

Babraham Parish Council: Minutes of Meeting held 11th Jan 2024

Present:

Denise Dear: Chair

Stuart Laurie

Jane Goody

Anne Charteris: Clerk

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| | Part I: Non-Confidential Information |
| 2401/01 | To receive and approve apologies for absence. Richard Bandy, Charlotte Boast, Peter McDonald, Chris Chapman |
| 2401/02 | To receive members' declaration of interest for items on this agenda None declared |
| 2401/03 | To sign and approve minutes of meeting dated 9th Nov 2023 The Minutes were approved by all and signed off as correct. |
| 2401/04 | Exclusion of the public To determine which items, if any, from Part 1 of the Agenda should be taken with the public excluded |
| 2401/05 | Report from South Cambridgeshire District Councillor P McDonald The report can be found in full on the website, but in brief: <u>Green Business Programme</u> South Cambridgeshire District Council has launched the Green Business Programme, an 18-month project to help local businesses go green, working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities. Grants are available to help businesses reduce their carbon footprint, reduce energy costs and work towards Net Zero. Cost of living support The District Council is urging residents who may be in need of support through the cost of living crisis to check they are claiming all the benefits they may be entitled to. The council is also offering extensive advice on reducing energy bills and other available help, including food banks. Please do get in touch if you need any more information. https://www.scambs.gov.uk/south-cambridgeshire-residents-urged-to-utilise-cost-of-living-support/ |
| | <u>Cambridge 2040' update</u> On 19 December, the Rt Hon Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, unveiled updated plans for the Government's 'Cambridge 2040' vision, with proposals for "northwards" of 150,000 new homes around Cambridge. A joint statement from our local authorities said, "We note ... that the number of new homes ... has come down from 250,000 to 150,000, but this is still substantially more than the over 50,000 homes we have identified as needed ... – a number which will already be incredibly challenging to bring forward. We are ambitious for high quality sustainable, green growth but can't stress enough how vital it is that Government supports us to tackle the issues that will otherwise act as roadblocks to sustainable growth." The District Council continues to stress the need to address water supply, public transport, community infrastructure and affordable housing in negotiations with the Government. We are still awaiting clarity over how they might support the development of the 50,000 homes required to follow Government policy in the Local Plan, let alone any larger number. |

Four Day Week Trial Update

We are now a year into the council's four-day working week trial, which is due to run until the end of March 2024. The trial was designed to test whether a four-day working week could improve the council's value for money to taxpayers, primarily by reducing its reliance on temporary staff for roles that are better filled with dedicated permanent employees. So far, the results have been very promising. Since the trial began, over half of 23 key roles previously covered by temporary agency staff have been filled by permanent staff. Jobs that had previously attracted no interest when advertised are now attracting a strong pool of applicants, allowing the council to recruit the best candidates. This has saved the council hundreds of thousands of pounds and is helping to build a more talented and efficient workforce. The direct savings from filling all of these roles would be around £1million per year. The council's performance has not suffered during the trial, and the focus on continuous improvement has been maintained. The trial still has 3 months left to run. The overall effects of the policy will be assessed at the end of the trial period, and a decision on whether or not to continue will be made by Full Council.

2401/06

Report from Cambridgeshire County Councillors Brian Milnes and Maria King

The report can be found in full on the website, but in brief:

FULL COUNCIL

Five motions from councillors were debated at the Cambridgeshire County Council full council meeting on 12 December. Four were passed, one was not.

1. Noting the crisis in adult social care caused by chronic Government underfunding to councils, and asking officers to be ready to take advantage of any future change in Government policies. (Passed)
2. Asking the council's Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee to consider actions to ensure a more diverse council. (Passed)
3. Expressing concern at the lack of availability of NHS dentistry, and committing to take action to address the problem. (Passed)
4. Complaining of confusion about highways consultations, and wanting to consult all who could potentially be affected by changes to the highway. (Not passed)
5. Welcoming options for more flexible working, and committing to promote these within the council and among local employers. (Passed)

£368,000 to help council respond to major projects

A successful bid to Government means an additional £368,000 to help the council respond to proposals for major infrastructure in Cambridgeshire. The money will help support the council with the administration of Development Consent Orders (DCO) for schemes like East West Rail, the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet upgrade, and the Fenland Reservoir, as well as other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). £268,000 will bring in extra technical and specialist resource, and a further £100,000 will enable work across all these types of projects.

