



BENWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Benwick Parish Council meeting on Monday 8 July 2024 at Benwick Village Hall

Present	Cllrs S Lowry, L Keppel-Spoor, R Few, R Emmitt, J Ablewhite, R Taylor and S Lowry. Cllrs T Taylor and A Woollard from Fenland District Council (FDC). Clerk A Barnes. Five members of the public.	
062/24-25	Apologies for absence Cllr Chapman sent apologies.	
063/24-25	Declarations of Interest Cllrs Ablewhite and Lowry declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 070/24-25 in relation to the village hall. Cllr Lowry declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 082/24-25 in relation to the Community Lounge.	
064/24-25	<p>Public time Public time opened: 19:32 Benwick in Bloom reminded the council of the Anglia in Bloom judging on Wednesday 17 July. Cllr Lowry offered to attend the judging as a parish council representative. Verge cutting and river bank maintenance was raised for the section between the two bridges. Cllr Emmitt believed this section to be the responsibility of Middle Level Commissioners. Cllr T Taylor (FDC) informed the council that Natural England have stopped a lot of cutting, bringing in new rules for this year. Cllr Taylor highlighted that any other village with river frontage will be experiencing the same challenges. Cllr Lowry proposed and it was AGREED that the Clerk contact Middle Level to clarify maintenance of this area.</p> <p>Benwick in Bloom reported a recent biodiversity project to upcycle the broken book swap shed and turn it into a bug house had been destroyed on completion. On collecting the debris, it was noticed that steps have been manually cut into the riverbank by the pill box on Nene Parage. Cllr Ablewhite suggested the vandalism is reported using the 101 police online service. Cllr Lowry proposed and it was AGREED for the Clerk to report the bank damage to the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Benwick in Bloom reported having painted the bus shelter, Cllr Lowry thanked them for this.</p> <p>Progress on the village sign was queried. Cllr Taylor updated that quotes are being obtained, including from a contractor who can create a wood carved sign which may be a good option if the current sign is beyond repair.</p> <p>There was a robust discussion around expectations of the parish council and residents being unclear on what the parish council achieve.</p> <p>It was noted that the FACT team have provided a lot of support to the village recently, including providing free refreshments for volunteers.</p> <p>Cllr Few was thanked for work to block off the entrance to a drove, making access for motorbikes and hare courses more difficult.</p> <p>Public time closed: 20:19</p>	<p>Agreed Clerk</p> <p>Agreed Clerk</p>
065/24-25	<p>Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24 The Clerk reported that the audit report and statement of accounts has been published on the parish council website in accordance with the publication requirements. We have been emailed by PKF Littlejohn, who advise that we needed to complete AGAR form 2 rather than form 2PM. They are happy for us to transfer the data across to the correct form and then minute this as part of the meeting. A certificate of exemption from external audit has been issued by PKF Littlejohn. Cllr Lowry proposed and it was AGREED that AGAR Form 2 be completed and signed.</p>	Agreed
066/24-25	<p>Confirmation of Minutes Cllr Lowry proposed and it was AGREED that the minutes of the parish council meeting on Monday 3 June are signed, with a note added that a discussion took place regarding verge maintenance.</p>	Agreed
067/24-25	<p>Action Log Councillors and the Clerk provided an update on actions assigned to them in the action log, details are included within the minutes under the relevant items.</p>	

