



BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held at St Barnabas Parish Centre on Tuesday 16th May 2023 from 7:30pm to 10:10pm. (At 21:25 it was unanimously agreed to suspend standing order 3.X and extend the meeting)

Present:

Cllr P. Ray, C. Clayson, Cllr T. Covell, Cllr E. Green, Cllr C. Goatham, Cllr J. Martin, Cllr J. Muteham, Cllr D. Clayson

Also present:

Mrs S. Muteham (Clerk), Cllr A. Gould (SBC), Cllr R. Lehmann (SBC/KCC) and 20 members of the public

Prior to the start of the meeting, all Councillors signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

001. Election of Chairman

Cllr P. Ray and Cllr C. Clayson were proposed and seconded for the role of Chairman. A vote took place, recording a majority in favour of Cllr C. Clayson. Resolved: Cllr C. Clayson was elected as Chairman for the ensuing civic year and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office (Chairman).

002. Election of Vice-Chairman

Cllr C. Goatham and Cllr T. Covell were proposed and seconded for the role of Vice-Chairman. A vote took place, recording an equality of votes. The casting vote by the Chairman was in favour of Cllr C. Goatham, who then declined acceptance. Resolved: Cllr T. Covell was elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing civic year.

003. To constitute Standing Committees

- A. PLANNING COMMITTEE
Cllr C. Clayson, Cllr C Goatham, Cllr P. Ray
- B. PUBLIC AMENITIES COMMITTEE
Cllr C. Clayson, Cllr C. Goatham, Cllr J. Martin, Cllr E. Green
- C. FINANCE COMMITTEE
Cllr C. Clayson, Cllr C. Goatham, Cllr J. Muteham, Cllr D. Clayson
- D. VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Cllr C. Clayson, Cllr C. Goatham, Cllr P. Ray, Cllr J. Muteham

It was agreed to dissolve the Public Footpaths Committee and matters relating to public footpaths would now be addressed by the Public Amenities Committee.

004. Apologies

None

005. Declaration of Interests

Cllr J. Muteham declared a personal interest in item 11.V and 11.W being matters relating to the Clerk.

Chairman's Initial.....

006. Minutes

The minutes of the following meeting, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and confirmed by the chairman of the meeting.

- A. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 11th April 2023 (minutes 609-621)
Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2023 were approved.

007. Draft Minutes

Reports containing minutes of the following meetings were circulated to all Members.

- A. Minutes as a report of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4th April 2023 (minutes 605-608). No comments were made by those present. Resolved: To accept the report of the meeting held on 4th April 2023.
- B. Minutes as a report of the Village Hall Management Committee meeting held on Tuesday 25th April 2023. No comments were made by those present. Resolved: To accept the report of the meeting held on 25th April 2023.
- C. Draft minutes as a report of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2nd May 2023 (minutes 622-626). No comments were made by those present. Resolved: To accept the report of the meeting held on 2nd May 2023.
- D. Draft minutes as a report of the Village Hall Management Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2nd May 2023. No comments were made by those present. Resolved: To accept the report of the meeting held on 2nd May 2023.

008. Public Participation

Two attending members of the public expressed their interest in joining the Village Hall Management Committee and were invited to attend the next committee meeting. One member of the public suggested that the Parish Council consider setting a youth council (or similar). Other members of the public did not speak in the public participation session.

009. Public Amenities Matters

- A. Cemetery - The Cemetery Working Group (CWG) and Clerk circulated reports prior to the meeting. Cllr C. Goatham on behalf of the CWG read aloud the recommendations of the group at the meeting (*Appendix A*). The recommendations had not been circulated prior to the meeting, and noting that members of the public wished to engage further with the Parish Council on this matter it was agreed to schedule an extraordinary meeting in June. It was also agreed that in response to the letters sent out to some plot holders in November, the council would take no further action until the matter had been resolved.
- B. Allotments - Cllr C. Goatham reported to those present that the “Men’s Sheds/Kent Sheds” scheme would not be suitable for the allotment plot, since it required facilities and staffing that were not viable at the allotment site. It was noted that a more suitable site would be at the Queen’s Head pub for a community/wellbeing allotment scheme. The Clerk reported that the vacant plot which was earmarked for a possible community plot was now overgrown and required rotavating before being let to a tenant. Those present agreed to pay for rotavating and to make the plot available to residents on the waiting list in the first instance. Resolved: to rotavate the vacant allotment plot ready for a new tenant.
- C. Bull Lane - The Clerk provided details of an anticipated £12,800 grant from the Football Foundation to assist with ongoing pitch maintenance. Those present agreed for the Clerk to make a formal application and if successful to start utilising the grant money immediately. Resolved: to apply for Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund grant and start utilising funding once received.
- D. Bull Lane - The Clerk provided a quote for clearing nettles/weeds along the footpath by the village hall carpark and turfing the area near the outdoor gym where brambles had recently been cut back. Those present declined to turf the area and agreed to look at alternative methods of vegetation in the autumn, and agreed to clearing the nettles/weeds. Resolved: to clear nettles/weeds on footpath adjacent to village hall carpark.