Consultation begins on budget proposals

Consultation is to begin on the council's proposals for its 2024/5 budget, in what is being called 'the toughest year to set a balanced council budget'. The Government's one-year Local Government Financial Settlement announced last month does not compensate for the levels of demand and inflation that the council is faced with, particularly in areas such as children's social care, home to school transport and provision for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. A fair funding review for local councils promised by the Government has never materialised. And all local authorities face significant financial uncertainties as a consequence, as I reported last month.

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| | <p>Covid</p> <p>Covid is far from over and testing for the type of illness remains important. We have asked the Director of Public Health to explore opportunities for procuring single tests which identify covid, flu, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) on a single test cassette. These are available in the EU countries but not yet in the UK.</p> <p>Preventing falls</p> <p>Falls and related injuries are a common and significant problem for older adults and a major public health issue. Falls are a major cause of disability and injuryrelated death in people aged 75 and over, and have a large impact on quality of life—and as our population ages, this will become even more of an issue.</p> <p>Around one in three people over 65 years old and half of those over 80 experience a fall at least once a year.</p> <p>Cambridgeshire County Council's Adults and Health Committee has endorsed a three-year Falls Prevention Strategy and detailed delivery plan, working with a multi-agency Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Falls Prevention Strategy Group.</p> <p>The strategy includes a number of interventions that have been shown to be effective at preventing some falls and fractures, and its intended outcome is a reduction in the rate of hip fracture admissions, and an improvement to the quality of life of older adults who experience a fall or fracture.</p> <p>Libraries offer a helping hand to stay connected this winter</p> <p>A successful pilot scheme offering free mobile SIM cards to those unable to afford internet access is now available in eleven of Cambridgeshire's libraries. Cambridgeshire Libraries have signed up to the National Databank, an initiative run by Good Things Foundation which provides free mobile SIM cards to anyone over the age of 18 who is on a low income. The SIM cards are donated to the National Databank by Virgin Media, O2, Vodafone and Three.</p> <p>Network Rail signs up to County Council biodiversity site</p> <p>Network Rail is the first investor in the council's pioneering biodiversity and habitat restoration scheme at Lower Valley Farm in Fulbourn. Arable land is being transformed into a one-of-a-kind 345-acre biodiversity net gain site.</p> <p>Council land there will be used to replace habitat lost due to construction of the new Cambridge South railway station at Cambridge Biomedical Campus.</p> <p>Change to access at Royston and Thriplow recycling centres</p> <p>Cambridgeshire residents now need to apply for a digital permit to use Royston Household Recycling Centre in Hertfordshire. The change comes following the announcement last year that Hertfordshire County Council would be adopting a policy restricting access to non-residents at Hertfordshire's network of sixteen recycling centres.</p> <p>Briefly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LHI Scheme deadline is Friday 12th January at 5pm • Any damage from the recent storms, please report to Highways and email Brian and Maria with photos and description of the issue • Parking enforcement by the County Council has started. Details on frequency of traffic warden visits to our villages and opportunity to provide information to the parking team will be provided in the next report <p>2401/07 Report from Babraham Research Campus (BRC) representative</p> <p>Chris Chapman was unable to attend but had sent a message to say that they are looking into the items reported at the previous meeting</p> <p>2401/08 Cheveley Park Development Plans. Nothing new to report</p> |
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| 2401/09 | Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) Nothing new to report |
| 2401/10 | Public participation time – 15 minutes allowed No members of public present |
| 2401/11 | <p>Forest Garden Project. To hear and comment on updates.</p> <p>Report from Hannah Thomas:</p> <p>In the last PC meeting, you sent me some queries regarding the Forest Garden. I answer those here, as I'm afraid I'm unable to attend the Jan 12th meeting in person.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ACCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY – in the early stages of planning for the FG, we discussed access and the need to avoid damage to the young trees. We discussed the similar situation with the apple trees planted in the community art area in the Babraham parkland, which was closed for several years for the same reason. The main section of the FG has trees that are now 2 years in the ground, but some are still very small and vulnerable. We need to be aware also that allowing access to the main section allows access to the new growing section at the top, as that isn't padlocked. My recollection is that we discussed possibly 5 years, but agreed about 3 years would be appropriate, but I have asked for further advice from the FG designer. Once we have a timeframe for access, I suggest I update the notices around to inform the community so that they are aware (linked to the signage point below). If the PC receives queries, however, please could people be alerted to the fact that the FG is opened regularly all through the spring, summer and autumn for working parties who want to come and help a bit or even people who just want to walk around it. The opening times are posted on all three Facebook sites: the FG site; PC site and the Babraham Community site. 2. PLANTING BULBS - the edge of the FG inside the fence was planted with a hornbeam hedge for wind protection and although many of those very young whips didn't survive the hot summer/cold winter of the 1st year, many did. The result may be a bit patchy, but we have been slowly checking the hedge trees and removing the ones that succumbed. As the aim of the FG is to be a space for edible plants, planting edible wildflowers in the place where the hedge hasn't survived would be a possibility. I am checking which alternative species could work with the FG designer. 3. GRASS – letting grass grow long and flower creates a wildlife haven for insects and small mammals, which then attracts other biodiversity (e.g. birds of prey), which supports the FG ecosystem so it's important for us to let the grass grow long, and the summer season is the time when that happens. So far, we have cut wide paths through the grass in the summer season, which has had much positive feedback from those visiting, both adults and children. The grass is then cut at the end of the season. We spoke last meeting about making signage to explain that, which will be done in the next few months, and certainly before the next long grass growth. 4. EA ACCESS – the Environment Agency have a water monitoring centre on the weir. During the design phase, I approached EA contractors when they were working, asked about access and adjusted the boundary fence accordingly. It is possible for them to access the monitoring station along the back edge of the FG with small plant vehicles as access isn't prevented. |

