

OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

2022/2
MINUTES

ORDINARY MEETING held in the Village Hall, Oxborough
Wednesday 21 July 2021, starting at 7.30pm

PRESENT:	Simon Willies	Chair
	Bernie Chapman	Vice Chair
	Graham Allison	Councillor
	Ian Monson	Councillor

6 Members of the Public

Before the meeting began, the Chair pointed out that windows and doors had been opened to enable good ventilation and that it was a personal choice to wear a face-mask.

Open Forum (questions regarding the Agenda)

None

1. **Apologies for absence**

Cllr Nairn had extended his apologies for not being able to attend, due to prior engagement and Cllr Buckingham could not attend due to personal circumstances.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

3. **Declarations of recording and social media use**

None

4. **To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 6 May 2021**

The Chair proposed these should be accepted, seconded by Cllr Chapman. A show of hands was unanimous, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

5. **Matters arising**

- Regarding minutes item 10 g Gooderstone School Report, Cllr Monson confirmed that he had supplied the report to the Clerk - and the Chair agreed that he had seen it circulated.
- The Chair pointed out that the minutes of correspondence received minutes item 12 d concerning the future of the telephone box had not been added to the agenda as agreed. The Chair reminded the council that in the past it had been agreed that the box should be maintained as a heritage fixture, but he asked for opinions. Councillors proceeded to discuss the possible use (e.g. as a library) - Cllr Chapman had thought that it was already being used as a library, whereas Cllr Monson commented that this question of use had been debated many times over the years and that any change of use would probably carry a cost implication for the maintenance. Cllr Allison described how he voluntarily inspects the box each week, cleaning out cobwebs and other debris, but that if the use was to be changed he would not continue to carry on with this, as he was not interested in seeing the box used for any particular purpose. The Chair thanked him for his continuing to maintain the box and all councillors agreed that the use of the telephone box should remain as it is.
- Regarding the minutes item 12 f, war memorial quote from Nick Hindle, which is £455 plus VAT (compared to the gross budget £318, based on his initial quote), Cllr Chapman pointed out that as the finances had been stretched already, it might be better to leave this for the following year. The Chair had taken a recent look at the war memorial, and although there is some discolouration (green hue) it seemed in good condition. Cllr Monson agreed as it was only a few years back that remedial work had been carried out, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor. Councillors agreed that this further maintenance work could be left for now, to be reviewed later during the year.
- Regarding minutes item 12 j, the new village hall notice board had been installed and the Chair extended his thanks to the Village Hall Committee for the very kind and generous offer to allow the PC ongoing use of it.
- The Chair referred to minutes item 14. Finance d, wherein the internal audit had been carried out by Mr. Mike Craig. He had overlooked to actually thank Mike at the time, so he did so now, as he was also aware that he had performed this service a few years running.

6. **Planning**

- 3PL/2021/0711/HOU (4 Swaffham Road, Keith Brodie and Anna Kahn): Proposed two storey side extension. No Objection - approved 28 June 2021
- 3PL/2021/0248/F: Removal of existing building and erection of new dwelling, the formation of rubble spits and the extension of the existing Oxborough Lakes Management Plan to 2036. Mr Alan Boswell. Approved (27 May 2021)

7. Correspondence

a) Norfolk Police

1. See website

b) Breckland Council

1. See website

c) Norfolk County Council

1. See website

d) Playground project

1. NGF quoted for a sign - £285 plus VAT

2. AG signs and Graphics (Adam Goodliffe). Prices for supply of signs only:

500 x 200mm on 4mm Aluminium composite: £17.50 plus VAT. 500 x 300mm on 4mm Aluminium composite: £19.50 plus VAT

3. Signtech UK (Prices for supply of the signs only):

1 of 500 x 200 x aluminium sign @ £35.15 + VAT / 1 of 500 x 300 x aluminium sign @ £40.25 + VAT

1 of 500 x 200 x **stiffened** aluminium sign @ £40.65 + VAT / 1 of 500 x 300 x **stiffened** aluminium sign @ £45.45 + VAT

4. The British and European safety standard BS EN1176 and the Health and Safety Executive strongly recommend that all play areas have at least one inspection every year from an independent suitably qualified body such as RoSPA. The clerk has downloaded RoSPA's 'Play safety Inspection Service Order Form' - option to select a 'Standing Order' (£68.50 plus VAT per year).

5. Clerk has prepared a Risk Assessment for the use of the play area (Rev IR) - to be reviewed and approved.

6. A regular inspection checklist specific to the play area can be produced at the same time as your annual inspection for a cost of £30.00 plus VAT. Once produced this list should last until there are changes to your area. It covers all the points that you should be checking on a weekly basis as well as those that should be looked at in more depth on a monthly/quarterly basis. Working to this list will help to show that you are complying with your legal "duty of care".

