact contractors to establish dates of installation so that they are all ready for use for the spring. Confirmed that it was a shame that it had not been completed earlier to take advantage of the recent heavy rainfall. Clerk to chase contractors.

10. Village Maintenance

- a. Clearing of the bank south side of Bramford Road has partly been cleared - All agreed bank looked better and now would be room to install the bus shelter.
- b. To note ongoing engagement with MSDC Bio-diversity officer - Noted.
- c. To note seasonal issues with gritting/bins within Gt Blakenham – Parts of village experienced problems during the cold spell with ice on the roads and being unable to drive cars up hills to their homes. GBPC guide parishioners to the use reporting tool to get grit bins filled and request a gritter to grit roads. So many of the roads are not adopted so the parishioners come back to GBPC to complain.
- d. To receive updates/reports from Cllr's concerning play equipment on Village Hall Playing Field – 106 Funding of £50,000 has been approved. The plan is to organise a meeting with VH and GBPC to discuss. Cllr McNamee mentioned that the VH vision is to complete the refurbishment in stages and repair some current issues. GBPC believed that the use of the money to repair the equipment and flooring not to be cost effective long term. GBPC had been advised the play area was too far away from the VH which was thought to be a safety issue for little children. A fence around the field especially near the car park was raised to stop potential accidents and football hitting parked cars. Cllr Field feels that repairs are needed so that the play equipment can be used in the meantime. He would like to see the equipment re used in the refurbishment, if possible, rather than starting from new. Cllr McNamee advised that the VH committee has some new members and that a reshuffle would be seen as positive going forward. All agreed that the village hall needs refurbishment and GBPC will be interested to see how the new sustainability report will come out compared to the one completed 3 years ago. Noted that the VH are not VAT exempt. Cllr Kemp raised a concern with cars being allowed on the field during organised events especially near the play area. It has been witnessed that this has been allowed to happen without a safety parking warden. Request for Cllr Kemp and McNamee to keep GBPC updated with reports, plans, funding and results of survey monkey going forward.

11. Churchyard and Cemetery.

- a. To consider any options for the rebuild and maintenance of the shelter in the Cemetery – Noted.

Amazon	D	Loctite Thread lock - Allotment Gates	£18.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Amazon	D	Line Marking Spray – Lawn Cemetery	£15.49	LGA 1972 s.111
Smart C	D	Replacement mobile phone– to be used by Parish Chairman	£179.99	LGA 1972 s.111

B = BACS C = CHEQUE D = DEBIT CARD

14. Reports

To receive reports from Councillors assigned to the following:

- a. Viridor Liaison Committee - Cllr. Plume – Noted to investigate why Valencia are no longer arranging liaison meetings.
- b. Suez Liaison Group - Cllr. Plume – Confirmed that they have now completed the management buyout of the company. The meeting was very positive and very few faults were identified.
- c. Great Blakenham Village Hall – Cllr McNamee – Due to ill health of members the meeting was cancelled.

15. Correspondence

- a. Email from parishioner concerning lighting at junction A14 Claydon. Referred to Highways reporting tool.

16. Future meetings

- a. To note invitation for items to be considered in the next meeting.
- b. To note the date of the next scheduled Meeting on Thursday 9th February 2023 and any items for the agenda.

Karen Grimwood
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 Date: 24th January 2023

Signed by Chairman 

Date 09/02/23