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| | <p>5. GATES – the gates have always been padlocked for protecting the trees. However, in both summers, the gate posts have warped a bit in the extreme heat/cold and that small movement has meant the latches don't meet, even when the padlock is on, so have swung open in high winds before now. Gary fixed both gates though, so they should now be secure.</p> <p>6. TREE TAGS – all trees were tagged on planting, but those tags were for very young trees and need replacing. Converting the existing tree tags to more permanent ones is planned, but should be done alongside the inventory, so we know exactly what survives each season. In Feb, we will do the inventory of tree survival to order any replacement trees for the spring and will then be in a position to order the tags.</p> <p>Obviously very little has happened with the FG over the winter time, but as the weather warms up and we order the next planting season plants (the ground cover layer), working parties will start up again. I have reached out to the Babraham Institute and Campus about possible working groups for this coming season and the village working group continues.</p> <p>This was discussed further at the Meeting, it was agreed that the Forest Garden steering group should meet with the Parish Council to discuss the Governance in more detail. The Clerk was asked to send in the Contract for the Forest Garden for the Parish Councillors to refresh their memories.</p> |
| 2401/12 | <p>Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) Progress Report January 2024 (NP Phase 3)</p> <p>Activities undertaken since last update (September 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Phase 3 grant <p>The Locality Grant for Phase 3 was awarded in October.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phase 3 progress <p>Following the completion and publication (on the website) of the Landscape Appraisal, Parish-wide Design Guide and Masterplan Study for The Close, work has been underway to produce the 'Pre-submission Draft' Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan draws upon those previous studies as evidence to underpin its policies.</p> <p>The Pre-Submission Draft is the proposal version of the plan that is required to be the subject of a 6-week pre-submission consultation with the people who live and work in the area before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination. The Parish Council is the 'qualifying body' undertaking the consultation and the NP Working Group will prepare the draft plan and the accompanying materials on behalf of the PC.</p> <p>The Pre-Submission Draft Plan is 60% completed and once it is finished (January) the NP Working Group will seek early feedback from the Local Authority and from the Parish Council. Once the NP Working Group have addressed comments from the PC and the Local Authority, we will arrange the consultation on behalf of the PC (February).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next steps<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ January – Pre-submission draft completed; sent to Local Authority / PC for comment○ February – Consultation publicized○ March – Consultation finishes; community comments addressed○ April – Final 'Referendum' draft sent by Parish Council to Local Authority for independent examination. |