Chairman’s Initial.....

011. Environmental Matters

- A. Electric Vehicles - The Clerk reported that she had met with a representative from KCC regarding the installation of EV charge points at the village hall carpark. Those present were supportive of applying for the installation of 4 fully funded charge points at an agreed location (*Appendix B*). Resolved: to make a formal application to KCC for 4 fully funded EV charge points.

012. Transportation Matters

- A. Boughton Hill - It was noted that the road repairs on the hill were behind schedule and it was now expected that the road would be closed until 2nd June 2023.

013. Finance and Administration

- A. Bank Reconciliation - The bank reconciliation dated 30th April 2023 was circulated prior to the meeting and approved by those present. Resolved: The bank account balances and reconciliations were approved.
- B. Items for payment - All payments as detailed on the bank reconciliation dated 30th April 2023 were unanimously approved at the meeting and it was agreed that payments were to be made on-line by two authorised signatories. Details of the payments are in *Appendix C*. Resolved: The payments as detailed in *Appendix A* were approved for payment
- C. Matters resolved under delegated powers - Approval for online payment of £281.96, being the quarterly PAYE payment to HMRC. Approved by Cllr P. Ray and Cllr T. Owens.
- D. Annual Accounts - The annual accounts were circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions. Those present unanimously approved the accounts. Resolved: that the annual accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023 be approved.
- E. Annual Return (Governance Section) - Cllr C. Clayson signed the Governance Section of the Annual Return. Resolved: That the Governance Section of the Annual be approved and signed.
- F. Annual Return (Accounts Section) - Cllr C. Clayson signed the Accounts Section of the Annual Return. Resolved: That the Accounts Section of the Annual be approved and signed.
- G. Review of Internal Audit Report for 2022/23 - The report was circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions from those present.
- H. Appointment of Internal Auditor 2023/24 - The Clerk provided 3 quotes for internal auditor services for the ensuing civic year. After consideration, those present agreed to use good practice and change auditor and appoint April Skies Accounting. Resolved: to appoint April Skies Accounting as the internal auditor for the financial year ending 31st March 2024.
- I. Review of budget performance - The Clerk circulated the actual vs budget information for the year ending 31st March 2023 prior to the meeting. There were no questions.
- J. Standing Orders - The revised document was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Those present unanimously agreed to approve the revised Standing Orders. Resolved: to approve Standing Orders.
- K. Financial Regulations - The revised document was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Those present unanimously agreed to approve the revised Financial Regulations. Resolved: to approve Financial Regulations.
- L. Code of Conduct - The revised document was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Those present unanimously agreed to approve the revised Code of Conduct (LGA model). Resolved: to approve Code of Conduct.
- M. Contractor - The Clerk reported that she had received notification that the litter picker hourly rate was increasing to £12 per hour. Those present considered and approved the increase. Resolved: that the contractor rate of £12 per hour be approved.
- N. Village Hall - The Clerk reported that she had received a request from the Village Hall for donation funding towards identified users. The financial information received was not clear and it was requested that further clarification on the financial accounts of the village hall were required prior to considering the donation request.

- O. Meetings - After discussion, it was agreed by those present not to pursue the option of voice recording meetings for the foreseeable future.
- P. Phone Boxes - The matter of converting the South Street phone box into a book exchange was moved to be addressed by the Public Amenities Committee.
- Q. Christmas - The Clerk reported that she had received a quote of £1,328.53 + VAT to install electrical connections for powering lights on christmas trees in 2 identified locations. Those present agreed to pay for the connection cost, subject to the remainder of the funding being provided by community groups/donations/grants. Resolved: to approve payment of £1,328.53 + VAT.
- R. Youth Council - Councillors briefly expressed their interest in setting up a scheme and it was agreed that in the first instance Cllr C. Clayson in conjunction with a member of the public would explore the options available.
- S. Councillor Vacancies - Following the recent elections there are 3 vacancies to co-opt councillors to the Parish Council. It was agreed to advertise the vacancies until 30th June 2023 after which date all applications would be considered. Resolved: to advertise co-option vacancies.
- T. Trustee Meeting - It was agreed to set the date of the next meeting for 23rd May 2023.
- U. Cost of Living Crisis - The Clerk reported that the council could apply for the KCC Parish Council Community Cost of Living Support Grant of up to £1,000. It was unanimously agreed to apply for the grant, which if successful would be used to provide safe places for local residents and support families struggling with the cost of food. Resolved: to apply for the £1,000 grant.

