

Bredgar Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting
Held at Bredgar Village Hall
On Wednesday 23rd November 2022 at 7.30pm

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

In Attendance: KCC Cllr. Richard Lehman and SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney attended the meeting.

Members of the Public: One member of the public attended the meeting.

1. Apologies

SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney apologised for arriving late due to her car breaking down.

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 24th August 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. J. Ingram, all councillors agreed.

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

Matters Arising

The letter to Emma Rouse concerning the conservation consultation as discussed at the previous meeting has been sent.

5. PCSO Report

Further to the latest report from PCSO Holmes last month when no crimes were reported, the following incidents have occurred in Bredgar:

- Items stolen from a garage in Parsonage Lane
- Milk stolen from a doorstep in Primrose Lane
- Person seen loitering near Rookery Close

All cases have been reported.

6. Ten Minutes Representation by the Public

Joanna Heath, Acting Head Teacher at Bredgar School, attended to ask advice from Parish Councillors.

Firstly, Jo informed the meeting that following a period of four years where Bredgar and Borden Primary schools shared a head teacher, the Trust has reinstated two acting head teachers. Jo is keen to develop a good relationship with the Parish Council and the community.

Jo stated that the access at the front of the school was causing safety concerns for the children and staff. The enclosed area at the front of the school could easily be accessed by the public during school hours and could compromise the safety of the children. There have been at least two instances in the last six months where a parent has been on site without

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authorisation. Jo proposed that the gates to the school premises would be locked during school hours and a higher fence be erected to protect the children and staff. Fire regulations would be fully adhered to.

The PC was fully supportive of the proposals and stressed the safety of the children and staff was very important.

Jo also stated that the school was looking for new governors for Bredgar School.

Councillors advised putting a note in the next Parish magazine and on the Bredgar Facebook site.

The PC and the school also agreed to collaborate on preparations for the Coronation of King Charles III next May 2023.

Jo Heath left at 8pm.

7. Authorisation of Accounts

PAYMENTS

08/08/22	R. Clack	Pond Maintenance	26.01
01/09/22	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
01/09/22	EDF	Pond Electricity	1.00
01/09/22	Royal British Legion	Poppy Wreath	20.00
01/09/22	Cllr. B. Clarke	Internal Auditor Gift	14.00
01/09/22	R. Clack	Pond Filters	24.20
01/09/22	Ask a Gardener	Village Maint	150.00
01/09/22	EDF	Pond Electricity	1.00
01/09/22	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
04/10/22	Matthew Low	Replace Cemetery Railings	450.00
04/10/22	T. Hudson	Honorarium	390.00
04/10/22	Ask a Gardener	Village Maint	150.00
04/10/22	Cllr. B. Clarke	Jubilee Oak Tree	39.95
10/10/22	Cllr. B. Clarke	Jubilee Plaque	285.85
31/10/22	KCC	Grass Cutting	569.00
01/11/22	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	150.00
01/11/22	EDF	Pond Electricity	1.00

RECEIPTS

02/09/22	Funeral Director	Burial of June Salmon	816.00
26/09/22	Bredgar Cricket Club	Rec Grd Rent	50.00
30/09/22	SBC	Precept	5342.00

Cllr. Priestley asked why the payment for pond electricity was only £1.

The Clerk replied that it was previously £34.00 per month until the PC was informed that it had accrued a credit of £229.68. The direct debit was then set at £1. However, following the installation of a smart meter at the pond, the direct debit has now been raised to £62.00 per month. Possibly this will settle at a lower amount when the smart meter readings kick in.

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

SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney arrived at 8.10pm.

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8. Financial Matters

Financial Review

The Clerk circulated the Financial Review to councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr. Priestley asked if the PC would be under the threshold of £25000 at audit in April.

The Clerk replied that the PC should be, but that if the figures exceeded £25000 a different process was taken at audit.

Precept for 2023

Councillors discussed the proposed increase of the precept. It was agreed by a majority of four councillors to three that the precept be increased by the inflation rate of 11.1% as the invoices due next year are expected to be similarly increased. The PC also aspires to improve the play area in the recreation ground when the new cricket pavilion is built.

Budget for King Charles III coronation

Councillors will collaborate with Bredgar School to celebrate the Coronation in May.

Christmas Tree

Councillors agreed to purchase a Christmas tree. Cllr. Whitnell suggested seeking a sponsor, possibly from a local business to help pay for the tree. Councillors thought it a good idea.

9. Planning Matters

Local Plan Update

Cllr. Bonney informed the meeting that Swale BC agreed to suspend the LP due to aspects around the Environment Bill from central Government. SBC are continuing to collect data over the next 12 to 18 months.

Councillors enquired whether the 5-year plan was still valid? Cllr. Bonney replied that the plan was still valid and had merit; SBC had won some planning appeals recently as inspectors had agreed with Swale's philosophy.

Sittingbourne town centre now has its own planning document. Cllr. Bonney has met with Network Rail representatives who have agreed to add the replacement of the bridge in Crown Quay Lane in their 30-year plan.

Conservation Review Update

A third party consultant is to be appointed in January who will review the Conservation plan. A Bredgar PC sub committee will begin annotating the current plan to assist the consultant.

10. Highways Improvement Plan

Chair, Cllr. Clarke, provided a slide show of the information in the Highways Improvement Plan, HIP. A sub committee of Cllrs Clarke, Parfitt and Whitnell revised the plan following feedback from KHS. A final edit will take place prior to submission.