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| | 2401/13 Clerks salary. Auditor commented that this has not been increased since Clerk started in May 2021. Clerk will provide latest salary scale from NALC. Also ask the Payroll provider to work out the back pay. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2401/14 General Village Matters and new items for discussion: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | FINANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2401/15 Receipts and Transfers (as of 5th Jan 2024) Unity Trust Interest £299.80 CCC for traffic calming costs £20,000.00 SCDC Sec 106 money £92,169.07 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| w | 2401/16 Payments (as of 5th Jan 2024) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Paid | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Clerk</td> <td>Salary/Tax/Expenses x 2 months</td> <td>£852.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hugo Fox</td> <td>Website provider x 2 months</td> <td>£71.98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ionos</td> <td>Email subs x 2 months</td> <td>£45.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unity Trust</td> <td>Service charge</td> <td>£22.05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brookfield</td> <td>Bins/grass x 2 months</td> <td>£711.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HCR Hewitsons</td> <td>Solicitors re Village Hall</td> <td>£2160.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Primary Care (Clerk)</td> <td>New pads for defibrillator</td> <td>£393.60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full list of payments was circulated and reviewed at the meeting, prior to being signed and approved. | Clerk | Salary/Tax/Expenses x 2 months | £852.00 | Hugo Fox | Website provider x 2 months | £71.98 | Ionos | Email subs x 2 months | £45.60 | Unity Trust | Service charge | £22.05 | Brookfield | Bins/grass x 2 months | £711.00 | HCR Hewitsons | Solicitors re Village Hall | £2160.00 | Primary Care (Clerk) | New pads for defibrillator | £393.60 |
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| | 2401/18 Balances and Bank Reconciliation at 5th Jan 2024 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | PLANNING | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2401/19 None. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2401/20 Planning decisions: None | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2401/21 Correspondence. Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambridgeshire Cambridgeshire County Council have now had the final formal confirmation from the Government regarding Civil Parking Enforcement. The scheme is now live across South Cambridgeshire. As outlined in the briefing session for councillors and parishes in November, notices will be issued until the end of January. These do not have a fine attached. From 1 February 2024, Cambridgeshire County Council's Civil Parking Enforcement Officers will issue penalty charge notices which include a fine for parking on restrictions such as double yellow lines. For more information visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cpe | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>Civil Parking Enforcement and Bus Lane Enforcement Highway Authority in the process of applying for Designation Orders decriminalises parking enforcement South Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire Civil Parking Enforcement and Bus Lane Enforcement - Cambridgeshire County Council</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Complaint received re burning of rubbish during the daytime. This is the advice on the Council website: Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act requires the local authority to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to investigate complaints that relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke emissions • Bonfires <p>Every year the Environmental Health Division receive a large amount of complaints about bonfires causing a repeated nuisance. Such nuisances need never arise if due consideration is shown to our neighbours. This information explains the law and gives some suggestions to help prevent a nuisance being caused.</p> <p>The Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows the Local Authority to take offenders to court should their bonfires cause a nuisance to neighbours (for example, have an unreasonable effect on their enjoyment of their home or garden). Moreover any bonfire on trade premises which causes dark smoke is an offence regardless of whether anybody else is affected (section 2, 1993 Clean Air Act). The fines could be up to £20,000 for each offence. Persons complaining to the Council will likely be asked to keep a diary of events to assist officers investigating the matter.</p> <p>Should you decide to have a bonfire, kindly note these recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not burn any oily rags, rubber, plastics, damp garden waste or other materials which would inevitably create heavy smoke or toxic fumes • do not burn a bonfire when your neighbours have washing drying, or are out enjoying their gardens or have windows wide open • do not light bonfires one hour before dusk, or leave them burning overnight. Choose the time of day and weather conditions that will cause the least inconvenience to neighbours • do not leave your fire to smoulder for long periods <p>If you would like to raise a complaint regarding smoke and bonfires, please email us on env.health@scambs.gov.uk or call us on 01954 713 000.</p> |
| 2401/22 | <p>Items for inclusion in the next meeting</p> <p>Date of next meeting: Thursday 8th Feb 2024 Thursday 14th March 2024</p> |
| 2401/23 | <p>Part II: Confidential Information</p> <p>Exclusion of the Press and the Public: To resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the meeting.</p> <p>Signature: <i>Anne Charteris</i> 21st Jan 2024</p> <p>10 Duxford Road, Hinxton, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1RB 01799 531827</p> |