

Bredgar Parish Council
Minutes of the AGM
Held by Zoom due to Coronavirus Restrictions
On Wednesday 13th May 2020 at 7.15pm

Present on Screen: Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke;
Joint Vice Chair Cllr. Penny Twaites; Joint Vice Chair Cllr. Jane Ingram;
Cllr. Mike Day; Cllr. Beverley McCourt; Cllr. Stephen Parfitt and Cllr. David Priestley.

Clerk: Teresa Hudson

In Attendance: KCC Cllr. Andrew Bowles.

Members of the Public: Two members of the public attended the meeting.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received and approved from PCSO Ryan Atherton.

2. **Declaration of Members' Personal and Prejudicial Interest**

An interest was declared by the Clerk in respect of the discussion on the Honorarium increase and Cllr. Penny Twaites in respect of the donation to Bredgar School.

3. **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.

The duration of the meeting was 2 hours.

4. **Election of Officers**

Nominations were put forward by email prior to the meeting for the positions of Chair and Joint Vice Chair. Each nomination was supported unanimously.

Chair: Cllr. Brian Clarke- Proposed by Cllr. D. Priestley

Seconded by Cllr. J. Ingram

Co-Vice Chair: Cllr. Penny Twaites- Proposed by Cllr. J. Ingram

Seconded by Cllr. D. Priestley

Co-Vice Chair: Cllr. Jane Ingram- Proposed by Cllr. P. Twaites

Seconded by Cllr. B. McCourt

5. **Elect Councillors to Roles**

Cllr. Brian Clarke KALC, GDPR, IT

Cllr. Penny Twaites Representative to the Governing Body/Local Monitoring Committee of Bredgar School, Response to Planning

Cllr. Jane Ingram Post Office Support, Village Hall Representative

Cllr. David Priestley Pond Warden, Pest Control, Heritage

Cllr. Beverley McCourt KCC Highways, Thatcher & Eleemosary Charities Representative

Cllr. Stephen Parfitt Parks & Gardens

Cllr. Michael Day Footpaths, Parks & Gardens, Pest Control

Teresa Hudson Website

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With regards to any negotiations between the Parish Council and Bredgar Farmshop concerning the updating of the Post Office lease, Cllr. Clarke will take the lead due to Cllr. Ingram having an interest in the Farmshop.

All roles were agreed prior to the meeting.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous PC meeting held on 12th February 2020 were read and formally approved by the Parish Council. They are now available on the Parish website. Proposed by Cllr. D. Priestley seconded by Cllr. P. Twaites.

Matters Arising

The policies/procedures discussed at the previous meeting have been updated and are published on the Parish website. Cllr. Parfitt has a new dedicated email address for PC purposes in accordance with policy recommendations.

The proposed letter to landowners concerning keeping local footpaths clear has been delayed due to the coronavirus.

The gate to a property in Swanton Street reported as being a possible obstruction was inspected by KHS and was deemed not an obstruction.

The Recreation Ground fencing is complete; the new hedge has yet to be planted by the local landowner.

7. PCSO Report

PCSO Ryan is unable to attend the Zoom meeting but has forwarded by email reports from January through to April of local incidents being dealt with by the police.

There were three incidents of criminal damage reported and three incidents of burglary across the ward.

8. Ten Minutes Representation by the Public

A parishioner reported, again, the resident driving a vehicle with false number plates.

The police have yet to respond. Councillors were frustrated by the lack of action taken against criminal activity.

9. Authorisation of Accounts

Payments

30/01/20	Ask a Gardener	Village Maintenance	£66.00
01/02/20	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	£150.00
04/02/20	SBC	Election Costs	£95.53
04/02/20	KALC	Training	£72.00
17/02/20	KALC	Training	£60.00
24/02/20	SBC	Grass Cutting	£2876.28
29/02/20	T. Hudson	Honorarium	£362.50
29/02/20	T. Hudson	Training	£72.00
29/02/20	T. Hudson	Postage	£86.71
01/03/20	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	£150.00
03/03/20	Archer	Litter Picking Signs	£116.34
12/03/20	KALC	Training	£72.00
14/03/20	SSE	Pond Electricity	£65.11
18/04/20	KALC	Subscriptions	£321.94

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18/04/20	TP Jones & Co	Payroll Prep	£78.00
18/04/20	BHIB	Insurance	£551.08
18/04/20	CPRE	Subscriptions	£36.00

Receipts

01/01/20	NS&I	Interest	£56.97
03/02/20	Bredgar PCC	Grass Cutting	£317.58
24/03/20	Bredgar Cricket Club	Rent	£50.00

Councillors had no queries concerning the accounts.

