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Bredgar Parish Council
Minutes of the
Public Meeting
Held on Wednesday 22nd May 2019 at 7pm
In Bredgar Village Hall

Present: Chair Cllr. Penny Twaites; Vice Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke;
Vice Chair Cllr. Jane Ingram; Cllr. Beverley McCourt; Cllr. Carole Charman and
Cllr. Michael Day

Clerk: Teresa Hudson

Members of the Public: Nine members of the public were present.

In Attendance: KCC Cllr. Andrew Bowles.

Chair, Cllr, Brian Clarke, opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr. Andrew Bowles and the members of the public to the meeting.

1. Apologies: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. David Priestley and SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney.

2. Declaration of any intention to record or film the PC meeting by any member of the Council or member of the public

No declaration of intent was made.

3. Emergency Plan

Cllr. B. McCourt explained to the meeting that the current Emergency Plan is due to be updated. The Parish Council writes the document, but it is a village document and ideally parishioners should be involved in updating and maintaining it. The idea is for parishioners to know where to access assistance should an emergency occur in the short time frame before the emergency services arrive. The PC would like to create a team tailored to the needs of Bredgar residents and to identify key roles and people.

An example of need is the unprecedented floods, which occurred in May 2018. It would have been very helpful if residents had knowledge of the whereabouts of pumps, etc. At such times, the emergency services can be overwhelmed and if people are able to set in place actions to remedy their situations as soon as possible it may prevent further damage. The PC is looking for volunteers to help prepare the plan, or have equipment, or could help at such times. If you can help or know anyone else who can help please let the Parish Council know.

An article is to be placed in the next Parish Magazine.

4. Local Plan

Cllr. P. Twaites informed the meeting that the recent political changes at Swale Borough Council would make a difference to the Local Plan. This evening in Swale House, a new leader will be elected and following that, a plan will develop. It is likely that there will be a different complexion in the Council.

Cllr. A. Bowles stated that the new coalition would like to scrap the current Local Plan but it would be expensive to create an entirely new plan. The department is understaffed and Swale BC is below the target figure on building new houses so it would be difficult to defend an appeal on development.

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5. Neighbourhood Watch

There are currently twelve residents who have been very much involved with maintaining Neighbourhood Watch throughout the village. The system works very well with members reporting to and receiving information from the police. However, the coordinator, Nigel Osmer, is stepping down and a new coordinator is being sought.

The position involves liaising with the members and with police when necessary by email. Nigel also arranged an annual get together in Bredgar Tearoom.

The PC feels it is a valuable scheme and should be retained if possible.

If anyone would like to take on the role of coordinator please contact the Parish Council.

6. Speedwatch

Resident, Paul Charman, brought the Speedwatch equipment to show the meeting how it works. He explained that the Speedwatch team carries out observations using the kit twice a month. However, the numbers of observations are limited as there are not enough volunteers. There are currently 5 volunteers. Training is provided online and with the equipment. The usual times for observations are when the rush hour traffic is most prevalent, 7.30 to 9am and 3.30 to 5pm. Last week 228 vehicles passed through the village during a morning session. Several locations are approved by the police but a favourite for noting speeding motorists is by the garage, however the police have been using this site to carry out their own Speedwatch over the last year. It is expected that the site will be handed back to the team this year.

The threshold for speeding in a 30mph area is 36mph. Speeds exceeding that are noted and details logged. Persistent offenders are dealt with by the police.

The record speed in Bredgar has been 51mph.

The PC feels that if residents complain about speeding in the village they would be willing to help do something about it.

A member of the public suggested taking the requests for volunteers to the various village meetings such as the History Society and WI.

The PC felt this was a very good idea.

7. VE Day Celebrations

On 8th May 2020, the country will be celebrating 75 years since VE Day. SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, would like to mark the important milestone in history when peace emerged after six years of war, and would like to reflect on the enormous sacrifice, courage and determination of people from all walks of life who saw us through this dark period.

Bredgar PC would like to mark the occasion in some way with the village becoming involved. The PC has asked Andy Whitnell if he would take the lead in organising the celebrations. He kindly agreed and suggested a street party, possibly in Gore Road.

Volunteers are needed to form a small committee to progress the ideas.

All celebrations are to be registered through www.veday75.org.

Several suggestions have been made by SSAFA, which may be incorporated into the celebrations.

Cllr. P. Twaites is to ask if the school have anything planned.

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Funding will be required, perhaps through sponsorship, donations or grants.

8. Questions

1. Following the tragic events of Monday evening when the defibrillator was used, work is required to bring the defibrillator up to date. The Ambulance Service has kindly offered to replace it with an up to date version. New training will be required as it is different from the previous one. It was also felt that the position of it needs to be more central in the village.

2. Drains. Following the floods of May 2018, KHS have carried out some improvements. Swanton Street has been assessed but a permanent solution has yet to be found. Primrose Lane drains have been checked with a video camera and blockages cleaned out. The water flows to a soakaway near the motorway bridge, which is to be cleaned.

When the weir on the pond is cleared of leaves, it no longer blocks the drains.

The drain outside the Farmshop still gets blocked and has yet to be solved.

There is still work to be done in Silver Street but KCC have agreed to create a ditch along the side of the recreation ground and excess water will be channeled into it.

Cllr. Bowles stated that the floods were an unusual occurrence, but KCC have doubled the number of surveyors from 2 to 4 who will look at drainage problems and endeavour to remedy problems quicker.

KCC have also increased the budget for Highways and Waste.

3. 20mph Scheme. The 20mph scheme has been dropped, as it does not meet KHS policies. The matter has been discussed with other local parishes and a decision made to encourage KCC to be more supportive of 20mph schemes. KALC is assisting in approaching the Kent Crime Commissioner to assist in enforcement.

The PC would still like to reduce the speed in the village and have therefore commissioned two speed surveys in Swanton Street and Bexon Lane with a view to reducing the speed in those locations to 30mph.

4. Fly tipping is likely to increase due to the increase in costs for using local council tips.

5. Does the PC have any plans for street lighting?

The Chair stated that there are no plans for street lighting in Bredgar. There is a cost consideration and, historically, residents feel it is important to maintain the impact on dark skies.

6. HGVs on Local Roads.

Residents are concerned about the number of large lorries attempting to negotiate the narrow lanes around Bredgar. Is there any way to deter them? There are businesses in the local area, which require large vehicles to access them, but it is causing problems when they get stuck or damage property when turning.

The Chair is to ask advice from KHS.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.