

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Held at Bredgar Village Hall**  
**On Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke; Vice Chair Cllr. Penny Twaites;  
Cllr. Mike Day; Cllr. Nigel Osmer; Cllr. Stephen Parfitt, and Cllr. Hilary Stowell.  
**Clerk:** Teresa Hudson

**Members of the Public:** One member of the public was present.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. David Priestley, SBC Cllr. Richard Lehman, SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney and PC Marcus Topham.

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

There were no interests to declare.

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

There were no intentions to record or film the meeting by anyone present.

**4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the previous PC meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 were read and formally approved by the Parish Council. They are now available on the Parish website. Proposed by Cllr. B. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. N. Osmer, all councillors agreed.

The Minutes were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

**There were no matters arising.**

**5. Police/ NHW Report**

Unfortunately, PC Marcus Topham sent his apologies due to operational commitments shortly before the meeting commenced.

Cllr. Parfitt reported that although no report was received from police records, there were incidents since the last meeting:

- Two shed break-ins in Primrose Lane – items stolen
- Theft of goods from the Farmshop prior to opening
- Cricket Club poles and ropes stolen
- In Hearts Delight a jaguar was stolen without the keys and traced by police before being lost.

Cllr Parfitt has 68 properties signed up for the NHW newsletter, by email. The PC encourages all incidents to be reported to assist the police in maintaining intelligence in the area.

**6. Ten Minutes Representation by the Public**

The meeting was informed of a parishioner suffering drug related abuse from another parishioner. It was reported to the police and local housing authority at the time of the incident.

Cllr Parfitt offered to assist the parishioner in obtaining a satisfactory solution with the police as the online portal was difficult to navigate.

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**Water Leaks in Swanton Street**

Residents in Swanton Street have suffered greatly over recent days and weeks from continuous rupturing of water pipes under the carriageway. SEWater engineers close the road for repairs but more leaks immediately appear. The latest repair lasted two hours before another rupture in very close proximity. Frustration is exacerbated by the need to wait for authorisation to repair. The situation is made worse by the closure of the A249 southbound which means drivers are using the road as a major cut through to and from Maidstone.

Hawks Hill Lane has also been closed for three days for gully clearance at the same time. This is further reducing routes for frustrated drivers.

Bredgar PC wrote to SEWater last year about the water leaks and received a reply which can be found on the website. Cllr. Monique Bonney also wrote to SEWater and to KCC leader Roger Gough to raise concerns about the impact on Bredgar residents due to the roadworks.

**7. Authorisation of Accounts**

**PAYMENTS**

28/11/23	Maypole Bells	Fitting 2x Dog Waste Bins	500.000
01/12.23	EDF	Pond Electricity	17.00
01/12/23	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
04/12/23	Ask A Gardener	Village Maint	150.00
04/12/23	T. Hudson	Honorarium	433.00
27/12/23	Cllr. B. Clarke	Xmas Gifts	27.00
28/12/23	All About Trees Ltd	Jubilee Garden Tree Work	468.00
01/01/24	EDF	Pond Electricity	17.00
01/01/24	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
09/01/24	Hippo bag	Cemetery Spoil	201.48
09/01/24	Roadware Ltd	Salt/Grit Bin	116.34
09/01/24	Mutts Butts	Dog Waste Bags	104.78
29/01/24	KCC Comm Serv Ltd	Rec Grd Maint	344.14
01/02/24	EDF	Pond Electricity	17.00
01/02/24	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
01/02/24	T. Hudson	Key Cut	9.00
03/02/24	Ask A Gardener	Village Maint.	150.00
06/02/23	Cllr. B. Clarke	Whips for Rec Grd	11.92
07/02/24	2x BPC cheques	Unity Trust Account Opening	1000.00
10/02/24	M Belsom & Son Ltd	Rec Grd Fence Repair	96.00
12/02/24	Hippo Bag	Cemetery Spoil	201.48
01/03/24	BPC	Unity Trust Transfer	28000.00

**RECEIPTS**

13/11/23	HMRC	VAT Refund	1052.28
27/12/23	Bredgar Cricket Club	Rec Grd Rent	50.00
15/01/24	Bredgar Cricket Club	Grass Cutting	819.37
05/02/24	Bredgar PCC	Grass Cutting	399.23
06/02/24	W. Whitmey Funerals	Burial + Plot Purchase	2650.00
07/02/24	Bredgar Book	Sales	570.00

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07/02/24	BPC	Unity Trust Acc. Opening	1000.00
29/02/24	CO OP Funerals	Burial of Colin Finch	2500.00
01/03/24	BPC	Unity Trust Transfer	28000.00

The accounts were proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Osmer. All councillors approved the accounts as presented.

**8. Financial Matters**

**Financial Review**

The clerk circulated the financial review prior to the meeting. The Financial Regulations are used to set the annual precept. The Chair stated that the regulations will be updated at the next meeting. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Osmer. All councillors agreed.

**Budget and Project List for 2024/2025**

The Chair circulated the budget prior to the meeting. The budget was one of the required documents needed to open the new bank account with Unity Trust.

The Chair informed the meeting of the forecast income and expenditure for the coming year which will be monitored throughout. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Whitnell. All councillors agreed to adopt the budget.

**Project List**

The Chair proposed that the cleaning of the War Memorial be carried out this year. The 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D Day is on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWII is in 2025. A quote has been obtained from Burslem for cleaning and advice sought on improving the lettering, which would require planning permission. The Memorial was last cleaned in 2005 and 2014.

The pond lights will also be upgraded to LED.

**Post Office Lease Renewal**

The Post Office lease has been renewed with The Farmshop for a period of three years and two months, which coincides with the end of the head lease of the Farmshop.