It was resolved that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

- V. Personnel - Resolved: the Parish Council to apply for a Lloyds Bank chargecard and to purchase a laptop for the Clerk.
- W. Personnel - Resolved: to authorise the Clerk's backdated overtime and future overtime up to 10 hours per calendar month. Contracted hours would be reviewed periodically.

The meeting was opened to the public

014. Councillors Reports

- A. Cllr P. Ray reported that several posts had been removed at Bull Lane recreation ground over the past weeks. Some were in safe storage awaiting reinstallation.
- B. Cllr Goatham reported that the tap at the allotments had been left on.

015. Chairman/Clerk's Reports - The Clerk's report is attached (Appendix C)

016. Correspondence

- A. Email detailing annual subscription rates for membership KALC/NALC (circulated)
- B. Letter of thanks from KSSX (Air Ambulance) for recent donation

The next full meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for Tuesday 13th June 2023 at 7:30pm. There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

Signed by the CHAIRMAN of the meeting

Chairman's Initial.....

Appendix A

Working Party Recommendations:

Council Procedures

1. **Questions Raised:** on the report there were questions raised – that answers are forthcoming to these questions and a formal discussion ensues.
2. **Communication:** A commitment to better/more empathetic/personal method of communication with the bereaved when dealing with enquiries, comments, compliments, or complaints. This needs to be a 2-way process. The working party are all happy to be involved, while they remain elected councillors.
3. **Process regarding future complaints:** Agree a process to take future formal complaints forward (councillors have not seen correspondence of complainants, although those complaints were sent to the Parish Clerk – adopted GDPR rules of the Parish Council should state that complaints sent to the Parish Clerk will be shared with the Parish Council, even if that information has to have personal details redacted).
4. **Maintenance and Inspection:** That the council maintain the Civic Cemetery in good order and inspect on at least a monthly basis: it was apparent that the Civic Cemetery had not been regularly inspected/maintained in a way which would be reasonable to expect.
5. **Renovation:** A timely program of renovation be agreed: benches to be fixed/maintained, paths to be cleared of moss and kept clear, another rubbish bin to be provided and situated in the Burial Ground.
6. **Equal access:** That work be considered to improve the accessibility of the Burial Ground, i.e., a new path to be installed.
7. **Contractor:** That the Parish Council regularly inspect and monitor the gardening contractor's work, and their employee's behaviour be quiet and respectful in a place where people come to mourn. Additionally, that accidents/incidents, such as running over the hose from the tap, are reported promptly and that they are made good at the expense of the contractor. Contractors to receive feedback and that the Parish Council are provided with their response to the recommendations affecting them. Can the Parish Council be provided with a copy of their contract for review?
8. **Damage to grave items:** If items on graves are damaged by the contractors - that the council agree on a formal process on how to inform people responsible for the grave.
9. **Review cost of plot:** (burial V ashes plot in the Garden of Remembrance) –
10. **Review the length of time for exclusive right of burial:** currently there is a minimum 50-year Exclusive Right of Burial for burial plots and only a 20-year Exclusive Right of Burial for ashes plots. Alter time scales to ensure consistency across the two halves of the Civic Cemetery. Advise plot holders what ramifications this may have on their perceived 'ownership' of the plot.

Revision of the Terms and Conditions/Rules and Regulations:

- **Dividing the rules:** for the Burial Ground and the Garden of Remembrance. Currently they are too confusing. They are in one long document and the rules vary for burial and for ashes plots. The rules given at a time of intense mourning should be succinct and easy to understand.
- **New Document:** when people purchase a plot they date a document and sign to say they have read and understand the rules.
- **No glass vases:** The rule that there are no glass flower vases allowed anywhere in the Civic Cemetery should be enforced, as broken glass is a health & safety hazard.
- **Rules tightened up on plastic flowers/tributes:** The Working Party would like to recommend that no plastic flowers should be allowed at all (as they deteriorate and when dumped within the compost heap they cannot biodegrade). Some flowers had sharp staples which were strewn across a large area of the garden of remembrance. This is a health and safety hazard. Alternatively and bearing in mind that plot holders have good reasons for using plastic flowers we would suggest that plastic tributes not be allowed to deteriorate and be disposed of appropriately.
- **Choices of headstone:** Types of stone allowed for memorials and headstones to be reviewed and the selection allowed could be expanded upon. As advised by a local stonemason, only 3 stone types are now available, out of the four which we currently allow. Of these 3, one is very hard to source as the quarry has closed and the other 2 stone types currently allowed are both extremely porous & result in

poor wear and tear over a short period of time. They require extra cleaning to maintain their appearance. Also, they are more expensive to purchase, than granite for instance, which is available in a variety of colours and is very hardwearing. The rule has already been breached, and not enforced, as there are already granite headstones in place, and have been for over a decade. A local stone mason identified this and complained historically to the parish council, but no enforcement action was taken.