7. Clerk found 3 quotes for skip hire (8yards):

Skippy Skip Hire £255 + VAT. Circle Skip Hire £240 + VAT. JP Skips £230 incl VAT. (Clerk note: not required as NGF agreed to remove the topsoil for free).

8. Clerk requested draft sign artwork for the official opening ceremony by Elizabeth Truss MP (9 July 2021) - circulated and approved by councillors.

9. Sarah Hussain, Community Reporter for Archant (EDP newspaper) will send a photographer to attend the opening event.

e) Clerk emailed Cathy Warnock with the suggestion that the leftover Queen's Golden Jubilee 2002 commemoration mugs (x24) should be gifted to the village hall. A minimum quantity had been purchased by the PC to hand out to the village children, but the surplus had been stored by the clerk since then. Cathy has agreed to accept the mugs for use in the village hall kitchen.

f) Ryston Runners - request to book village green on Sunday, 5 Sept (for annual ½ marathon) - plus permission to install 8 porta-loos, to be delivered on Friday 3 Sept/removed on Monday 6 Sept. Booking form sent, BACS payment received. **Councillors discussed the request, comments included that it would be their responsibility if any damage occurred over the 4 days - otherwise it was agreed that permission be given.**

g) The Chairman emailed the link to Campaign launched to mark Queen's Platinum Jubilee - BBC News:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-57137057> commenting that there are some trees on the green that are not in great shape. People across the UK are being urged to plant trees in an initiative to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. In the news report: "He (Prince Charles) said it is vital more of the right species of trees are planted, in the right places and that more woodlands, avenues, hedgerows and urban planting schemes should be established, while protecting and sustaining what we already have". **Cllr Chapman, Cllr Monson and the Chair were all in favour of planting new trees (maybe beech).**

h) OVH requested letter of support from the Parish Council, for funding application to improve the exterior area of the village hall, specifically a new wheelchair ramp, patio, planter and garden furniture.

i) Email response from housing association Victory ASB. "If the tenants, did want to install a driveway they would need to request permission with Victory Housing Trust as we would not pay for these works. I would suggest having a conversation with them to explain the ongoing issues, as they may not be aware".

j) Developing Skills in Health and Social Care (DSHSC) - project providing fully funded qualifications to staff living and working in adult health and social care sector - funded by European Social Fund. <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/help-with-employment/training/health-and-social-care-training>

k) OVH & PCC (village hall & church combined event) completed application form to display banners on village green railing for the Open Gardens planned for 3-4 July.

l) Mike Craig, treasurer for OVH -The Village Hall BBQ has been agreed to take place on Saturday 31 July 2021 (5pm onwards); he asks that the use of the Village Green on 31 July should be avoided so as not to coincide with the BBQ.

m) Email received 13 June from Paul Smythe: 'just to let you know a large branch (5-10M) fell off the beech tree onto Swaffham Road about 20 min ago, blocking both lanes. It's been removed and no one or any cars were involved. The speed at which it fell off may merit another inspection'.

o) Fabian Eagle, NCC Councillor, email regarding the use of his personal Highways budget to cut back vegetation at dangerous junctions as in previous years.

p) PFK Littlejohn (auditors) -Receipt of documents - notification of exempt status, 2021

q) Clerk requested the beech tree site inspection by Tree Officer (Hugh Coggles) - 25 June.

r) NALC- Regarding the Armed Forces Covenant Pledge: "County Councillor Keith Kiddie who is Norfolk County Council's Armed Forces Champion, urging your council to sign the pledge and appoint your own Armed Forces Champion". Here are some things a

Parish or Town Council must do to make the pledge binding on the council. It should be a decision taken at a full council meeting: from which it follows that it has to be on the agenda for that meeting and minuted, and the pledge should be signed by the clerk and, preferably, the chairman as well on behalf of the council. **The Councillors agreed that this should be considered, so it will be added to the agenda for the meeting in September.**

8. Highways

- i) Regarding the request for permission to install a post on the verge of Eastmoor Road (for the additional dog poop bin)- permission granted.
- ii) Regarding any works carried out on the Beech tree which would Jack Griffiths (Highways Engineer) advised "With regards to this the majority of tree surgeons would provide a form of traffic management. Normally, stop and go boards to manage the vehicles. This allows the flexibility to carry out the necessary works and even stop all traffic for up to 15mins when required for larger branch removal."
- iii) "Parish Partnerships" scheme for local highway improvements, which the County Council will be repeating in 2022/23. All bids to be submitted by 10 December 2021.
- iv) **Cllr Chapman pointed out that there is still an ongoing problem with the road flooding in the dip of road adjacent to the wall of Oxburgh Hall (exiting village towards Stoke Ferry), as the drainage pipe (which extends beneath the wall) is blocked, and the gully is not being dug in the correct area. The Clerk will contact Highways to discuss this.**

