

**2022/6**  
**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Simon Willies    Chair  
Bernie Chapman    Vice Chair  
Graham Allison    Councillor  
Linda Holloway     Councillor  
Ian Monson    Councillor  
Mike Nairn     District Council Councillor

4 Members of the public

## None

## 8. Planning

Motion to consider whether the PC should respond to any of the planning applications, and if so, what to respond

1. 3PL/2021/1519/LB Oxburgh Hall -responded with No Comment (21/1/2022). Approved by BC (3-2-2022).
2. 3DC/2021/0236/DOC Oxborough Lakes House Oxborough Lakes (Mr Alan Boswell)- Discharge (in Part only) of Condition 9 on 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).

## 9. Finance

- a. To receive bank balance and reconciliation

The Councillors reviewed the current Budget vs. Actual (Appendix A). It was noticed that the annual payment to the village hall for the hire of the hall had not yet been paid; the Clerk will request an invoice.

- b. To consider authorisation of payments and to sign cheques.

Cllr Chapman suggested it might be cheaper to combine payments to the clerk, however the monthly bank charge fee of £5 includes all cheques drawn. Cllr Chapman suggested that all the Councillors should be signatories, Cllr Allison agreed but Cllr Holloway said that she would defer her agreement until the following day (communicate her decision to the Clerk) so the Clerk will obtain the appropriate application form.

### a) Payment:

1. TSB bank fees £8.50
2. Ladywell Accountancy Services - annual PAYE (y/e March 2022) £25
3. Clerk's annual wage- £1430
4. Clerk's annual expenses £185.37

### b) Receipts:

1. National Trust paid £150 for period May 2020-May 2021

The payments were approved by all, and Cllrs Willies and Monson signed the cheques.

## 10. Correspondence

- a) Norfolk Police (see website)

- b) Breckland Council (see website)

1. Breckland District Council has cut grass in the ownership of, and on behalf of Norfolk County Council. NCC has now taken the decision to cut their own grass within the Breckland district, which will take effect from January 2022. Attached are map/s indicating the areas of grass affected, and confirming ownership, so you have clarity of which areas are in the ownership of BDC and which are owned by NCC. Should you have any grass cutting related concerns with BDC you can report them via: <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/3023/Grounds-maintenance>

Should you have any NCC related concerns you can contact them via: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads/road-maintenance/trees-hedges-and-grass-verges>

- c) NCC (see website)

1. Flexibus for Swaffham is planned to launch on 14th March 2022. This will be a high-quality bus service, using 1 new 16 seat fully accessible vehicle, operating between 0700-1900 Monday to Saturday. Passengers will need to book in advance, with booking options over the telephone, online and through downloading a booking app. Payment can also be made in advance using the booking app, or on the bus. This new service will give travel options to Swaffham and beyond, Monday to Saturday for the following: Barton Bendish, Beachamwell, Bodney, Brockville Cockley Cley, Cranwich, Didlington, Drymere, Eastmoor, Foulton, Gooderstone, The Cressinghams, Hilborough, Ickburgh, Methwold, Mundford, The Pickenhams, Northwold and Oxborough. (I have also attached a map of the service operating area). The current service 12 (North Pickenham to Swaffham - Monday to Friday) and the Service 31 Beachamwell, Oxborough, Gooderstone, Cockley Cley South and North Pickenham to Swaffham), will be discontinued with all villages having flexible travel opportunities across the new service Monday to Saturday.

d) Email from Suzanne Brown regarding: The Anne Robson Trust is a pre-bereavement charity that passionately believes that "no one deserves to die alone". Liz Pryor, founder and CEO has recently been awarded the MBE in the Queens 2022 New Year's Honour's list, for services to end-of-life care. Calls are free and confidential -0808 801 0688. Information displayed on notice board and website.

f) Email from Julie Wood: 'Please pass on our thanks to the Parish Council for their donation of £175 towards the upkeep of the churchyard'.

