

# **BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**(draft) Minutes of Bedfield Parish Council AGM held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 at the Bedfield Community HUB The meeting commenced at 19:00**

## **05/25 - 01 *Present***

- Alison Manning (Chair - AM), John Dickson (Vice Chair – JD), Martin Abley (MA), Marion Harvey (MH), Lisa Crane (LC) and Michael Walsh (MW).
- Geoff Robinson (GR) as Parish Clerk.
- Andrew Manning (ANM) as the Community Club representative.
- Matthew Hicks (MH - SCC and MSDC Ward Councillor) – for Item 05/25 – 03.
- Two members of the public.

## **05/25 - 02 *Election of Chair and Vice-Chair***

- Alison Manning was unanimously elected as Chair and John Dickson as Vice-Chair.

## **05/25 - 03 *Report from Matthew Hicks, County Council and District Ward Councillor***

- MH's most recent monthly report for May 2025 had been circulated.
- He summarised the latest SCC priorities, which included the forthcoming Devolution proposals and some of the advantages, for which he was very enthusiastic about. He also explained that the newly elected mayors will hold power when it came to negotiations with Central Government for funding.
- He also mentioned SCC 's financial situation and the ever-growing cost of adult and children's social care needed to cope with increasing numbers.
- SCC had taken control of libraries to avoid having to reduce hours and replacement mobile library vehicles will also be provided.
- MH responded to a question by MA and stated that there will be redundancies through Devolution, but the start-up costs would quickly be justified by the savings.

## **05/25 - 04 *Apologies for Absence***

- Jenny Barham (JB). (Approved absence)
- The need for councillors to attend as many meetings as possible was accepted, especially the AGM. AM stated that the AGM is always held on a date in May and councillors should bear this in mind when making other advance arrangements. .

## **05/25 - 05 *Public Open Session***

- One member of the public expressed thanks for the Parish Council's support for the recently successful planning application in respect of the toilet at Bedfield Church.

## **05/25 - 06 *Register of Members Interests***

- All the councillors were reminded that they must notify GR of any changes affecting their Register of Members Interests.

## **05/25 - 07 *Minutes of the Last Meeting (20<sup>th</sup> February 2025)***

- These were subsequently agreed as accurate and signed by AM.

## **05/25 - 08 *Matters Arising from the Minutes***

- The 2025 children's play area inspection report had been received and had not

highlighted any major concerns, with almost everything low risk, with only a few items requiring minor attention. The possibility of using astro turf on the tunnel was discussed and will be considered.

#### **05/25 -09 Police Report**

- GR stated that the National Police Crime Map showed twelve offences in Bedfield during the months of January to March 2025, four being "Violence/Sexual Offences" and eight being "Criminal Damage/Arson". Further details are vague under data protection rules, but all of the offences are shown as occurring in or around Cemetery Road.

#### **05/25 – 10 Planning Updates**

- DC/25/0707 (Playview – Demolition of Garage/Replacements Etc.) – Approved by MSDC
- DC/24/05160 (Willow Croft – Demolition of current single-story building and replacement with two others). No objections had been offered & still with MSDC for a decision. It appears that the potential presence of bats has delayed matters.
- DC/25/00476 (Blossom House – Extensions) – Approved by MSDC.
- DC/25/01110 (Bedfield Church – Provision of a Closet Toilet) – Approve by MSDC
- DC/24/05551 (Erection of One Dwelling) – Approved by MSDC. To be monitored by GR as the plot is for sale & permission was granted as a self-build.
- MSDC had confirmed that the Willow Croft development would be named Willow
- Limited work had recommenced at the Home Farm development.
- After a brief discussion, it was agreed that although a Neighbourhood Plan was a good idea, the amount of work required and the uncertainty of present Central Government planning policy meant that it should be shelved for the time being.

#### **05/25 - `11 Long Green Meadow and Flooding Issue**

- GR gave a brief update on the ownership and history of Long Green Meadow.
- He further explained that in connection with concerns about flooding from a resident, HM Land Registry documents had been obtained showing that the Parish Council did not own any of the pond situated at Orchard Cottage. In addition, a contractor had been hired who found and cleaned a 12" pipe that runs under the entrance to the HUB.

