

DRAFT

BAUGHURST PARISH COUNCIL Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 26 November 2015, 7.30 pm Heath End Hall, Baughurst

PRESENT: Cllrs M G Slafford (Chairman), C I Curtis, C Grenville, J Hewitt, F Langley, J Peatman, G Porter, P R S Postance, S E Terrett, R Ward
Also present: County Councillor W Lovegrove (to 6), Borough Councillors M Bound and R Tate, and 4 members of the public
Apologies for absence received from Cllr P E Garrett
In attendance: Mrs P J Waterfield, Clerk

57. **Minutes of the last meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting of 22 October 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and approved.

58. **Declarations of interest**

Councillors were reminded that for those with any interest to be disclosed in relation to any item included in the agenda for this meeting, it was their duty to do so at the appropriate agenda item (as required to be disclosed by Section 96(1) of the LGA 1972, and in accordance with the Parish Councils Order 2001).

59. **Presentation by Vicki Jacomb, Came & Co Insurance Brokers**

The Chairman welcomed Ms Jacomb to the meeting. She confirmed that Baughurst Parish Council has Public Liability for a limit of indemnity of £10,000,000. Public Liability protects the Council against claims for injury or damage to third parties property where negligence can be proven. Where negligence cannot be proven - ie tree surveys having been carried out on a regular basis, this is then considered to be an 'Act of God', and claims will not succeed. Public liability cover will protect Council against such claims, and, if Council is proved to be negligent, will pay the claim.

The insurer would expect the Council to have written risk assessments for all of their responsibilities and to have an inspection regime in place. The risk assessments should be reviewed annually but if a change has occurred then they should be updated. The frequency of the inspection regime would depend on the responsibility and/or professional advice ie a playground should be visually inspected weekly with an annual inspection by an independent qualified person, but trees may not need to be inspected for 3 to 5 years.

She promoted the idea of a volunteer Tree Warden, someone who is reasonably qualified for the role, and confirmed that this Council's use of a professional arboriculturist for tree surveys is a good idea. She confirmed that, in the view of her company and their insurers, this Council is exemplary in their commitment to the concept of insurance.

She also discussed the current Asset Register held by the Clerk, itemising all items owned by this Council and their corresponding degree of cover. She explained that not all property needs to be insured, only those where there may be a risk of injury to others, but that individual items can fall under a blanket 'umbrella' heading.

60. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting of 22 October 2015**

(48) Speedwatch

(48) Retractable posts, BR5

Awaiting return of formal documentation from HCC.

(48) Rural affordable housing

Community Action had notified Council of the withdrawal of Hyde Housing Association from any low-cost rural housing schemes. They estimated a further 6 months would elapse before

a replacement partner would be found, and all proposed schemes would grind to a halt in the meantime.

(48) Pinch points, Wolverton Common

HCC had agreed that remedial cutting back of vegetation could be carried out by this Council, but that white lining and cleaning of reflectors, etc., should still be carried out by HCC.

(48) 'Welcome to Baughurst' sign, War Memorial

HCC had replaced the posts in time for the Remembrance Day service and parade.

(48) Overhanging tree at Heathlands/Heath End Road

Quotations had been received.

(48) Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday arrangements went smoothly, with the exception of one member of the public, who drove through the security cordon and amongst those parading. Thanks were made to the Clerk and the security team for their hard work.

(48) Siting of Portacabin, Portway

The cabin had now been removed.

61. **County, Borough, Police and BDAPTC reports**

County Councillor W Lovegrove reported:

a) Police

Baughurst Speedwatch figures as follows:

Baughurst

06/10/2015 from 08.00 hours to 08.45 hours in Wolverton Common

- 5 - First time offenders
- 1 - Second time offender

22/09/2015 from 08.15 hours to 09.30 hours on Heath End Road

- 14 - First time offenders
- 1 - Second time offender

25/09/2015 from 08.00 hours to 09.30 hours in Wolverton Common

- 15 - First time offenders
- 1 - Second time offender

25/09/2015 from 15.00 hours to 16.45 hours on Baughurst Road

- 34 - First time offenders

09/10/2015 from 15.30 hours to 17.00 hours on Baughurst Road near Oak Cottage

- 22 - First time offenders
- 1 - Second time offender

b) County Councillor Lovegrove reported:

- Confirmed the grant of £300 to cover the hire of the security team, Remembrance Sunday. Thanks were made for his generosity
- Warned that further cuts were on the way, covering trimming of grass verges, gulleys, street signs and pathways
- Warned that HCC had decided to withdraw from the reciprocal arrangement with West Berkshire (for which they pay a premium), allowing Hampshire residents to use the refuse facilities at Padworth and Newbury free of charge. It was not known whether West Berkshire will impose a fee for use by Hampshire residents

