

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 5th December 2022 at from 7.30pm – 10:30pm in Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT

Stuart Smith, Sarah Dhesi, Paul Culley-Barber, William Crane, Yvonne Burton, Stella Shackle, Joseph Scholes and Sarah Osbaldeston (Clerk) and Eleanor Bannister (Deputy Clerk).

1. Welcome and Introduction to the meeting by Chair, Stuart Smith.
2. **TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
 - 2.1. Pat Wilson sent her apologies which were duly accepted by the council.
 - 2.2. Mary Moxon listened to the meeting online but did not take any part in voting.
3. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
 - 3.1. Items 7.4, 17, 24, 25 – Paul Culley-Barber declared pecuniary interests.
 - 3.2. Item 24, 25 – Yvonne Burton declared pecuniary interests.
4. **OPEN FORUM - FOR PARISHIONERS TO RAISE QUESTIONS ON AND/OR MAKE STATEMENTS ABOUT MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AND TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR**
 - 4.1. 1 parishioner was present, and a further parishioner joined online. No District or County Councillors were able to attend.
5. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2022**
 - 5.1. Following minor amendments Paul Culley-Barber proposed (seconded by Yvonne Burton) the council approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 7 November 2022. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal and the minutes were duly signed by the chair.
6. **TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA**
 - 6.1. To receive an update on the churchyard gate – The Parochial Church Council will keep the gates clear of leaves.
 - 6.2. The Street Noticeboard – This will be removed and kept with the handyman over the winter to renovate ready for the Spring. It will then be relocated on the side of the newsagents.
 - 6.3. Update on the upkeep of the Heronsgate Hopkins Homes site – BDC have acknowledged our query and advised this has already been raised as a planning enforcement issue and they are looking into it.
7. **PLANNING**
 - 7.1. **Application: 20221870**

Description: erection of a dwelling and ancillary works
Location: Kings Head, 39 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4LE
The Parish Council have serious reservations in relation to this application and that it objects to the application on the following grounds:

 - *Neighbourhood Plan (NP) HOU1 – Local Housing Needs: The Council fails to see how yet another 4 bedroom house addresses local housing need considering the number of 4+ bedroom housing being built in the village.*
 - *NP HOU5 Policy: The application should have 4 car parking spaces for a 4-bed house. (It only has 3.)*
 - *NP ENV3 – Drainage: There are no details or assurances given as to how this proposal will reduce the flooding concerns in this area of Blofield.*
 - *NP ENV2 – Soft Site Boundaries & Trees: There is no detail provided about the treatment of the mature trees that are currently in the garden area of the Kings Head pub.*

- *Other observations noted by the Council: The existing grit bin would need to be relocated. There are also real concerns about parking being further restricted in The Street which is already an issue and the practicalities and impact to the bus stop. Finally, there is a real concern that this would lead to the loss of the only village pub, with it being converted to a residential dwelling which would be more likely if, as planned in this application, it loses half of its garden and half of its car park.*

7.2. Application: 20221893

Description: Single storey extensions to three elevations, replace dilapidated roof with new structure and covering. New single garage to replace existing.

Location: Blafelda, 24 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4JS

The Parish council agreed to make no comments on this application. However, if new or additional information comes to light it would appreciate the opportunity to consider this further.

7.3. Application: 20221746

Description: 1) Two storey front extension. 2) Single storey side extension. 3) External insulation to existing brick walls. 4) Proposed new driveway and parking.

Location: 5 Saint Andrews Way, Blofield, NR13 4LA

The Parish council agreed to make no comments on this application. However, if new or additional information comes to light it would appreciate the opportunity to consider this further.

7.4. TO CONSIDER COMMENTS ON THE NCC PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE NEW SCHOOL IF AVAILABLE

7.5. No planning application number has been received yet for the new school. [Clerk \(SO\) to chase.](#)

8. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA AND NOTE ANY PLANNING UPDATES

8.1. Application: 20221923

Description: Change of use of commercial spa building and associated grounds back to residential use.

Location: Willow Farm, Field Lane, Blofield, NR13 4RP

The Parish council agreed to make no comments on this application. However, if new or additional information comes to light it would appreciate the opportunity to consider this further.

