

**Bredgar Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting
Held at Bredgar School
On Thursday 29th October 2015 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Chair Cllr. Mrs. P. Twaites; Vice Chair Cllr. Mr. B. Clarke;
Cllr. Mr. D. Clack; Cllr. Mrs. S. Hickman; Cllr. Mr. G. Kite; Cllr. Mr. D. Priestley and
Cllr. Mr. M. Pullen.

Clerk: Mrs. T. Hudson

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

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Declaration of Members' personal and prejudicial Interests

Declarations were made by the Clerk in respect of the Post Office; Cllr. Pullen in respect of the Recreation Ground and Cllr. Twaites in respect of land opposite Bexon Court.

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

No declarations of intent to record or film were made.

4. Ten Minutes Representation by the Public

No representations from the public.

Cllr. S. Hickman arrived at 7.40pm.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous PC meeting held on 30th July 2015 were read and formally approved by the Parish Council. They are now available on the Parish website. Proposed by Cllr. D. Clack, seconded by Cllr. B. Clarke.

They were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

Matters Arising

Overgrown Hedgerows

Hedgerows along Bexon Lane have been cut back.

Swanton Street Surface

KCC Cllr. M. Baldock reported that £20K had been spent on this road carrying out ad hoc repairs but comprehensive surfacing cannot be carried out until the next financial year.

Bredgar School Admissions

The Chair reported that the school has no influence on admissions [in that they have to abide by KCC decisions and are not able to increase numbers within the younger cohorts]. The parents were advised to contact local MP Cllr. Gordon Henderson, who also looked into the matter but said nothing could be done currently to achieve admission for the child concerned.

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Landscaped areas costs review

The clerk reported that the landscaped areas cost £906 to maintain last year, it is expected that a similar amount will be spent this year. Councillors felt that it was money well spent as the areas enhanced the village.

Bollards

Quotes are pending for the installation of bollards outside the Post Office.

Holly Tree

Arrangements have been made to fell the overgrown holly tree at Travers Gardens and for the disposal of the tree.

School Signage

Bredgar School has the backing of the PC regarding signage in The Street warning motorists of children near the school and will contact KHS to discuss the matter.

Swanton Street

Despite talks with KCC Cllr Baldock, the issue of speeding motorists through Swanton Street has not yet been resolved. Further discussion is to continue between Swanton Street resident present and Cllr Baldock.

6. Authorisation of Accounts

The PC approved the accounts as set out in the meeting's agenda. Proposed by Cllr. B. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. David Priestley.

7. Finance Matters

Recreation Ground Purchase update

This will be reported in item 11.

PC Financial Review

A summary of the financial situation was e-mailed to councillors prior to the meeting. The summary shows that, following an appeal for funds to purchase the recreation ground; the PC expects to have a balance of approximately £52400 at the end of the financial year (minus the cost of purchase of the recreation ground). The cost of the recreation ground itself, and associated costs should be approximately £43000, leaving a working capital in the order of £9000.

Transparency Code

The clerk reported that the Transparency Code has been introduced for smaller authorities with an annual budget below £25K. Normally this would apply to Bredgar PC, however, with the increase in income from contributions to the recreation ground appeal, the budget this year is above the threshold. Therefore the Transparency Code does not apply until the budget returns to below £25K.

Under the Transparency Code, smaller authorities are obliged to publish:

- All items of expenditure above £100
- End of year accounts
- Annual Governance Statement

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- Internal Audit report
- List of Councillor responsibilities
- Details of public land and building assets
- Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings

Larger authorities do not have to publish this information but must have an external annual audit.

However, smaller authorities are currently in a three-year contract to have external audits, with two years still to run. Therefore the PC will automatically comply with larger authority regulations. The clerk stated that the relevant information will continue to be published on the Parish website this year even though it is not compulsory.

Grass cutting costs review

The clerk circulated information and a map of the areas of the village covered by the maintenance contract. A total of £2727.21 + VAT is currently paid for grounds maintenance, not including the landscaped areas covered by Dawn Kingsford. The PCC pays for grass cutting in the Churchyard with a subsidy of £350 paid by the Parish Council. The Cricket Club pays for the recreation ground cuts but not the play area cuts.

Councillors queried some areas marked, as they were not maintained by SBC. The clerk is to confirm with SBC which areas are covered.

PC Assets

The PC responsibilities/asset list, as stated in the agenda, will be published on the Parish Website.

8. Reports from Councillors

Cllr. B. Clarke

Cllr. Clarke attended the Swale Rural Forum and Swale West meetings. SBC Cllr. Baldock requested applications for funding for Parish projects. Cllr. Clarke stated that Bredgar would be applying for funding to replace the decking at the pond.

Cllr. Baldock acknowledged concern on planning feedback to parishes. Cllrs Clarke and Twaites attended planning enforcement training, a presentation is to be forwarded to all councillors explaining the processes of enforcement.

Cllr. M. Pullen

Nothing to report.

Cllr. D. Priestley

Nothing to report.