g) Request for donation from 'Fresh Start new beginnings', a children's charity offering a therapeutic service for children aged 0 to 18 in Suffolk and Norfolk who have been victims of sexual abuse.

h) Anglian Water: - planning to install a new water pipeline, known as the Didlington pipeline, which will run northwest of Boughton to Gooderstone -currently identifying the likely routes for this pipeline and "considering timescales for delivery. We are seeking to identify a route that minimises the impact to the local environment and

disruption to the community. We will be in touch again once we have made further progress with this route selection". i) GoCompare email (catherine@content.gocompare.com) regarding a guide to preparing for a flood and protecting your property - <https://www.gocompare.com/home-insurance/limiting-flood-risk-and-damage/> and a request to add this information to the PC website.

j) The Pensions Regulator: Every three years an employer must put certain staff back into a pension scheme. This is known as 're-enrolment'. This is an employer's legal duty, and you must let us know you have done it by completing and submitting a re-declaration of compliance. OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL last carried out re-enrolment duties on 3 July 2019 and you will once

again need to check your specific duties in the same way you did then. Complete between 3 April - 2 October. Clerk note, letter code is 1024941223.

k) Norfolk Citizens Advice are currently having a recruitment drive for more volunteers and we are also recruiting two more Trustees. See Posters on display board and website.

l) Adcocks Garden Services - email from Sam Adcock: 'would be happy to clear the tree free of charge on the basis we could keep the wood'. **Cllrs discussed this request, but concluded that there would be villagers with wood burners (for fuel) or even a lathe (for wood turning) so thank you, but no.**

m) NALC - repeat request to the PC to subscribe, annual membership cost is £88.39. **This was discussed and the Councillors agreed to not subscribe as finances would not allow it.**

n) Draft Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke Ferry (on display in their village hall 17 March) or [www.stokeferryplan.co.uk](http://www.stokeferryplan.co.uk) Deadline for comments to King's Lynn & West Norfolk Council is 9 May.

o) TSB is closing the branch in Swaffham; the PC will be able to access the account in King's Lynn. No changes to the bank account are required.

p) Nexus Fostering - carers urgently needed in Norfolk - see website and Notice Board for information.

q) Beech Tree:

1. Email from Mr. David Hotchkin, withdrawing the offer to pay for tree works carried out by AGDJ Brown, due to lack of method statement and risk assessment and the attempt to take down the tree "none of this gives me any confidence in the abilities of AGDJ Brown... I consider that the Parish Clerk has been guilty of negligence in this matter, because they have failed to exercise 'due diligence'. Further, I must question the competence of the Parish Council in general, for allowing this matter to develop as it has by the acceptance of the cheapest quote without further research and questioning".

2. Email from Mr. Paul Smyth, concerning the tree contractor AGDJ Brown, advising that he and his wife Teresa (living in the house directly adjacent to the tree) "have misgivings (I wonder, for example, if they have the equipment or experience necessary to professionally access and remove the significant branches in the higher parts of the tree) which the PC is free to take into consideration if it wishes to."

3. Email from Chris Heatley in response to David Hotchkin, supports his opinion "and would like to thank you for your due diligence"

4. RFQ to have the beech tree felled was relayed to Tim's Tree Services at a site meeting 8 March - but the company emailed this response: 'We had an onsite meeting on Saturday with all staff members and have taken the decision that on this occasion we are not in a position to offer a quotation'.

5. Site meeting on 16 March at 3pm with Dr. Stump.

## 11. Highways

1. ENQ900200205. Clerk reported mud on road problem on The Green (adjacent to the telephone box): "We have inspected and are going to resolve the problem - After investigation we have confirmed action is required. Defects are scheduled for repair depending on the nature of the defect and work needed but on average can take approximately 6 weeks".

