

# BYFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL held by video conference on WEDNESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 commencing at 7.30pm

**PRESENT** - 7 Councillors - Cllrs J Gillic (Chairman), S Boddington, M Buckley, L Clark, C Davis, B Ridyard and M Taylor.  
Also present - District Cllr Frost.

**DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST** – Cllr Boddington for item 10ai (planning application) as she lives opposite.

**ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were accepted from – Cllrs Crowshaw and Shepherd. County Cllr Robin Brown had sent apologies.

### 1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING(S) –

**13<sup>th</sup> August** Cllr Boddington proposed that the minutes be approved as a true record; seconded by Cllr Davis and agreed by all who had been present.

### 2. REPORT ON MATTERS OUTSTANDING not covered elsewhere on the agenda

a) Renewal of lease for Scout HQ The Clerk and Cllr Davis had read through the proposed new lease from the solicitors and comments/queries had very recently been sent to the solicitors. **On-going**

b) Updating the Risk Assessment Cllr Buckley advised he had not been able to proceed with this. Consideration as to how this might be done to be carried forward to October. **Agenda**

### 3. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM THE LAST MEETING **None**

### 4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had been to the End of Lease Sale held by Northants CALC at their offices in Litchborough and acquired assorted items for use by the Council in return for a donation to the British Heart Foundation. NCALC will operate from staff homes for the time being.

### 5. REPORTS BY COUNTY and DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

**District Cllr Frost** advised he had little to report. Work on preparing for the two Unitary Authorities for the County was progressing.

He asked if the Council was aware that the support group for the planning application for a new Medical Centre financially supported by 70++ houses had been writing to many of the Parish Councils in the area seeking their support for the application. The Chairman said it had been heard that the group was doing this.

**6. COMMENTS FROM PARISHIONERS PRESENT** Item to be carried forward as it was understood a parishioner did wish to join the meeting but was not yet able to do so. See page 502.

### 7. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE requiring a DECISION and not covered elsewhere on the agenda

a) Northants CALC AGM No-one able to join the virtual meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. The Clerk would send apologies to Mr Moody. **Clerk**

b) Daventry DC/BT proposal to remove last public phone box in the village The consultation is between BT and Daventry DC. DDC is proposing to object to the proposed closure (as it did for the last consultation) and is seeking the agreement or otherwise of the Parish Councils involved.

Cllr Boddington proposed that Council supports the DDC proposal to object to the removal of the box. She felt the box should be retained as its' location beside the A361 road makes it available for travellers without a cell phone or cell phone signal and also for parishioners should the landline connections fail or there being no reliable cell phone signals. She also supported the notion of requesting the return of a K6 red phone box. Agreed by all. Clerk to respond to DDC. **Clerk**

**8. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS and FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

To be carried forward to October.

Updated Financial Regulations need to be created. The Clerk and Cllr Davis will look at this.

**Agenda  
Cllr/CD**

**9. FINANCE****a) FINANCIAL STATE**

The Clerk reported that the financial state at 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020 showed total liquid assets of £103,574 of which £43,064 is ring-fenced – leaving a net figure of £60,510.

Spending, excluding VAT, since 1<sup>st</sup> April is £28,943 against a pro rata budget April-August of £31,270.

The annual budget being £75,050.

CIL fund is now at zero.

**b) Internal Control.**

The Chairman and Cllr Davis had undertaken separate checks of the books against statements etc. Both had found all to be in order.

**c) INCOME banked since the last meeting**

Lloyds Bank	Interest	£3.28
BRG charity	Transfer because of pending closure of the BRG Charity bank account	£6027.00 ring fenced
Cricket Club/Scout Grp	Water used March to August	£48.29
3 new allotment holders	Rent to 30 September	£9.00
Cash	R Healey – access lease fee 2020	£1.00
Humphris Funerals	Burial fee – Mr C Laurie	£300.00

The Chairman explained why virtually all the money in the BRG charity bank a/c had been transferred to the Parish Council – as Sole Custodian Trustees of the Charity. From July NatWest is required to offer switching to other, smaller, banks of some of its business accounts. Early in 2020 the Trustees had agreed to close the account with NatWest and open another account with Lloyds Bank. The problems associated with the closing down of many facilities by the COVID-19 virus epidemic had meant a new account with Lloyds could not currently be opened.

Since making the decision to move nearly all the money from the BRG charity bank account for safe keeping it had been discovered that NatWest is offering inducements to account holders to switch to other banks (but not to Lloyds). In view of the switching offer being made it is possible that all or some of the BRG charity money held by the Council may need to go back to the charity NatWest account, as the switching offer is substantial enough to make this worthwhile.

