# BLEDLOW-CUM-SAUNDERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Bledlow Village Hall on Thursday 7th September 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors M Blackwell, S Breese, P Castle, N Cox, A Lord, S Reading (Chairman) and A Sage.

Clerk: Jocelyn Cay

Member of the public: Bill Bendyshe-Brown

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from County and District Councillor Carl Etholen, Councillor June Butler and Councillor Sue Bird.

1. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3rd August 2017**

Cllr Breese queried paragraph 7 regarding broadband as he felt it did not accurately represent the views he put forward at the meeting. Subject to an amendment to paragraph 7 the minutes were approved after being proposed by Cllr Blackwell and seconded by Cllr Sage. The clerk will make the necessary amendment and recirculate the minutes. They will be signed by the chairman at the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

1. **Member of the public**
   1. Bill Bendyshe-Brown attended the meeting as a member of the public rather than in his role of County Councillor. He raised concerns over an overgrown verge at the top of West Lane, Bledlow which is impeding the view of traffic making the corner dangerous. The council reviewed the Devolved Services Agreement (DSA) with Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) to determine who is responsible for the verge and its clearance. It was agreed that, after consideration of the Land Registry maps, the verge belongs to BCC and is therefore the responsibility of the parish council as per the DSA. The clerk agreed to arrange a contractor to clear the verge. There was concern however that the verge is not specifically marked on the maps drawn up under the DSA and that other similar verges in the parish may also have been missed off the maps. The clerk will contact the Devolution Office at BCC to request a review of the areas the parish council is responsible for under the DSA.

**Action: Clerk**

* 1. Mr Bendyshe-Brown raised a second issue regarding Bledlow Cross, a registered ancient monument in the parish that is currently very overgrown and at risk of being damaged. Maintenance and clearance of the site is not possible by volunteers as the cross is located on private land believed to belong to the Carington Estate. It was agreed that Cllr Sage would advise the clerk of the local representative of Historic England so that the overgrown monument can be reported. It was also agreed that the clerk should contact the Carington Estate to remind them of their duties.

**Action: Cllr Sage & Clerk**

1. **Planning matters**
   1. Current applications were discussed and responses approved. In particular Cllr Castle declared an interest in the application for a new build house located on land between The Orchards and The Crofters on Chinnor Road, Bledlow Ridge. There was general concern over this application and that an orchard on the land had been felled prior to the planning application being made in an effort to avoid clauses of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) which state trees should be protected. The Bledlow Ridge councillors will formulate their response outside of the parish council meeting and Cllr Sage has already offered an analysis of the application based on the NP.
   2. Cllr Breese informed the council that there would be a NP training workshop held on Monday 18th September at 7pm for all councillors. The intention is for the NP Working Group to remind councillors of the major elements of the plan and then for some case studies to be considered. Cllr Breese advised all councillors to bring a laptop or tablet to the workshop.
   3. The clerk advised that Longwick-cum-Ilmer had submitted a Neighbourhood Plan for consultation with comments to be submitted by 9th October 2017. It was advised that all councillors should read the plan and that Cllr Sage would collate any comments so that the clerk can make a formal response in time.

**Action: All Cllrs & Clerk**

1. **External audit of the Annual Return**

The clerk reported that she had received the results of the external audit of the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2017. The auditors have approved the accounts however have placed an “except for” qualification on the accounts in relation to the high reserves which have been questioned in previous audits and yet remain very high. It is advised that the council should have maximum reserves of 115% of the precept (circa £21,000) however reserves at the end of the year were around £102,000. The auditors have advised that the council needs to earmark specific projects for the reserves.

Cllr Breese asked what the sanctions would be for holding high reserves. The clerk stated that there were none other than that the accounts would be flagged. Cllr Breese urged the council to refrain from spending the reserves purely to reduce the balance and suggested that specific projects should be considered including expansion of the burial grounds, improvements to the village halls such as WiFi installation and playground maintenance, or a community fibre broadband project. There was also a suggestion that the precept could be waived. It was agreed that reduction of the reserves should be added to the agenda for the November meeting for further discussion.

1. **Application for grants**
   1. Prior to the meeting the clerk had distributed an application from Dial-A-Ride who had calculated that residents in the parish had used the service to a cost of £259 in the past 12 months and were asking for a contribution from the parish council towards that amount. The council were concerned that there had been reports that the service was not always available for residents and that any funds donated would therefore be used to subsidise the service for residents of other areas. Cllr Castle also suggested that the balance sheet of Dial-a-Ride be inspected as it is currently unknown how much money they have in reserves. Cllr Breese proposed that the council support the request for the full amount of £259 but that the clerk write expressing the concerns of the council over availability of the service and also asking for a copy of their accounts. This was seconded by Cllr Sage and unanimously agreed.