10. Annual Accounts for the Year Ending 31/03/2020

The Annual Accounts were circulated prior to the meeting.

a. Finance Policy Review

Councillors did not propose any changes to the current Finance Policy. Proposed by Cllr. B. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. S. Parfitt.

b/c. Consideration and approval of the Statement of Internal Control by the PC

No changes were proposed. Proposed by Cllr. D. Priestley, seconded by Cllr. P. Twaites.

d/e. Consideration and approval of Audit Exemption Certificate

The criteria for submitting the Exemption Certificate has been met.

Proposed by Cllr. D. Priestley, seconded by Cllr. J. Ingram.

The certificate will be submitted to PKF Littlejohn by email.

f. Consideration and approval of Internal Auditor Report

All councillors approved the Internal Auditor report.

Proposed by Cllr. P. Twaites, seconded by Cllr. D. Priestley.

Councillors thanked the Internal Auditor, Mr. Scott.

g. Consideration of the Annual Governance Statement

The Chair read out the statements on the AGS. All councillors agreed with the statements.

h. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement resolution

All councillors approved the AGS. Proposed by Cllr. B. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. D. Priestley.

i. Consideration of the Annual Accounting Statements by the PC

The Clerk informed councillors that the Schedule of Assets is a fixed cost list as oppose to the insurance schedule where costs can depreciate.

j. Approval of the Annual Accounting Statements by resolution

All councillors approved the Annual Accounts. Proposed by Cllr. S. Parfitt, seconded by Cllr. J. Ingram.

k. Signing of the Accounting Statements by the Clerk/RFO and Chair.

The documents were signed by the Chair and Clerk the following day.

l. Review of Clerk's Honorarium

The Chair excluded the Clerk whilst discussions commenced on the Honorarium increase. Councillors approved an increase.

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11. Covid 19 – Coronavirus

The PC have been working closely with Friends of Bredgar Church (FoBC) who have been active in providing essential assistance to vulnerable and elderly parishioners by collecting shopping from Bredgar Farmshop and regularly phoning with support. Currently 104 people are being monitored, with villagers stepping up to deliver the shopping and assist where needed.

Tremendous community spirit has been shown in many ways to help parishioners through the national Coronavirus lock-down. The Bredgar Village Facebook Group has been widely used and followed by parishioners as a focus point. The Cooper family have helped coordinate the weekly ‘Thank You NHS’ applause in the village and promoted the government’s slogan “Stay home / Protect the NHS / Save lives” with their spoof live streamed News Desk. Bredgar Amateur Dramatics, ‘BAD’ has produced several amusing short films. The White family has regularly posted their Bear updates, where walkers can spot the teddies in their window, and the Clerk has posted amusing articles to lighten the mood.

Cllr. Ingram and the Clerk have been the face of the PC in the farmshop and any requests for help to the PC have been passed on to the FoBC and have been actioned accordingly. Social media link, Nextdoor, part of Facebook, publish updates on local issues in the neighbourhood.

The PC would like to thank everyone involved in helping parishioners to feel safe in their homes during these unprecedented times.

12. Reports from Councillors

Cllr. Bev McCourt

Nothing to report

Cllr. Penny Twaites

Bredgar school building has been closed during the pandemic. The children of key workers have been attending Minterne/The Oaks with staff working a rotation of one week in school and 3 weeks out of school. The school was open during the Easter holidays.

There was a virtual Governing Body meeting last week but Cllr. Twaites was unable to attend.

Planning applications have dried up recently, nothing to report at present.

Cllr. David Priestley

Cllr. Priestley has been self-isolating so therefore has not been able to check the rattraps at Bredgar pond.

A recent planning application concerning the demolition of a barn in Bredgar prompted a discussion on preserving old buildings for the future or at least keeping a record of the buildings for the parish history. Cllr. Priestley contacted Rupert Austin from Canterbury Archaeological Trust for advice. There is a service, which, for a fee, will record the structure of a building. The costs would be borne by the person demolishing the building and would be actioned from a recommendation from the parish council in the planning application.

Councillors unanimously agreed to adopt this approach going forward, the results would need to be collated and stored, possibly by the PC or Sittingbourne Heritage Museum for example.