**d) Membership of CPRE for a further year** Cllr Davis proposed that Council continue membership at £36.00 for the year from October 2020. Seconded by Cllr Boddington and agreed by all.

**e) Donation to Byfield cricket club for additional mowing of the BRG in 2020** There was some discussion on this item as no cricket had been possible this season due to the impact of the COVID-19 virus. The Chairman explained that the additional mowing of the cricket outfield by the club had not been totally necessary. The Parish Council had arranged from March 2020 for the whole of the recreation ground to be cut by its mowing contractor twice a month, which is deemed acceptable for the general use of the ground by parishioners for recreational purposes. In previous years only that part of the ground outside the cricket outfield (boundary) had been cut by the Council's contractor, with the club carrying out much more mowing within the boundary.

He explained the donation to the club is to cover some of the cost of fuel for their gang mower. However, in view of the anomaly brought about this year by no cricket training or matches being possible he felt that it might be a good time to re-visit an offer/agreement made a good few years ago and he proposed he draft a suitable letter to the cricket club and arrange a meeting with the cricket and football clubs as to the management of the surface of the BRG in future years. He did feel that the donation for this year should be considered for payment as the Council had not raised with the cricket club that the donation might be suspended for 2020. This action was agreed by all.

The Chairman would send a draft of his letter to the club to all councillors before sending it. **See item 17b  
Chairman**

**f) Audit 2019-20**

i) External audit (JKF Littlejohn) Report not yet received.

**g) ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT see schedule on page 506**

The Chairman advised there were two additional payments to those already listed –  
e.on Direct Debit of £415.10 to be taken on or about 16 September for electricity used in August.

However, this sum may be reduced due to additional LED lanterns having been installed.

Mrs A Weller - £37.50 to cover the donation to British Heart Foundation for items from the Northants  
CALC office closure plus mileage to/from Litchborough.

Cllr Ridyard proposed that the scheduled and additional accounts be paid; seconded by Cllr Boddington  
and agreed by all.

**6. COMMENTS FROM PARISHIONERS b/f**

Meeting closed so that Holly Fitzerman of Woodford Road could raise matters with the Council.

Miss Fitzerman had already asked Council what could be done to raise the awareness of drivers to  
horses and riders using Boddington Road in order to get to the RofW bridleway EF11 towards Iron Cross.  
The Clerk had contacted County Highways who had offered to install suitable temporary warning signs.  
These had recently been installed and Miss Fitzerman thanked Council for the quick response.

She is also concerned that some farmers do not re-instate bridleways on their land after crop clearance  
and ploughing. She asked if there is a set period in which this should be done and how it is monitored.  
The main problem is with EF14 from The Twistle through to Aston le Walls. She was advised the Clerk  
had already written to a contact at County Highways on this matter as it is they who have to ensure the  
law is upheld. She was advised it might be useful for her to contact the British Horse Society to get an  
understanding of the requirements from them. She would do this. And to report any issues with  
bridleways through the County Council Street Doctor website, as this is then directed to the correct  
department as well as keeping such issues logged.

The Clerk offered to contact the NFU to find out what they could advise.

The Council would attempt to speak with the farmers concerned.

**Clerk  
Chairman**

Miss Fitzerman left the meeting, which was then re-opened.

- Cllr Clark asked if the agenda order might be changed as he would soon have to leave the  
meeting due a very early appointment the following morning.
- This was agreed

**11. RIGHTS OF WAY**

a) Concern for horses and riders using Boddington Road to access EF11 Matter resolved for the time  
being with County Highways temporary warning signs installed.

b) Concern about some farmers not re-instating RoWs after ploughing – or at other times

See item 6 above. The Clerk would seek guidance from the NFU and continue to press County Highways  
for a reply and action.

The Chairman would aim to find a way of speaking with the farmers concerned.

**Clerk  
Chairman**

c) Replacement finger post for EF2 where it crosses Banbury Road

The Clerk advised she had, yet again, requested a two-arm post from County Highways but as yet no  
response at all.

It was agreed that Council consider a temporary post and arms which could be fixed to the pedestrian  
gate on the south side of Banbury Road. The Clerk would seek suitable contractors to make and supply  
this.

**Clerk**

**12. ALLOTMENTS, POCKET PARK and NEW WOOD**

**a) Allotments**

Cllr Clark advised that he has cleared the abandoned plot 11C which could now be offered to the first on  
the waiting list.

**Clerk**

The tenants of plot 8 are slowly clearing their plot so that it can be split into two in time for the start of the  
new allotment season on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

He is concerned that very little work has been carried out on plot 7A. The Clerk to contact the new  
tenant.

**Clerk**

Also, that the new tenants of 7B wish to very slightly move the shed which is on 7A. Clerk to put each in  
touch with the other to discuss this.

