

**GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of **GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL**

held at The Stevenson Centre at 7:00pm on Monday 11th December 2023

**PRESENT** Councillors Cllr David Young **Chairperson**

Cllr Marjorie Bark Cllr Tony Bavington

Cllr Sharon Bowman Cllr Kevin Graham Cllr Stewart Sheridan Cllr Jane Wakeman

Cllr Pamela White Cllr Judith Wilson

Cllr Colin Wright

District Cllr Ruth Hendry

Council Manager Mrs N Tamlyn

Council Administrator Mrs S Kubat

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jane Brooker, Melanie Keane, Tom Keane and

Tim Hurst. The Council Manager advised that Cllr Brooker intends to attend the next Committee meeting.

1. **CHAIRPERSON’S ADDRESS**

Cllr Young advised Members that Cllr Keane would be taking a short sabbatical from the Council due to ill health. Cllr Keane had suggested that he may return in the New Year as a Councillor but not as Chair; however, the Council Manager confirmed that this would not be possible as the Local Government Act requires the Chair, if present at a meeting, to preside and act as the Chair, if called upon. Members agreed that no decision needed to be made for the time being. Cllr Young would be standing in and asked the Council to be patient whilst he learns the role and sent best wishes to Cllr Keane.

Cllr White attended the St Andrews Church Over 60’s Christmas Lunch on Friday 8th December and reported that the 50 attendees had all enjoyed the meal and the choir from Wells Hall School.

1. **To consider Declarations of Interests and Councillor Requests for Dispensations relating to items on the Agenda**

Councillor Bavington declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item relating to the Bures Road Safety Group as he is a resident of Bures Road.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

**NONE**

1. **To confirm the Minutes of the FULL COUNCIL Meeting held on monday 13TH NOVEMBER 2023**

**AGREED** that the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 13th November 2023 are confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

**PAGE J073 ITEM 7 TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORTS**

**FROM:** Members discussed the flooding in Hawthorn Road and Poplar Road, an area which forms part of old BDC infrastructure, and the need to report the matter to Suffolk County Council for further investigation.

**TO:** Members discussed the flooding in Hawthorn Road and Poplar Road, an area which forms part of old BDC infrastructure, and the need to report the matter to Suffolk County Council for further investigation. BDC should also be informed in order for them to address the issue of ageing infrastructure.

1. **POLICE MATTERS**

The Council Manager advised that there was nothing to report from the Police.

Sgt Williams has recently visited the office with the new Great Cornard Community Officer, PC Dominic Manthorpe. The office now have an email address and mobile number in order to contact PC Manthorpe with any urgent issues. Both officers have been given the date for the Annual Parish meeting.

The Council Manager confirmed that the recent car theft in Dove House Meadow is currently being investigated, also sightings of a suspicious vehicle in Blackhouse Lane.

**7.** **TO RECEIVE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORTS**

District Councillor Hendry delivered the following report:

Blueprint for districts’ development adopted by councils

Babergh and MidSuffolk District councils have formally adopted their joint local plan – the blueprint for the districts’ future development until 2037.

The Joint Local Plan (JLP) has been designed to ensure residents and communities have sufficient housing, employment and investment, environment and heritage is protected and infrastructure is in place for healthy communities and thriving towns.

We can now move forward with the second phase of the JLP which will include housing allocations and settlement boundaries. With this in mind, parishes without Neighbourhood Plans are being encouraged to get them in place. There is practical and financial support available to support Parish Councils to enable this.

The First stage of the JLP can be viewed at www.babergh.gov.uk/jointlocalplan.

Making our listed buildings ready for the future

Owners of listed buildings could find it easier to make energy efficiency improvements under new plans being considered by BMSDC.

Both districts have thousands of listed properties, but these often suffer from poor energy performance due to factors such as limited insulation, poorly fitting windows and single glazing – which are costly to both the environment and owners.

Currently, property owners must apply for Listed Building Consent to make any changes. But the councils could now become the first rural councils to introduce Local Listed Building Consent Orders (LLBCO).

In specific areas, these would still safeguard valuable heritage assets but streamline the process for approving balanced and sensitive energy efficiency improvements. Technical specifications would be set out, and there would still be council oversight.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils declared a climate emergency in 2019 and this initiative aligns with the commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 while also safeguarding valuable heritage within both districts.

Councils launch new winter grant

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have launched a new grant to help communities tackle issues like social isolation and the need for ‘warm spaces’ this winter.