**Action: Clerk**

* 1. The clerk updated the council on the progress of the application by the Rural Community Defibrillator Group for the council to fund a 10 year warranty and service package on the new defibrillator installed at the Golden Cross in Saunderton. Previously the council had approved this at an anticipated cost of £450 plus VAT however the quote received totals £595 plus VAT. The council agreed that they would still fund the service agreement at the new price. Proposed by Cllr Lord and seconded by Cllr Sage. The clerk will update the Rural Community Defibrillator Group and initiate the purchase of the package.

**Action: Clerk**

1. **Insurance**

The clerk advised the council that the annual insurance policy would renew on 1st October 2017. The insurance provider, Zurich, had confirmed that it would be acceptable to add the defibrillators in the parish onto the asset register of the council at no extra cost. The renewal price quoted by Zurich was £792.75 for a one year policy or £728.89 per annum for a 3 year policy. This compares to a cost of £802 paid in 2016/2017. It was agreed that the 3 year plan would be pursued following a proposal by Cllr Lord which was seconded by Cllr Sage.

**Action: Clerk**

1. **Authorisation of payments**

The following payments were unanimously agreed following proposal by Cllr Lord, seconded by Cllr Sage:

| **Cheque No.** | **Payee** | **Description** | **Net Amount** | **VAT** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Jocelyn Cay | Salary – August 2017 | £458.33 |  | £458.33 |
|  | John Lawrence | Grass cutting | £268.00 |  | £268.00 |
|  | Princes Risborough Town Council | Grass cutting | £180.00 | £36.00 | £216.00 |
|  | TBS Hygiene | Bin emptying | £53.60 | £10.72 | £64.32 |
|  | JM Lewis Building Contractors | Bledlow Village Hall project grant | £10,000 | £2,000.00 | £12,000.00 |
|  | BALC | Clerk training – burial grounds | £136.05 |  | £136.05 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Total for month** |  | **£11,095.98** | **£2,046.72** | **£13,142.70** |

1. **Broadband**

Cllr Reading provided an update. BT are currently still aiming for high-speed broadband in Bledlow Ridge to be switched on in September 2017. It is believed further phases of connection are planned in the parish but no plans have yet been made available. A new cabinet has been installed however at the bottom of Perry Lane, Bledlow. The Broadband Working Group did not meet in August but will resume work in September.

1. **Correspondence, reports and issues from councillors and clerk**
   1. Cllr Lord reported that PC Lee Turnham was no longer available for SpeedWatch so the scheme is currently on hold. In relation to speeding issues, the clerk updated the council on progress on actions from the previous meeting regarding the possibility of acquiring funding towards speed indicator devices from LAF. LAF have informed the clerk that the speed indicator devices requested cannot be funded by the forum as they do not have the required permissions from the department for transport. The clerk had contacted West Wycombe Parish Council to enquire as to how they acquired their device and the processes entailed. West Wycombe informed the clerk that they purchased the device at a cost of around £3,000 and that a fee had been paid to BCC in order for the device to be installed and set up to their approval. It was agreed that the clerk should pursue options to purchase 2 similar devices for Bledlow-cum-Saunderton.

**Action: Clerk**

* 1. The clerk raised the issue of working hours and proposed she set some core hours in order to ensure she can work efficiently and in a more organised fashion. It was agreed that she would work from 9.30am to 12.30pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but would still also respond to urgent and important issues outside of those hours. The clerk also requested that a separate telephone be acquired for parish council work as currently she is using her personal telephone. The council agreed this was a reasonable request and the clerk will obtain more details for presentation at the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

* 1. Cllr Cox asked if anything had been heard regarding the retrospective planning permission for outbuildings and removal of posts in the verge at Rocworth House, Bledlow Ridge. The clerk had heard nothing and will follow up with Wycombe District Council (WDC).

**Action: Clerk**

* 1. Cllr Blackwell provided an update on the building works at West’s Yard, Saunderton. Officers from WDC have been on site to inspect the working practices of the developers. Several major issues of non-compliance have been recognised including non-washing of wheels, blocked drains, slurry running from the site and damaged lights in the bollards on the A4010. WDC are now monitoring the site daily. Network Rail are also going to inspect the site following reports of the railway bridge being struck.
  2. Cllr Castle reported that he had performed the quarterly bank reconciliation and that all was in order.
  3. The clerk reported that she had received an enquiry from a resident regarding parking on Haw Lane, Bledlow Ridge and that double yellow lines had been requested. The councillors stated that double yellow lines are the responsibility of Transport for Bucks, not the parish council.

1. **Next meeting**

It was confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Bledlow Ridge Village Hall on Thursday 5th October 2017 at 7.30pm.