9. Finance

- a. To receive bank balance and reconciliation
 - b. To consider authorisation of payments and to sign cheques:
Payments:
 - 1. Insurance renewal (LTA)- £164.51 (paid by villager). **This additional insurance is for the play equipment and railings. The original quote of £65 only included the play equipment.**
 - 2. British Heart Foundation - donation of £30 in memory of John Voaden, ex-Chair and Councillor of the PC. Payment made - to be ratified at the meeting and cost reimbursed to the clerk.
 - 3. NGF Play - balance of playground equipment - £8667.96. BACS payment made.
 - 4. NGF Play - balance of playground fencing and gates-£6926.54. BACS payment made.
 - 5. TSB bank charges -£10
 - 7. AG Signs & Graphics (2 x play area signs) - £27 plus VAT (paid by villager)
 - 7. Sign Trade Supplies (railings clips and channel) - £21.31 plus VAT. Payment made - to be ratified at the meeting and cost reimbursed to the clerk.
 - 8. AG Signs & Graphics - Official Opening Plaque- £17.50 plus VAT
 - 9. Repayment of loan comprising the VAT component of the playground project- £3712.98

Cllr Chapman proposed these payments - seconded by Cllr Monson- all in favour, passed.

Receipts:

- 1. Ryston Runners - £90 (1/2 marathon booked for 5 September 2021)
- 2. Anonymous donation towards the playground project - £5000 - Received with grateful thanks from the PC
- 3. Loan comprising the VAT component of the playground project - £3712.98
- 4. VAT refund request submitted 15 June - £3922.48 - refund received
- 5. Oxborough Village Hall - Open Gardens weekend (3-4 July), parking on the village green - £60

10. Village Hall Report by Cllr Allison

The Open Gardens event had raised £1350, shared equally between the village hall and the church. Although the BBQ planned for the end of July had sold out, it might be possible to still buy a ticket as there has been a few cancellations. Café Ox has been generating between £30-£50 each week, thanks to Frankie Watkins and Anita Cutler for weekly cake baking. There is a Christmas event planned for children but more details to follow on. The new notice board has been installed (for use by the village hall and parish council), which was funded by a covid-19 grant from the government. Just waiting for delivery of the magnets before it can be used. He invited questions: Cllr Willies asked whether the Gooderstone coffee morning held on the same day had impacted Café Ox - he said it had not. The Chair thanked Graham for his report.

11. Motion to agree to purchasing the RoSPA Annual Playground Inspection service for the Play Area, at an annual cost of £72 plus VAT

The Chair considered this to be good practice and Cllr Chapman agreed, adding that it ensured the safety of all, addressing health and safety issues. Cllr Monson thought it was an excellent idea, to have a professional inspection to maintain the play area in good order and Cllr Allison had no objection that this would be acceptable. Cllr Chapman proposed the motion, seconded by Cllr Willies - all in favour, motion passed. The clerk will make the necessary arrangements.

12. Motion to approve Risk Assessment (Rev IR) on the playground area

The Councillors reviewed the draft risk assessment and made a few changes, specifically to include under 'misuse of play equipment' the risk of adults using the equipment, in spite of the sign which advised the age limit of 14 years. Adults should understand that they 'play' at their own risk. Cllr Chapman noted that the play equipment was still very new, so hopefully the novelty appeal for adults would eventually wear off but Cllr Allison observed that adults will be children. Cllr Monson thought that the signage was very comprehensive. The Chair proposed the motion, seconded by Cllr Monson - all in favour, passed. The clerk will amend the risk assessment as instructed here and publish the initial release revision on the website.

13. Motion to approve Safety & Maintenance Sheet (Rev IR) on the play equipment/ area (weekly checks)

The Councillors scrutinized the draft check sheet and after some discussion, it was agreed that additional columns be added to allow for 'action taken' (if damage is discovered) whereby hazard tape needs to be used to cordon off equipment or areas, whilst repair work is undertaken; as Cllr Monson said, this is a very serious issue and the 'inspector' needs to have authority to take immediate action. Cllr Chapman asked the Clerk to speak with the grass cutters (CGM) regarding cutting/strimming around the railings- to avoid damage to the surface (which might happen particularly during strimming). Cllr Monson suggested the application of a small amount of weed killer for this purpose - and Cllr Willies said that this could perhaps happen at the same time as the bi-annual herbicide treatment carried out on the verges. Cllr Chapman proposed the motion to approve the amended check sheet, seconded by Cllr Monson - all in favour, motion passed. The Clerk will draw up a rota for the weekly inspections to be carried out on Fridays.