The ‘Living Well in Winter’ grant has been set up to help local VCFSE (voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise) organisations provide new, accessible spaces and activities for people to enjoy, or expand upon existing projects.

The funding means that the councils can help communities tackle social isolation and address the choice for some residents of whether to heat or eat this winter - as the cost-of-living crisis continues to take its toll.

Eligible projects might include after-school clubs, the continuation of warm spaces, subsidised family sports sessions, multi-generational activities, lunch clubs and sessions to help people discover new hobbies.

Parish councils, uniformed groups, sports clubs, preschools, parent-teacher associations, village halls and faith settings are among the list of organisations that can apply for the grant under the VCFSE banner, and those that submit an application must already be providing a service to residents of the district.

Groups can apply for a minimum of £500 and a maximum of £2,000. Applications are now open and can be submitted until Sunday, 17 December.

Cllr Wakeman asked whether libraries are included in VCFSE organisations, District Cllr Hendry suggested checking the BDC website.

Members discussed whether Great Cornard would be eligible for any Neighbourhood Plan funding due to its size, Cllr Hendry will look into the matter but advised that as BDC are encouraging all Parishes to adopt a Neighbourhood Plan it was unlikely that the size of the Parish would be an issue. Cllr Bark advised that there is currently funding available from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities until April 2024 but that this is likely to be extended into the next financial year when the Parish Council will be in a clearer position as to whether it will move forward with a Plan. **NOTED**

1. **TO CONSIDER THE ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD LIST – FOR NOTING**

The Items Brought Forward List was **NOTED**

1. **CORRESPONDENCE**
2. **Babergh District Council: Notice of adoption of the BMSDC Joint Local Plan**

**Part 1 2018 - 2037**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** the Notice of Adoption of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1 2018 – 2037

1. **FIFTEEN MINUTES FOR THE PUBLIC TO ASK QUESTIONS**

**At 7:16pm the Council invited electors of Great Cornard Parish Council to put questions to the Council.**

**As no electors were present the business of the meeting resumed at 7:16pm.**

1. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE STEVENSON CENTRE CAR PARK RESURFACING PROJECT AND PROPOSAL TO INSTALL CAR PARKING SPACES**

The Council Manager advised Members that this project has been delayed due to bad weather, but the contractor was hopeful that work will begin on Wednesday 13th December and will continue up until Christmas and in to the New Year. The car park will remain open while the work is carried out on the drainage with small areas being fenced off but will have to be closed for 2 days while the resurfacing is completed.

Members discussed the need to install marked parking bays due to the increasing popularity of The Stevenson Centre and the fact that people do not park to maximise the space, and to allocate spaces for staff members.

A new compound for the bins will be provided when the adult exercise area becomes part of the car park in the future and this will also be the location of EV charging stations.

Colne Contracts have provided an estimate of £1,400 to install the lines. With bays at 2.5m wide this would equate to 40 spaces plus 4 disabled spaces. At 2.6m wide this would be 36 spaces and 4 disabled spaces.

Members **AGREED** to instruct Colne Contracts to install lines for spaces at 2.6m wide with 4 disabled spaces and 3 staff spaces at a cost of £1,400 plus VAT.

Funds to be allocated from Earmarked Funds for The Stevenson Centre Car Park Project and the remainder of The Stevenson Centre Grant Budget.

1. **TO CONSIDER COSTINGS FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF THE STREETLIGHT UPGRADE PROGRAMME**

The Council Manager advised that Stage 1, Phase 1 of the Parish Council’s streetlight upgrade programme has now been completed.

Members discussed the suggested list of lights to be upgraded in the next stage and **AGREED** to continue work in the highlighted order on the list **(see Appendix A)** and to instruct SCC to carry out works to the value of £29,513.00.

Members **AGREED** to vire the FY23/24 Funds of £1,010.32 to the Street Light Fund which would provide a contingency of £4,107.17

Funds for this work are available from Earmarked Funds for Street Light Improvement.

1. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE INTERNAL AUDITOR ROLE**

The Council Manager advised Members that the Council’s Internal Auditor, Amanda Reavell, has sadly passed away.

It will now be necessary to appoint a new Internal Auditor in the early part of the New Year in order to complete the AGAR by the end of June. If no appointment is made it is possible to instruct a company such as Heelis and Lodge – Independent Internal Audit Services – to carry out the work.

Members **AGREED** to approach Heelis & Lodge for the cost of carrying out the Internal Audit on an interim basis and to request that Mr Dave Crimmin carry out the audit on their behalf.

