

BOXTED PARISH COUNCIL (BPC)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 13 MARCH 2024

BOXTED VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Members – Councillors Jamie Seakens (Chair), Arabella Brentnall, James Collitt, Amin Dedhar, Jonathan Hunt, Angela McLauchlan and Gene Pugh.

Karen Thompson - Clerk

ALSO IN Cllr Tom Rowe (Colchester City Council (CCC)) and members of the public

ATTENDANCE

24/36 Welcome and noting apologies.

Jamie Seakens welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that Cllr Smith was absent. His apology was accepted.

24/37 Declaration of Interests – None declared.

24/38 Public Participation Session

The issue of the recent installation of new bus stops was raised. The clerk confirmed that she had only been communicated with on the stop towards Colchester on the Dedham Rd as it is a Parish Council bus stop. There was no consultation or information received regarding the new stops. An urgent meeting was requested as the bus stops towards Cooks Hill and opposite Hobbs Drive on Straight Road, apart from being at odds with the rural location, are considered very dangerous.

24/39 Minutes of the last meetings of the Council held on 14th February 2024.

Councillors resolved to agree the minutes of the last meeting. Minor typos had been corrected.

24/40 City and County Council - To receive the verbal reports of the City Councillor and the County Councillor.

Councillor Rowe asked about progress on the Cross Cottages flooding. A parish councillor said that it may be that a filled in ditch could be the cause of the flooding and reinstatement was being investigated.

Cllr Rowe also updated on the sites identified in the Colchester Local Plan were just sites that people have put forward to be considered for inclusion as development sites in the development of the Colchester Local Plan. They have no status other than put forward. No decisions have been made and if selected then planning would need to be applied for in the usual way. Cllr Rowe advised that the Parish Council should take up the offer of on site meetings to look at the proposed sites.

24/41 To note the Casual Vacancy applicant deadline is 28th March. This was noted.

24/42 Planning Applications

.1 **To consider commenting on the following applications and noting the decisions made:**

<u>240420</u>	26/02/20	1 Border House, Boxted Court, Dedham Road	Application for a lawful development certificate for proposed single storey rear extension
24			

The Council resolved NOT to make a comment

The Council resolved to make the following comment cautioning against the over-industrialisation of the smallholdings, and the reduction of the “green gap” between Colchester and Boxted which is a key policy of our Neighbourhood Plan. Structures such as this seem disproportionately sized in relation to the usage of the small-holding properties. Particularly those that are used primarily for equestrian use and do not need substantial agricultural machinery to be housed and maintained. BPC are also concerned by any structures that appear to offer the potential for industrial or commercial uses. In this proposal the floor plan indicates multiple workshop style bays and the provision of a bay that could be easily converted to an office space that includes a toilet. BPC do not object to this structure in general but would like to see conditions imposed to ensure that this structure and the proposed site, are not used for industrial or commercial purposes as a result of any subsequent planning approval for this structure. Additionally, BPC seeks to support the Dedham Vale Society – Dark Night Skies campaign and would welcome conditions on external lighting, particularly as no external lights are indicated in this proposal. BPC have sought to encourage landowners to improve the quality of their hedges to improve screening, and we note that the applicant in this case has recently planted new hedgerow on Langham Road for which we are thankful. We would welcome all additional attempts to improve screening through a systematic landscape plan being implemented.

It was additionally noted that the following had been received as a certificate of lawful use. The Council did not dispute the use of this building claim for the purpose stated.

- .2 **Decisions** - Decisions made by Colchester City Council were noted.

24/43 Parish Council Finance

- .1 **To receive the Parish Council Financial Report as at the 29 February 2024 (see attachments including bank and card statements).**

The financial statement was received, and the following was noted. Spend to date was reported as £93,023 and receipts were £104,272. Bank holdings were £70,640 with all precept for 23/24 received and a VAT reimbursement of £16,000 due before the year end.