14. Motion to purchase additional signage for the village green

The original DoorStep Green sign board is looking very faded and needs restoration, but the plaques detailing the funders are almost entirely faded away - the draft sign (plaque) to replace them had been circulated to the Councillors previously (see Appendix B). There is a second sign which is required on the vehicular gates (the Clerk has displayed a home-made sign since the Open Gardens event) - to warn that vehicles should not be parked across the gates, as access is required at all times. Councillors agreed that a formal sign should be installed at this location. Cllr Monson proposed the motion, this was seconded by Cllr Chapman - all in favour, motion passed.

15. Round-up and conclusions on the completion of the Playground installation

The Chair asked Councillors for feedback on the playground project. Cllr Chapman thought that the opening ceremony with Liz Truss presiding had been very good, that it is a lovely playground enjoyed by lots of children. Although the Clerk confirmed that a thank you letter had been sent to the pub, as Catkin and Stephen Parker had supplied refreshments free of charge, Cllr Chapman informed the council that he had given them a couple of trees as further thanks. The Chair also thought that the opening event had gone well and thanked the Clerk for her work towards making this happen, adding that the EDP newspaper had published a decent report of the event. Cllr Monson expressed himself that, contrary to what people thought, he had not been opposed to the playground project, only his concern had been that the Parish Council negotiated with Oxborough Farms Ltd (OFL) the legal aspect (because of the covenant) of installing the play equipment on the land. This had been achieved by way of a temporary arrangement (valid for 7 years) but that it would probably remain in place, as the playground is particularly well-thought out and well designed, thanking past Councillor, Paul Gilluley for doing this. He pointed out that the railings had been originally included in the first design, and that they added to the safety of the play equipment. Cllr Allison questioned why OFL had insisted on a railing height of 1.2m (4 feet) rather than 3 feet which is standard (at which point Cllr Willies confirmed that RoSPA advise 1m, which is more than 3 feet). Cllr Monson continued by saying that the location by the bus shelter was best for safety, being prominent and easy for children to access. Cllr Allison acknowledged the covenant on the land, appreciating that legally it had to be done right, but questioning why OFL had not put all the issues to the PC in one go, rather than one at a time, sending threatening legal letters. The Chair reminded everyone that there is no purpose in going back over the problems raised at that time, but Cllr Allison said that he could only comment on what had happened - to which Cllr Willies said that the whole of the Parish Council should have been aware of the covenant, not just Cllr Monson. Indeed, Cllr Monson responded that he only became aware of the covenant last July (when someone else pointed it out to him) and he had consulted his solicitor with the question of breaking it. But it seemed as if the then Chair of the PC was going to go ahead with the playground project in spite of the covenant, and before the legal matter could be settled. He concluded that he did not resort to the solicitor again until March of this year, as his concern over the condition of the Beech tree caused him to request a change to the playground location. But then the PC engaged a solicitor to write a letter of response so OFL had to instruct solicitors again. Cllr Willies interjected at this point, recalling how the PC had received the solicitor letter which demanded a response within 2 days, which was impossible for the PC to comply with, as there was no time to arrange a meeting. He added that although it had been unfortunate that the PC had needed to go to the expense of following the legal route, hopefully the PC could look to the future with no further acrimony. Cllr Monson thought that credit should be given to all parties and that when after 7 years it could be seen that the playground was kept in good order, it would remain a temporary structure so the covenant would remain unbroken, protecting the village green from being developed.

16. Motion to install a post on the verge of Eastmoor Road, for an additional dog poop bin

Permission has been received from NCC Highways to install a post on the left-hand side of the verge on Eastmoor Road. Cllr Chapman and Cllr Monson confirmed that there are always plenty of dog walkers along this stretch, and the Chair suggested that if the motion was approved, that this additional location would be advertised. Cllr Allison could not comment on whether this would be a good location, as he walks his dog the other side of the main road (on the Foulden Road). Cllr Monson queried as to whether there were any existing services at the proposed location, but Cllr Chapman could not confirm either way, although of course the water authority could be consulted. The Chair advised that an alternative location had been suggested, which was the railings on the other end of the village green (village hall end) - no permission is required for that location however. Cllr Monson thought that as permission had already been given for the Eastmoor Road location, that it would be sensible to proceed and he proposed the motion, seconded by Cllr Chapman - all in favour, passed.