068/24-25	County & District Councillors Reports Cllr T Taylor (FDC) updated the council on the following. Anglian Water have been contacted regarding the flooding issues. The issues with the derelict property along Nene Parade have been passed to the enforcement team. There has been a number of dog attacks being reported, the environmental health team are aware and the advice is to report any dog attacks to the police. The best approach for a war memorial contractor is to ask Historic England who they have on their approved list.	
069/24-25	Defibrillators The Clerk reported that the two recently purchased units have been delivered to Mr Eglan ready for installation on site. Replacements pads and AED starter kits are on the list of payments to approve in the finance item. Cllr Ablewhite informed the council that Magpas are offering free defibrillator training and they are looking to arrange some sessions at the village hall.	
070/24-25	Village Hall Cllr Ablewhite updated that the lease agreement is close to completion by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). A £3000 grant has been received. The insurance company have approved repairs and appointed a contractor for works to the damaged wall at the village hall.	
071/24-25	Community Lounge Cllr Lowry updated that the recent family fun afternoon saw over 100 people in attendance and raised £205.00 for donation to the East of England Air Ambulance. Cllr Lowry thanked those who helped organise the raffle. Cambs ACRE awarded a further grant of £2000. A senior's Christmas party is being planned for 11 December, with a children's Christmas party following on 14 December. Cllr Lowry is keen for ideas for an event for those residents who fall into neither the seniors or children's parties. The community fridge is saving up to 50kg a week from going to landfill. Cllr Lowry asked for assistance with collecting surplus food from supermarkets if possible. A discussion around insurance cover for the community lounge took place. It was proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Ablewhite and AGREED that community lounge events be covered by the village hall policy and the grant money continue to be overseen by the parish council.	Agreed
072/24-25	Highways matters Cllr Ablewhite reported that the speed signs are still working well. Cllr T Taylor (FDC) queried the ability to save and print data. Cllr Ablewhite clarified the data is downloaded to an app.	
073/24-25	Cemetery and September Gardens The Clerk reported the next visit for cemetery maintenance is 11 July, the contractor has been advised of the Anglia in Bloom judging. Cllr Lowry raised maintenance of the allotments, in particular weeds and nettles. The Clerk reported that some tenants did not wish to renew plots this year. Cllr Ablewhite reminded the council that there is planned maintenance for the hedge cutting later in the season and that the easiest way to keep the site well maintained is to ensure all the plots are let. Cllr Ablewhite proposed, Cllr Lowry seconded and it was AGREED that the Clerk advertise vacant plots. Cllr Taylor highlighted that there is now signage up for the Commonwealth War Graves.	Agreed Clerk
074/24-25	Traffic Management for Community Events Training The council discussed traffic management LANTRA training on offer by CCC and decided this is not required as a need for road closures in the village is not envisaged.	
075/24-25	Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Weed Control Strategy A discussion around the CCC weed control strategy took place, with councillors noting that October is not an ideal time to be applying herbicide.	
076/24-25	Civic Reception Attendance at the Chairman of Fenland District Council's Civic Reception on Friday 6 September 2024 was discussed. Cllr Lowry proposed and it was AGREED that if the chairman is unable to attend they will.	Agreed
077/24-25	Cambridge and Counties Bank – Change to terms and conditions To council reviewed the changes to the Cambridge and Counties Bank terms and conditions effective from Thursday 1 August 2024. No concerns were raised.	
078/24-25	The Pound Cllr Lowry proposed and it was AGREED to obtain quotations for the removal of existing tree stumps and to then get the area turfed. Cllr Few suggested contacting the contractor who carried out tree maintenance for the council previously.	Agreed Clerk