- **Headstone sizes:** For the burial ground. There is a maximum size of headstone, which has been breached in a few cases, already. There should be a minimum size of headstone also to ensure clarity, just as there is in the Churchyard adjacent. Maximum/minimum sizes should be specified as being measured from ground level with a drawing of the dimensions to be provided by the funeral director/stone mason. All headstones should comply with these sizes from the accepted date of any revision of these rules as adopted and agreed by the council.
- **Fencing of plots:** That the council consider allowing the fencing of plots, both in the garden of remembrance and in the burial ground. This is an emotive issue. All participating in the working party meetings viewed this as a way to ensure that tributes to their loved ones are undisturbed from animals (eating plants/flowers) and that the graves/ashes plots are undisturbed by other people (walking on or encroaching on the grave). The view that people should not walk on other people's graves is widely held and strongly felt to be disrespectful.
- **Statuary/tributes:** Council to consider altering the rules relating to statuary not being allowed on graves, as many people find personal items a meaningful way to express their remembrances/feelings about a loved one.
- **Stone Chippings/kerbs:** Council to consider the use of stone chippings – these are not currently allowed, however at Love Lane Cemetery they are often used in conjunction with stone borders or edging, which are not currently allowed either at the Civic Cemetery.

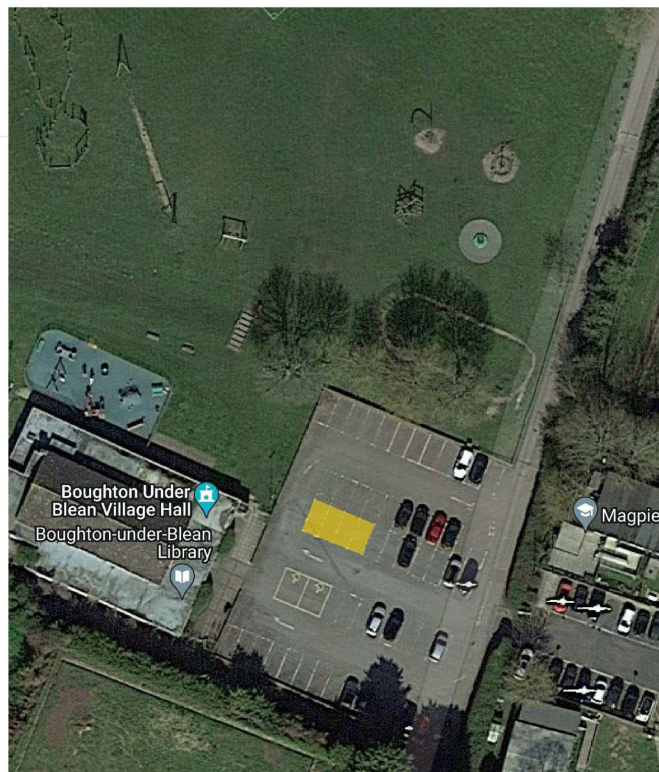
Appendix B

EV Charging Village Hall

EV Charging Bays



EV Charging Option B



Appendix C

Castle Water (Public toilets) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£33.47
Castle Water (Cemetery) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£5.00
Castle Water (Allotments) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£11.22
British Gas (Public toilets) - (D/D estimate for information only)	£22.41
Staff costs – (estimate for information only)	£1,258.85
Bk Tfr - S. Morrow - Toilets - Cleaning	£633.60
Bk Tfr - Countrywide Grounds Maintenance - Mowing & Grounds Maint. (Bull Lane/The Street)	£814.00
Bk Tfr - Bourne to Garden - Mowing (Cemetery/Poplar View)	£1,820.40
Bk Tfr - S. J. Harris - Plumbing repairs (Allotments)	£60.00
Bk Tfr - T. Covell - Councillors Allowance Q4-2022/23	£84.83
Bk Tfr - Streetlights - Maintenance contract - Q1 23/24	£984.79
Bk Tfr - McCabe Ford Williams - Payroll services	£222.00
Bk Tfr - M. Wellington - Litter clearance	£170.00
Bk Tfr - KALC - Annual subscription	£704.14
Bk Tfr - S. Muteham - Expenses (taps/noticeboard/mileage/litterpick..more)	£185.34
Bk Tfr - Pro Dynamic Contracts - Bollards (St Barnabas bench)	£1,074.00
Bk Tfr - L. Robbins - Internal audit fee	£120.00
Bk Tfr - Zurich - Annual insurance	£1,345.18
Bk Tfr - Safeplay - Basket swing repairs	£2,394.00
Bk Tfr - Mayarc Ltd - Phone box repairs	£400.00