8.2. Stuart Smith raised concerns over the state of the verges outside the Hatch Homes development and outside the Norfolk Homes development near McDonalds. [Clerk \(EB\) to raise concerns with planning enforcement.](#)

9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE DAWSONS WAY APPEAL

9.1. There is no update available.

10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARTY'S MARSH NORFOLK WILDLIFE TRUST MEETING AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

10.1. Yvonne Burton provided a detailed update following the meeting with Norfolk Wildlife Trust. It is hoped that Bure Valley Conservation Group can schedule two cuts for 2023 in late March/April and Mid-August. It was recommended the council should consider grazing circa 3 cattle on the site during the spring/summer months, this would remove the need for cutting although the initial fencing costs could be expensive. [Clerk \(EB\) to investigate.](#)

10.2. The Tree Warden has recommended the removal of a small sycamore (548) adjacent to the Platinum Jubilee Bench to lighten up the area and stop birds roosting above the bench. Tree 570 needs work carrying out as it is damaged. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council carry out these tree works. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. [Clerk \(EB\) to progress.](#)

10.3. Yvonne advised that the recent working party has lined the paths with wood chippings again. Yvonne Burton has been advised that beavers at Marty's Marsh would not be a possibility.

- 11. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE CULVERT PROJECT AND CONSIDER ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
- 11.1. Eleanor Bannister has appointed Norfolk Rivers Drainage Board to carry out the repair. Eleanor will obtain a vole survey in mid-February and sort out the Environmental Permit required.
- 12. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BRIDGE PROJECT AND CONSIDER NEXT ACTIONS**
- 12.1. Councillors have met with a contractor to discuss possibilities for the bridge. The council await initial quotations before progressing further.
- 13. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON COURTHOUSE CUPULA WORKS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
- 13.1. Eleanor Bannister provided an update on the Cupula Works. When the contractor returned to make the wood repairs it transpired that the wood rot extended much further than originally thought. The contractor, Sarah Dhesi, Sarah Osbaldeston have met the Broadland District Council Heritage Officer onsite to discuss the repairs further. The Officer has agreed to extensive repairs but a planning application needs to be submitted for listing building consent. This will need to include detailed drawings and specifications for the work so this can be fully considered by the officer. The work will also require some lead repair.
- 13.2. The council discussed taking the scaffolding down or leaving it in place until the end of May 2023; hopefully allowing time for the repairs to be carried out. It was felt that the scaffolding was required for visits to determine the requirements of the works through the planning process. Stuart Smith proposed the council pay £2,574 to keep the scaffolding in place until the end of May 2023. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. [Clerk \(EB\) to liaise with the contractor to progress the detailed drawings / specifications and planning application as quickly as possible.](#)
- 14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON COURTHOUSE GUTTER CLEANING AND REPAIRS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
- 14.1. Stuart Smith has cleaned the gutter and downpipe and it continues to flood; it is damaged and requires repair. Eleanor Bannister has obtained 3 quotations. The council agreed to approve up to £1,200+VAT for cleaning of all the guttering, repair of 2 gutters (by the side entrance, by the toilet window) and the replacement of a missing slate. [Clerk \(EB\) to establish the best availability of the contractors and appoint them to progress the work as soon as possible.](#)
- 15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WYNGATES AREA 3 PROJECT AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
- Eleanor Bannister provided a detailed written report on the Wyngates Area 3 project. The garden designer scheduled to visit the Wyngates Area 3 site is no longer able to help. [It was agreed to obtain details of the proposed tree planting scheme from BADCOG representatives so elevations/footpaths/ponds/small play can be considered in conjunction.](#) This can then be reviewed by the council prior to the planting session on the 21st January 2023. On the 21st January tree planting of 100 trees will take place and Marty's Marsh volunteers will help. A risk assessment and training will take place first. Sarah Dhesi advised she attended a NALC tree planting course recently. [Clerk \(EB\) to book a date to install the concrete bin base and contact BDC \(Matt\) to obtain a gate key and written permission to plant the trees as this land is still currently owned by BDC.](#)
- 16. TO DECIDE IF THE COUNCIL WISH TO CONTINUE INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUNTRY PARK PROJECT AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
- 16.1. The council reviewed a very detailed and thorough document prepared by Eleanor Bannister. This details information from various officers at Broadland District Council with a great deal of knowledge on complex planning applications / attenuation ponds / flooding risks. See Appendix A.
- 16.2. Over the last few months, the council has been investigating the risks of taking on the Country Park land. The council knowledge and depth of understanding has increased significantly, and these risks have become a concern.
- 16.3. The council has significant concerns regarding:
- Reparation Rights liabilities that would come with the land.
 - Norfolk Broad wide concerns on nutrient neutrality since Spring 2022 effecting drainage strategies on all planning across Broadland District Council.