- c) Borough Councillor M Bound reported:
 - Advised that the Inspector had completed his Examination of the Local Plan, and has asked for clarification in some areas. The report will then go out for public consultation, and brought before full Council in February
- d) Borough Councillor R Tate reported:
 - Mid term financial planning report is about to be published for consultation in November
 - This is a balanced budget, with a proposed Council Tax increase of between 0-1.9%
 - Fees are rising in line with inflation – ie parking fees, although the half hour of free parking time in some Council car parks is to be extended to one hour
 - Fire Service consultation plan has been pressing ahead, with plans for high quality response time and retention of staff

61. **Open forum**

Several members of the public spoke in defence of planning applications which they have put forward. The Clerk also reported a slight increase in the hourly rate of rental of Heath End hall.

62. **Committee reports**

a) **Playing Fields and Open Spaces**

- Failing oak tree – Brimpton Road –

Had been felled

- Land adjacent to 105 Long Grove

The monthly contribution of £250 had ceased in September, and all monies owing under the court order had been paid up to date, including £500 in lieu of interest accruing on the loan. After contacting our solicitors, advised that hold-up in the triple transfer lies with the return of legal documents from the opposing solicitors, concerning the transfer of the land which this Council currently owns, to the residents.

- Long Grove play equipment – bird droppings

Wicksteed could only advise the setting up of a system of wires over the equipment to prevent the birds roosting.

- Maintenance contact EJS

EJS had advised that they attended the sites on a monthly basis, carrying out any repairs notified by BDBC, and also looking to pre-empt any possible problems. Their invoicing will be carried out quarterly, and will carry a record of the dates on which they visited.

- Postbox – Pound Green

Post Office had advised that they are unlikely to move the box to another more accessible and safer location.

- Telephone kiosk, Baughurst Road is to be removed by BT.

- Lease agreement, BR5

Replacement deeds were signed again by Cllr Slatford and returned to HCC.

- Wolverton field – to consider offer to purchase

Cllr Slatford declared an interest and left the room. The Trustees of the Sir George Brown Charity, from whom this Council currently rent Wolverton field at £150 per year, had offered the field for sale. An approximate price of £20,000 had been suggested, to be confirmed or amended following independent valuations by both parties. Currently the field is owned by the Trust, and the Parish Council own the equipment and carry out all maintenance.

The annual rental runs for a 10 year period, with a break-clause in the lease at 5 years, which is imminent. A standard lease had been drawn up by the Trust five years ago, to replace those which had been in place for at least 30 years, but had been discarded by our solicitors as being not fit for purpose. Another option currently being considered by the Trust is to use part of the field/car park area as a site for proposed rural affordable housing (to provide an almshouse).

It had also been suggested that this Council, in conjunction with the proposed purchase, may wish to register the right of way, whose ownership is unknown, between the field and the Old Hare and Hounds, as part of the title.

Following much discussion, it was AGREED that:

- ❖ As we cannot justify the amount need to purchase the field, the proposal should be declined, with thanks, and the current situation should remain as it is for as long as possible
- ❖ We would not wish to take ownership of the public right of way adjacent to the field

- Tree Survey, Woodlands Road

Following further examination of the survey undertaken of the area of land between Woodlands Road and Brimpton Road, 24 trees had been designated as advised to be felled at some time in the future. The lowest quotation of £4550 was AGREED, providing that the works can be carried out in the immediate future. If not, the second option of £4990 would be accepted. Also that a formal cycle of tree surveys of all trees on land owned by this Council should be undertaken. The first formal survey was of the land to the rear of the Hurst School in July 2014, and it was therefore agreed that the cycle should commence from that date.

Thus far, the areas covered are:

- Land to the rear of Long Grove (July 2014)
- Land at Woodlands Road with Brimpton Road (December 2015)
- AGREED that the next area should be the woodland at the rear of Heath End Road

Cllr Terrett agreed to plot a sequence which would incorporate all the outstanding areas. The cycle will be carried out as a rolling programme.

- Land at rear of Hurst Community College – quotations for planting

AGREED that cotoneaster dammeri should be used, and AGREED that approval should be given, to a maximum of £800, to the purchase of the plants (approximately 200 in all). The area had recently been cleared of all debris, nettle and bramble, although roots remained which still required to be pulled by hand.

- Tree pruning

AGREED, as policy, that, on occasions where Council-owned trees overhang residents' property, that this Council should consider each case on its merits, and, if circumstances and budget allow, pay half towards the cost of the works, providing that the resident is willing to pay the remaining half.

- Felling of dead tree, Fair oak Way hammerhead - AGREED at a cost of £50
- Pruning, oak trees overhanging rear of 6 Heathlands - AGREED that two oaks should be crown-lifted and cut back by 5m, at a cost of £350, to be shared by landowner.

