

Blackthorn Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 at 7.30pm in Blackthorn Village Hall.

Councillors Present: Mrs J. Lamont (JL) Chairman, Cllr. Mr R. Rue (RR) Vice-Chairman, Mr C. Hegarty-Swain (CHS), Mr R. Burden (RB) and Mrs A. Stevenson (AS).

In Attendance: T. Charlesworth Clerk/RFO

24.01 Apologies:

RESOLVED: To accept apologies from:-

- Cllr. R. Lamont due to personal commitments.

24.02 Declarations of Interest: None declared.

24.03 Public Participation: No attendance.

24.04 Minutes: To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6 December 2023 at 7.30pm previously circulated.

RESOLVED: Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 6 December 2023 at 7.30pm were approved and signed by the Chairman Cllr. J. Lamont with the following amendment:

- a. Clerk: Amendment to M11/2023-23.200-b-i should be recorded under M11/2023-23.200-a-i.

24.05 Reports:

- a. **Chairman's Report:** Following heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding the Chairman contacted County Cllr. I. Corkin who arranged to visit the village; the meeting took place on 3 January 2024. MP Victoria Prentice also visited the village on the 12th January to establish the facts and visited the drainage ditch causing the issues. Trees dumped at the entrance to the rail track have been reported to Network Rail. It is now clear that the new trench, cut out by Network Rail, has caused the track to flood. The MP has written to the Environment Agency and Network Rail at the highest level to start discussions.
- b. **Clerk's Report:**
 - i. Website/Emails: Navitas Design: Setup of new 'invoice' mailbox completed and mailbox quota upped following full inbox.
 - ii. A precept requirement of £13,935.00 has been submitted to C.D.C.
 - iii. Planning - 23/03071/OUT – Resolution submitted to C.D.C. - That the parish council had no objections and made the following comments: The Parish Council draws attention to the visibility splay that is presented as a 40mph limit when it is a 50mph limit and that further development will have a negative effect on local flooding issues.
 - iv. Grass Cutting Contract: Contractors advised of acceptance of quote.
 - v. Blackthorn Brook Clearance: Quote requested.

24.06 Vacancy/Co-option: The Parish Council is in receipt of no applications.

24.07 District or County Councillors: No reports received.

24.08 Governance:

- a. **Civility & Respect:** The Parish Council is in agreement that the Civility & Respect Pledge is a duplication of the Code of Conduct, the only difference being that the Code of Conduct has seven principles and the Pledge has ten.

RESOLVED:

- That the Parish Council abides by the Code of Conduct and therefore, does not deem it necessary to sign up to the Pledge.
- The Parish Council will respond to the survey 'Why not signed up'.
- i. **Training:** In line with the Code of Conduct.
- ii. **Dignity at Work Policy:** Draft c/fwd to next meeting.
- iii. **To put in place a training programme for councillors and staff:** Draft, in line with the Code of Conduct, to be considered at next meeting.
- b. **Policy:**
 - i. **Training:** See 24.08-1-i and iii.
- c. **Standing Orders:** To confirm updates and contents of Para.18: C/fwd.
- d. **Risk Assessment:** To confirm the addition of the matrix guide: C/fwd.
- e. **Data Protection Regulations:**
 - i. **Generic Emails:** All councillors to try and complete setup by March.
- f. **Annual Review of Documents:** Documents to be reviewed by 31 March; C/fwd.
 - ii. **The Characteristics of Effectiveness of Internal Audit:**
 - iii. **Internal Audit Review of Effectiveness of Internal Auditor:**
 - iv. **Asset Register:**
 - v. **Financial Regulations:**