#### **05/25 - 12 Tennis Court Refurbishment, HUB Lease etc.**

- After much hard work, by Rebecca Waterman on behalf of the Bedfield Town Estate, she had been unable to obtain a lower fee for the completion of the lease that the quote of £1,250.00 from Gudgeons & Prentice at Stowmarket. It was agreed that this should be accepted. GR to contact Rebecca.
- The resurfacing of the tennis court had been completed and the contractor paid. It was agreed that it looked very good indeed and was now back in use.
- The Tennis Club will now operate as a separate entity to the Community Club, rather than as a sub-committee and pay an annual rent which will be revised yearly to include an increase in line with the national CPI. This will be incorporated in a contract between the TC and B&MSCC.

#### **05/25 - 13 Financial Update**

- Expenditure since the last meeting (February 2025) in the 2024/25 financial year has been £51.59 VAT refund to B&MSC, plus 835.97, £196.99 & £91.80 for the Clerk's second-half year salary, PAYE and expenses respectively.

- Expenditure so far in the 2025/26 financial year has been a £265.30 VAT refund (B&MSCC), £5462.50 & £8938.62 for the tennis court refurbishment (Premier Sports Surfaces) and £217.44 SALC membership renewal.
- Income since the last meeting in the 2024/25 financial year has been £0.35 interest (Barclays) and £7,852.87 as a loan towards the tennis court resurfacing (B&MSCC).
- Income so far in the 2025/26 financial year has been a VAT refund of £272.43 (HMRC), the first Willowcroft CIL payment of £5,796.82 (MSDC) and the first half-year precept of £3050.00 (MSDC)
- Impending payments authorised were £50 for the local audit (Paul Burrows) £478.85 VAT refund to B&MS and £200 for excavation work at the entrance to the HUB (Tom Kerry).
- The 2024/25 Annual Accounts had been audited by Paul Burrows as the internal auditor. The Annual Governance Statement and the accounts were approved and the AGAR3 forms signed. GR to facilitate PKF Littlejohn as the external auditors and post the required documents to the website and on the noticeboard.
- The 2024/25 annual CIL return was agreed and signed.
- The 2025/26 Financial Risk Assessment was agreed and signed.
- The Clerk's 2025/26 contract was agreed and signed.
- GR produced an estimate for the 2025/26 financial year but made it clear that it was without prejudice to any unforeseen circumstances that could occur in the next twelve months. This shows a projected surplus of £5,470.00 on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. He also emphasized that this was for running costs only and did not include further tennis court payments, other capital projects or CIL income.

#### **05/25 - 14 Community Club Update**

AMM gave updates on several salient points. viz:

- The project regarding the refurbishment of the pavilion had yet to progress, mainly due to domestic problems appertaining to the architect. The pre-planning consultation with MSDC had still to take place.
- The pavilion heaters had been replaced with more efficient and quieter models (with thanks to Nigel Billington).
- The AGM will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 but disappointingly no new Management Committee Members could be recruited.
- At the request of the groups using the pavilion, notice boards had been erected for individual use.
- Plans for the fete were well advanced and one pre-meeting had been held with another planned for June.
- A pub night with food had been held in February 2025 had been very successful. .
- A nearly new container had been purchased and sited, which greatly alleviated the lack of storage problems.

#### **05/25 - 15 Any Other Business and Correspondence Etc.**

- GR said that once again our insurance brokers had highlighted the need for tree management and there was a brief discussion on who was responsible for the trees at the HUB. GR will copy the most recent lease to MW who will study the document to see if any clause covers trees and ditches, etc.
- GR had continued to report potholes, footpaths and other ongoing matters.
- GR and AM had attended a meeting with representatives from SCC and MSDC on Community Emergency Planning. Further details will be received by way of a template to complete, but overall it was thought that much of it had limited relevance to Bedfield.

It was agreed that any such plan should be produced jointly with Monk Soham PC.

**05/25 - 16 *Date of Next Meeting***

- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025, commencing at 19:30.

The meeting ended at 20:22

**Chair.....**