17. Motion to proceed with crown-reduction on the Beech Tree, led by Cllr Monson

Cllr Monson reported that the old Beech tree had been losing branches, especially now as the weather has been warmer and the tree is in full leaf. Clearly the report completed the previous year indicated the necessary crown-reduction work to be carried out and he has volunteered to finance this work. This will make the tree less susceptible to wind damage and stabilize it for some years to come, especially seeing as the trunk is sound, in spite of the fungus growing at the base. He is acquiring several quotes but has been advised that the tree surgeons are all too busy to carry out immediate crown-reduction work. The Chair pointed out that it has become a matter of urgency, following on from recent branch-fall. Cllr Chapman thinks that the fungus could be problematic and would rather replant with a few new beech trees, although Cllr Monson pointed out that there is a further beech tree which has been growing at the corner of the gate. Cllr Chapman volunteered to grind down the stumps, concerned that heavy and large farm machinery along the main road can cause strong drafts which might dislodge further branches. Cllr Allison had met Breckland Council tree inspector, Mr Coggles, who had said that there was some urgency and that the work should be carried out as soon as possible - unfortunately the Clerk has yet to receive an email from him. Cllr Monson asked if the PC would like to proceed with the motion - adding that he will organise for a local tree surgeon to remove the loose branch as soon as possible. Cllr Willies proposed the motion, seconded by Cllr Chapman - all in favour, motion passed.

18. Motion to repair the broken wooden gate (replace post and re-attach gate) on the village green

The Chair thanked Cllr Allison for carrying out initial repairs already, as he has installed a new post and re-hung the gate. Cllr Allison explained that Mr. Andrew LeClerq has offered some banisters to replace the rope. Cllr Monson also offered to supply a further post when needed, and Cllr Allison advised that the problem is that the ground is set hard with lots of roots, which makes it almost impossible to get a strong fixing for the post. The Councillors agreed to review the situation at a later date.

19. A.O.B

Cllr Monson expressed his satisfaction with the works carried out recently by Highways Department, to Gooderstone Road from its junction with Murgots Lane to its junction with Folly Lane - using recycled material, the road has been flattened out quite well.

Public participation

20. TO RECEIVE INFORMATION OR SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING

None

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.
The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Appendix B



APPENDIX A	Meeting 21 July 2021				
Report: Accounts reported against the budget quarterly					
IAW Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control (section Financial Reporting)					
BUDGET 2021/22	Budget	Actual			
Estimated Gross Payments					
Accountants	25.00	0.00			
Training	150.00	0.00			
Clerk's wages/expenses	1369.00	0.00			
HMRC	286.00	0.00			
CGM (grass maintenance - 15 cuts)	612.00	0.00			
CGM (herbicide treatment -twice)	66.00	0.00			
Hedge maintenance (1 cut)	334.64	0.00			
St. John the Evangelist donation	175.00	0.00			
Royal British Legion donation	30.00	0.00			
Insurance	162.21	162.21			
Village Hall Hire/Zoom meeting	100.73	0.00			
Bank charges	60.00	10.65			
Playground Project -balance on equipment	8667.16	8667.96			
Playground Project - railings	0.00	9895.06			
Playground Project - Official Opening Sign	0.00	21.00			
Legal Fees	792.00	1257.00			
War memorial cleaning	318.00	0.00			
Village Green bench	380.00	0.00			
	13527.74	20013.88			
Estimated Receipts					
Village Green Hire	30.00	150.00			
National Trust Lease	150.00	0.00			
Precept	3166.00	1583.00			
VAT refund on playground project	2063.80	3712.98			
VAT Refund	170.00	209.50			
Anonymous Donation towards the Playground	0.00	5000.00			
	5579.80	10655.48			
Bank Reconciliation					
Bank Balance b/f	11540.37				
Add Receipts:					
Hire of village green	150.00				
Anonymous Donation towards the Playground	5000.00				
VAT on playground payment by anonymous doner	3712.98				
VAT refund	3922.48				
sub-total	12785.46				
Less Payments:					
Bank charges	10.00				
Hayes & Storr (legal fees)	957.00				
Insurance	162.21				
NGF Play Ltd (balance on playground railings)	6926.54				
NGF Play Ltd (balance on playground equipment)	8667.96				
AG Signs & Graphics (playground sign for opening)	21.00				
Refund VAT on playground payment from doner	3712.98				
sub-total	20457.69				
Balance @ 13 July 2021	3868.14				