**Clerk**

## 18. HIGHWAYS

### a) Consideration of applying for 20mph limits on some village roads and/or Home Zones being established.

Cllr Clark explained that either of these would be helpful for Fessey and Lovett Road and The Causeway as children often play in the roads or ride cycles. The roads are cul-de-sacs. He said the main problem is often speedy 'white van' drivers who are not as vigilant or thoughtful as they might be. He advised that a number of parents in the area had raised their concerns with him.

The Clerk had already written to County Highways on the matter and had been advised that a request for a 20mph limit had to be made and this would be added to an agenda for a County body to consider.

There is a set procedure to be followed.

It was agreed that Cllr Clark follow up the reply from County Highways and formally seek a 20mph limit for the 3 roads. **LC**

The Chairman advised that the Council would cover any costs involved e.g. legal fees, new signs.

Cllr Taylor to put this proposal on the Council Facebook page for advice and any feedback from residents. **MT**

- Cllr Clark left the meeting and the agenda order reverted.

## 10. PLANNING

### a) APPLICATIONS

i) DA/2020/0603 – 30 Bell Lane for single storey rear extension.

Cllr Ridyard reported that the extension is to create a larger kitchen area. She knows the property and confirmed the existing kitchen is very small and could benefit from being larger.

She proposed that Council support the application as the extension would benefit the living conditions of the householder. Agreed by all. **Clk**

### b) APPROVAL(S)

i) DA/2020/0241 and 0493LB – 32/34 Banbury Lane for alterations to outbuilding including changes to roof from iron to slate. It was noted that the requested Velux windows in the north facing roof are deemed acceptable except that they must have obscure glazing.

c) REFUSAL(S) None

d) Any urgent planning matters to be brought to the attention of the Council, arising after publication of the agenda. None.

## 12. ALLOTMENTS, POCKET PARK and NEW WOOD

### b) Pocket Park and New Wood

i) Compost bins for Sheep Meadow 1 (SM1). Cllr Boddington to try to speak with Iain Black about making these. **SB**

ii) Possible strimming of SM1. No reply to clerk's request to Mr Law. Cllr Boddington to ask Mr Manton if he would give a price. **SB**

She hoped that the Friends of the Pocket Park might be able to start work at the end of September, in which case they could gather up the arisings from strimming or cutting SM1 in readiness for a bonfire in due course.

## 13. GENERAL ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

a) Thinning out of trees on the highway bank on east side of Banbury Lane One suggestion from the visit by Northants ACRE officer is to reduce the number of saplings in this area.

To be added to the list of village trees (although these technically owned by County Highways) needing attention and to be included in quotes by tree surgeons. **BR/Clerk**

This work may require a road closure order and also taking down of overhead power cables by Western Power as trees are growing through the cables.

Cllr Boddington has received a report of the visit by ACRE and will write up notes for councillors on this. **SB**

b) Trees etc over-hanging footways and roads The Chairman had contacted a householder in Banbury Lane about large and extending leylandii. Some work may be done on these when trees under a) above are thinned out.

Cllr Boddington and the Chairman to inspect ivy extending out over fence bordering Banbury Road – from Farebrother Close. To be cut back if possible. **SB/JG**

#### **14. TREES**

a) Frequency of professional inspections for general safety and condition It was agreed to continue with these on a 3-year cycle unless requested otherwise by the insurers – who do not have a stipulated frequency. Next such inspection due December 2022/January 2023.

b) Update on work required from last inspection Await quotation from a contractor. But since asking for this other work is to be considered. Waiting for date(s) for site visit to obtain further quotations.

#### **15. COMMUNICATING WITH PARISHONERS**

a) BPC Website and Facebook useage. Cllr Taylor reported the following figures for the last month – Facebook – 210 followers in total. 3 new in the month. Most interest in minutes and agendas, possible road closures and windfall apples.

Website – 2311 ‘hits’ in August but Cllr Taylor reckoned most of these were just ‘trawling’. Access to The ByWord attracted a lot of attention as did Contact Us. The Clerk advised two overseas enquiries through Contact Us – one from New Zealand and the other from West Germany. Both genuine.

b) Website Accessibility Cllr Taylor advised that the Council’s site is fully compliant with the new Regulations which come into effect later this month. Sites have to be ‘user friendly’ for anyone with sight impairment or other disabilities.

#### **16. PLAYGROUND**

a) Weekly inspections No issues noted.

b) Nest swing – update on improvements and consideration of change of safer surface

Cllr Ridyard reported that longer chains have been ordered and delivery is awaited. Contractor will then be able to lower the height of the basket back to where it was.