24.09 Project Reports:

- a. **Drainage/Flooding:**
 - i. **River Bank Repairs/Network Rail:** See 24.05-a.
 - ii. **Blackthorn Brook:** Update on last 15m clearance: Action sits with the Environment Agency as it is a strategic waterway.
- b. **Village Plan: Review of proposals:**
 - i. **White Traffic Calming Gates:** Someone may have been located that may be able to spray paint wooden gates.
 - ii. **Proposed new gate on Station Road at the Junction of Weir Lane:** To consider any information relating to an application for permission of proposed new gate: C/fwd.
 - iii. **20mph Application:** O.C.C. – Blackthorn 20mph Limits: Consultation has been completed by O.C.C. and signs have been erected however, the 20mph limit is not currently active; noted that the 20mph speed limit signs have been put on posts next to the white gates rather than on them. Clerk to liaise with Cllr. C. Hegarty-Swain to formulate a letter to O.C.C. regarding notification of decision, final drawings and due notice of switch over. VAS data to be collected between now and switch over.
- c. **O.C.C. - RE: Changes to Schedule 1 of S101 grass cutting agreement:** To consider and approve changes: Changes to the schedule to be shared with the grass cutting contractors; decision C/fwd to next meeting.

24.10 Finance:

- a. **Payments prior to the Meeting:** To record and approve any invoices paid prior the meeting as listed on the payment schedule:
 - i. ICO - Renewal confirmation ICO:00015425099 - £35.00 – Paid by D/D.
 - ii. Coversure Insurance - FW: Working From Home Insurance Renewal – Renewal 10 January 2024 - £134.37 – Cheque No: 101490; to approach Merton PC for a contribution.
- b. **Receipts:** To record and approve any receipts received as listed:
 - i. Scottish Widows Bank – St. No: 52 – Interest £42.92 – 1 Jan 2024.
- c. **Payments:**
 - i. **Salary(s):**
 - Salary Dec 2023 - £299.00 - Expenses £1.20 – Mileage £4.80 – Home Working Allowance £26.00 – Total £331.05 - Cheque No: 101491.
 - Salary Jan 2024 - £299.00 – Expenses £2.39 – Mileage £4.80 – Home Working Allowance £26.00 – Total £332.19 – Cheque No: 101492.
 - ii. **Membership Renewal:**

RESOLVED:

- Not to renew Community First Oxfordshire Membership 25/2025 - Parish Council (population below 300)- £35 - Parish Council (population between 301-1000) - £55. Electorate for 2022/23 264 – 261 for 2023/24.

- d. **Payroll:** To record submission to HMRC: Up to date.

RESOLVED:

- In order to meet with the PAYE monthly pay from 6th to 5th of each month the Parish Council is to ensure that salary is paid at the end of each month.

- e. **Bank Reconciliation:** Presented prior to the meeting.

- i. To accept the Bank Reconciliation up to 31.12.2023 (Barclays issue date 19.1.2023):

Balance B/fwd	£27,778.34
Add Total Receipts	£ 809.57
Less Total Payments	£ 5,184.48
Balance C/fwd	£23,403.43

- ii. To accept the Bank Reconciliation up to 19.1.2024 (Barclays issue date 19.1.2024):

Balance B/fwd	£23,403.43
Add Total Receipts	£ 42.92
Less Total Payments	£ 169.37
Balance C/fwd	£23,276.98

- f. **Budget Comparison:** To accept the budget comparison up to the 1 February 2024; noted that SLCC has paid back the £72.00 overpaid.

- Outstanding allotment rents to be chased up.

- g. **Financial Controls:** Quarterly check to be completed and signed off by Internal Control and RFO: With the absence of Cllr. R. Lamont this was carried forward to next meeting.

- h. **VAT Spreadsheet:** Presented prior to the meeting; was accepted, showing an outstanding amount of £405.62; claim to be made up to December.

- i. **Quotes:**

- i. **Traffic Calming Gates:** Quote to be obtained for the spraying of wooden gates.
- ii. **Blackthorn Brook: To consider quote for 2024/25:**

RESOLVED:

- To accept and approve the quote for £2,850.00 plus VAT.

- j. **Grants/Funding:** To consider any relevant applications for funding: None.

- k. **End of Year Audit 2022/23:** Internal Audit – Actions following report:-

- i. **Document Management:** Ongoing.

- l. **Budget 2024/25:**

- i. **Council Tax Base:** The precept requirement will show on the council tax bill for a band D property in 2024-25 as a 9% increase on last year based on the council tax base.

