

BIRCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Full Council on Wednesday 6th September 2023. The Meeting was held at 7.30 in Bircham Social Club.

Present: Cllrs G Daniels (Chairman), T Clark, D French, R Hutchinson, C Morley, L Palmer, H Rayner, P Spake

Also present, Simon Bower (Clerk) and five Members of the Public.

1. Declarations of Interest (23/087)

- a) There were declarations of interest on item 7a.b. from Cllrs French and Spake.

2. Apologies for Absence (23/088)

- a) There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Noon and Sargent¹.

3. Chairman's welcome and announcements (23/089)

4. Minutes (23/090)

- a) *The minutes of the meeting held on 26th July 2023, having been previously circulated, were accepted as a true record and duly signed.*
- b) No matters arising from the above minutes.

5. Public Participation (23/091)

- a) A representative of Sedgeford Parish Council described their efforts to have a Quiet Lane included in their Neighbourhood Plan, and requested that Council consider supporting these efforts by agreeing to extend this along Fring Rd. This would not involve any change to the permitted use of the road, but would encourage its use by walkers/cyclists, and alert drivers to their presence. Cllr Daniels requested that Item 13b dealing with this question be brought forward, and Cllrs asked questions and discussed the matter. *It was agreed to add this to the October agenda, allowing more time for research.* Clerk to establish size of signs, responsibility etc.

6. Reports (23/092)

- a) Bircham in Bloom – none.
- b) County Councillor – not present.
- c) Borough Councillor – Cllr Morley gave a lengthy description of the Borough's finances, and lack of recent audits. He stressed the need for value for money and increased efficiency, expressing concern over a potential future "£3m black hole". Inflation had eaten into the £25m "levelling up" grant, and he noted that the Borough would not be adding £3m to the Guildhall funding, to

¹ An email apology from Cllr Wright-Thompson arrived during the meeting but was not opened.

Signed:

(Chairman) Date: 11/10/23

avoid borrowing. He raised concerns over the possibility of a 2026 ban on oil-powered boilers [though there was some confusion on this raised by Cllrs – did it mean only new boilers, or existing ones?]. Local MPs had been involved in discussions. [Clerk noted he had responded to a recent survey, expressing frustration that aspects of the “green agenda” were being pushed to Parishes with little understanding of what most could do.] A Council Tax Support Consultation was now in progress, proposing 100% relief for some. He noted that the Borough lottery could do with more support, and that the Government had retreated on a deposit scheme for bottles due to inflation fears.

d) Clerk – The Clerk expanded on his report from the Public Pack:

- Outdoor Gym – awaiting installation date. CIL funding from Borough agreed - £5,000. Alive Leisure cannot do “training” on use, nor can the providers. Clerk enquiring if any private gyms/trainers may be able to help. Proposed signage had been received and he would make amendments as suggested by Cllrs.
- Children’s Play Equipment – contractor contacted – quote awaited for minor works and report on future of the swings.
- Noticeboards – the Brancaster ones were currently being fitted. Bircham next few days.
- In Bloom – no response from Borough yet about the Triangle [request to Cllr Morley to chase]. Clerk to meet with BiB on Terms of Reference.
- £800 grant from Cllr Chenery received – letter of thanks written.
- Armed Forces Pledge – text written and run past Cllrs; no amendments proposed.
- Website – domain name and website set up by NALC, along with emails. Information received and would be beginning transfer of information and help for Cllrs on adopting emails soon.

7. Planning (23/093)

a) Planning Applications were considered:

- a. 23/01336 (Demolition of rear conservatory to facilitate rear extension, and side extension, Burley House, Docking Road, Great Bircham) - no objection raised.
- b. 23/01552 (Proposed rear extension and alterations to dwelling house, Home Lea, 85 Stanhoe Road, Great Bircham) - no objection raised.

b) ...including this, arriving after publication of the agenda:

- a. 23/01496 (Single storey front shower room extension and side utility & boiler room extension. Bagthorpe Road, Bircham Newton) - no objection raised.

8. Finance (23/094)

- a) Financial Report – The Clerk noted that end of September balances would be around £28,500, although some direct debits had not yet been notified. A repeated line on the expenditure list would be removed. The spending against

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budget list was useful as it represented half of the year [and spending totalled around 47% of that agreed]. The cost of the Adult Gym would not affect general funds, as would be coming from Council CIL. He also noted that, due to the new audit regulations and large spending items, it was likely that Council would have an Intermediate Audit this year – cost around £400.

- b) Donation to the Gt Massingham Car Scheme – this budgeted for but needed approval [done with the expenditure in c. below]
- c) Expenditure, as listed in the public pack², was agreed.
- d) It was agreed that Cllr Clark would become a signatory to Council accounts.

9. Highways (23/095)

- a) Clerk had received some issues which had been forwarded to Rangers, and he reminded Cllrs to encourage people to report Highways issues direct to NCC.

10. Delegated decisions (23/096)

- a) The following planning recommendations (all “no objection”) had been made under scheme of delegation:
 - Sent 3/8 – 23/01218 - Playing Field Nets.
 - Sent 3/8 – 23/00410 – Conversion Barn to Dwelling; Hall Farm Barn.
 - Sent 25/8 – 23/01277 – Detached Garage; Upgate, Lynn Rd.

11. Other items for consideration (23/097)

- a) A request had been received to ensure the blue bin on the Playing Field was made available for the bin collection (same day as domestic black bin). Cllr Rayner offered to move this, and was thanked by Council.
- b) No response had been received from the Cricket Club ref revised contract for grass-cutting and other matters. It was hoped that a meeting/discussion could take place very soon.
- c) Remembrance – It was agreed that Council should obtain a wreath, and that the Clerk should investigate small poppies to be placed on the War Memorial fence. Clerk to purchase if available following consultation with Cllrs.

12. Other items for discussion (23/098)

- a) Nothing raised.

13. Correspondence (23/099)

- a) A response had been received from the OPCC ref Council’s speeding concerns³. It was felt that this did not satisfactorily answer the concerns over whether the Speedwatch Team were operating in vain. Clerk to write asking whether Speedwatch reducing their efforts would reduce Police presence, and how to get an increase in such presence.
- b) Covered above – Quiet Lanes.

² See below

³ An email had also been received earlier in the day from the local Police

- c) Seven emails had been received requesting allotments be provided. It was agreed that the Clerk should begin investigating such a possibility, specifically in terms of land ownership, possible costs, viability, and process. A reminder that such allotments were for domestic, not personal, use was made.

14. Next Meeting (23/100)

- a) The next meeting was confirmed as 7.30pm on Wednesday, 11th October 2023, at the Social Club

15. Private session (23/101)

- a) It was agreed to close the meeting to public and press, under relevant legislation and standing orders. [Public and Clerk left the meeting.]
 b) Arrangements for the Clerk's Appraisal were agreed.

The Meeting ended at c.9.15pm

Expenditure:

Inv Date	To	For	Gross	VAT	Budget
26/7/23	Lazerpie Ltd	Memorial Case	£2,040.00	£340.00	XXX
8/8/23	Gt Massingham Car Scheme	Donation	£300.00	£0.00	CCS
14/8/23	Creake Pest Control	Moles at Pond	£150.00	£0.00	POM
	BCKLWN	Election			
31/8/23	Salaries incl tax	Salary	£457.08	£0.00	CKS
1/9/23	ECS - sep	Computer	£24.60	£4.10	EXP
	Npower - aug	Street Lights			SLP
29/9/23	Salaries incl tax - approx	Salary	£457.08	£0.00	CKS

Signed:

(Chairman) Date: 11/10/23