079/24-25	Turf Fen Charity Cllr Lowry highlighted that they do not know much about the land or financial help available to people of the village from the Turf Fen Charity. Cllr Ablewhite proposed, Cllr Lowry seconded and it was AGREED that the parish council request for an update including a financial breakdown and information on how many people have been helped.		Agreed Clerk	
080/24-25	Verge maintenance contract Cllr Lowry stated that the question raised at the last meeting was around the movement of machinery along the highway. The Clerk reported that the insurance and risk assessment documentation of the contractor had been checked. The parish council's insurance provider had also been contacted and were happy that the contractor's own insurance is sufficient. Cllr Ablewhite suggested we obtain this in writing from our insurance company.			
081/24-25	Clerk's report and requests The Clerk updated the council that having looked at the ICCM Cemetery of the Year awards they did not feel the council met the criteria and so did not put in an application. It would be nice to build on the information we have and create a case for next year. The Clerk also reported having heard nothing back from our existing website hosting company about the transition to a .gov.uk domain.			
082/24-25	Income & Expenditure a) Cllr Lowry proposed and it was AGREED to approve the batch of payments up to and including the Clerk's salary and expenses. Cllr Ablewhite proposed and it was AGREED for the remaining payments to be approved.		Agreed Agreed	
	Npower Chess ICT Ltd Wave HHA Grounds Maint. Zurich N Oliver Defib World Defib World A Barnes S Lowry S Lowry S Lowry S Lowry	Electricity Invoice for May 2024 – DD paid 19/06/2024 Website hosting charges 01/06/24-31/05/25 – DD paid 27/06/24 Sub-total pre-authorised by Council Water bill 12/12/23-26/06/24 June 2024 Cemetery Maintenance Insurance (policy period 19/06/24-18/06/25) Verge maintenance April-June 2024 3x sets replacement defibrillator pads 2x AED starter kits Expenses & salary Community Lounge reimbursement Community Lounge reimbursement Community Lounge reimbursement Community Lounge float advance July 24 Subtotal to authorise for payment now	£ 115.62 £ 98.14 £ 213.76 £ 97.53 £ 419.87 £ 1037.96 £ 185.00 £ 200.59 £ 19.39 £ 446.51 £ 339.98 £ 492.82 £ 437.00 £ 50.00 £ 3726.65	
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE AUTHORISED		£ 3940.41	
	b) The Clerk's report on the June 2024 bank balances can be found at Appendix 1.			
083/24-25	Correspondence a) Rural Services Network Bulletin (emails 11/06/24, 11/06/24, 19/06/24, 26/06/24, 02/07/24) b) FDC Press release (emails 11/06/24, 12/06/24, 19/06/24) c) FDC Pre-Election guidance (email 11/06/24) d) FDC Safe Car Wash App (email 12/06/24) e) NALC Chief Executive's Bulletin (emails 11/06/24, 12/06/24, 19/06/24) f) NALC Star Council awards (email 11/06/24) g) CCC Street works TTRO24-795 (email 19/06/24) h) CCC Street works TTRO24-1036 (email 26/06/24) i) CCC Highways Events Calendar July (email 01/07/24) j) NALC Advice on the Pre-Election period (email 11/06/24) k) FDC Pre-election guidance (email 11/06/24) l) ICCM Cemetery of the Year (email 12/06/24) m) FDC Member Services Safe Car Wash App (email 12/06/24) n) Cambridgeshire Matters (email 11/06/24) o) Improved bus routes (email 11/06/24) p) Cemetery of the year (email 12/06/24) q) Benwick in Bloom (emails 19/06/24, 22/06/24) Cllr Lowry wished Benwick in Bloom the best of luck for the Anglia in Bloom judging. r) Doddington Diary (email 01/07/24)			

084/24-25	<p>Planning There were no planning applications to review at this meeting.</p>	
085/24-25	<p>Biodiversity and Habitat Initiatives Cllr Lowry proposed and it was AGREED to include questions asked by the Middle Level Commissioners regarding mooring use under this item. The Clerk asked the council questions regarding the mooring being used for paddleboarding and recreational activities on the river. The council were open to improving paddleboard access as it was noted there is currently quite a big drop from the mooring to the water level. Responses to the questions will be sent back to Middle Level.</p>	Agreed
086/24-25	<p>Agenda Items/Next Meeting The date of the next Parish Council meeting is Monday 5 August 2024. Items to be included on agenda should be with the Clerk by Monday 29 July 2024.</p>	

Appendix 1

Bank Reconciliation		Financial Year ending 31 March 2025	
Benwick Parish Council			
Prepared by Abbey Barnes (Clerk & RFO)			
Date	08/07/2024		
Approved by	Chair		
Date	08/07/2024		
Balance per bank statements at end	28/05/2024	£	£
Current Account		23,556.39	
Cambridge and Counties Bank		42,855.93	
			66,412.32
Less: Unpresented Cheques			
Cheque Number	amount		
		50.00	
		492.82	
		192.00	
		192.00	
		339.98	
		200.00	
			1,466.80
Add: Any unbanked cash in transit			0.00
Net bank balances end 28/05/2024			64,945.52
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book, as follows:-			
Opening Balance (01 April 2024)		58,327.80	
Add: Receipts to date		13,812.38	
Less: Payments to date		7,240.88	
Closing Balance		64,899.30	

Earmarked Reserves:

Verge Planting	£1,067.13	
Community Lounge	£4,597.01	in trust
Cemetery Extension	£6,604.17	
Street Lighting	£9,426.58	
The Pound	£2,410.00	
Village Sign	£2,000.00	
War Memorial	£6,000.00	
Mooring	£7,961.16	
Allotments	£2,191.35	
General Reserve	£22,641.90	
		E M TOTAL £42,257.40