- Pruning, tree overhanging rear of 89 Long Grove

AGREED that thinning of tree at 15% should be carried out, at a cost of £380, to be shared by landowner.

- Pruning, 3 horse chestnuts at rear of 57 Long Grove

Resident had asked for cutting back of overhanging trees. Tree contractor is of opinion that all three young horse chestnuts should be removed, due to future problems of becoming too large for the site. AGREED that this would be considered during forthcoming tree survey.

- Messrs Staceys had responded to a letter from this Council which had expressed concern over the increase in lorry movement through Wolverton

b) **General Purposes Committee**

- High speed rural broadband

Cllr Stalford advised that approximately 300 houses in Baughurst and Wolverton would not benefit from superfast broadband, which correlates to approximately 35m per second. Trials have been taking place nationally over the last 6 years. Investigation locally has resulted in companies offering local WiFi, which gives reasonable coverage. Copper wire has historically been used, but now Swedish fibre optic is the preferred choice, which would give up to 1000mb per second, and can be provided at similar cost to that provided by BT. Suggested that a registered list of local people who may be prepared to pay more for this service should be put in place. Research had taken place into grant funding, but currently no funding appears to be eligible. A public meeting locally will be held when more information has been gathered.

- Clerk's hours

Had been increased to 20 hours per week, with implications for the 2016/17 Budget. An 'out of office' response had been put in place, and HALC had advised that, in the Clerk's absence, a locum Clerk could be employed from their 'bank'. Agreed that a list of pertinent telephone numbers would be supplied to Chair and Vice Chair, in the case of an emergency taking place when the Clerk is absent. Her annual appraisal will be carried out in January.

- Remembrance Sunday

Arrangements had gone well, with the help of the professional security team, with the exception of an incident which had occurred towards the end of the service. The Police have been notified, and a request for information put on the Council Facebook page reached 3000 people, but without any success thus far in identifying the culprit. Thanks were made to both the Clerk and the security team for their hard work, which resulted in a successful day. The Chairman noted the presence of a large number of children and young people at the event, which is to be promoted.

- Training

Cllr Stalford raised several issues resulting from his recent training session, including:

- o Sequence of planning applications and response

a) Clerk to investigate timescales of BDBC Planning Committee meetings to identify whether a need exists for additional meetings to consider plans in the interim.. It was noted, however, that the response date required on the application notice does not necessarily concur with the proposed dates of BDBC Planning Committee.

- o Use of private email accounts

Training had suggested that Councillors should have a corporate email address linked to Council, to prevent the possible invasion of their private email account should a Freedom of Information request necessitate this. The Clerk reminded the committee that Council business should not be conducted by use of email, especially when a decision-making process could be at risk. She also expressed concern that this could disenfranchise those Councillors who do not use email, and which then precluded them from any 'conversation' held between those Councillors who did. She had further concerns regarding the possible misuse of a Council email account, where Councillors may be tempted to respond on behalf of Council, which is not lawful. Much discussion ensued, both for and against, and views of other Councillors are to be sought. A quotation from our current provider for the supply of Council email addresses is as follows:

£10 per year per mailbox – Webmail access only (total £110 per year)

£13.50 per year per mailbox – Webmail access as well as being able to use the account in Outlook (or Thunderbird, Opera Mail, Live Mail, Mac Mail, etc (total £148.50 per year)

- Community right to challenge grants

Cllr Stalford gave a brief précis of the situation regarding right to challenge, explaining that it gives communities the right to take over responsibilities previously held by Borough or County councils. Examples of this would be public lavatories, where the local Borough Council has decided to close them on the grounds of economy.

o Training for Clerk and Councillors

As training is often oversubscribed before it can be agreed by full Council, AGREED that bookings may be made as they occur, providing no payment is made at the time.

• Budget 2016/17

The prepared budget statement for the year 2016/17 had been circulated, from which it was noted that this Council had an excess of expenditure over income of £9617.