- The risk of taking on and being responsible for attenuation ponds and associated drainage pipes
- The risk of contamination to the local water course.
- The large insurances costs for the site.
- The wet/marsh land that will no longer provide the full country park facilities the council had hoped for.
- The significant increase in precept required (in light of the risks above), in order to maintain the site, once initial maintenance funds have been spent. It will not be possible for volunteers to maintain such a large area.
- The time cost to the parish council both short and long term.

16.4. In addition, the council know that:

If neither Parish Council (Blofield or Brundall) wish to take on the responsibility for delivering the country park / on-going management, the provisions of Part 3 of the S106 would apply. This requires the developer, Hopkins Homes, to consult the public on the content of the proposed Country Park Scheme to the satisfaction of Broadland District Council, that the scheme be approved in writing by the District Council, and that reserved matters approval for the country park has been achieved. What is provided in the country park (ie footpaths etc) would therefore be determined/secured as part of this approval process taking into account the public consultation. Hopkins Homes would be obligated to lay out the country park in accordance with the approved scheme.

16.5. Following a very detailed and thorough discussion it was felt that the risks detailed in 16.3 are too great for the council to accept. The council thought it was sufficient to either -

16.6. a) leave Brundall Parish Council to develop and maintain the site or

16.7. b) take part in the public consultation from Hopkins Homes, Hopkins Homes will then deliver the Country Park and another public body will own and maintain the site.

This will make it possible for parishioners to enjoy the country park without the responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the site.

16.8. As a result of this, Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Paul Culley-Barber) the parish council no longer take part in the Country Park project. The council resolved to approve this proposal (for – 6, abstention – 1).

16.9. Clerk (EB) to inform Brundall Parish Council, Broadland District Council and Hopkins Homes of this decision.

17. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE NEW SCHOOL AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

17.1. Norfolk County Council Children's Services have advised they have submitted a planning application to NCC but this has not yet been accepted or allocated a planning number. Children's Services are still on target to open the new school in September 2024.

18. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT, NOTE COUNCIL FUNDS AND REVIEW INTERNAL MONTHLY CHECKS

18.1. Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Stuart Smith) the council approve all December payments of vouchers #132-142 totalling £3618.93 (Appendix A). The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (SO) to arrange payments. It was noted that voucher #131 is the second part of voucher #94, a split code payment so does not represent an additional further payment.

18.2. The council noted the internal audit checks dated 22nd November 2022 carried out by Sarah Dhesi (Appendix B).

18.3. The council noted the bank reconciliation at 4th November 2022 of £979,030.68 (Appendix C).

18.4. Stuart Smith reported to the council that the clerk national salary scales have been adjusted with effect from 1 April 2022. Back payments of salary are due of approximately £1100 in total (plus pension contributions). Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the payments be made in January 2023. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal.

19. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT RESERVES POSITION

19.1. The clerk (SO) provided a detailed report of the council reserves at 21st November 2022 (see appendix D).

20. TO AGREE THE BUDGET AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2023/24 AND SET THE PRECEPT FIGURE

- 20.1. The clerk (SO) provided a budget report prepared by the finance working party for consideration by the council.
- 20.2. The working party proposed the council approve the budget detailed in the attached document (Appendix E & F). The working party reviewed the reserves position in detail, (see reserves balance sheet, Appendix D). It continues to plan for various projects over the coming years. This includes allocating:
- £10,000 to the Courthouse reserve in light of the significant works required to the cupola
 - £10,000 to the churchyard for the churchyard wall repairs
 - £2,000 to Marty's Marsh for ongoing longer term maintenance.
- 20.3. The working party have reviewed the budget and ensured only small increases where necessary. Broadland District Council have advised an increase in the tax base from 1571 to 1607 properties in the parish for 2023/24. It is therefore hoped that the small proposed increase in precept will be absorbed by this increase in number of properties and result in no increase in cost per household. The finance working party have reviewed the budget and recommend setting the Parish Precept at £99,700 for 2023/24. This is an increase of £2,200. This will result in an estimated total cost of £62.04 per year or £5.17 per month per band D house in the Parish, almost identical to last year's costs.
- 20.4. The working party propose the allotment rent remains at £50 per year per full plot. There is approximately £3500 unspent in Parish upkeep budget, the working party proposed the council allocate any surplus funds from this code to Courthouse Reserves for the cupola in March 2023.
- 20.5. The council unanimously resolved to approve all budget detail and points in 20.1-20.4. **Clerk (SO) to request that the parish precept is set at £99,700 for 2023/24.**

The council unanimously resolved to extend the meeting beyond 10pm in order to complete the agenda and suspend standing order item 3w.

21. TO CONSIDER ANY S137 OR SMALL GRANT DONATIONS

- 21.1. See Agenda item 28.