- .2 **To approve for payment the invoices presented.**

The following invoices for the month were seen and approved for payment.

Parish Council

Pay (inc HMRC, pension etc)	2420.96
Clerk's expenses (working from home allowance, mileage)	80.00
Green recycling bins	76.87
Cloudy IT Licenses	96.60
Hall hire	20.00
Viking sundries	149.46
Grant Approved Cricket Club	260.00
Payroll software - Moneysoft	98.40
EALC - Treasury training - clerk	90.00
Moser Groundcare – pitch improvement	1,440.00
Tree Survey - JF tree Specialist	480.00
Rebate groundsman - Hub loft access parts	45.90
Village Hall	
Michelle Gourlay (cleaning)	450.00
Business Rates – Colchester Council	21.46
Toilet and tap repairs - refund Clerk	47.16

24/44 Phone Box Library

To note and thank Haley Jones for managing the Phonebox library and to seek another volunteer as Haley steps away. The council thanked Haley Jones and noted that in-between volunteers we would take the opportunity to spring clean the box and look at improving the windows.

24/45 Neighbourhood Plan

To set a date for the first meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. Suggested 24th April 2024 at 7pm. This was noted and the following Councillors agreed to sit on the group: Jon Hunt, Arabella Brentnall, Jamie Seakens, Angela McLauchlan, Gene Pugh.

24/46 Land at Cooks Hill Dedham Road Corner

To note the portfolio holder for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land would need to authorise a transfer to the Parish Council as it is designated HRA land. It was suggested that resident support would be helpful. This was noted and a draft survey was agreed that would seek views.

24/47 Recreation Ground

To note that Moser Groundcare will start the grass cutting contract on 1 June 2024. This was noted.

24/48 Annual Tree Survey

To receive the results of the tree survey and decide any actions (see attached). The tree survey was received and all medium and some low recommendations were agreed to be actioned. For future surveys we would also ask for the trees on the Village Green to be included.

24/49 Review of Asset Register

To review and accept the current asset register (see attached). The revised Asset Register was reviewed and approved.

24/50 Review Co-option Policy

To review the current Co-option Policy (attached). This was approved.

24/51 Village Hall

For the Parish Council as Sole Trustee to the Village Hall and to note the published minutes of the Village Hall AGM which describes the minor increases to hiring charges (see attached). This was noted and the rate increases agreed. It was also decided that the council would charge £1000pa for time and services of the clerk and the handyman spent on the hall.

24/52 Clerk's Report

.1 To receive the clerks report including a list of resolutions agreed at earlier Parish Council meetings and note progress to date on the following (full report - see attachment). This was received.

It was decided to delay the procurement of a bare rooted fir tree for the hall until late Oct/November.

.2 To note that the quotes received for CCTV will be for discussion at the next meeting. This was noted.

24/53 Items for the next meeting agenda

The following items are planned for the next meeting agenda:

- Risk Register

24/54 Annual Parish Meeting 10th April

To note that the newly formed CIC to take forward plans for the Royal British Legion Site have been invited to talk about their plans. Also, the Boxted against the Pylons and Harpers Café will speak. This was noted.

24/55 Date of Next Meeting - The proposed date of the next meeting is 10 April 2024 at 730pm or later if the Annual Residents Meeting runs later.

Delegated authority being granted to the Clerk with authorisation from the Chair for emergency and time critical issues.

This was agreed.

24/56 To exclude members of the press and public from the meeting and to consider pay awards.

- .1 **Motion to exclude public & press: In accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted namely the consideration of pay rates. The Public and Press be temporarily excluded from this meeting and will be instructed to withdraw.** The members of the public left the meeting.
- .2 **To consider awarding the cleaner and handyman a pay rise for 24/25 (see attached confidential paper).** The council resolved to award a payrise of 5% to staff not on a national negotiated contract, with effect from 1 April 2024.

Signature _____ Signed by _____