24.11 Planning:

- a. **Planning: Applications:** To consider all recent applications received from Cherwell District Council detailed below and any other planning applications submitted and published on the CDC planning portal between the agenda being published and the meeting: None noted.
- b. **Decision Notices:**
 - i. **22/01976/OUT** - Proposal: Outline Application (except for access) for residential development of up to 75 dwellings including bungalows; open spaces (including children's play space); community woodland and other green space; new vehicular and pedestrian access off Blackthorn Road; and associated landscaping, earthworks, parking, engineering works, demolition, and infrastructure - Location: OS Parcel 3489 Adjoining And South West Of B4011, Allectus Avenue, Ambrosden - Parish(es): Blackthorn Ambrosden - Decision: OUTLINE PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS – Date of Decision: 19.12.2024
- c. **Appeal Notices:** None noted.
- d. **Withdrawal Notices:** None noted.
- e. **Planning Matters:**
 - i. **Network Rail:** Nearing the end of control period.
 - ii. **EWR** opening to Milton Keynes.
 - iii. **C.D.C. - Proposed Neighbourhood Area Designation:** The parish of Heyford Park - consultation will run from Thursday 18 January 2024 and any comments should be submitted by 6pm, Monday 4 March 2024: Noted.
 - iv. **C.D.C. - CHERWELL DC** - Planning Application Validation Checklist Consultation - NOW LIVE. Comment until 11th March 2024 - consultation period is from Monday 15th January to Monday 11th March 2024 (at 11:59pm): Requested a list of differences from previous checklist.
 - v. **O.C.C.** - Tell us your views - Draft Oxfordshire Councils Charter - Consultation Now Live - This consultation will close at midnight on Sunday 11 February: Noted.

24.12 Clerk's Contract:

- a. **To consider and approve Clerk's updated contract based on the NALC Model 2011.**
- b. **Upon acceptance and approval to be signed:** Draft to be updated with a view to complete at the next meeting.

24.13 Village Maintenance Tasks: Review of proposed job role: C/fwd.

24.14 Community Emergency Plan Survey – 2024 - O.C.C. - FOR ACTION: - Deadline for return is April 1st 2024:

- a. **Emergency Plan:** To review.

24.15 Attendance at Meetings: No attendance recorded:-

- a. **O.C.C.** - Oxfordshire County Council Lane Rental Scheme Proposal Consultation Meeting.
- b. **C.D.C.** - Invitation - Community & Parish Council Networking Event - Wednesday 24 January 2024 - Cherwell District Council Offices Bodicote House Bodicote OX15 4AA - 10am – 1pm.
- c. **CFO** - Delivering the Housing that your Rural Community Needs - Online Event 5th February 2024.
- d. **O.C.C.** - Next PTRs meeting: March 19th 2024.

24.16 Correspondence/Emails: (See Appendix 4): (B.P.C. 313): Comments to be considered and any matters for the next agenda not already considered as part of this agenda: None noted.

- a. **BPC313(56): O.C.C. - Let's make Oxfordshire Smoke Free - PLEASE get involved:** No decision.

24.17 Village Matters:

- a. **Facebook: Matters for Parish Council consideration raised through the village Facebook page:**
 - i. **C.D.C.** - Community First Oil Buying Scheme.
- b. **Publication:** To consider approve matters for publication through the Parish Council website or village Facebook page: The Parish Council acknowledge the issues raised regarding the flooding and overwhelmed sewage pump.

24.18 Matters for Further Information or Discussion at the Next Meeting:

- a. **Matters for Further Information:**
 - None.
- b. **Matters for Discussion at the next meeting:**
 - Review of Documents and Internal Auditor.

24.19 Date of Next Parish Council Meeting: 1 February 2024 at 7.30pm.

- a. **7 March 2024 at 7:30pm:** To confirm if meeting is required.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:25pm.
Draft Minutes subject to Confirmation

Minutes approved 7 March 2024 – M2/2024-24.23
Signed by the Chairman: J. Lamont.