Cllr. D. Clack

Cllr. Clack has contacted PROW concerning the proposed footpath alongside Swanton Street. The area can be registered as a 'Permissive Path'. It must be closed for one day a year; the landowner is responsible

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for maintenance and has liability for accidents. The PC may take a lease on a peppercorn rent and therefore take responsibility for liability. The clerk is to investigate the costs of adding the proposed path to the PC insurance. The Chair is to investigate the legal costs involved. Cllr. Kite is to ask a local tradesman to quote for the removal of hedges at either end of the proposed footpath and leveling of the ground. The Chair will then follow up with a discussion with the tenant and landowner of the area concerned.

Cllr. G. Kite

Cllr. Kite apologised for not attending the recent clean up around the pond as he was recovering from an operation.

Following a request to KHS, hedges were cut back either side of the motorway bridge in Wrens Road, however some were missed so that will be followed up. The path at Travers Gardens continues to suffer from encroaching tree roots; Cllr. Clack is to contact PROW.

Cllr. S. Hickman

Spring bulbs have been planted in the tubs around the pond.

Cllr. P. Twaites

The new facilities at the school are complete and are popular with the children. Borden Primary School is now part of the collaboration along with Bredgar School and Minterne School with David Whitehead as Executive Headteacher.

9. Planning Matters

Blind Marys Lane

The applications for 1 Old Half Acre is still being determined, as there are issues in relation to residency.

The Chair is to look into specific new government guidelines for ANOB.

Dukes Shaw

This application is pending following an objection from the PC.

CPRE request for comments in relation to Swanstree Avenue development

The Chair asked councillors if there were any comments to be made on the proposal for 590 new houses on agricultural land. Cllrs had no specific comments.

KSP Development

Four councillors attended the exhibition at the Woodstock Club showing the proposed development of houses next to Kent Science Park.

Councillors noted the space shown seemed small for the number of properties proposed and that there would likely be traffic problems. The outline planning application is expected very shortly.

Land opposite Bexon Court planning application

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The Chair declared an interest in the planning application for land opposite Bexon Court. Cllrs Clarke and Priestley will respond to the application on behalf of the PC.

10. Highways

Swanton Street Gateway

KHS have progressed in the replacement of the damaged gateway at Swanton Street. When costs are known, the clerk will contact the driver who caused the damage.

11. Recreation Ground Purchase

The legal process of the purchase of the recreation ground is well underway but is not yet complete.

12. Recreation Ground Inspection Report

Cllr. Pullen reported that the items noted in the report have been dealt with. The litterbin next to the play equipment needs to be close enough to be used by the public. A new rubber buffer has been attached to the kissing gates and amendments made to allow better use. Following the completion of the purchase of the recreation ground, a new notice is to be made where warning signs can be added if required. The netting in the grass around the goal posts has been removed and the goal netting tidied up. The bolts on the whirly have been tightened and catgut placed on the top of the swings to deter pigeons.

13. Website

The photos on the PC website have been renewed and regular updates are added to the site. Maintenance of the website is ongoing. Posters are displayed on the two notice boards and in the Farmshop advising parishioners of the website.

14. Pond

Councillors and residents carried out maintenance around the pond and Cllr. Clack sprayed weedkiller where necessary. No rats have been reported recently.

It has been noted that some timbers on the decking require renewing. A full inspection is to be carried out by a local builder and a report will be available next year.

15. Broadband Update

The Chair and Cllr Clarke met with KCC in September to obtain a broadband status report. The result was a forecast of works starting during October and learning that more action by residents was unlikely to achieve faster progress. The planned works were started on the 26th October. New pipe

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work being installed at the end of Bexon Lane and fibre cable run. The service which will cover a large part of the village is expected to be fully deployed by the end of 2015.

16. Church Wall Repairs

The Chair received a letter from Nigel Osmer seeking financial support for the repair of the Church wall along Bexon Lane. Councillors felt that, although not directly the financial responsibility of the Parish Council, the Church is a focal point in the village and some help could be offered. The recent appeal for donations for the purchase of the recreation ground was thought to have affected donations to this cause. Following a vote, it was decided unanimously to make a donation to the fund. A majority voted to donate the sum of £750 to the fund.

17. The Firefighter Foundation Charity

The founder of The Firefighter Foundation, a national charity run by Kevin Quinn, has contacted the PC to explain that the foundation is aiming to promote community safety by encouraging schools to own a defibrillator. The Chair is to consult the school as to whether they have been approached to site one at the school. Councillors felt that the village hall might be a suitable place to locate a defibrillator. Some councillors were sceptical as to whether it would be of great benefit to the community as properties were spread out and an ambulance might get there quicker.

18. Any Other Business

Christmas Tree

The annual Christmas tree will be ordered from the Farmshop and be erected at the beginning of December by Cllr. Pullen.

Electrical Check

The electricity box at the pond will be visually checked annually by councillors, and receive a biannual check from the electrician.

19. Next Meeting

The next PC meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th January 2016 at 7.30pm.