

BUXHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the full Council meeting held on Monday 6 November 2023 in Buxhall Village Hall

Councillors Present: David Steed (DS) (Chairman), Les Basham (LB) (Vice Chairman), Emily Byam (EB), Chris Hall (CH), Scott Martin (SM) and Graham Mitchell-Rowlands (GMR).

In Attendance : District Councillor Nicky Wilshere (NW), County Councillor Penny Otton (PO), Tina Newell (TN) (Clerk and six members of public).

061123/01 **Apologies for absence:** Councillor Michael Drury (MD) tendered apologies for absence prior to the meeting.

061123/02 All Councillors resolved to accept apologies from MD.

Declarations of Interest:

061123/03 SM declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6ai when Council will be considering a planning application (DC/23/03804) as he is a neighbouring farmer.

061123/04 **Dispensation considerations:** There were no requests for dispensations to consider.

061123/05 **Minutes of previous meeting:** All Councillors confirmed receipt of the draft minutes from the meeting of 4 September 2023 prior to the meeting and resolved to accept these as a true record of the decisions made. DS signed the minutes from reference 040923/01 to 040923/49).

Public Forum:

061123/06 All Councillors confirmed receipt of County Councillor PO's report prior to the meeting which is appended in full to these minutes; the recent flooding has been the worst experienced and the clean-up will now begin with MSDC and SCC cleaning the roads and debris – anyone effected by the flooding can claim £500 to help with costs; the new contractor for highways 'Milestone' are keen to talk with Parishes about ways they can improve the service; a recent speed survey on Lower Road, Onehouse confirmed suspicions of speeding traffic and PO is seeking to lower the speed limit from 60mph to 40mph; SCC are predicting an overspend

for the financial year 2023/24 of £22.3million; there is a consultation on Suffolk Libraries which is essential in helping keep all our libraries including mobile libraries open.

- 061123/07 PO confirmed her commitment to provide £1500 from her locality/highways budget towards an additional Speed Indicator Device.
- 061123/08 All Councillors noted District Councillor NW's report had been received prior to the meeting; the report offers thanks to everyone who has helped neighbours or strangers during the recent storm and confirms the District Council are applying for additional financial support for homes and businesses effected; it was suggested links to the specific items on the report would be beneficial rather than advising 'details are available on the website'. The full report is appended.
- 061123/09 Councillors questioned the District Councils late issuing of and the severity of issuing only an amber weather warning recently. NW confirmed there is to be a full review of the policies and procedures for when, who, if and where the sluice gates are opened during times of excessive rain as it was noted that the lack of co-ordination with the sluice gates added to recent flooding.
- 061123/10 NW confirmed a £1500 contribution towards a new Speed Indicator Device and will send TN the application form to complete.
- 061123/11 A member of the public asked for the Parish Councils permission to install a bottle bank at the village hall noting this would generate additional revenue for the village hall (previously a bottle bank was at The Crown public house however this has now been removed). All Councillors agreed this is a decision for the VHC and would offer their support.
- 061123/12 A resident spoke in frustration regarding the amount of traffic passing through the village especially early morning and mid-afternoon and the increase in HGV's now using the local roads; the same resident supported the proposal for white gates as a way to define the entrance to the Parish and the speed restriction.
- 061123/13 TN confirmed the Stowmarket Safer Neighbourhood Police Team have been in the area recently carrying out speed checks and they will continue to do so as often as they are able.

- 061123/14 LB asked for more volunteers to come forward to help with Community Speed Watch.
- 061123/15 TN read aloud an email received from a resident who was unable to attend the meeting with concerns regarding speeding traffic in the Parish highlighted from the recent Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) scheme. Some solutions were expressed including entrance gates, chicanes and speed cameras. It was suggested residents are guilty of speeding as well as those passing through the village and it was agreed to place an article in the Buxhall Broadcast explaining the dangers of speeding especially along residential roads.

Planning:

All Councillor's considered the following planning application relating to Buxhall received since the last meeting:

- 061123/16 **DC/23/03804** Householder application Erection of boathouse (amended design to that approved under DC/21/04913)

Buxhall Vale, Purple Hill, Buxhall IP14 3DH

After a brief discussion and noting the increase in size to the first floor from application DC/21/04913 is not large, all Councilors agreed to offer NO COMMENT on this application.

All Councilors noted the following decisions, relating to Buxhall, made by the District Council since the last Parish Council meeting:

- 061123/17 DC/22/02876 Buxhall Vale, Purple Hill, Buxhall
MSDC: GRANTED BPC: Supported.