She proposed that Council consider replacing the play bark safer surface with a surface as supplied by Proludic to go under the new items e.g. climbing unit and cable run. This would remove the regular problem of forking over the surface and replacing it fairly often. It would also reduce the likelihood of the area being used by dogs, cats etc as a lavatory.

It was agreed the Clerk seek a quotation for this by contacting Proludic.

**Clerk**

#### **17. RECREATION GROUND**

a) ‘Dogs on Leads’ signs around playground area

Cllr Taylor updated Council on his proposal for 3 signs each on 2m poles to be sited at locations around the perimeter of the playground area – where they should be visible to dog owners approaching from different directions. It was suggested that 3 brightly coloured poles might be better than just plain metal.

Clerk to ask Mr Draper to install when poles are available.

**Clerk**

b) Improvements to the ‘turning area’ between village hall and Russell Pavilion.

The Chairman reported he has to write up the possibilities following a site meeting.

**JG**

#### **Brought forward from item 9e**

c) Donation to Cricket Club for additional mowing of BRG

The Chairman proposed that a donation of £650 for 2020 be paid in October. Agreed by all.

**Agenda**

#### **18. HIGHWAYS**

a) – see above page 503

b) Works under HS2 Road Safety projects No detailed update as Cllr Crowshaw could not attend.

Assumed to still be on schedule for this autumn for the two pedestrian crossings.

c) HS2 work at Chipping Warden No known changes to any road closure orders and re-routing of traffic on A361.

Other – road side notices of road closures of A361 at Charwelton during the working day for up to 6 weeks. No-one could find details of why this is so or for what. No information received by the Clerk.

The Clerk will try to find out from different sources.

**Clerk**

**19. COUNCIL PROPERTY including Brightwell and Russell Pavilions**

a) Brightwell Pavilion – update on application for improvement work No further update as Cllr Crowshaw could not attend the meeting.

b) Consideration of funding a separate water supply to the Russell Pavilion

The Chairman explained that when the pavilion was built it was, for some reason, decided by the BRG Association to install a spur off the supply into the village hall. This has meant that the only meter is for the hall and the hall treasurers have had to calculate via a sub meter the water used by the pavilion and invoice the two sports clubs for this. It has not always been easy for the hall treasurer to do this nor for the invoices to be paid as the two clubs have to come to an agreement as to how much water each will have used over the past quarter.

He advised that the Clerk is seeking quotations for the installation of a separate water supply and meter(s) for the pavilion. When costs are known then Council or the BRG charity can decide whether or not it can afford to do the work. **Clerk**

c) Possibility of collections from dual litter/recycling bins by Daventry Norse

At present Norse cannot do this in the way they are set up to operate the contract on behalf of DDC. Cllr Taylor advised he has one further line of enquiry on this. On-going. **MT**

**20. BURIAL GROUND and CLOSED CHURCHYARD**

a) Burial Ground

i) Update on breaches of conditions regarding burial plots. The Chairman reported he had yet to contact the family which had installed a surround to a grave. **Chairman**

b) Closed Churchyard

i) Collapsed stone wall. Contract for repairing this has been let. The Clerk advised that DDC did not need to inspect the wall before or after the work.

ii) Work on trees and south boundary wall The Chairman reported that a contract had been let for the removal (cutting through) of ivy on 14 or so trees in the churchyard and also removal of ivy on the wall beside Gooseberry Lane. Gooseberry Lane would also be cleared of weeds etc as would the path between the churchyard and the recreation ground.

**21. LIGHTS and UTILITIES**

a) Report of non-working lights Cllr Davis reported just one light not working – PL1 in The Twistle. There was some discussion as to whether the mercury lantern should be repaired or wait for another light to fail and then ask Aylesbury Mains to repair both or to seek a price from Zeta to replace the remaining non-LED lights in The Twistle. One (PL2) now has a LED lantern. It was agreed to seek a price to upgrade the 5 remaining lights in The Twistle – all bar one of which are on wooden poles so could be more expensive. The Clerk to contact Zeta. **Clerk**

**22. VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**

a) Village Hall committee. Cllr Gillic reported that the hall had just opened up again for limited bookings. It had received a substantial grant from HM Government under its’ scheme to help businesses and organisations in the hospitality and leisure world which could suffer loss of income due to the lock-down brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It had also received a grant for re-furbishing the hall from the HS2/Groundworks grant scheme for local groups.

There being no further business to consider the meeting was closed at 9.40pm.

The Chairman advised the Council would need **to meet on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September** to consider comments on a planning application which had been received too late for tonight’s meeting.

Chairman

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**Items for inclusion on October agenda**

**Agenda**

- Initial budget for 2021-22
- Remembrance Sunday - wreath and bearers

