

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Held by ZOOM**  
**On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke;  
Joint Vice Chair Cllr. Penny Twaites; Joint Vice Chair Cllr. Jane Ingram;  
Cllr. Mike Day; Cllr. Beverley McCourt; Cllr. Stephen Parfitt and  
Cllr. David Priestley.

**Clerk:** Teresa Hudson

**In Attendance:** SBC Cllr. Andrew Bowles (19.50 – 20.40)  
and SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney (19.30 – 20.35)

**Members of the Public:** No members of the public were present.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from KCC Cllr. Andrew Bowles and SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney as each could only attend part of the meeting due to several meetings scheduled for the same evening. The apologies were accepted by councillors.

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

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 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020 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. D. Priestley.

The Minutes will be signed by the Chair.

**Matters Arising**

There has been some progress with the water leaks by correspondence with SE Water. Flooding is ongoing at Swanton Street with residents continuing to lobby KCC. The white line on the decking has been repainted.

**5. PCSO Report**

A new PCSO has been appointed for the West Downs area. PCSO Lewis Rigden has made contact by email to ascertain the area to be covered in Bredgar; Cllr. Parfitt has forwarded some maps of the area concerned.

There has been a mini crime wave locally where several cars have been broken into and ransacked. Rodmersham has also suffered with attempted break-ins in outbuildings. Police have been informed.

**6. Ten Minutes Representation by the Public**

No members of the public were present.

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Held by ZOOM**  
**On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm**

**7. Authorisation of Accounts**

**Payments**

<b>18/07/20</b>	<b>M. Belsom &amp; Son</b>	<b>Fence repair</b>	<b>78.00</b>
<b>01/08/20</b>	<b>Bredgar Farmshop</b>	<b>PO Rent</b>	<b>150.00</b>
<b>03/08/20</b>	<b>ROSPA</b>	<b>REc Grd Inspection</b>	<b>86.40</b>
<b>08/08/20</b>	<b>Ask a Gardener</b>	<b>Village Maintenance</b>	<b>140.00</b>
<b>01/09/20</b>	<b>Bredgar Farmshop</b>	<b>PO Rent</b>	<b>150.00</b>
<b>04/09/20</b>	<b>Zoom</b>	<b>Registration – 1 month</b>	<b>14.39</b>
<b>04/09/20</b>	<b>Safety Supply Co.</b>	<b>Litter pick Equipment</b>	<b>79.74</b>
<b>04/09/20</b>	<b>Ask a Gardener</b>	<b>Village Maintenance</b>	<b>140.00</b>
<b>14/09/20</b>	<b>T. Hudson</b>	<b>Honorarium</b>	<b>375.00</b>
<b>14/09/20</b>	<b>GWR Fastenings</b>	<b>Plaque Fixings</b>	<b>17.09</b>
<b>14/09/20</b>	<b>Royal British Legion</b>	<b>Poppy Wreath</b>	<b>20.00</b>
<b>17/09/20</b>	<b>SSE</b>	<b>Pond Electricity</b>	<b>63.82</b>
<b>17/09/20</b>	<b>Gordon Dennis</b>	<b>Painting of Swings</b>	<b>540.00</b>
<b>19/09/20</b>	<b>Matthew Low</b>	<b>Cemetery Tree Work</b>	<b>1450.00</b>
<b>01/10/20</b>	<b>Bredgar Farmshop</b>	<b>PO Rent</b>	<b>150.00</b>
<b>03/10/20</b>	<b>Andrew Chawner</b>	<b>Decking Painting</b>	<b>60.00</b>
<b>22/10/20</b>	<b>Brian Clarke</b>	<b>Refund/ Cemetery Plot</b>	<b>50.00</b>
<b>29/10/20</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>Brown Bin Rec Grd</b>	<b>37.00</b>
<b>01/11/20</b>	<b>Bredgar Farmshop</b>	<b>PO Rent</b>	<b>150.00</b>
<b>01/11/20</b>	<b>KCC</b>	<b>Grass Cutting</b>	<b>616.09</b>
<b>05/11/20</b>	<b>Ask a Gardener</b>	<b>Village Maintenance</b>	<b>140.00</b>

**Receipts**

<b>17/08/20</b>	<b>Family of Ann Chawner</b>	<b>Burial of Ashes</b>	<b>221.00</b>
<b>19/08/20</b>	<b>M. Bottle</b>	<b>Burial Plot Purchase</b>	<b>150.00</b>
<b>02/09/20</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>Covid Grant</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>24/09/20</b>	<b>Bredgar Cricket Club</b>	<b>Rec Grd Rent</b>	<b>50.00</b>
<b>25/09/20</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>Precept</b>	<b>5136.50</b>
<b>13/10/20</b>	<b>KCC</b>	<b>Grass Cutting</b>	<b>179.54</b>
<b>15/10/20</b>	<b>B. Clarke</b>	<b>Burial Plot purchase</b>	<b>200.00</b>

There were no questions on the accounts. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, Seconded by Cllr. Priestley.

