

STOW BEDON & BRECKLES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Stow Bedon & Breckles Parish Council on Monday, 12 April 2021 at 7.30 p.m. This was a Zoom on-line meeting.

Present: Councillors: Jonathan White (Chairman), Phil Childs, Dawn Jessett, Lee Pilkington, Hannah Reed.
Julian Gibson (Clerk).

Absent: Councillor John Morfoot.

Before the opening of the Meeting the Chairman expressed the Council's sorrow following the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, and extended commiserations to Her Majesty The Queen and the Royal Family on their loss. A minute's silence was then held.

- 1 **Apologies for absence.** It was **resolved** to accept the reason for absence offered by Cllr. Morfoot.
- 2 **Declarations of interest.** None.
- 3 **Dispensations.** None.
- 4 **Public participation session.**
 - 4.1 Cllr. Cowen said mentioned the Breckland on-line Book of Remembrance which is at <https://www.theonlinebookcompany.com/OnlineBooks/BrecklandHRHPPTributes/Content/nt/Filler>, and invited residents to leave their tributes to the Prince there. He said that Breckland Council had received and passed on the large grant funding from the Government to support businesses in their post lock-down recovery. His Council has brought its Annual Meeting forward to April in order to be able to hold it virtually, in view of the Government's failure to extend the legislation confirming the legality of such meetings after 6 May (see agenda item 10). Finally, he said that the joint partnership with South Holland Council had amicably be broken up, but that his Council was looking at a possible similar venture with another council within the County.
 - 4.2 Mr. David Williams, the SAM2 Co-ordinator advised the Council that there appeared to have been an attempt to open the device, presumably to steal the battery, and as a result the sign was badly damaged. He would report it to the Police, although with little expectation that they would be able to do anything. The Clerk said he would check with Westcotec to see if a repair was possible, and if necessary, make a claim on the Council's insurance. He would also write to local residents to see if anybody saw anything suspicious.
- 5 **Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 15 March 2021 were **confirmed**, and **signed** by the Chairman.
- 6 **Matters arising.**
 - 6.1 [Minutes of 18 January 2021, 10] **Deer sign.** The Clerk to Wretham Parish Council has now taken delivery of and deployed the Deer sign, initially in Wretham, but it will alternate with locations in this parish on a monthly basis. As there are eight approved locations there is little chance of over-familiarity developing.
 - 6.2 [13] **Cherry Tree Farm.** The Clerk reported that he had not heard back from the proprietor or any of the other bodies he had written to about this issue except Kay Gordon at Highways. He would take up her offer to speak with the Local Highway Manager team regarding possible repair of the damage.
- 7 **Correspondence.** The following correspondence was **received**:
 - 7.1 HM Revenue & Customs: *Important information for all employers* - (regarding year-end).
 - 7.2 Barclays Bank Plc: *Your business accounts - at a glance* - Balances on 31 March 2021.
 - 7.3 Barclays Bank Plc: *Your Community Accounts* - Balances on 27 February - 31 March 2021.

8 Planning.

- 8.1 **3PL/2020/0690/F: Brookside Farm, Breckles.** Retention of three replacement poultry houses along with six feed silos (replacement buildings). Planning Permission dated 22 March 2021.
- 8.2 **3PL/2020/0802/HOU: Breckles Gate, Wretham Road, Breckles.** One Bedroom Annexe. Notice of an Appeal to the Secretary of State against the decision of Breckland Council to refuse to grant planning (Ref. no. APP/F2605/W/21/3266251) was **received**. The Council **considered** the details in the Appellant's Statement of Case, and was very concerned to see that this was implying that the aim of the appeal was to obtain permission, not for this application but for application 3PL/2012/0847/F, which the applicant had previously withdrawn. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should write to the Planning Inspector pointing this out, sending a copy of the Council's original response to this earlier application.
- 8.3 **3PL/2021/0448/VAR: Open grazing land adjacent to Pig Patch House.** Variation of Condition No 2 on 3PL/2019/0897/F - amended design of dwelling. It was **resolved** that the various objections which the Council made to the original application still apply and should be repeated, but that this application was the lesser of two evils, as it appeared to be less obtrusive.
- 8.4 **3PL/2020/1479/F: Land Adjacent River Cottage, Lower Stow Bedon.** Proposed Dwelling - Revised plans. It was **resolved** that the Council still objected on the original grounds, and that any amendments were so minor as to make no difference,
- 8.5 **3PL/2021/0161/HOU: 3 Hall Cottages, Rockland Road, Lower Stow Bedon.** Single storey extension to side of dwelling. Planning Permission dated 5 April 2021 was **received**.

9 **Pingo Trail Car Park.** The Chairman reported that Highways had still failed to respond to his attempts to contact them. He will continue to press to try to get a site meeting. It was reported that, on a recent very fine day so many cars had been parked in the lay-by that some protruded onto the A1075. Cllr. Jessett advised that every time this is seen it should be reported to the Police because of the danger involved.

