

# **BEDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**(draft) Minutes of a Bedfield Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at the Bedfield Community HUB. The meeting commenced at 19:00**

## **02/26 - 01 Present**

- Alison Manning (Chair - AM), John Dickson (Vice Chair – JD), Martin Abley (MA), Marion Harvey (MH), Jenny Barham (JB), Michael Walsh (MW) and Lisa Crane (LC).
- Geoff Robinson (GR) as Parish Clerk.
- Andrew Manning (ANM) and Graham Mobbs (GM) as the Community Club representatives.
- Twelve other members of the public.

## **02.26 - 02 Apologies for Absence**

- Matthew Hicks (MH) District and County Ward Councillor.

## **02/26 - 03 Public Open Session**

AM opened the session by welcoming the members of the public, explaining the purpose of the open session and then inviting them to comment on agenda items. The following items were raised, viz:

- A member of The Friends of Bedfield Heritage explained that further funding was required for the completion of the outdoor toilet at Bedfield Church, which had planning permission. This would benefit the whole community, be open seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day and not just be for church visitors. The project will cost circa £50,000 and £15,000 had been secured, with grant applications in the pipeline for £70,000, but with no guarantee of success. The question was asked if some of the Parish Council Neighbourhood CIL money could be used, or if a donation could be given. Accordingly, a summary of the request will be submitted by the Friends to the Parish Council for consideration.
- The Parish Council was also asked to consider paying for the annual village Christmas tree and again a written request will be submitted for consideration.
- The Parish Council and all those involved were thanked for completing the SID project at Little Green, which was already showing a significant reduction in speeding.

## **02/26 - 04 Register of Members Interests**

- All the councillors were reminded that they must notify GR of any changes affecting their Register of Members Interests. None were notified.

## **02/26 - 05 Minutes of the Last Meeting (26<sup>th</sup> November 2025)**

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

## **02/26 - 06 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- SCC Highways had said that the replacement of the 30mph repeater signs on Long Green did not meet their current criteria.
- The cost of extending the 30mph limit from near Bedfield School to The Rabbits was prohibitive and will not be pursued.
- The cost of a litter bin near Bedfield School would be circa £250.00. AM had not had a response from the school regarding the problem and GR will write to the villager

who raised the issue to see if there had been any improvement to the situation.

**02/26 - 07 Report from Matthew Hicks, County Council and District Ward Councillor**

- MH's most recent monthly report had been circulated and posted to the website.

**02/26 -08 Police Report**

- The police national crime map shows no offences recorded in October 2025, one offence of "Vehicle Crime" of in November 2025 and a further offence of "Violence and Sexual Offences" in December 2025, both in the Cemetery Road area. GR reminded everyone that the details were generically grouped on the website.

**02/26 - 09 Planning Updates**

- An enquiry from a Southolt Road resident regarding potential further developments at Poplar Farm had been referred to Worlingworth PC, who had responded by saying that nothing had been received.
- No planning applications were currently live.

**02/26 - 10 HUB Lease**

A very detailed debate took place regarding the long-running attempt to finalise the lease of the HUB field with the BTE. The salient points and decisions taken included:

- Everyone agreed that with the best of intentions, the renewal procedure had gone on for far too long and it was in the interest of both parties to conclude the lease. Without a lease, grants cannot be obtained for large amounts.
- It was felt that the latest draft provided by the BTE's solicitor was unnecessary in parts and seemed to be following a "standard" script. However, in the interest of moving things on, the Parish Council would accept the draft, subject to GR advising small changes regarding, the L&R Property paragraph on the first page (ownership of the play equipment the parish council) and to delete "nor last longer than a day" from paragraph 3.7.
- It was thought that the "Landlord and Tenant" statements in the lease did not apply as all lettings are on a hire basis, without bestowing any rights. It was also agreed that "damage" clauses do not apply to the assets owned by the Parish Council, such as the pavilion. MW was unhappy with the termination clause of paragraph 3.14 but it was accepted that it was largely unlikely ever to be appropriate, due to the rights of the PC as the tenant.
- It was agreed to accept the inclusion of the clause stating that the Parish Council will be responsible for the trees.
- GR will arrange the completion of a tree survey, which will be paid for from the Neighbourhood CIL grants. This had been agreed with MSDC and is likely to be in the region of £480.00,
- Although legally they may not be liable, the Parish Council will pay the solicitor's costs as previously agreed. However, this will be with the caveat that discussions on the cost of any remedial action required following the tree survey can be negotiated without prejudice with the BTE.
- Irrespective of signing the imminent new lease, the BTE will be asked to jointly support efforts to have a replacement longer lease signed as soon as possible. This is vital to obtain large grants for the refurbishment of the pavilion project and in due course, asking the Charity Commission to reconsider their previous refusal. Rebecca Waterman, the BSE former Secretary, was praised for her patience and attempts to achieve this in the past.