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Held by ZOOM**  
**On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm**

**8. Financial Matters**

**Financial Review**

The financial review was circulated by email prior to the meeting. There were no questions from Councillors. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Priestley.

**Precept Review**

Councillors stated the financial position is good following the grant of £10 000 from SBC and that we would not be looking to increase the Precept this year. Cllr. Bowles informed the meeting that it was too early to say whether KCC would be increasing council tax. Chair, Cllr. Clarke, proposed that the PC does not request an increase in the Precept from SBC. Councillors voted unanimously to agree with the proposal.

**9. Planning Matters**

SBC Cllr. Bonney apologised that she could not attend the whole meeting as she had another meeting to attend. However, she was able to update the meeting that there has been no briefing yet on the new planning changes from central Government.

Planning training has taken place for SBC and Parish councillors, which has been very useful. SBC are keen to push ahead with the Local Plan to try to contain the number of houses in the proposed plan for Swale. A large development is proposed for Duchy land at Faversham, with other smaller sites around Swale including possible sites in villages. The proposals are to go to Cabinet for approval. Everyone is welcome to attend the online meeting.

**COVID**

Swale is currently one of the worst areas for cases of Covid 19. SBC has been in talks with Public Health England. Cases are notably high in Sheppey and West Sittingbourne, and previously in Central Sittingbourne. SBC are currently setting up sites for vaccinations and work is ongoing to support that. Cllr. Bonney said it was heartbreaking that so many businesses were suffering, including the self-employed, and complex systems have been set up by SBC but then the Government back tracked on some parts of the scheme. Local businesses are advised to apply for assistance and officers will be on hand to discuss and advise. At present, they are swamped but are endeavouring to get through cases as quickly as possible and will take a reasonable view if documents are unavailable. There is a dedicated email to contact at Swale so business owners are advised to get in touch.

Cllr. Bonney is also lobbying for emergency payments for parents with children suffering from Covid who have to work and look after the children. It has been noticed that children with covid have been sent to school, as parents cannot afford to take time off work to look after them.

Cllr. Bowles stated we should expect to be in tier 3 from the end of lockdown. This will be reviewed every 14 days.

**10. Reports from Councillors**

**Cllr. Stephen Parfitt**

The recreation ground hedge has received its annual cut back.

The pond plants are in good shape.

Renovation has been taking place at the barn to the rear of Manns Place.

The barn near Wrens Cottage has also had work carried out on it.

The numerous abandoned road signs around the village were collected and put by the War Memorial and have now been collected by Kent Highways.

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Held by ZOOM**  
**On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm**

The telephone box by the Church is still in working order even though BT has a policy of disposal. Provided some calls are made each year the phone will remain. Cllr. Parfitt ensures this happens, and has cleaned the box including removing ivy from around it. It needs repainting and Cllr. Parfitt proposed that the PC take on the cost of the work. This will be followed up at the next meeting.

The swings in the recreation ground have been repainted and had anti bird spikes fitted. The annual Spring Clean took place on 27<sup>th</sup> September with approximately 20 people helping to clear litter around Bredgar. About 60 sacks were collected along with larger items such as a mattress, etc. A report and photos are available on the Parish website.

The Chair thanked Cllr. Parfitt for his efforts in bringing it all together.

**Cllr. Mike Day**

It has been noticeable that fly tipping continues to blight the area.

The condition of Blind Mary's Lane is worsening.

**Cllr. Jane Ingram**

The village hall reopened following the first lockdown then had to close again for the second lockdown.

Cllr. Ingram stated that she no longer has any ties with Bredgar Farmshop but continues to fully support the Post Office. There is currently no news on any proposed increase in the rent for the Post Office, which is leased from the Farmshop.

The Farmshop itself appears to have been quiet but the Post Office continues to attract custom from outside the village as well as residents and proves to be a lifeline for many. Councillors asked whether the Post Office could operate if the shop closed. Cllr. Ingram stated that it would be too difficult to operate alone but it is felt that there is no risk at present of the shop closing down.

**Cllr. Beverley McCourt**

There have been no meetings for the Thatcher Trust charity but emails have circulated and numbers are confirmed for the annual charitable Christmas gifts.