Concerns include:

- The corner at Bredgar Church where HGVs cannot turn

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- Prevention of HGVs entering Bredgar excepting local businesses
- Permit controlled zones for HGVs
- Signage

Cllr. Clarke asked councillors to study the proposals and comment prior to the final draft submission to KHS.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Ingram.

Cllr. Lehman left the meeting at 8.55pm.

11. Recreation Ground

Cricket Pavilion/Play Equipment Update

Councillors discussed the future position of the new cricket pavilion in relation to the play equipment, as there was some confusion with the cricket club committee after the last meeting. The preferred position is close to the current position but set back to give more space. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Ingram. All councillors agreed to the revised location.

Cllr. Parfitt had researched costs for the repairs to the play equipment and circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr. Ingram asked if many children used the equipment? There are local children who use it but some go to other parks where they can access better play equipment. Cllr. Whitnell suggested completely removing the current equipment and starting afresh with improved, possibly disability friendly, equipment, designed to capitalize on the rural aspect, and to possibly collaborate with local partners such as By The Bridge.

Councillors agreed to the idea as it could spread the cost whilst assisting local business.

Cllr. Twaites left at 9.30pm.

12. Village Matters

Village Bus Service Update

KCC Cllr. Rich Lehman informed the meeting that unfortunately KCC have voted to go ahead with the proposed cuts to bus services which means Bredgar will lose the service next February.

Passengers will have to rely on the Kent Karrier service, which has no concessions and a journey costs £3.50.

School children would have to apply for transport to KCC. Cllr. Lehman informed the meeting there is provision from KCC if parents work and cannot get their child to school. Information is going to be available in the parish magazine and online.

Cllr. Clarke attended the KALC AGM where he was the proposer for a review of services. KALC are to take it up in discussions with KCC.

Pond Repairs

Chair, Cllr. Clarke, showed councillors a slide show of the damaged concrete lining at the pond and the proposed repairs. A footpath closure has been applied for from KCC. The repairs are scheduled for 14th/15th December.

Cllr. Clarke proposed the repairs and Cllr. Priestley seconded them. All councillors agreed.

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13. Jubilee Oak Tree/Bush Close

The walled garden at Bush Close has been cleared by Blenwood and maintenance responsibility handed to the PC from SBC. Blenwood have offered to help/sponsor with supply of some plants, if possible with a small sign at the front of the bed.

The plaque has been purchased and will need fixings.

Posts and straps for the oak tree will be purchased.

A site meeting is to take place to decide if extra topsoil is needed and to decide on the positioning of the tree. The planting of the Jubilee oak tree will be publicised and recorded on the Queen's Canopy Site.

Councillors approved the expenditure, proposed by Cllr. Ingram, seconded by Cllr. Whitnell.

14. Reports from Councillors

Cllr. P. Twaites

Nothing to report.

Cllr. M. Day

The parking area outside the bungalows opposite the Church is to be entirely for disabled parking. This decision is out of the jurisdiction of the parish council. Cllr, Day attended a meeting concerning the footpaths around Swale. There is to be more publicity about the leisure walks available.

Cllr. H. Whitnell

Cllr. Whitnell attended sub committee meetings for the Highways Plan as reported.

Cllr. S. Parfitt

Pavement repairs have been carried out in Medlar Close.

Several water leaks have been reported and repaired.

The hedging at the corner of Silver Street needs cutting back properly, it has been reported and a site visit from KCC awaited.

Instances of fly tipping continue to occur around the village. Cllr. Bonney informed the meeting that a new waste contract for Swale has been negotiated. It will be more costly but hopefully much more efficient.

The litter pick in September was successful.

Cllr. J. Ingram

Nothing to report.

Cllr. B. Clarke

Cllr. Clarke has attended the following meetings since the last PC meeting:

Western Area, SBC Liaison, KALC Swale Area, KALC AGM and KCC Highways.

Reports were circulated to councillors.

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

Resignation

It is with regret that the Chair informed the meeting that Cllr. Jane Ingram will be resigning from the PC in January 2023. Cllr. Ingram has found that her business is so successful it is

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taking more of her time and she is finding it difficult to devote enough time to PC matters. Councillors were sad but understood her reasons and thanked Jane for all her hard work and contributions to the village.

May 2023 Elections

In accordance with the four-year rule, all Bredgar Councillors will be up for election in May.

Cllr. Clarke asked if any other councilor would like to become Chair next year.

Reports from SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney:

SBC Budget

The draft accounts for Swale Borough Council have been published. Swale will be using some of their reserves to meet the budgeting needs in the coming year.

Swale House

The renovations are almost complete. The asbestos has been removed from the window frames and the building is due to be back in use on 19th December. Some minor issues will be completed when workers are in situ. The Council is planning to rent out one floor to other businesses, since a flexible working environment is to continue with staff working from home for part of the week.

Health Services in Sittingbourne

Cllr. Bonney informed the meeting that she has been involved in discussions with the CCG concerning health services in Sittingbourne and the surrounding rural villages. CCG have put forward the erroneous figures of 40 000 residents in Sittingbourne and 13 GP surgeries. There are actually 70 000 residents and 8 GP surgeries.

Sittingbourne has no emergency care; residents needing urgent care are directed to Faversham or Sheppey.

The health service in Sittingbourne is not fit for purpose.

Cllr. Bonney has succeeded in persuading the CCG agreeing to appoint a consultant to look into this issue. A public engagement paper will be available in December until March 2023 and Cllr. Bonney encourages everyone to make their feelings known.

17. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next PC meeting will be on Wednesday 1st March 2023

The meeting ended at 10.30pm.