1. **DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**
2. **Confirmation and adoption of the Minutes of the meetings held on 13th and 27th November 2023**

**AGREED** that the Minutes of the Development and Planning meetings held on Monday 13th and 27th November 2023 are confirmed as a correct record.

1. **Questions to Committee Chairperson**

**NONE**

1. **ART, SPORTS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**
2. **Confirmation and adoption of Minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2023**

**AGREED** that the Minutes of the Art, Sports and Leisure Committee meeting held on 27th November 2023 are confirmed as a correct record.

1. **Questions to Committee Chairperson**

**NONE**

1. **Ratification of Recommended Items**
2. **PAGE 2 ITEM 8 TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION FOR TREE WORKS FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL INSPECTIONS**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it accepts Evergreen Landscapes and Fencing’s quotation of £1,700.00 plus VAT for works required to various trees at the Cemetery,

St Andrew’s Churchyard, the Recreation Ground and the Country Park following the annual tree inspections. **AGREED**

Funds to be allocated from within the Agency Services, Recreation and Cemetery Budgets.

1. **PAGE 2 ITEM 9 TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION TO RENEW THE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT FOR THE EXTERNAL TOILET DOORS AT BLACKHOUSE LANE**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it accepts Healthmatic’s quotation of £919.80 plus VAT to renew the annual maintenance agreement for the automatic doors at the external toilets at Blackhouse Lane to include:

* 2 preventative maintenance visits per annum
* 1 reactive visit per annum
* parts to the value of £250 per annum, and
* additional call outs charged at £160 plus parts

**AGREED**

Funds to be allocated from the Blackhouse Lane Budget.

1. **PAGE 3 ITEM 10 TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION FOR REPLACEMENT GUTTERING AT THE BLACKHOUSE LANE PAVILION**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it accepts a quotation from MCG Property Maintenance & Groundworks for £932.44 (no VAT) to replace the broken downpipes and install protective hardened steel caging at the Blackhouse Lane pavilion subject to confirmation from the contractor that the caging would also protect the connection between downpipe and gutter which has now been received. **AGREED**

Funds to be allocated from the Blackhouse Lane Budget.

1. **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**
2. **Confirmation and adoption of Minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2023**

**AGREED** that the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on

27th November 2023 are confirmed as a correct record.

1. **Questions to Committee Chairperson**

**NONE**

1. **Ratification of Recommended Items**
2. **PAGE 1 ITEM 5 TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION TO RENEW THE 3 YEAR SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR THE CHURCH CLOCK**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it accepts Smith of Derby’s quotation for £810.00 plus VAT to renew the three year service agreement for the Church clock from 1st February 2024. This quotation provides for three yearly services including the service and testing of parts, any oiling/greasing required and a reduced call out charge. **AGREED**

Funds to be allocated from Earmarked Funds for the Church clock.

1. **PAGE 3 ITEM 8 POLICY MATTERS i) To consider adopting a Traveller Protocol**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it adopts the Traveller Protocol with the amendment to point 4 which proposes that Councillors also be included in those advised to ‘avoid any interaction with the travellers’. **AGREED**

1. **PAGE 3 ITEM 8 POLICY MATTERS ii) Environmental Policy Statement**

To **RECOMMEND** that Full Council that it adopts the Environmental Policy Statement, subject to the agreed amendments being made by Cllr Bark and an updated version being circulated to Members. **AGREED**

Cllr Bavington advised Members that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party had met to discuss the creation of a Great Cornard Plan. Member reviewed the notes from the meeting **(see Appendix B).** Cllr Bark advised she would be speaking to District Cllr Hendry with a view to arranging a meeting with BDC officers with experience of drawing up Neighbourhood Plans. Support is also available from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Members **AGREED** to authorise the Working Party to begin research into grant support and seeking advice on how to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan.

1. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**
2. **To approve the latest list of payments**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** the latest list of payments **(see Appendix C).**

1. **To receive a verbal report on the income and expenditure from Cllr Bowman as Internal Control Member**

Cllr Bowman advised Members that she had completed reconciliations on the two Great Cornard Parish Council bank accounts and The Stevenson Centre Charitable Trust bank account and had found no anomalies.

Cllr Bowman also checked salary payments checking that all pay awards were correctly calculated and the gross amount matched the bank account and again, found no anomalies.

The petty cash records were checked and found to be accurate.