- 061123/18 DC/23/03255 Park Farmhouse, Worlds End, Buxhall
MSDC: GRANTED BPC; Supported

Finance:

- 061123/19 **Bank Reconciliations:** The bank reconciliation for the period ended 31 October 2023 as supported by bank statements, was available to all Councillors prior to the meeting; CH, as a non-bank signatory, confirmed the bank reconciliations as presented agreed to the bank statements showing a balance of £64,129.10; £11,367.18 in the Community account £1,770.97 in the Business Premium account and £50,990.95 in the Unity Trust account.

061123/21 **Budget to Actual:** Councillors confirmed receipt of the Budget to Actual report prior to the meeting; the asset replacement, election, jubilee and village hall lines appear over budget however these budgets are held within the reserves account. A reclaim for the VAT has been made which when received will bring the payments vs budget back into line with an expenditure of £2,985 against a budget of £7,203.

061123/22 All Councillors noted a VAT refund for £8,366.43 was submitted to HMRC on 01 November 2023.

061123/23 **Reserves:** All Councillors received the reserves account prior to the meeting and agreed to vire the remaining balance of £555.22 within the jubilee account to the general reserve; all other reserves remain relevant for the current financial year and with no questions all Councillors agreed to accept the reserves account.

061123/24 **Asset Register:** Councilors confirmed receipt of the asset register prior to the meeting and noted the increase in the insurance value to that agreed at the last meeting due is due to the increased replacement cost of the MacBook from £670 to £800 (previous meeting assets agreed at £93,031.96 now increased to £93,161.96).

Councillors noted the following receipts since the last meeting:

	From	Details	Gross £
061123/25	MSDC	Remaining 50% of precept	3381.50
061123/26	Barclays	Interest	54.98
061123/27	Various	Allotment rents	420.00
061123/28	Unity Trust Bank	Interest	343.98

061123/29 All Councilors noted one allotment tenant had paid £20 cash, not included in the above figure, and TN had used this to buy stamps and to heat the village hall during meetings.

All Councilors noted the following gross payments made outside of the meeting agreeing they were from the grant of £25k originally agreed on 0404022/28:

061123/30	SMS Stainless	Village hall kitchen refurbishment	10,616.40
061123/31	SMS Stainless	Village hall kitchen refurbishment	10,616.40
061123/32	SMS Stainless	Village hall kitchen refurbishment	4,251.56
061123/33	SMS Stainless	Village hall kitchen refurbishment	3,840.00

All Councillors approved the following gross payments to be made by internet banking confirming a full schedule, supported by invoices had been received prior to the meeting:

	Payee	Details	Gross £
061123/34	Tina Newell	Salary and reimbursements	583.60
061123/35	Business Services at Community Action Suffolk	Insurance	464.35
061123/36	Buxhall Village Hall	Hall Hire	12.50
061123/37	Community Action Suffolk	Website	60.00

061123/38 Councillors received a financial request of £480 from the Village Hall Committee for additional roof repairs; TN confirmed there is approx £500 left from the original grant of £25k for the kitchen refurbishment. After a brief discussion GMR proposed to support this request seconded by LB; with all Councillors in agreement the Parish Council agreed to fund £480 for additional roof repairs to the village hall.

061123/39 CH proposed to support the emergency works required to the lighting at the playingfield car park seconded by LB. With all Councillors in agreement it was resolved to instruct Swinford Electrical (Ipswich) to replace 2 halogen floodlights with 50w LED floodlights at a cost of £150.00.

061123/40 TN confirmed the mandate change request form for Unity Bank was completed earlier this evening and will be sent to Unity tomorrow; LB will contact Barclays to confirm his identity to enable the Barclays mandate be updated.

061123/41 All Councillors noted the insurance has been renewed with Business Services at Community Action Suffolk at a cost of £464.35. The cover gives fidelity guarantee of £100k, municipal infrastructure £92,362 and all risks £800. Councillors agreed

this is sufficient and suitable cover and in line with the bank reconciliation and asset register.

061123/42 All Councillors considered applying for a further defibrillator noting the Department for Health and Social Care has launched an initiative with £1million of funding and resolved to apply for funding; if funding is granted the location would then be considered.

061123/43 Councillors noted the original quote of £500 from Gudgeons Prentice for the work to first register parish land has now increased to £1k with the reason cited as being increased workload. Councillors expressed disappointed at this and resolved for TN to source further quotes before the next meeting.