2. ENQ900201808. Reported a second time mud on The Green, as the first works carried out were not completed (since a couple of cars were parked on the area). **Cllr Willies pointed out that although some work had been done, since the parish had not received notification of the dates, some cars had been in the way.**

3. ENQ900201804. Broken footpath sign on Eastmoor Road. **Cllr Allison advised of further broken signs (close to the wall of Oxburgh Hall) - the Clerk will raise a request for repairs.**

4. UK Power Networks: 6 -weeks' Notice of scheme, which includes alterations to the high voltage (HV) overhead line at Ferry Lane, Oxborough, whereby a span of overhead line is being removed, highlighted yellow on the enclosed plan. The cable is being diverted underground to a new terminal pole.

## 12. Update on the felling of the Beech Tree

a. reconsider the decision to employ AGDJ Brown (method statement and risk assessment (RAMS) still not supplied and concerns of incompetency following the first attempt).

Cllrs agreed that as no RAMS yet received and seeing just how appalling was the small amount of work carried out, with no professionalism at all (in spite of the impression given by their website), it was proposed that the use of this contractor should be cancelled. Cllr Holloway added that tree works carried out by local councils was, in her experience, always skilled and knowledgeably completed. Cllr Chapman proposed that AGDJ Brown works should be cancelled, seconded by Cllr Holloway - all in favour, agreed. Cllr Allison expressed his concern that the PC may be invoiced for works carried out so far, and the Chair responded that the PC would not pay anything, Cllr Chapman adding that with all the Health & Safety precautions ignored by Brown they would not be in any position to charge any money to the PC. Cllr Willies agreed as even when the broken branch was eventually cut down onto the green it was left in place, rather than removed as promised.

b. review existing quotes for the tree works (e.g. Golden Tree Services-GTS) and seek additional quotes. (Nb: Mr. David Hotchkin has reaffirmed his offer to pay for the tree works and replanting).

A recent request for a quote (following a site meeting) had been turned down by Tim's Tree Services but on the day of the PC meeting, a site meeting had been held with Dr. Stump and the quote emailed that evening:

Contractor	Felling/ dismantling	Traffic Management	TM details	Replacement Tree	Notes	Date quoted
Golden Tree Services	£4490	£700		£250	Subject to VAT	21/8/2021
Dr Stump	£6000	£2000	Road closure	No	Subject to VAT	16/3/2022
Target Trees	£12500			No	Subject to VAT	3/9/2021

Matt from Dr. Stump gave a professional presentation of how the work would be carried out, sharing photos of recent similar tree fells and the type of equipment used. Cllr Allison suggested seeking further quotes, citing a company in Ashill (Norfolk Arborist), contact numbers 01760 724270/07917 207781. Councillors agreed that a further quote (with the requisite RAMS information) should be sought and then all these quotes shared with Mr. David Hotchkin.

### 13. Village Hall Report by Susan Hernandez

The sound-dampening baffles have been installed and the effect has been very noticeable, especially when all the heaters are on, and the hall is busy with the coffee morning or the quiz. The garden transformation is proceeding well, and the new grass and grass seed will be added at the beginning of April, with the final flagstones as well, which will be used to site some of the new benches. The spoil heap is going to be gently shaped and planted with grasses, and this small hill will be accessible to the children - so they can all see that Norfolk isn't as flat as they say.

Mike Wood has recently renovated the storeroom (during the bitterly cold weather), also worked with Tristan Tomlinson for 2 days on ladders and scaffold towers installing all the new baffles onto the ceiling - grateful thanks to them both. Mike also assembled all the new garden furniture, installed new shelves in the cleaning cupboard and moved the History Group cabinets out of the lobby first and into the storeroom - he has been non-stop in carrying out so many jobs, a really generous volunteer! Both CaféOx and the Quiz Evening on March 30 will be in aid of Ukraine - with all proceeds and donations to be sent to the Ukrainian Red Cross: we hope that these events will be well attended as Oxborough Village makes a stand for this terribly oppressed country.

