

# Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 from 7.30pm – 10.45pm in Blofield Courthouse.

## **PRESENT**

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

1. Welcome and Introduction to the meeting by the Chair, Stuart Smith.
2. **TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
All councillors were present.
3. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**  
Items 7, 8, 10 and 14 - Paul Culley-Barber declared a pecuniary interest.  
Item 19 - William Crane declared a pecuniary interest.
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. No parishioners were present at the meeting.
5. **TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA**
  - 5.1. Focal Point – Matt has updated the Council, a couple of parishioners are considering the editor role of the newsletter, and this is being explored further, however an April edition is unlikely. The Focal Point CIC (Community Interest Company) will be wound up if a volunteer editor does not come forward.
  - 5.2. UKPN Substation access map across the community hub land – NCC have provided a draft access map for UKPN to access the substation as part of the UKPN lease. The Council has reviewed the draft map and this will need to be adjusted to be closer to the western boundary of the site to avoid the planned community hub building area and avoid the children's playground already in situ. Clerk (EB) to liaise with NCC. Will Crane agreed to take a drone image of the site to make the access possibilities clearer to see.
  - 5.3. Outdoor classroom octagon structure and play train – The school PTA would like to keep these items, if at all possible, transferring them to the new school site. Clerk (EB) to make some enquiries and see if there are any volunteer teams from Galliford Try / Pentaco who could help to dismantle / relocate the items. Alternatively, could NPS include this in their dismantle plans and the items are then moved to the new site for the PTA to reconstruct.
6. **PLANNING**
  - 6.1. Application: 2025/0423  
Proposal: Single storey front extension, two storey side extension and single storey rear extension  
Location: The Granary, Braydeston, Blofield, NR13 5AP  
The council agreed to make the following comments:  
The council cannot see any mention or detail explaining how the additional surface water runoff from the proposal will be dealt with.  
No detail around how foul waste will be handled – can this be investigated.  
Request to install swift boxes and minimise light pollution measures in accordance with the Blofield NP Dark Skies Policy (ENV5).  
The council are concerned on how construction traffic will reach the site. Would this be via Pound Lane and then towards Braydeston on the narrow roads or through Blofield toward Lingwood and then off accordingly. Please can a construction travel plan be investigated to see if there is any impact to Blofield residents.

- 7. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM NCC CHILDREN'S SERVICES SITE VISIT TO THE OLD SCHOOL SITE AND DISCUSS ACCESS TO THE NEW PLAYGROUND FOR AUGUST 2025**
  - 7.1. NCC Children's Services wish to push the stop date for the transfer of the land back from mid-May to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025 (plus 20 days for legal completion). The council are concerned that this will not make it possible for the play area to be enjoyed by children during the summer holidays. The council are unhappy with this proposal and unanimously resolved to request a change to ensure the play area is used over the summer. The council agreed to contact NCC Children's Services and work with them to ensure the site is ready and available to be opened and enjoyed by parishioners in the summer holidays.
  - 7.2. The site visit took place on Friday on 14<sup>th</sup> February with representatives from the parish council and NCC Children's Services and NPS. The boundary has been agreed on site. Solid fencing will be installed to divide the site (with a temporary gate for the school to access the swimming pool for the summer term) and hoop topped metal fencing across the front of the year 6 classroom (1.5 metres from the building). A gate will be installed at the entrance to the council site.
  - 7.3. It was noted that permission will need to be requested from BDC Planning for installation of a gate for the new entrance. Clerk (EB) to action.
  - 7.4. The council has met with EV charger experts at NCC and found out more detail. One single pole with two sockets could be installed with a slow charge and funding may be available. However, this is unlikely to be used often given the cost and fast charging available nearby. (80 being built on the Yarmouth Road just before the McDonald's roundabout, and Gridserve charging station for 36 vehicles in Postwick.) In addition, contracts with maintenance / management / installation firms could make the installation prohibitive to the parish council. Further detail on running costs to be obtained to ensure the parish council make an informed cost-based decision.
  - 7.5. The council agreed a site visit to the Forest School on the school site to see the sheds, pond and site. The council can then review and consider Health and Safety, works required and ensure the sheds are required. Clerk (EB) to arrange councillor visit.
- 8. TO NOTE THE REMOVAL OF THE HEDGING IN MARCH 2025 TO ALLOW THE NEW ACCESS POINT TO BE CREATED**
  - 8.1. The council has requested the Heras fencing on loan from Pentaco until the end of August and this has been agreed. The council would like to thank Pentaco for this loan and assistance. This will be installed (& covered with a mesh) on the 14<sup>th</sup> March by Pentaco after the hedge is cut back in the morning. Clerk (EB) / SO to arrange insurance / weekly checks of fencing.
  - 8.2. The roots of the hedge will be removed by the contractor employed to create the entrance.
- 9. TO NOTE AND APPROVE WORK ON BLOFIELD COURTHOUSE SOLICITORS ROOM AND EXTERNAL DAMP ISSUES**
  - 9.1. The council discussed the two quotations obtained for the work to add a piece of guttering, repoint damaged areas of the wall behind the down pipe (near the side entrance door by the car park). In addition, strip back and remove plaster and boarding in damp section of Solicitors Room and hallway and allow area to dry (for six months or could be longer) then refix and make good.
  - 9.2. Following a brief discussion, Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council resolve to appoint the lowest quotation of £6,450 +VAT for the work, subject to the additional cost of replacement panelling (if required). The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (EB) to action.
  - 9.3. The council agreed to speak to our contact at Galliford Try to understand if they have any drain experts.
- 10. TO APPROVE OBTAINING REVISED RUNNING COSTS OF A COMMUNITY HUB FROM FMG**
  - 10.1. The council has received a quotation of £1,500+VAT to revise the financial model in the feasibility study at today's date and for a different sized community hub. In addition, to provide a breakdown for the preschool year 6 classroom running costs and a reasonable rental for the preschool.
  - 10.2. The council discussed this quotation at length and Stuart Smith proposed the council request the work is done for £1,000 and the council advise that no consultation with the preschool is required and the council can provide a detailed summary of the preschool current offering and the year 6 classroom specification. Clerk (EB) to action.
- 11. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**
  - 11.1. Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