Appendix D

Clerks report (summary of tasks completed) 04-04-23 to 11-05-23

Public Amenities

1. Obtained quotes & instructed repairs - play equipment at Bull Lane recreation ground
2. Reported damage & instructed repairs - outdoor gym at Bull Lane recreation ground
3. Requested quotes & ordered replacement bench at Bull Lane recreation ground
4. Attended site meeting for quotes to remove fly-tipping/dumped vegetation at Bull Lane
5. Instructed & inspected completed works to remove fly-tipping/dumped vegetation
6. Purchased bedding plants for war memorial
7. Inspected catch-pit drain at Bull Lane recreation ground and requested quotes to address tree-root ingress issues in drains
8. Arranged & held site meeting with grounds maintenance contractors regarding No Mow May arrangements
9. Arranged & held site meeting with grounds maintenance contractor regarding football pitch improvements and funding
10. New door frame received for phone box on The Street
11. Instructed & inspected works - installation of replacement door on The Street phone box
12. Instructed & inspected works - removal of bench at Bull Lane recreation ground
13. Requested quotes to re-purpose metal bench (to replace broken bench at cemetery)
14. Attended site meeting with KCC to agree electricity supply point for xmas trees
15. Requested quote for turfing bramble area and strimming vegetation at side of VH
16. Purchased replacement posts for noticeboard on The Street
17. Instructed & inspected works - urgent replacement of noticeboard posts
18. Investigating nozzle replacements for dispensers at public toilets
19. Purchased taps, arranged repairs, inspected works - leaking taps at allotments
20. Prepared pitch assessment report to support grant funding application (football pitch)

General

21. Kept website up to date with meeting agendas and minutes, road closures, news items
22. Kept facebook page up to date with meetings, road closure and news items
23. Submitted monthly piece to community magazine
24. Carried out monthly defibrillator check
25. Published new advertising for VHMC volunteers
26. Created welcome pack for new council
27. Arranged and held site meeting with KCC to discuss traffic concerns near White Horse
28. Requested information on Lloyds Bank Chargecard
29. Liaised with Queen's Head pub to formalise plans for Coronation event
30. Drafted Staffing Committee Terms of Reference
31. Updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
32. Updated Code of Conduct
33. Attended SLCC seminar (Get Councillors off to a Flying Start)
34. Attended Local Councils Liaison Forum meeting
35. Reviewed and clarified various VH administration/finance documents/charity law
36. Assisted/requested information from VH relating to PC donations/subsidising hire fees
37. Started process to open new bank account for VH
38. Reviewed Trustee responsibilities to VH/Trust Deed
39. Requested quotes on professional advice to further revise Trust Deed
40. Uploaded VHMC redacted minutes onto Parish Council website
41. Queried payroll invoice with accountant
42. Arranged, validated and received completed DBS check for safeguarding policy
43. Liaised with solicitors on legal matters regarding Bull Lane access road
44. Email sent to KCC requesting permission for No Mow May on The Street
45. Updated online banking signatories
46. Arranged & held site meeting with KCC streetlighting engineer regarding xmas tree/lights
47. Requested legal advice on service agreements for contractors
48. Completed grant monitoring form (cost of living crisis)
49. Dealt with various parties regarding legal deeds at Bull Lane recreation grounds
50. Completed draft Annual Accounts for year ended 31st March 2023
51. Completed Internal Audit for year ended 31st March 2023
52. Updated year end related financial data on website
53. Enquired about Parish Council Community Cost of Living Scheme grant funding
54. Dealt with complaint over courier delivery of new phone box door
55. Investigated storage options for existing christmas lights
56. Receipt of lighting grant from Swale Borough Council

Parishioner correspondence

57. Received & responded to email regarding concerns TPOs at Garden Hotel
58. Received & responded to parishioner email reporting faulty streetlight
59. Received & responded to phone call reporting rotting timber on noticeboard
60. Received & responded to email complaint regarding cemetery regulations
61. Received & responded to email reporting overgrown footpaths
62. Received & responded to phone call regarding concerns over cemetery regulations
63. Received & responded to email complaint regarding verges being cut in May