As the Queen is marking her Platinum Jubilee this summer, there is the possibility of a collaborative party to take place on the village green: VHC hope to work with the PC to plan an event for the village - details to follow on.

And finally, following on from last year's success, the Open Gardens will be held over a summer weekend, date to be agreed soon.

### 14. Ideas on improving income

Cllr Chapman thought a reasonable increase should be applied to the village green hire (increase from £90 to £100), and Cllr Allison suggested that the PC ought to market the village green so that more hirers could be found. Cllr Willies agreed with him adding that the range of prices should be increased as well (£45 increase to £50 for residents) and after further discussion Cllr Holloway suggested an increase from £30 to £35 for charitable hires, although the Chair pointed out that this figure could be reduced if agreed by all Councillors. Cllr Monson thought that £100 seemed a fair price for a nice, well-kept village green. Cllr Allison remarked how he had checked out the village news publication The Signpost, but that although other villages promoted the use of their own greens, no prices were ever published. He feared that increasing the hire rate might see Oxborough losing out on potential hires. The Chair proposed increasing hire charges to £100 / £50 / £35 (full hire/resident hire/charity hire) seconded by Cllr Chapman - all in favour, agreed.

### 15. Upkeep of playground equipment and area

The Chair had noticed that grass had been growing up around the equipment - but following the first cut of the year by CGM a few days prior to the meeting, this has been rectified. He added that some of the equipment is looking dirty, but Cllr Chapman responded that this is normal for playgrounds. The Clerk was asked to supply some further copies of the Safety & Maintenance Sheet as the weekly checks had not always been completed - Cllr Allison confirmed that he would carry out his first inspection on 1 April.

### 16. Motion to review Policy Documents:

- Risk Assessment (Rev F) - Clerk recommends update to Rev G
  - Financial Regulations (Rev B) - Clerk recommends no updates
  - Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control (Rev B) - Clerk recommends no updates
- Cllr Monson asked how long the Clerk had retained the PC records at her house (she advised that for as long as she had been the Clerk, she had always kept the paperwork) and Cllr Monson suggested that it would be possible to send older records to the archive department at NCC. Cllr Willies suggested adding a further clause to the Financial Regulations, namely: Section 10.4 If the order is for works for £2,500 and above the RFO needs to conduct due diligence on companies providing a quote. It was agreed to amend Financial Regulations and update to Rev C. The Risk Assessment updates were agreed, namely: (a) i. Assets listed updated with additional dog poop bin and Playground equipment/railings/gates (b) ii. Insurance updated with playground equipment/railings/gates and (c) iii. Assets updated with playground equipment/railings/gates. Cllr Chapman proposed these amendments, Cllr Allison seconded, all in favour - agreed.

### 17. Queen's platinum jubilee celebration -grants available for lunch party/tree planting

Since the PC cannot apply for the funds, it will be down to the village hall to make the application (as mentioned earlier in the meeting by District Cllr Mike Nairn), with the help of the Clerk who is the PC representative. Of course no charge for the use of the village green and Cllr Chapman volunteered to provide the use of a generator so the music can be powered. Cllr Monson

recalled how in years past the local villagers would organise such events, and Cllr Allison mentioned Nick Kahn and his daughters, as they all played music and sang. Cllr Willies offered to supply a boom box which plays music via a phone CD player (so both would need a plug and wi-fi), and there is already the possibility of hiring a live jazz band (Jazz Sign) from Swaffham (information supplied by Geoff and Bar Pritchard) who are available on Friday 3 June (performance charge of £240) but who would need access to a marquee and electric power supply. Regarding a free tree from the Woodland Trust, applications for tree packs (British species only) for schools and community groups are now closed for this season due to popular demand but applications will open again in spring 2022. "If you're applying as a community group, the land needs to be accessible to the public. You should also make sure your local community are aware of your plans to plant and are happy for you to go ahead." Cllr Allison reported that a number of the existing trees have been damaged around the base from strimming and grass cutting equipment used by CGM, but Cllr Monson noted that the Council had previously agreed that there are enough trees.