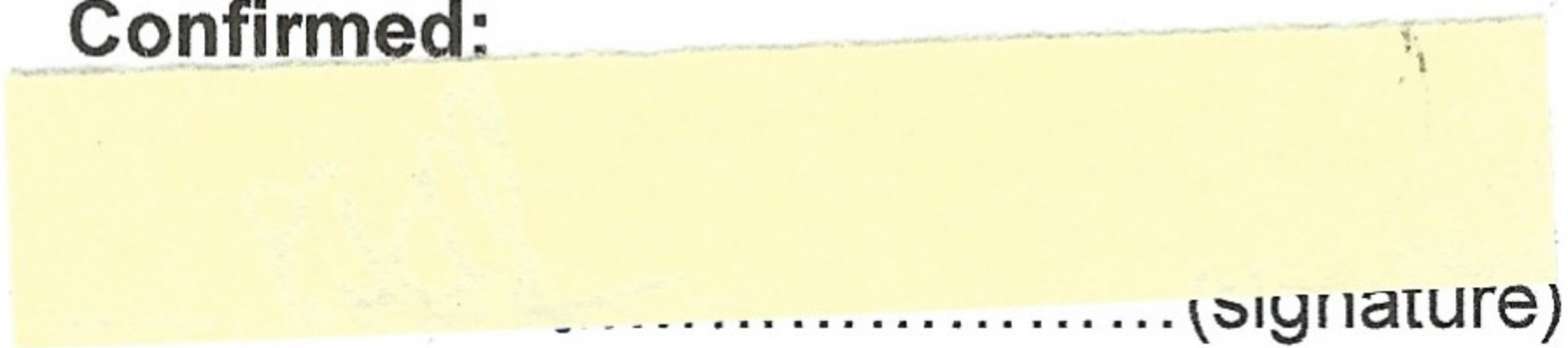
10 **Virtual meetings.** Notice from Luke Hall MP, Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, stating that the Government has decided not to bring forward emergency legislation to extend the regulations permitting virtual meetings from 7 May 2021 was **received**. This was on the grounds that primary legislation would be required, and there was not time in the Parliamentary program to achieve at this late stage. This is despite,

- Coronavirus full page Government newspaper adverts stating, "Every online meeting is making a difference";
- letters being sent to people previously advised to shield, stating, "It is important that you continue to keep the number of social interactions that you have low";
- the route-map out of lockdown saying that organised indoor meetings (and therefore the opening of village halls) will not be permitted until 17 May at the earliest;
- Scottish local authorities having had express provision to meet remotely prior to the pandemic, and the Welsh Government having since passed legislation coming into force on 1 May and makes express indefinite provision for Welsh local authorities to meet remotely;
- MPs being able to continue to attend the House of Commons remotely until 21 June; and
- The Speaker having announced that House of Commons Select Committees are to continue meeting virtually until 17 September.

11 **Action in the High Court.** It was **noted** that Lawyers in Local Government, the Association of Democratic Services Officers, Hertfordshire County Council and others have asked the High Court to rule that, as there is nothing in current legislation that actually debar Councils from meeting virtually, no changes are required and that virtual meetings are legally permitted under existing laws. The Court has agreed that this case will be fast-tracked, and a decision is expected by the end of April.

- 12 **Possible Rescheduling of May meeting.** It was **agreed** that, in the event that the action in the High Court was not successful, and it was deemed not to be legal to hold meetings virtually from 7 May onwards, the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council originally scheduled for 17 May would be moved to 5 May so that it could take place virtually. However, if the action succeeds it would be held virtually on 17 May.
- 13 **Delegation of powers to the Clerk.** In case it is deemed not to be legal to hold meetings virtually from 7 May onwards, and bearing in mind that in those circumstances it may well be impossible on occasions to, (a) find a suitable place for the Council to meet physically, or (b) to muster a quorum at such a meeting as a result of Coronavirus concerns, it was **agreed** that power be delegated to the Clerk to take all decisions on any matter where such delegation is legally possible, after consulting members by a virtual meeting or by other means.
- 14 **Call for evidence on virtual meetings.** It was **agreed** that the Clerk should respond on behalf of the Council asking for Parish Councils to have the power to take this decision in relation to all future meetings, so that this option exists, whether or not the Council at the time decides to make use of it.
- 15 **Finance**
- 15.1 **Subscriptions.** It was **resolved** that cheque number 100838 for £109.97 to the Norfolk Association of Local Councils be signed, in settlement of their invoice no. 4851 for the annual subscription for 2021/22. (*Local Government Act 1972 s.143*)
- 15.2 **Subscriptions.** It was **resolved** that cheque number 100839 for £29.95 (£24.96 + £4.99 VAT) to the Clerk be signed, in reimbursement for his having paid Spanglefish for hosting the Council's website for the year ending 10 April 2022. (*Local Government Act 1972 s. 111*)
- 15.3 **Subscriptions.** It was **noted** that on or around 26 April 2021 the Information Commissioner's Office will collect £35.00 from the Council's account by direct debit, being the new data protection fee due under the *Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018*. (*Local Government Act 1972 s.111*)
- 15.4 **Credits.** Receipt of the following credit was **noted**:
- 15.4.1 Breckland Council - Precept: £2,575.00 - 7 April 2021.
- 15.5 **Monthly Financial Report.** The report for the month ending 31 March 2021 was **received**.
- 16 **Matters for consideration at next meeting.** Pingo Trail Car Park update.
- 17 **Next meeting.** The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be on **Wednesday, 5 May, or Monday 17 May 2021, at 7.30 p.m. via video link**, depending upon the decision in the High Court action, as agreed in item 11 above.

Confirmed:

 (signature)

Alan Curtis
....., **Chairman**

5. May 2021

Scheduled future Meeting dates:

Wednesday 5 or Monday, 17 May 2021	Monday, 13 September 2021	Monday, 17 January 2022*
Monday, 14 June 2021	Monday, 18 October 2021	Monday, 14 February 2022
Monday, 12 July 2021	Monday, 15 November 2021	Monday, 14 March 2022
Monday, 16 August 2021*	Monday, 13 December 2021	

*If needed