

Bredgar Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting
Held at Bredgar Village Hall
On Wednesday 8th March 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke; Vice Chair Cllr. Penny Twaites;
Cllr. Mike Day; Cllr. Stephen Parfitt, Cllr. David Priestley and Cllr. Hilary Whitnell.
Clerk: Teresa Hudson

In Attendance: SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney attended the meeting at 8.50pm.

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

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from KCC Cllr. Rich Lehman, SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney and PCSO Katie Jordan.

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

Cllr. Brian Clarke declared an interest as an allotment holder in Bredgar.

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 23rd November 2022 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. P. Twaites, all councillors agreed.

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

Matters Arising

Bredgar Pond

The pond repairs have been completed; new concrete blocks have been installed behind the bus stop. Three other concrete blocks will require replacement in the future.

Christmas Tree

The 2022 Christmas tree was kindly donated by Bredgar and Wormshill Railway. Bredgar Parish Council thanked the Railway for the tree and helping to install it.

Swale Local Plan

The Swale Local Plan remains paused for up to 18 months from October 22 due to uncertainty about the policy on housing targets from central government.

5. **Resignation of Cllr. Jane Ingram**

Jane Ingram resigned from the Parish Council due to increased workload in her business. Councillors thanked Mrs. Ingram for her valued work for the village over the last seven years and continued support especially for Bredgar Post Office.

The vacant position has been advertised and the PC is pleased to receive an application from Mr. Nigel Osmer.

Local elections take place on 4th May 2023 and, with seven nominations, it is expected that there will not be an election in Bredgar and all seven nominees will stand as Parish Councillors.

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6. PCSO Report

PCSO Katie Jordan was unable to attend the meeting due to shift patterns. However, she sent an email stating nothing of note had been reported.

Cllr. Parfitt reported to the meeting that there had been a minor theft in The Street; the Warren had been broken into; Wrens Rd stables had suffered a break in with a significant theft of tack and horse equipment, and the post box had gone missing from Swanton Street.

Cllr. Whitnell asked if the PC could report incidents on behalf of residents. It was agreed that all incidents should be reported so that police can build a bigger picture of criminal activity in the area and direct resources accordingly.

7. Ten Minutes Representation by the Public

The members of the public had no issues to report.

8. Authorisation of Accounts

PAYMENTS

01/11/22	EDF	Pond Electricity	62.00
02/11/22	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
01/12/22	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
01/12/22	EDF	Pond Electricity	62.00
05/12/22	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
12/12/22	Cllr. B. Clarke	Supports for Oak Tree	12.72
12/12/22	T. Hudson	Honorarium	390.00
13/12/22	Cllr. B. Clarke	Xmas Gifts	30.75
01/01/23	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
01/01/23	EDF	Pond Electricity	62.00
05/01/23	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
05/01/23	SBC	Brown Bin Rec Grd	45.00
21/01/23	KCC	Village Maintenance	113.80
01/02/23	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
01/02/23	EDF	Pond Electricity	62.00
07/02/23	Kay Dee Fabrications	Pond Repair Work	1464.00
08/03/23	Matthew Low	Pond Repair Work	350.00

RECEIPTS

14/11/22	HMRC	VAT refund	1332.46
14/12/22	Parishioner	Purchase of Grave space	150.00
28/12/22	Bredgar Cricket Club	Rec Grd Rent	50.00
17/01/23	Bredgar PCC	Grass Cutting Donation	324.00
18/01/23	Bredgar Cricket Club	Grass Cutting Donation	758.67

Councillors noted the acceptable costs for the repairs to the pond.

The accounts were proposed by Cllr. Twaites, seconded by Cllr. Priestley.

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9. Financial Matters

Financial Review

The financial review was circulated by the clerk prior to the meeting. There were no queries.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Priestley.

Review of Banking Signatures

The PC is required to have two signatures on all cheques. It is good practice to have three councillors available to sign cheques in case of the unavailability of one signatory. Due to the resignation of Cllr. Ingram, Cllr. Whitnell has agreed to replace her as third signatory. The clerk will initiate the necessary paperwork.

Election Costs

Councillors are mindful of the expected election costs, which should be kept to a minimum if no election is necessary.

Clerk Honorarium

The clerk left the room while councillors discussed the Honorarium.

A decision to increase the Honorarium by the rate of inflation, 11.1%, was agreed unanimously.

10. Planning Matters

Highsted Park Response

On 30th January, Bredgar PC submitted responses to Swale BC regarding the amendments to the two Highsted Park planning applications. These responses are available on the planning portal as well as the parish website.

Consultants Cerda previously carried out extensive consultation work for Bredgar, Rodmersham, Milstead and Bapchild PCs to produce a joint response to the original Highsted Park applications. They have recommended and offered to submit a further joint response to the amended Highsted Park applications on behalf of all the parishes without further charges.

Cllr. Clarke proposed to accept the offer, Cllr. Twaites seconded the proposal and all councillors agreed.

Cllr. Clarke agreed to write to the other PCs confirm Bredgar want to accept the offer following sight of the submission.

Conservation Review Update

Peter Bell has been engaged to carry out the Conservation Review. A walkabout will take place on 30th March, beginning at 10.30am with councillors, SBC planners and Mr. Bell viewing the area from the Church tower, before travelling around the immediate area to take in all the aspects of the village.