**Cllr. David Priestley**

Cllr. Priestley has completed a comprehensive survey of the types of trees in the hedgerows in Bredgar for a project to protect the landscape instigated by SBC Cllr. Mike Baldock. A formula is available to calculate the age of ancient hedgerows and it appears some of the oldest hedgerows are in Bexon Lane and could be 910 years old. The work will be submitted to Swale BC.

Work is planned to cut back the willow on Duck Island. Councillors proposed to carry out the work themselves. A new duck has appeared on the pond to the delight of residents.

**Cllr. Penny Twaites**

Bredgar School continues to operate with no closures of classes. However, The Oaks School, part of the Academy Trust, has closed.

**Cllr. Brian Clarke**

Cllr. Clarke thanked Dick Clack for repairing the plaque on the stone at Bredgar pond.

Phase one of the work in the cemetery was completed in August with trees and undergrowth cleared along the edges of the area. Phase two to remove mounds of earth around the edges and flatten the ground is now complete; several lorry loads were removed and trees that had blown down also taken away. The grass will be reseeded in the spring.

A quote to replace broken railings is expected soon; four sections are beyond repair and will be replaced.

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Held by ZOOM**  
**On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm**

In the recreation ground, a brown bin has been ordered from SBC to remove grass cuttings accumulated by the cricket club.

Swanton Street is to be connected to fibre broadband very soon. It will encompass the top end of Silver Street and Deans hill as well.

Normal services could not take place on Remembrance Sunday. However, a wreath was laid by councilors, with photos and the names of the remembered published on the website.

Cllr. Clarke thanked Julie Harris for ensuring the flowers around the Memorial and pond were looking attractive.

According to current legislation, the Parish Council website must be compliant with Accessibility Regulations. Cllr. Clarke has carried out work on the website to ensure it is as compliant as it can be. Hugo Fox is working on fixing some outstanding issues but there is no date yet for completion.

Councillors asked what would happen if it failed? Cllr. Clarke said that as long as we have made efforts and statements of compliance are available the PC should be within legislation. The PC will carry out an annual review.

Cllr. Clarke attended the KCC Highways Parish Seminar. A report was circulated by email to councillors following the meeting. Cllr. Clarke is to attend the Swale Western Area meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December and the KALC AGM on 27<sup>th</sup> November.

## **11. Village Matters**

### **Cemetery Waste Soil**

The soil recently removed from Bredgar cemetery has built up over the years from graves dug by gravediggers appointed by funeral parlours with no regulation from Bredgar PC. The clerk asked other parish clerks how they dealt with the spoil from their graves and received a number replies with differing ideas and solutions. The responses have been collated and circulated to councilors. There appears to be no definitive answer to the problem but there is a consensus that topsoil can be useful for filling in graves that have sunk whilst subsoil should be removed. Ideas discussed involved arranging for gravediggers to remove the spoil, having a designated area for spoil which would be removed periodically, and charging families the costs. The regulations will be reviewed and updated at the next meeting.

## **12. Fly Tipping/CCTV**

‘Fix my Street’ has proved to be an excellent and quicker method for reporting and clearing up fly tipping incidents.

Following collaboration with KCC, cameras will soon be available at certain sites in Bredgar where fly tipping occurs regularly in an attempt to catch offenders. It takes a lot of effort to clear repeated cases of fly tipping.

Cllr. Bowles informed the meeting that cases of offenders’ vans being crushed were increasing rapidly. The KCC surveillance team is helping, with prosecutions rising dramatically.

Cllr. Parfitt has been very active in moving the PC forward and it is good to have the support from KCC, who also provide funding for the cameras.

## **13. Policy Updates**

Cllr. McCourt reviewed the Safeguarding Policy and circulated the updated version prior to the meeting. The Chair proposed to accept the updated policy provided there are no

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Held by ZOOM**  
**On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm**

objections within the next week. A list of contacts where parishioners may obtain help will be placed on notice boards in the village and on the website.

**14. 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.

**15. Any Other Business**

The Pankhurst estate is expected to be auctioned within the next few months. Councillors were reminded that the estate includes a pasture close to the village but the Chair stated that no action could be taken until any potential planning matter was submitted.

Councillors asked whether current buildings being renovated were subject to inspection and by whom? The Chair informed the meeting that anyone could potentially report concerns to SBC but that the PC were not required to inspect works.

**Christmas Tree**

The Christmas tree will be ordered as soon as possible and erected on Duck island.

**16. Date of the Next Meeting**

**The next PC meeting will take place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021**