

Blackthorn Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7 November 2024 at 7.30pm in Blackthorn Village Hall.

Councillors Present: Mrs J. Lamont (JL) Chairman, Cllrs. Mrs A. Stevenson (AS), R. Lamont (RL).

In Attendance: T. Charlesworth Clerk/RFO
One member of the Public.

24.194 Apologies:

RESOLVED: To accept apologies from Cllrs: Mr R. Rue (RR) Vice-Chairman and Mr E. Burborough (EB).

24.195 **Declarations of Interest:** None declared.

24.196 **Public Participation:** The Chairman welcomed member(s) of the public: Discussions took place regarding the retendering of the 108 Bus Service at the end March/beginning of April 2025, which currently provides one bus per day from Blackthorn Village to Bicester and is utilised; it was proposed that the Parish Council may consider liaising with Stagecoach.

24.197 **Minutes:** To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3 October 2024 at 7.30pm previously circulated and taken as read.

RESOLVED: Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 3 October 2024 at 7.30pm were approved and signed by the Chairman Cllr. J. Lamont.

24.198 Reports:

- a. **Chairman's Report:** None.
- b. **Clerk's Report:** None.

24.199 **Vacancy/Co-option:**

- a. **Vacancy:** No applications.

24.200 **District or County Councillors:** None present.

24.201 **Governance**

a. **Policy:**

- **Employment:** Sexual, General Harassment: To be circulated for review and adoption at next meeting.
- b. **Generic Emails:** Set up information provided: Remaining three councillors to set up generic emails.

c. **Risk Assessment:**

- a. **Draft Health & Safety Risk Assessment for Volunteers:** C/fwd.

d. **Virtual Attendance at Meetings:** Allowing councils to use virtual attendance at council meetings. A consultation paper has been published with a closing date of 19 December:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings>: Responded on-line at the meeting in favour of virtual attendance at council meetings.

24.202 **Project Reports:**

a. **Drainage/Flooding:**

- i. **River Bank Repairs/Network Rail:** No update.

b. **Blackthorn Brook:**

- i. **Last 15m:** No update on hand over to O.C.C: C/fwd.
- ii. **Clearance:** Work completed.

c. **Village Plan: Review of proposals:** To consider erection of horse and pedestrian signs as part of proposals.

- i. **White Traffic Calming Gates:** Gates to be reviewed and prioritized: C/fwd.
- 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 –** Update on VAS replacement: No update.
- iv. **A41:** Reduction of Speed Limit: Nothing further to report at this time.

24:203: **Play Area:** Nothing to report.

24:204: **Finance:**

a. **Payments prior to the Meeting:** To record and approve any invoices paid prior the meeting as listed on the payment schedule:

- i. **Salary –** Salary – October 2024 - £281.60.

b. **Receipts:** To record and approve any receipts received as listed:

- i. **Clerk repayment of £59.99** originally paid for the purchase of Microsoft 365.

c. **Payments:**

i. **Salary(s):**

- Salary November 2024 – £299.00 - Payment approval required for end of October.
- OALC - Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024/25 – Scale 17 - £15.58 per hr - back dated to 1st April 2024.

RESOLVED:

- To approve payment for end of November; to be verified at next meeting. Following submission to HMRC - PAYE.

RESOLVED: To accept and approve payment of invoices listed on the payment schedule:-

- ii. Expenses/Home Working Allowance October 2024: Total £39.90.
 - iii. HMRC – October - 2024 £17.40
 - iv. M.R. & J.S. Cross — Inv. No's: 305 - £150.00 (Cutting Allotment Hedge 9.10.2024) - 306 - £348.00 (Grass cutting Play Area – 9.10.2024/23.10.2024) – 307 - £792.00 (Grass cutting Verges 24.10.2024) – Total £1,290.00.
 - v. M.R & J.S. Cross – Inv. No: 309 - £3,420.00 – Clearance Blackthorn Brook – October 2024.
 - vi. R. Lamont – Reimbursement purchase of hard drives as approved at previous meeting (invoice not rec'd at time of printing agenda) – Amazon £42.99.
- d. **OALC** – To note the Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024/25 to be implemented from 1 April 2024.
- e. **Subscriptions: OALC** - Subscriptions 2025/26 – Noted OALC Approved an increase of 7%.
- f. **Request(s) for Funding:** None.
- g. **Payroll:** To record submission to HMRC: Up to date; to review how to submit back pay.
- h. **Bank Reconciliation:** Presented prior to the meeting: To accept the Bank Reconciliation 1.10.2024 -31.12.2024 (Barclays issue date 21.10.2024):
- | | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Balance B/fwd | £26,312.49 |
| Add Total Receipts | £ 103.41 |
| Less Total Payments | £ 1,666.68 |
| Balance C/fwd | £24,749.22 |

i. **Budget Comparison:****RESOLVED:**

- To accept the budget comparison up to the 7 November 2024: Noted that everything is currently within budget apart from VAT which is not budget for.

j. **Financial Controls:**

- i. Quarterly check to be completed and signed off by Internal Control and RFO: Completed for period 19 June – 18 October 2024 signed by Internal Controller Cllr. R. Lamont and the RFO.
- k. **VAT Spreadsheet:** Presented prior to the meeting; was accepted, showing an outstanding amount of £237.31 up to 7 November 2024.; Claim submitted to HMRC for £726.20 inclusive and up to the end of September.