Cllr Bowman intends to carry out monthly checks with the Acting RFO. **NOTED**

Cllr Bowman also advised that, due to the ongoing problems the Council Manager was experiencing with Barclays Bank, it may be advisable to look into the possibility of transferring the Parish Council and Stevenson Centre bank accounts to another bank, preferably one with a branch in Sudbury. **NOTED**

1. **PROPOSAL TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 1 OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT (1960) FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS OF BUSINESS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY INVOLVE THE LIKELY DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL AND EXEMPT INFORMATION**

**AGREED** to exclude press and public from the meeting.

1. **STAFF APPRAISALS**

Members reviewed Confidential Report Nos. G09 and G10 and **AGREED** to accept the recommendations of the reports.

1. **TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE RECRUITMENT OF A NEW COUNCIL MANAGER**

Cllr Bavington confirmed that both he and Cllr Graham had met with Dave Crimmin to discuss the recruitment a new Council Manager. No changes were needed to the Job description, Person Specification, application form or the Council Profile and it was proposed that interviews now take place over one day as opposed to two.

Members discussed the suggested timetable of dates below and for the role to be open to job share which had been suggested a by Member.

Recruitment process timescale:

1. Thursday 18th January 2024 Place advert
2. 5pm Thursday 1st February 2024 Closing date for applications
3. 10am Friday 2nd February 2024 Applications to be sent to Interview Panel

for consideration

1. 3pm Friday 2nd February 2024 Convene Interview Panel to shortlist

candidates (to be confirmed)

1. Friday 9th February 2024 Interviews held

Members **AGREED** to accept the above dates and update the recruitment process timetable and job advertisement accordingly. It was also **AGREED** to add ‘Open to job share’ to the advertisement. The interview panel was confirmed as Councillors Bavington, White, Bark, Wilson and Cllr Young will replace Cllr Keane. Mr Crimmin would also attend the interviews.

Mr Crimmin had advised Members of a locum service for Clerks which could be called upon if necessary and had also provided details of a recruitment agency who specialise in Public Sector recruitment. **NOTED**

The Council Manager confirmed that the holding advert had also been added to the Essex Association of Local Councils website.

**Meeting closed at 8:26pm**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Chair – Cllr Stewart Sheridan**

**APPENDIX A**







**APPENDIX B**

**MINUTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY MEETING**

**HELD MONDAY 4TH DECEMBER 2023 AT 3PM**

Present: Cllr Tony Bavington

Cllr Marjorie Bark

Cllr Stewart Sheridan

Council Administrator – Sarah Kubat

Apologies were received from Cllr David Young and Cllr Jane Wakeman.

Cllr Bavington proposed that Cllr Bark chair the meeting. Cllr Sheridan agreed.

Cllr Bavington explained that the Parish Council had previously explored the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan for Great Cornard but that this had been unsuccessful due to the need to conform to the Joint Local Plan which proposed more housing in Great Cornard which the Parish Council would be opposed to.

However, as Great Cornard is now the only local parish without a Neighbourhood Plan there is a danger that it could become the “dumping ground” for housing.

Cllrs could use Little Cornard NP as a guide as this includes several areas of shared interest and also information from the PIIP.

The Parish Council has always wanted to keep a green belt around the village and would be keen to acquire land around Kedington Hill to add to the Country Park.

As part 2 of the JLP has not yet been completed the Gt Cornard NP could possibly influence where any housing was located.

Cllr Bark suggested getting consultants in to help draft a Neighbourhood Plan and members discussed whether this was necessary and whether there was funding available to facilitate this.

Funding is available via the Department for Leveling Up, Housing and Communities. All grants issued must be spent during that financial year. Total grant available is £10,000 but this does not need to be applied for in one lump sum.

The first step in the process would be to gather information about Great Cornard such as any protected features such as the Country Park, surface water plan, what protections are necessary (ie traffic/light spillage/biodiversity/environmental etc). Also to identify any community assets and what facilities are wanted/needed in the village such as open spaces/playgrounds, via public consultation.

The timeline for completion of the NP would be in the region of 2 years. Pointers could be taken from existing NP’s.

Cllr Bark will investigate whether Babergh District Council have an Officer who could attend a meeting and offer any advice.

Cllr Bavington and the Council Manager will look at putting aside funds in the 2024/25 budget.

Members discussed passivhaus/air source heat pumps in social housing/new houses and solar panels/quality of new housing/conversion of existing houses to make them accessible.

It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that it move forward with a conceptualisation meeting before April 2024 with a view to using resources and advice from DLUHC and BDC to begin work on a Neighbourhood Plan.

Meeting closed at 3:50pm

**APPENDIX C**

**Great Cornard Parish Council BACS Payments up to 11th December 2023**