Victor House

The PC noted that the property now known as Victor House has a complicated history. The proposed new building is two storeys rather than one and will be higher than the previous property although the second storey is within the roof space. Councillors were concerned that if the building were too high, it would have an impact on the AONB.

All councillors agreed and Cllr. Twaites will submit a response.

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Councillors acknowledged the importance of responding to planning applications in a timely manner. The clerk agreed to specify the response date when sending the emails.

11. Highways Improvement Plan

Cllrs. Clarke, Parfitt and Whitnell have been working on the Highways Improvement Plan. It includes signage to divert HGVs to a preferred route through the village; avoidance of damage to the Church wall due to lack of turning space; request to KCC for a permit controlled area for large vehicles in the AONB; expression of interest for 20mph areas in future when better technology may enable it; and tidy up of unnecessary signage. It was noted that newspaper reports suggest there would be future changes to sat nav algorithms to take account of large vehicles on narrow lanes. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Whitnell. Cllr. Whitnell is to submit the plan to KCC and a copy will be sent to Hollingbourne PC.

Speedwatch Update

Councillors were pleased to hear that speedwatch is to restart in Bredgar. Paul Charman is looking for volunteers, as there are only three members at present.

12. Recreation Ground/Cricket Pavilion

Cllr. Clarke and Cllr Parfitt met with the Cricket Club and discussed the siting of the new pavilion. It is hoped that the play equipment will not need to be moved as funds to replace it have yet to be secured.

Boundary of Recreation Ground

In 2019, the landowner who farms in the field next to the recreation ground removed the trees along the boundary due to safety reasons. The farmer agreed to replace the trees at an appropriate planting time. He has done so but the trees (Douglas fir, Scots pine, Silver birch & European larch) are far apart and will grow very tall. Preferred planting would include a hawthorn hedgerow. The trees planted appear to not be thriving so the PC proposes to investigate whether additional appropriate saplings can be installed.

13. Village Matters

Village Bus Service

Unfortunately the village bus service no longer exists. KCC have reduced many local services saving costs of £350K. Cllr. Parfitt was on the last bus to run, and after 30 years of service there will be no more. Approximately 25 residents were reliant on the bus with about 60 customers overall travelling the route. Cllr. Parfitt has devised a new route and has submitted this to KCC in the hope of resurrecting a service of some sort.

KCC Kent Karrier is a substitute service, which requires an application to join, then booking a trip for £3.50 each time. Details are available online.

King Charles III Coronation Plans

Cllrs. Clarke and Whitnell met with Bredgar School Head teacher Miss Heath to discuss plans for the forthcoming Coronation. Miss Heath has agreed to coordinate

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plans with the assistance of the PC, Church and others to create a day to remember for the village. The PC has arranged the road closure at the top of Bexon Lane. Updates will be published by the school in due course.

Councillors agreed that the refurbished flowerbed in Bush Close would become a tribute to King Charles, with a plaque to commemorate the Coronation.

Proposed New Bredgar Book

Parishioners have indicated they are keen to purchase copies if the WI History of Bredgar in book form, which covers the time up to 1972, if it is published. The PC would like to hear from anyone who has a story to tell of life in the village that may be included as new amendments to the book.

It was suggested that the book also be published digitally.

SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney arrived after chairing another meeting elsewhere.

14. Reports from Councillors

Cllr. Twaites

Nothing to report

Cllr. Whitnell

Nothing to report

Cllr. Priestley

A few tasks remain to be completed at the pond:

- Change the pump filter
- Prune the tree on the island
- Spread sand on the decking

Cllr. Parfitt

KCC visited the site of the overgrown bushes at Gore Rd/Silver St. KCC agreed to maintain the bushes, cutting back at an appropriate time to avoid nesting birds.

Many road signs have been collected from highways work in the area to be returned to Kent Highways, they await collection. Cllr. Parfitt used the telephone box in the village to report the signs to Kent Highways, which saved call costs and maintained use of the phone box so it is kept in the village.

Fly tipping remains a problem but is collected eventually by SBC.

Water leaks continue in Swanton Street and are reported and repaired only to burst again. A permanent solution appears to evade the water board.

Cllr. Day

A new footpaths officer has been appointed at SBC. It was noted that the footpath from Primrose Lane to Hearts Delight Rd is being used by horses. This could cause problems for dog walkers. The clerk is to report on the issue.

Cllr. Clarke

The Jubilee Oak tree, planted in the village last year, has been added to the Queen's Canopy website. The plaque will be installed this year.

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The Cemetery Policy is to be amended. Work was carried out, at great cost, to maintain the boundary of the cemetery where excess soil had been dumped. The policy was changed last year making the owners of graves responsible for disposing of the spoil. This has proved difficult to enforce.

Cllr. Clarke has suggested that a Hippo bag/disposal be purchased at circa £230 for each funeral, which will solve the disposal problem.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Twaites.

15. 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.

16. Any Other Business

War Memorial Cleaning

Cllr. Parfitt asked about the status of the proposal to clean the War Memorial. Cllr. Clarke confirmed that the War Memorial cleaning had been added to the project list awaiting prioritisation for funding. The project list is published on the PC website. It was agreed it will be reviewed at the next meeting.

17. Date of the next meeting

The next PC Parish/AGM meeting will be on Wednesday 17th May at 7.30pm in the village hall.