**12. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH**

12.1. Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7:30pm at Heathlands Community Centre.

**13. TO RESOLVE TO PASS A FORMAL RESOLUTION (UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES AND ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS ACT 1960) TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC FOR THE REMAINING AGENDA ITEMS**

13.1. No parishioners were present at the meeting.

**14. TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE BLOFIELD PRESCHOOL RELOCATING TO THE YEAR 6 CLASSROOM AND ASSOCIATED BUSINESS PLAN**

14.1. Parish Council representatives have met with the preschool staff and trustee committee to discuss further the possibility of the Blofield Preschool relocating to the year 6 classroom.

14.2. The preschool has visited the site and confirmed in writing their commitment to move forward with this. They have shared their constitution with the parish council.

14.3. Modifications would be required to the year 6 classroom to make this possible, the preschool has provided a list of requirements / desires for the council to consider, including the possibility of using the existing forest school amenity.

14.4. The council confirmed that the land transfer date has been moved to the end of July 2025. Therefore, it is unlikely that a preschool could open in the year six classroom (with a few alterations) before April 2026.

14.5. The parish council resolved to commit in principle to work with Blofield Preschool to facilitate their relocation to a 'modified' year 6 classroom on the 'old school site', with a target date of April 2026. The parish council resolved to update the preschool and MHH of this decision and note this on the parish council Facebook. Clerk (EB) to action.

14.6. The parish council resolved to investigate planning 'change of conditions' required to make this possible. Clerk (EB) to action.

14.7. The parish council resolved to obtain further concept designs from the architect (with council input) of a modified year 6 preschool layout and associated costings of the work. Meeting scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 with the architect.

14.8. A draft memorandum of understanding will be required between the parish council and the preschool for both groups to sign should this be progressed. Following this, running costs of the preschool site will need to be established, further detail agreed, and a contract signed.

**15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE MARGARET HARKER HALL & BLOFIELD MEMORIAL GROUND COMMITTEE / PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

15.1. The clerk (SO) shared notes from the MHH chair & trustee and parish council representatives meeting. The group is struggling for trustees and volunteers, without this community support running the facility is very difficult. The chair MHH has contacted all groups involved in the whole facility to request further support. A plea for support has been placed on Facebook too. The AGM is scheduled for May when it is hoped, more volunteers will come forward.

15.2. The council discussed, at length, the challenges the Margaret Harker Hall & Blofield Memorial Ground management committee face. The council unanimously resolved to spend £700 on legal advice regarding this site. Clerk (EB) to action.

*The council unanimously resolved to extend the meeting beyond 10pm in order to complete the agenda and suspended standing order item 3w. Stella Shackle left the meeting at 10pm.*

**16. TO REVIEW PARISH COUNCIL FUNDING FOR THE PROPOSED NEW COMMUNITY HUB**

16.1. The council discussed the funding of the community hub project, the council are keen to live within the funding means they have and hopefully attract some grant funding too. The council has £1,100,000 available in CIL and Section 106. Following detailed discussion, the council resolved to budget £1,000,000 towards the hub (keeping £100,000 in reserve). In addition, the council intends to go out for various grants, possibly up to £300,000. The council agreed to work on architectural concept plans at a cost of £1,100,000 to £1,300,000.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:45pm.

Signed.....

Dated .....