2014/2015 Actual	Item	2014/2015 Budget	2015/16 Budget	YTD 2015/16 7 months Actual	Predicted year end 2015/16	Predicted Variance to yr end 2015/16	Proposed Budget to year end 2016/17
	RECEIPTS						
38500	Precept	38500	40425	40425	40425	0	45000
41	Bank interest	20	30	15	34	4	30
876	Playing field hire	980	1140	1064	1140	0	1200
3207	Grants	5600	6010	7110	7410	1400	7000
45	Booklets sale	20	40	37	45	5	40
2096	VAT	2000	2000	1548	2000	0	1500
3000	Repayment 105 Long Grove	2500	3000	1000	1000	-2000	0
300	Speedwatch hire	500	300	100	100	-200	300
£48,065	TOTAL RECEIPTS	£50,120	£52,945	£51,299	£52,154	-791	£55,070
	PAYMENTS						
20232	General administration	23500	23500	13473	23500	0	26000
1059	Grants/free 2p	2000	1800	150	1800	0	2000
17096	Playing fields and open spaces maintenance	17000	17000	7748	28000	11000	25000
2041	VAT	2000	2000	1549	2000	0	1800
835	Pineapple field	1000	1000	730	1251	251	1000
2021	Highways and rights of way	2000	2000	0	2000	0	2000
40	Chairman's allowance	100	100	70	70	-30	100
0	Churchyards, War Memorial	2000	2000	3150	3150	1150	1000
£43,324	TOTAL PAYMENTS	£49,600	£49,400	£26,870	£61,771	£12,371	£58,900
£4,741	RECEIPTS LESS PAYMENTS	£520	£3,545	£24,429	-£9,617	-£13,162	-£3,830
	RESERVES						£40,000

The Budget was AGREED.

- Computer – Microsoft Office Small Business

Clerk advised that, following an unsuccessful attempt by Microsoft to load Windows 10, which she had aborted in mid cycle, Microsoft Office Small Business Word and Excel refused to load. The passkey originally issued with the purchase of the package may only be used once and is thus negated. Following advice from various Councillors, Clerk is now using Open Office, which is reasonably successful, although shadows of the original problem still surface occasionally. AGREED that professional advice is sought to correct the problem.

- Regulatory papers

- ❖ Financial Risk Assessment

Reviewed and AGREED.

- ❖ Financial Regulations

Clerk confirmed a change in the Regulations, which will need to be reviewed and revised.

- ❖ Standing Orders

AGREED that these would be further reviewed at the next appropriate committee meeting.

- Any other business

Clerk notified the attempted break-in at 'The Wellington Arms', and the request, by the public house, for this Council to cease clearing the public highway to the right of the property. AGREED that, although having sympathy, the public highway should continue to be cleared.

63. Finance

a) financial statement

The latest financial statement was noted.

b) Parish Grants and Precepts 2016/17

The Precept for 2016/17 was agreed as:

Precept: £42,446

Limited General Grant: £1100

64. Planning

a) to receive and consider the latest planning applications

15/02172/LDEU	Grantham Farm, Inhurst Lane	Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for change of use of land from agricultural to car park area for nursery use	No objection
15/03786/HSE +LBC 03787	Browns Farm, Pound Green	Demolition of existing extensions and erection of two storey extension (renewal of consent BDB 77049)	No objection
15/03765/HSE	Heath End Hall	Single storey extension of small hall	No objection
15/03963/HSE	72 Woodlands Road	Single storey front extension and pitched roof over porch	No objection
15/03851/HSE	Axmens Ford, Axmansford	Two storey extension to form new front elevation, erection of single storey garden room to rear with associated demolition, two storey rear extension, alterations to existing lean-to side element and extension above with associated alterations to the roof	No objection
15/03889/HSE	Hillside Farm, Baughurst Road	Detached annex with garage/machinery store and farm office on ground floor and living	No objection but 'tie' requested

		accommodation over	
15/03859/HSE	Elm Cottage, Baughurst Road	Two storey side/rear extension and extension of existing conservatory	

b) Decisions by BDBC

15/02812/HSE	April Cottage, Haughurst Hill	Side extension	Approved
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65. **Accounts for payment**

Received: Calleva £73, War Memorial Grant £1000

To pay:

Inland Revenue	Tax and NI November	BACS	0
	Tax and NI December	BACS	107.98
BDBC	Printing – newsletter	BACS	47.02
Clerk	Salary and allowances November	BACS	1198.87
	Salary and allowances December	BACS	1042.10
Regency	Payroll – November	d/d	13.50 + 2.70
	Payroll – December	d/d	13.50 + 2.70
BDBC	SLR – 2014/15	BACS	1280.00
A D Gibbs mowing	St Catherine's	BACS	25.00
	Wolverton	BACS	50.00
	Baughurst Common	BACS	398.05
	Pineapple field	BACS	58.14
SEB	Pavilion	d/d	33.70
Southern Water	Pavilion	d/d	1.00
Datasharp	Copier service November	d/d	27.50 + 5.50
	Copier service December	d/d	27.50 + 5.50
Townsend Trees	Tree surgery	BACS	670.00 + 134.00
HCC	Pension November	BACS	274.38
	Pension December	BACS	274.38
M Lawrence	Site clearance by JCB	BACS	850.00 + 170.00
M J Events	Security, Remembrance Sunday	BACS	261.00 + 52.20

56. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of BAUGHURST PARISH COUNCIL will be held on Thursday 14 January 2016, 7.30 pm, Heath End Hall, Baughurst.