- Accordingly, GR will obtain professional quotes to have the rent of the HUB revalued and continue to try and obtain evidence of similar arrangements in other villages.
- A “land-swap” with Long Green Meadow was discussed but deemed to be highly unlikely or even possible. It is believed a similar request to buy the HUB from the BTE would be difficult, not the least financially.
- GR to advise all the above points with the BTE as soon as practicable.

#### **02/26 - 11 Village VADs**

- The new SID had been installed at Little Green and was working. It had been very effective and appreciated by the local residents, appearing to be already responsible for significant reductions in speeding. The post for its transfer to Earl Soham Road was in place. Vince Prank was thanked for the installation.
- The Long Green SID continued to be moved between there and Southold Road and supply data. This still shows some excessive speeds at certain times of the day. However, when it’s on Southold Road, it is accepted that it picks up vehicles before they enter the 30mph limit. It was therefore decided to just continue to monitor the situation for the time being.

#### **02/26 - 12 Financial Update**

- Expenditure since the last meeting (November 2025) has been the repayment of the £7,852.87 loan for the tennis court resurfacing to the Community Club, £66.00 for the website hosting fee (CAS) and the purchase of the SID from Elan City (£3,473.08) .
- Income since the date of the last meeting has been £0.29 interest (Barclays) and £3,000.00 grant for the SID (MSDC).
- The payment of the Clerks second half-year salary & PAYE (£1048.08) and expenses (£144.98) was authorised
- GR had produced an estimate for the 2025/26 financial year which showed a projected surplus of £3,307.00 on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. This looks lower than planned but will be replenished when a larger than normal amount of VAT is reclaimed from HMRC in early April 2026.
- GR explained that Neighbourhood CIL money is paid twice a year by MSDC, in April and October. Bedfield PC should receive two amounts in 2026/27 of £5796.82 in respect of the original Willowcroft and £5,398.55 in respect of the smaller two-house development
- GR also produced an estimate for the 2026/27 financial year, with the caveat that 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 was a long way off and could be subject to unexpected events. The increased precept for 2026/27 of £6,500.00 GR with all other anticipated income, could produce an estimated carryforward figure of circa £32,667.00 @ 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027, which would include CIL payments of £27,100.00.
- Paul Burrows has agreed to be the Local Auditor for the 2025/26 Financial Year.

#### **02/26 - 13 Community Club Update**

ANM gave updates on several salient points. viz:

- Circa ten responses had been received from 180+ requests for activities villagers would like to see and almost all pointed up for more of the successful and popular “Pop-up Pubs”. ANM said that the recent one had been another success.
- The Club AGM will be held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and encouraged as many people as possible to attend.
- The Fete will be held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2026 and planning will start soon.

**02/26 - 14 Any Other Business and Correspondence Etc.**

- GR explained how he reads all the SALC and other similar items that he receives. He then then circulates them as he feels is appropriate. He explained that it was not up to him to “censor” items and up to the individuals to decide to read them (or not!). The councillors confirmed that this system should continue.
- GR had continued to report potholes, footpaths and other similar matters. He will contact SCC Highways regarding a blocked culvert near to Abbey House. On Earl Soham Road
- After complaining via MH, Church Lane had had some of the potholes filled. However, others had been left due “not being able to have enough tar on the lorry”! GR to revisit with MH.
- The partial blocking of a Bridleway at the bottom of Church Lane near the church had been resolved by SCC Highways with the landowner and a letter was read out by JD from the farmer. This explained the reason and highlighted the serious problem being experienced by farmers with illegal activities such as hare-coursing and other illegal “sports”. JD also gave a detailed update in just how bad the situation was and asked that everyone be vigilant and let him know at any time if they suspected suspicious activities taking place. The Councillors expressed great sympathy but said that also had to follow up any complaints from villagers about footpaths.
- Details of a Royal Garden Party and a Catchment & Landscape Nature Recovery Grants had specifically been circulated.
- GR stated that credit had to be given to SCC Highways for the many new footpath finger posts that had been erected.
- A complaint had been received from a Church Lane resident regarding sewage problems in his home due to the inadequacy of the local pumping station. GR had responded saying that over capacity had been a problem for many years, but that Anglia Water were looking into roof drainage water entering the system.
- Essex and Suffolk Water was praised for their very prompt attention to two recent water leaks in the village.
- GR stated that the Parish Council and Community Club Asset Register had been circulated for adoption shortly. He also said that unfortunately, it would be likely to lead to an increased insurance premium, because of the increased values.

**02/26 - 15 Date of Next Meeting**

- The next meeting will be held the AGM to be held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026 commencing at 19:00, followed by the AVM at 20:00, to be held at the Bedfield Community HUB.

The meeting ended at 20:10

**Chair**.....