l. **Quotes:**

- i. **Traffic Calming Gates:** Quote to be obtained for the spraying of wooden gates: C/fwd.
- ii. **Traffic Calming Gates – Spraying:** C/fwd as above.
- iii. **Grass Cutting/Allotment Hedge 2025/26:**

RESOLVED:

- To accept and approve the grass cutting and allotment hedge quotes for 2025/26 to be reviewed on a yearly basis as follows:
 - Grass cutting and strimming of Blackthorn village verges.
 - £690.00 per cut plus vat.
 - Grass cutting and strimming of Blackthorn village play area. We would include hedge cutting of perimeter hedges in September which in previous years has been undertaken as a good will gesture.
 - £155.00 per cut plus vat.
 - Hedge cutting of allotment hedge on Station Road.
 - £130.00 plus vat.

iv. **Clearance of Blackthorn Brook 2025/26:****RESOLVED:**

- To accept and approve the quote for the Clearance of Blackthorn Brook 2025/26 to be reviewed on a yearly basis as follows:
 - £2,850.00 plus vat (no price increase from 2024).

v. **Play Area:**

- **Resistance Penetration Test:** C/fwd.

m. **Grants/Funding:** To consider any relevant applications for funding:

- i. **Parish Council Website:** Act Now to secure your government incentive and .GOV.UK domain: No plans to change from .org.uk.
- n. **Budget 2025/26:** Draft figures circulated prior to the meeting were reviewed and amended to include OALC Subscription increase; salary increase resulting in an 18% increase based on the current year's Tax Base.

RESOLVED:

- To provisionally approve the proposed increase of 18% subject to any major changes to the Tax Base for the coming year.
- To accept that the majority increase will be the ongoing/annual costs, from general funds rather than ring fenced funds, for the clearance of Blackthorn Brook essential for flood alleviation.

- To review fund allocation at the next meeting to include the consideration/approval of £4,000.00 set aside for survey to be used for flood prevention works..

24.205 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
- i. **Symmetry Park:**
LAND AT SYMMETRY PARK, BICESTER
A detailed Planning Applications is being prepared to deliver Planning Permission for up to 25,856 sqm (Gross External Area) of logistics floorspace, within Class B8 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order with Ancillary offices Use Class E(g)(i), together with associated site infrastructure at Symmetry Park Bicester. The site is located adjacent to the A41, accessed from the existing Symmetry Park Bicester: To be reviewed.
- b. **Decision Notices:** None noted.
- c. **Appeal Notices:** None noted.
- d. **Withdrawal Notices:** None noted..
- e. **Planning Matters:**
 - i. **Network Rail:** No update.

24.206 Clerk's Contract:

- a. **To consider and approve Clerk's updated contract based on the NALC Model 2011:** Updated with amendments; draft policies to be reviewed next meeting.
- b. **Upon acceptance and approval to be signed:** C/fwd.

24.207 Changes to website accessibility compliance to WCAG 2.2AA: Cllr R. Lamont would look at compliancy.**24.208 Footpaths:** No update with landowner:**24.209 108 Bus Service:** Consultation with O.C.C: To consider representation at the proposed meeting with affected parishes: See 24/196. A letter to be drafted to Stagecoach.**24.210 Training:**

- a. **To consider any further training:** Offered by OALC, SLCC and NALC: None noted.

24.211 Attendance at Meetings: No attendance recorded:-

- a. **O.C.C. - PTRs meeting:** Teams link and calendar entry – Tuesday 19th November at 1.30pm.
- b. **C.D.C. - Invitation to Cherwell Parish Liaison Meeting - 06 November - (6-8pm).** This will be held remotely via MS Teams.

24.212 Correspondence/Emails: B.P.C. 322: Comments to be considered and any matters for the next agenda not already considered as part of this agenda:

- a. **BPC322(8) East West Railway** Company's door-knocking exercise re-starting.
- b. **BPC322(21) Silvertime Legal** - Guest Speaker for Blackthorn Parish Council: Attended village coffee morning.
- c. **BPC322(29) C.D.C. - Review of Cherwell District Council Polling Districts and Polling Places Consultation - consultation closes on Tuesday 11 November 2024:** To note no change to polling station for Blackthorn

24.213 Village Matters:

- a. **Facebook: Matters for Parish Council consideration raised through the village Facebook page:** The Parish Council review matters on the Facebook page and advise authors to raise matters for the agenda through the parish council clerk:
- b. **Publication:** To consider approve matters for publication through the Parish Council website or village Facebook page/Website:
 - C.D.C. updates.

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

- a. **Matters for Further Information:** None.
- b. **Matters for Discussion at the next meeting:**

24.215 Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

- a. **5 December 2024 at 7.30pm:** Parish Council Meeting to be held in Blackthorn Village Hall.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:11pm.

Draft Minutes subject to Confirmation:

Approved: 6 February 2025

Minute Ref: M1/2025-25.4

Signed: *J. Lamont*

Chairman Cllr. J. Lamont