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The duck house has received some essential maintenance to keep it afloat and is regularly visited by ducks, moorhens and a heron.

Cllr. Jane Ingram

The village hall is closed due to the coronavirus but has successfully applied for a £10,000 grant. The cricket club has also received the grant from the local authority. New owners have taken over the lease at Bredgar Farmshop/Tearoom. Football has dramatically increased due to the virus and the owners have subsequently made huge investments in stock, the tearoom is being renovated and a new security system has been installed. The PC are very grateful for everything Matt has done for the village during his tenure at the farmshop, and hope the farmshop continues to be well supported by the village and surrounding area going forward.

Cllr. Stephen Parfitt

The water leak at Swanton Street has been addressed.

The dog waste bags appear to deplete quickly, the parishioner responsible for replenishing the containers is monitoring the situation.

Bredgar phone box is not on the next wave of closures for Open Reach, although Borden phone box is. A proposal to use Bredgar phone box as a library was abandoned as the box is still in use, although requires repair at present. A flourishing book sale operates in Bredgar Post Office with books for sale at 30p each and all proceeds going to the Wisdom Hospice. Over the years, villagers have raised over £5000 for the Hospice. The Chair thanked Cllr. Parfitt for following up the issue.

The litter pick scheduled for April was cancelled due to the virus. It is hoped to be rescheduled for 27th September. The Chair is to contact Vicky Sedgwick at SBC to request loan of the litter pickers.

The Rural Police report showed several local robberies from stables; residents are asked to be vigilant.

Cllr. Michael Day

Although confined for some time due to the virus, some walking on local footpaths have taken place. They were found to be overgrown but accessible.

The water supply to Swanton Street was cut off with no warning. It was subsequently repaired but not without incident locally.

Openreach engineers have been evident in Swanton Street and they unofficially indicated that their work on the high-speed cable might be completed by the beginning of June.

Cllr. Brian Clarke

KCC Highways have looked again at the drainage issues in Swanton Street. There is a plan for a deeper borehole to provide some improvement this year. Highway restructuring, dependent on funding availability, will be needed to provide a final solution.

Silver Street drains have all been cleaned down to the junction of Gore Rd and Wrens Rd.

The two planters at the pond require maintenance, as they are overgrown.

The projects list was approved at the previous meeting but has not progressed due to the Coronavirus lock-down.

Cllr. Clarke attended a Local Plan Panel meeting on 7th May. The SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) list generated from a call for sites was approved. This is a key piece of local plan review evidence that identifies a future

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potential supply of development land and assesses if sites are 'suitable', 'available' and 'achievable'. There are 9 Bredgar sites in the SHLAA, 8 of which are assessed 'unsuitable'. Cllr. Clarke stressed that it was a list that could change and did not mean sites were accepted.

The two parishioners left the meeting at 9pm.

13. Donation for Bredgar School for use of Premises

The PC has, each year, donated £160 to Bredgar School for use of their premises for meetings. Councillors felt that even though this meeting is by Zoom, it would continue to make the donation and would review the decision if the school were not used for several meetings. Cllr. Twaites did not participate in the decision. The remaining councillors agreed to the donation. Proposed by Cllr. B. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. D. Priestley.

14. Village Matters

VE Day Celebrations

Although VE Day celebrations were cancelled across the country, parishioners were invited, through Facebook, to participate in a two-minute silence at 11am and a toast at 3pm.

Community Assets

Designating a local amenity as a Community Asset safeguards the first option to purchase should an owner decide to sell.

Councillors agreed to revisit Community Assets on a three monthly basis.

15. Cemetery Regulations

The Clerk made some minor alterations to the Cemetery Regulations that were circulated by email prior to the meeting. The councillors unanimously agreed the changes. The Regulations are available on the Parish website. Proposed by Cllr. B. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. D. Priestley.

16. Any Other Business

The Annual Parish meeting has been cancelled this year due to coronavirus. The Chair's Annual Report will be published on the Parish website.

The PC thanked Cllr. Bowles for the regular reports he sends through to the Clerk and Chair.

Cllr. Parfitt has suggested a local landscaper who could be asked for a quote to tidy up the cemetery.

Cllr. Bowles informed the meeting that local waste centres are to reopen by appointment only.

Cllr. Bowles has been reappointed as Chair of the Swale Joint Transport meeting.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 19th August at 7.30pm and is likely to be a Zoom meeting again.

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