061123/44 All Councillors received a first draft budget for the 2024/25 financial year; CH requested a conservative estimate for interest be included within the receipts line, this was not supported by TN as interest rates are not guaranteed. All Councillors noted the tax base which is used to calculate the final figure will not been released from MSDC until mid-late November and therefore agreed to review this at the next where meeting when the budget and precept will be set.

To receive updates and reports from officers and take action as appropriate:

061123/45 **Footpaths:** All Councillors received the report prior to the meeting noting a footbridge has been lost due to the recent flooding.

Road Safety:

061123/46 After a lengthy discussion and noting the cost to purchase and install each white gate could be in excess of £2,250 it was agreed for GMR and TN to carry out a feasibility study before any decision can be made.

061123/47 It was resolved to purchase one Speed Indicator Device from Westcotec to include dual colour speed display, a portable solar panel system and data collection at a net cost of £4,474: £3,000 pledged from the District and County Councillors earlier in the meeting and £1,474 from Parish Council CIL funds.

061123/48 All Councillors considered if there are any road signs that need replacing or installed noting Suffolk County Council (SCC) has a new fund for road signage and resolved for LB and SM to carry out an audit of signage which they will send to TN for forwarding to SCC under the new scheme.

- 061123/49 **Tree Warden:** After consideration all Councilors agreed there was no Parish land suitable for planting of individual trees, tree schemes, community woods etc. A wildflower meadow had been trialled on the playing field previously but residents didn't support the idea and so it was agreed not to pursue this.
- Village Hall Committee VHC):**
- 061123/50 CH expressed thanks on behalf of the Parish Council to the VHC giving special thanks to the subcommittee of three who worked tirelessly in researching, consulting residents, planning, obtaining grants and quotations resulting in such an excellent kitchen refurbishment; the amount of work, effort and time they have given is to be acknowledged, appreciated and thanked.
- 061123/51 The repositioning of the fire assembly point will be considered at the next meeting as there is a financial implication that was not known at the time of the agenda.
- Playingfield:**
- 061123/52 As MD was no present there was no monthly visual inspection report.
- 061123/53 TN confirmed stickers to change the wording on the playing field notices to include what3words is with the printers.
- 061123/54 Councilors noted the annual play inspection will not be carried out until early in 2024; the last inspection report was dated 19 January 2023.
- 061123/55 TN has sourced one company from whom a quote has been received however as the cost to travel to the site alone would be £226.10 all Councillors resolved for TN to continue to source a more local company.
- 061123/56 SM confirmed he will attempt repairs to the eastern boundary fence on the playing field before the next meeting.
- 061123/57 After a lengthy discussion it was agreed for DS and MD to meet with the Civil Engineer from Mid Suffolk District Council on site to understand the concerns with the condition of the ditch to the rear of some properties along Brettenham Road.
- 061123/58 **Flooding:** Whilst Councilors noted there was no direct impact on properties in the Parish following the recent extreme weather due to Buxhall sitting in the main on a hill however many residents were unable to leave the village due to flooding

lower down. It was agreed knowing the policy and procedures with the sluice gates would be beneficial.

- 061123/59 **Allotments:** All Councilors noted the allotment invoices were issued and all tenants have made payment in full.
- 061123/60 **Bus Service:** All Councilors noted Suffolk County Council have been granted £1.8million to spend on enhancements to the current passenger transport network for 2024/25. After discussion Councilors agreed there is no demand for additional public transport in Buxhall and resolved no further action to be taken.
- 061123/61 All Councilors agreed for TN to list the Buxhall Crown with Historic England; CH agreed to be available to assist with the application if needed.
- 061123/62 **Any other matters for information, to be noted, or for inclusion on a future agenda:** replacement notice board, to consider additional land for village hall car park expansion, Rattlesden air field update, budget and precept and financial cost in moving the fire safety evacuation point.
- 061123/63 **To note the date for the next scheduled meeting:** All present noted the date of the next meeting as Monday 15 January 2024 unless a meeting before is considered required.
- 061123/64 **Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 all Councilors resolved to exclude members of the press and public noting the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:** employment review.
- 061123/65 All members of the press and public left the meeting room.
- 061123/66 All Councilors received a recommendation from the staffing committee to increase the Clerks salary to salary scale point 21 noting the Clerk has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the role.
- 061123/67 The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25pm.