Councillors discussed future plans in the event that the Post Office could no longer operate from the same premises. A steering group of three councillors, Cllrs. Clarke, Osmer and Parfitt, will plan for the future.

**Clerk's Honorarium Review**

Councillors agreed to increase the clerk's honorarium by 4%.

**Update on PC Banking Mandate**

The change of bank initiated by the clerk and Chair has progressed. The new account with Unity Trust has been set up, it incurs a monthly fee of

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£6 which will be offset by the increase in savings interest. The NS&I account is to be closed with all monies transferred to Unity Trust. Funds can be easily transferred between the current account and savings/fixed bond accounts within Unity Trust. The PC intends to have a contingency account of £5000 and a savings account earmarked for new play equipment once the new cricket pavilion has been built. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Osmer. All councillors agreed.

**9. Planning Matters**

**Conservation Area Update**

The recent Western Area meeting included a plan to bring forward the Bexon Lane conservation area review to this year.

**SBC Enforcement Consultation**

The member of the public stood outside for this discussion. The PC received a new Planning Enforcement policy consultation document detailing a new way for SBC to enforce planning decisions. The PC were concerned that the enforcement on Blind Mary's Lane had not been carried through and requested a status update from SBC. SBC agreed with BPC that enforcement had not been carried out and that under the existing process a complaint could be recorded by the Planning Authority with BPC as the complainant. There are only two years left before expiry on one of the notices of enforcement to clear the site. Councillors unanimously agreed to submit the complaint to have the Planning Authority and the Appeal Planning Inspector's decisions enforced.

**Highsted Park**

The Highsted Park development plan has been resubmitted by the developers. Councillors are of the same opinion as previously in that the plan should be challenged. Bredgar is to collaborate with Milstead, Rodmersham and Bapchild parish councils to engage professional advice from CERDA and Red Kite Network to work for the benefit of the villages. Costs will be circa £1500 for each village. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke seconded by Cllr. Whitnell, all councillors agreed to the expenditure. Leaflets will be circulated to all residents informing them of an informative display at Rodmersham village hall in due course.

**10. Highways Improvement Plan**

**HGV Signs**

Councillors were pleased to see several signs indicating unsuitable routes for HGVs have been erected by KHS as requested by the PC at a previous meeting with KHS.

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**Consider Requesting KHS salt Gore Rd and Wrens Rd**

Councillors agreed to hold off on the request to install grit bins on Wrens Rd and Gore Rd until further information is sought on whether they will be filled by KHS.

**11. Recreation Ground**

**Boundary Maintenance**

Landscape Services have cleared the overgrown brambles etc from behind the cricket pavilion and will put down weedkiller later in the year. The hedge along the boundary of the recreation ground with the road is coming to the end of its life. The Chair proposed a replacement hedge be put on the project list. All councillors agreed to the proposal.

**Consider Request for event in Rec Grd**

The Clerk received a written request to hold a dog event in the recreation ground in the summer. Councillors discussed the request but felt that parking would be an issue, particularly if the weather was wet. The PC declined the request and suggested Wormshill as an alternative. The applicant has been informed and is approaching Wormshill village hall.

**12. Village Matters**

**Pond Tidy Discussion/Plans**

Councillors agreed to the proposal of employing a professional gardener to maintain the area around the pond for a trial year. All councillors agreed.

**Decking Maintenance**

The decking at the pond requires maintenance as parts are showing their age. Councillors agreed to engage ON Building to carry out the repairs. The issue of the white line edging was discussed, no solution was reached as yet.

**Bredgar Book Update**

The PC commissioned 50 Bredgar books to be printed by SBC. Four were given as gifts and all but two have been sold. The Chair is to investigate the costs of commissioning another 25 from SBC for sale in the coming year. The clerk is to write to Stephen Palmer thanking him for his valued work in bringing the project to fruition.

**Legacy from the Late Marie Jean Evans**

The clerk received a letter from a solicitor informing the PC that the late Marie Jean Evans has left a legacy of £100 to the Parish Council. Councillors will consider how to commemorate Mrs. Evans in some way. Her husband, the Rev Evans was vicar at Bredgar and married Cllr. Osmer and his late wife in 1969.

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**13. Reports from Councillors**

**Cllr. Hilary Whitnell**

Local farmers are reinstating footpaths, but some stiles are a problem which has been reported to KCC. The footpath enforcement dept may need to be informed if the problems do not improve.

**Cllr. Nigel Osmer**

Nothing to report.

**Cllr. Penny Twaites**

Nothing to report.

**Cllr. Twaites left the meeting at 10pm.**

**Cllr. Stephen Parfitt**

Cllr. Parfitt has booked a KALC training seminar on transport, with a view to learning more about the state of the rural bus services.

The bushes at Gore Road / Silver St have been cut back by KCC.

A gate at Stiff St Farm has been difficult to open; dumped fencing behind it has been removed to make it easier.

Two instances of fly tipping in Ruins Barn Road have been reported this week.

**Cllr. Mike Day**

Cllr Day reiterated the ongoing problem of the water leaks in Swanton St and the inconvenience to residents.

**Cllr. Brian Clarke**

Cllr. Clarke has attended the SBC Liaison meeting, the KALC meeting and the SAC meeting.

The Jubilee plaque is in place beneath the commemorative tree in Bush Close.

The recreation ground whips have been planted.

The tree in Jubilee Garden has been trimmed of the dead branches.

**14. 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. Any Other Business**

Bredgar House has become an eyesore detrimental to the look of the village, particularly noticeable when parishioners have made an effort to improve the village. Councillors were concerned a business was operating from the residential building.

**16. Dates of the next meetings:**

**Parish Meeting (7pm) and AGM (7.30pm) Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 7.30pm**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm.**