22. TO CONSIDER SIGNING UP TO THE CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

- 22.1. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Joseph Scholes) the council sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. The council unanimously resolved to approve this. **Clerk (SO) to action.**

23. TO CONSIDER THE CREATION OF NO COLD CALLING ZONES AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 23.1. Will Crane provided further information about cold calling; these are established through NCC by request. The parish council support implementing no cold calling zones in any areas within the parish. Stuart Smith to put further detail in the next newsletter for parishioners information.

24. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE A47 DUALLING RED LINE BOUNDARY MARKED OUT AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

- 24.1. Highways England have moved the redline boundary across the allotment site indicating the land that will be taken. Eleanor Bannister (clerk) has arranged a meeting onsite on the 11th January 2022 to discuss the matter further with Highways England representatives. The heads of terms documents detailing what the council has agreed to, have not yet been signed. **Clerk (EB) to liaise with the solicitor regarding our legal position.**

25. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE QUARTERLY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION/COUNCIL MEETING AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 25.1. Eleanor Bannister and Sarah Dhesi carried out the recent allotment inspection and attended the meeting. There is 1 plot that is neglected and requires some attention, **Clerk (EB) to contact the lease holder.**
Clerk (EB) to issue a general reminder to plot holders regarding the removal of tarpaulins as ground cover as this also provides nesting grounds for rats.
Clerk (EB) to review if the bird flu guidance has changed and if this impacts the welfare of the chickens on the allotment.

Sarah Dhesi reported that the new community shed is being well used. The allotment association AGM will hopefully be on the 30th April 2023.

26. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE MHH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING AND HEATHLANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 26.1. Sarah Dhesi provided a verbal update from the recent Margaret Harker Hall Management Committee. They are continuing with outstanding building repairs identified in the survey. They are considering our play equipment offer and will come back to us in January 2023.
- 26.2. Yvonne Burton circulated the Heathlands Management Committee minutes from their November meeting.

27. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE DOCTORS SURGERY EXPANSION

- 27.1. The surgery has confirmed that they are still progressing with their plans for an extension. Legalities and funding are being worked upon at present.

28. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE 'WARM HUBS' INITIATIVE AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 28.1. Eleanor Bannister reported that Blofield Church and Blofield Library are both running warm hubs at different points throughout the week. Heathlands also run a Monday luncheon club.
- 28.2. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Joseph Scholes) the council spend up to £200 per month to the end of March (from the small grants fund) on additions for the warm hubs in the parish. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. [Clerk \(EB\) to investigate what is best needed and purchase.](#)

29. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE BUCKENHAM WOOD MEETING AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 29.1. Yvonne Burton reported on the plans of Strumpshaw Parish Council to purchase the Buckenham Woodland and form a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The council agreed to promote the project on their website.

30. TO AGREE THE MEETING DATES FOR 2023/24 at 7:30pm unless otherwise specified

Monday	16 th January 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	13 th February 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	13 th March 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Thursday	23 rd March 2023	Annual Meeting of the parish	Heathlands
Monday	24 th April 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	22 nd May 2023*	Annual and monthly	Blofield Courthouse
* The Annual Parish Council meeting starts at 7.00pm, followed by the Parish Council meeting at 7:30pm			
Monday	19 th June 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	31 st July 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	11 th September 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	9 th October 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	6 th November 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	4 th December 2023	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	15 th January 2024	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	12 th February 2024	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	11 th March 2024	monthly	Blofield Courthouse

31. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

- 31.1. A parishioner has raised concerns regarding the length of the grass in the village in December. Clerk (SO) provided detail of the improved cuts provided; 12-14 cuts per year March to late October.
- 31.2. Focal point correspondence. Granville Hornsby is retiring from producing Focal Point.
- 31.3. A council representative is invited to the Tree Wardens Network Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 25 January 2023 starting at 19:00 at Freethorpe Village Hall. No councillors plan to attend.
- 31.4. Pensions regulator re-enrolment form – The clerk (SO) has completed the re-declaration form on behalf of the parish council.

- 31.5. Road drainage concerns have been reported to NCC highways regarding the section of Plantation Road outside the school. The gullies in this area have been identified as priorities for repair / cleaning.
- 31.6. Brundall Mens Shed has been awarded Broadland District Council Community Group of the year.
- 31.7. Wicksted have confirmed that the Heathlands Play equipment fulfills all current safety standards.

32. OTHER REPORTS AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- 32.1. Nothing discussed.

33. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

- 33.1. Monday 16th January 2023 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:30pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....