

STOW BEDON & BRECKLES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Stow Bedon & Breckles Parish Council on Monday, 17 February 2014 at 7.30 p.m. in Caston Village Hall.

**Present: Councillors: Phil Childs (Chairman), Paul Howe, Dawn Jessett, John Morfoot, Lee Pilkington.
Julian Gibson (Clerk)**

- 1 **Apologies for absence.** None.
- 2 **Declarations of interest.** None.
- 3 **Dispensations.** None.
- 4 **Public participation session.**
 - 4.1 District Councillor Phil Cowen updated the Council on the recommendations of the Boundary Commission, and the alterations they had made to the submission made by Breckland Council (see item 7.13). He said that at last full details of the Government funding had arrived, and so his Council had been able to agree a balanced budget for the next two years, although following that there will be a substantial deficit. He spoke of the intention to create a Local Asset Backed Vehicle as a way of hopefully developing his Council's spare land plots. These may well include The Close in Stow Bedon. Finally, he mentioned the sorry business of the Breckles Heath development, saying he believed that his Council did not have the power to refuse the applications submitted under the General Permitted Development Order (see item 8.2).
 - 4.2 County Councillor Ian Monson said that his Council had also, that very day, agreed a budget for next year despite a certain amount of playing politics. There will be no increase in the County's portion of Council Tax, but this has involved various cuts, including to the Recycling Centres which would stop accepting tyres and paint. There would also be a reduction in opening hours, and perhaps in the future a charge of £2/visit. Members considered that this was likely to increase the volume of fly-tipping, which is of course dealt with by Breckland rather than the County Council. Councillor Monson said he would speak to the Trails Officer about Peddars Way now that it seemed likely that the Breckles Heath development would remain, and so the destruction of the National Trail would continue unabated.
 - 4.3 The matter of the name of the road through Lower Stow Bedon was raised. The Clerk said that although Highways thought it was called Rockland Road all the way from the B1111 to Rockland, Google calls it Brays Lane from the junction with Stoway Lane, while some residents of Hall Cottages call it Hockham Road. On the Royal Mail website none of the properties have any road name. The Clerk will ask Breckland Council, which is responsible for naming roads, and put the matter on the next agenda.
 - 4.4 The Clerk also mentioned an email he had received about maintenance of ditches, and was asked to put this on the next agenda.
- 5 **Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 16 December 2013 were **confirmed** and **signed**.
- 6 **Matters arising.** [10] **Pingo Trail car park and lay-by.** Councillor Monson said he had, as requested, contacted the Cabinet Member for Transport suggesting that the lay-by should be closed as such, and access to the car park improved. A response is awaited.

7 Correspondence. The following correspondence was **received**:

- 7.1 Norfolk Parish Training Partnership: *Initial Training for Clerks and Councillors*.
- 7.2 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *Norfolk Link* - December 2013.
- 7.3 Norfolk County Council: *Better Broadband for Norfolk Information Sheet 15*.
- 7.4 Norfolk Constabulary: *Parish/Ward Crime Statistics - 1-30 November 2013*.
- 7.5 Barclays Bank Plc: *Community Account Statement* - 30 November - 31 December 2013.
- 7.6 Barclays Bank Plc: *Active Saver Account Statement* - 30 November - 31 December 2013.
- 7.7 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *Funding Information Evening* - 31 January 2014.
- 7.8 Norfolk Association of Local Councils: *Funding Information Morning* - 4 February 2014.
- 7.9 *Clerks & Councils Direct* - January 2014.
- 7.10 Norfolk County Council: *Norfolk Gritting Routes Leaflet*.
- 7.11 Norfolk County Council: *Highway and Community Ranger Visit* - 7 March 2014.
- 7.12 MAGPAS: *Appeal letter*.
- 7.13 Local Government Boundary Commission: *Electoral Review of Breckland: Draft Recommendations*. The Boundary Commission recommendation is a new two-member Wayland Ward, to be made up by Hockham, Merton, Shropham, Stow Bedon & Breckles, and Thompson (as at present, but excluding Wretham) plus Griston, Caston, Great Ellingham, Little Ellingham, Rocklands, Snetterton, and Quidenham. The Clerk was asked to write to the Breckland Council and the Boundary Commission pointing out that there is no sense of community cohesion between the parishes grouped along the A1075 with those a long way to the east or those south of the A11, whereas there are strong links with Wretham Parish. He will ask them to reconsider their proposals in a way that will maintain the grouping of parishes along the A1075 designated corridor of movement.