**18. A.O.B.**

Cllr Chapman asked if the Lime tree on the Pound could be added to the next Agenda as it needs attention, probably needs pruning. Cllr Monson recalled how some 25 years previously the top of this tree had died of and how it took many years to recover. And although the PC has carried out some gentle pruning over the last years (when previously Trevor from Treelink had carried out works on the tree, free or charge) the Clerk was instructed to seek quotes for works to be carried out.

**Public participation**

**19. To receive information or suggested items for consideration at the next meeting**

Mrs. Pritchard mentioned the broken branch which has been lodged in the tree opposite the pub- the branch is being entwined around some electric cables and despite the many recent winds, sees no signs of shifting, although now it is looking very snappy. It would be a good idea to have someone take a look before it proves hazardous. She recalled how NCC Councillor Fabian Eagle has an annual £6k highways budget, and perhaps this could be used to remedy the badly deteriorated road surface on Ferry Road, which is full of potholes. Councillors agreed that this road had seen regular repairs (as it must be made up of its own material) and the Clerk was instructed to contact Highways and put in a request for plannings. Mrs. Pritchard finished by noting that the Forestry Commission and the National Trust make constant use of tree surgeons, and perhaps they would be able to supply another contact for the felling of the beech tree.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.  
The meeting closed 9.10pm

APPENDIX A	Meeting 16 March 2022				
Report: Accounts reported against the budget quarterly					
IAW Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control (section Financial Reporting)					
<b>BUDGET 2021/22</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>		
<b>Estimated Gross Payments</b>					
Accountants	25.00	0.00	25.00		
Training	150.00	0.00	150.00		
Clerk's wages/expenses	1369.00	0.00	1369.00		
HMRC	286.00	0.00	286.00		
CGM (grass maintenance - 15 cuts)	612.00	593.28	0.00		
CGM (herbicide treatment -twice)	66.00	33.00	33.00		
Hedge maintenance (1 cut)	334.64	344.68	0.00		
St. John the Evangelist donation	175.00	175.00	0.00		
Royal British Legion donation	30.00	30.00	0.00		
Insurance	162.21	162.21	0.00		
Village Hall Hire/Zoom meeting	100.73	0.00	100.73		
Bank charges	60.00	59.15	0.85		
Playground Project -balance on equipment	8667.16	8667.96	0.00		
Playground Project - railings	0.00	9895.06	0.00		
Playground Project - signage	0.00	21.00	0.00		
Legal Fees	792.00	1257.00	0.00		
War memorial cleaning	318.00	0.00	318.00		
Village Green bench	380.00	0.00	380.00		
Dog waste bin	0.00	126.08	0.00		
	<b>13527.74</b>	<b>21364.42</b>	<b>2662.58</b>		
<b>Estimated Receipts</b>					
Village Green Hire	30.00	150.00			
National Trust Lease	150.00	150.00	0.00		
Precept	3166.00	3166.00	0.00		
VAT refund on playground project	2063.80	3712.98			
VAT Refund	170.00	209.50			
Anonymous Donation towards the Playground	0.00	5000.00			
Donation towards the playground signage	0.00	9.00			
	<b>5579.80</b>	<b>12397.48</b>	<b>0.00</b>		
<b>Bank Reconciliation</b>					
Bank Balance b/f	<b>3918.74</b>				
<b>Add Receipts:</b>					
National Trust Lease	150.00		1222.66	estimated	
<b>sub-total</b>	<b>150.00</b>			balance end	
<b>Less Payments:</b>				of financial	
Bank charges	8.50			year 2021/22	
St. John the Evangelist donation	175.00				
<b>sub-total</b>	<b>183.50</b>				
<b>Bank Balance @ 4 March 2022</b>	<b>3885.24</b>				