8 Planning.

- 8.1 **3PL/2013/0951/EU: Oakglen, Caston Road, Stow Bedon.** Use of the land as a single dwelling without complying with condition 1 attached to on Planning Permission ref. W3259. Certificate of Lawful Use or Development dated 6 December 2013 was **received**.
- 8.2 **3AG/2014/0001 & 0002/AG: Thetford Forest Park, Breckles Heath.** Applications under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, both for Construction of new poultry arc (*recte* retrospective application for three poultry arcs each). The objection made by the Clerk on the Council's behalf was **confirmed**.
- 8.3 **3PL/2013/0730, 0731, 0733, 0736, 0737/F: Breckles Heath.** Notice of Appeals made to Secretary of State was **received**.

9 Casual Vacancies. Once again a number of parishioners had been approached, but without success as yet. The Clerk was asked to keep including the item on future agendas.

10 Stow Bedon Church. It was **noted** that the Chairman had provided a letter of support for the application for funding being submitted to the National Lottery Fund by Stow Bedon Parochial Church Council.

11 Wayland Partnership. A letter asking for support for an application for funding being submitted by the Wayland Partnership Development Trust for a project to investigate the impact of the Great War on this area was **received**. It was **agreed** that the Council should write a letter of support for this application.

- 12 **Insurance.** It was **agreed** that the Clerk be authorised to sign a Long Term Agreement for the Council's insurance, and therefore benefit from a fixed premium for a three-year period, with a 5% discount.
- 13 **Financial Regulations.** The Council's Financial Regulations were **reviewed**, and **agreed**.
- 14 **Standing Orders.** The Council's Standing Orders were **reviewed**, and after some minor amendments were **agreed**.
- 15 **Asset Register.** The Council **reviewed** the contents of the Asset Register, and **agreed** the valuations for insurance purposes.
- 16 **Risk Assessment.** The Council **agreed** the Risk Assessment 2014.
- 17 **Annual Review of the system of internal control.** The Council formally reviewed and approved its system of internal control.
- 18 **Precept.** The Clerk explained that, as had happened last year, Central Government had given a grant of £305k to Breckland Council to be passed down to Parish & Town Councils to mitigate against the impact of the changes made to the method of administration of Council Tax Support. The Leader of Breckland Council had received an email from the Department of Communities and Local Government confirming that the "funding already includes an amount to pass on to parishes," but in spite of this the Breckland Cabinet had decided to keep all the grant and use it to reduce its own share of Council Tax, meaning that in order to receive the same amount of money as last year, parishes would have to increase their precepts.

Following a campaign by the National Association of Local Councils the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State wrote to the Leader of Breckland Council saying, "the element of localised council tax support funding provided to local authorities which reflects reductions in town and parish tax bases should be passed down to these councils", and "the fact that the town and parish element of the funding is not separately identified and is not ring-fenced should not be used as an excuse to avoid passing down funding." In spite of this Breckland Cabinet had decided to stick to its plans and keep the grant for itself, and this Council had been obliged to set its Precept on this basis.

However, following a vigorous campaign headed by the Chairman of Swanton Morley Parish Council, the Leader of Breckland Council has now said that his council's decision had been taken as the result of a "misunderstanding" of what the Government had meant (although it is difficult to see how the statements could be interpreted in any other way). As a result, an additional Cabinet Meeting has been called, at which it will be proposed that the full £305k is passed down to parishes. It was **agreed** that, as the amount of Grant this Council will receive is small, no change should be made to the Precept already submitted. The grant is only a transitional measure, and will eventually be withdrawn.

- 19 **Finance.**
- 19.1 **Insurance.** It was **resolved** that cheque number 100632 for £398.05 to Broker Network Limited be signed, being the renewal premium for the Aviva insurance policy with Came & Co for 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014, having taken into account the 5% discount received as a result of the Council's agreeing to the Long Term Contract. (*Local Government Act 1972 s. 111 & s. 140(1)*)
- 19.2 **Monthly Financial Report.** The report for the month ending 31 January 2014 was **received**.
- 20 **Matters for consideration at next meeting.**
- 20.1 Name of road through Lower Stow Bedon.
- 20.2 Ditch maintenance.

21 Next meeting. The next meeting of the Parish Council, was **confirmed** as **Monday, 17 March 2014**, at 7.30 p.m. in Caston Village Hall.

Confirmed:

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Phil Childs, Chairman

17 March 2014

Scheduled future Meeting dates:

Monday, 14 April 2014	Monday, 18 August 2014*	Monday, 15 December 2014
Monday, 12 May 2014	Monday, 15 September 2014	Monday, 19 January 2015*
Monday, 16 June 2014	Monday, 20 October 2014	Monday, 16 February 2015
Monday, 14 July 2014	Monday, 17 November 2014	Monday, 16 March 2015

*If needed