



BENWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Benwick Parish Council meeting on Monday 4th September 2023 at the village hall

Present	Cllrs L Keppel-Spoor, R Few, R Taylor, J Ablewhite, S Lowry, Clerk R Robinson and six members of the public	
103/23-24	Apologies for absence Cllrs R Emmitt and M Chapman	Accepted
104/23-24	Declarations of Interest Cllr Keppel-Spoor declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in item 112/2023-24 Village Hall and item 115/2023-24 Turf Fen Charity Cllr Ablewhite declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in item 112/2023-24 Village Hall	
104/23-24	PUBLIC TIME The hedge at 1 High Street on Doddington Rd is still overgrown. Clerk to repeat complaint. Benwick Christmas Lights (BCL) committee would like BPC to top up the funds previously provided by the Parish Council of £160, if necessary, to fund a 15 foot tree which might cost £400-500 including delivery. Nothing permanent can be put on Boon's land, as they park vehicles there, but they do provide electricity for the lights. In following years BCL committee would like the tree funding to be agreed annually as part of the budget process for the forthcoming year	Clerk
105/23-24	Confirmation of Minutes It was Proposed by Cllr Keppel-Spoor and AGREED to approve and sign the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 th August 2023	Agreed
106/23-24	Matters Arising none	
107/23-24	Youth club Benwick village Hall Committee (BVHC) to meet next week and will discuss this. Clarity from parents/youths is needed as to what is wanted. No single organisation can provide for this, it needs to be a cooperative effort.	
108/23-24	The Pound The Working Group on the Pound is to meet this week. Clerk has asked for three quotes for full removal of the shrubs	Cllr Keppel-Spoor
109/23-24	County & District Councillors Reports None received. Clerk to request written reports in future	Clerk
110/23-24	Trees including Christmas trees and TPOs Obtaining a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) involves making a map of the location of the tree and sending to planning at Fenland District Council (FDC). Benwick Parish Council (BPC) did ask FDC to put a TPO on the oak in the playpark in January 2022 and have so far not seen any result. Applications from several people might get a better result. BPC do not want a TPO on our tree on the Pound as it would mean paying for planning permission every time we needed to prune it, in any case BPC are committed to maintaining our tree. The same applies to the oak tree with the surround bench at the beginning of the High Street on CCC Highways land. The tree near the bus shelter is on FDC land. Cllr Ablewhite stated that the Christmas Tree and lights are the biggest event in the village calendar. It was Proposed by Cllr Ablewhite and seconded by Cllr Few and AGREED that the Parish Council would allocate up to £400 from the general reserves as a safety net to ensure that a tree can be funded for the village if appeals for donated trees fail and that we consider the provision of a Christmas tree in the annual budget process for the coming financial year. Planting a suitable tree was mentioned, this would take several years to reach a reasonable height. A family at the top of the High Street have offered a tree which would need to be felled. A volunteer offered to call and find out if it is still available.	Agreed Clerk Member of the public
111/23-24	Dog fouling Clerk reported that FDC are going to try a weighted-bottom bin on Ramsey Rd and that they are scheduling the work for the bin at Caton's Bridge	
112/23-24	Village Hall to discuss and agree any actions needed including a) report of Working Group on school use of the hall – awaiting BVHC meeting next week b) budgeting for expenditure on any matters connected with the village hall – Cllr Ablewhite reports that financial position of the hall is healthy	

113/23-24	War memorial Working Group to meet this week. The tradition of railings around war memorials versus the idea of fixed steel flower planters was discussed			Cllr Keppel-Spoor
114/23-24	Training Cllrs to contact the Clerk if interested in any of the courses being circulated e.g. from CAPALC and then he can research prices			
115/23-24	Turf Fen Land Charity The Parish Council appoints the trustees. The Charity was suspended for a while until last year. Clerk advised the period of appointment has to be four years. Cllr Ablewhite to receive a copy of the Trust Deed.			Clerk
116/23-24	Local Highways Initiative Evidence would be needed for a bid for traffic calming on Lilyholt. We have not been able to get software defined speed radar from the Police and Crime Commissioner or speed survey "wires" from CCC Highways. The present MVAS does provide speeds and numbers of vehicles so we need to get that up and running. Clerk to investigate smaller, cheaper MVAS speed recording devices. Grants may be available for the signs or the solar panels to power them from Burnt House, Ransonmoor and to apply for another MVAS in the current LHI round. Clerk to research. Clerk advised that with the solar panels we would require less manpower to keep the MVAS running, which if not done by a Cllr or volunteer would cost £60 per visit from an electrician			Cllr Chapman Clerk
117/23-24	Planning Rubble is piled up overtopping the fence by two to three feet at the back of 3-15 Lilyholt Road which are all bungalows. Clerk to report to Environmental health as the material is from contaminated ground which was a lorry yard and garage. There should be a reserved matter on the planning application for the removal of the contaminated waste. Cllr Ablewhite to investigate.			Clerk Cllr Ablewhite
118/23-24	Income & Expenditure a) It was Proposed by Cllr Keppel-Spoor and AGREED to approve the following accounts for payment			Agreed
	Npower	Electricity July - DD paid 17/8/2023 (inc. VAT)	£82.05	
		Sub-total pre-authorised by Council, paid June	£82.05	
	CAPALC	Cllr Training	£75.00	
	HHA Grounds Maint.	August Cemetery (inc. VAT)	£392.40	
	R Robinson	Expenses & salary	£289.61	
		Subtotal to authorise for payment now	£757.01	
		TOTAL EXPENDITURE AUTHOURISED	£839.06	
	b) Clerk's report on the August Bank Balances and reconciliation is at appendix 1			
119/23-24	Correspondence a) Rural Services Network, Bulletin (email 8/8/2023, 22/8/2023, 15/8/2023, 30/8/2023) b) FDC Press release (email 7/8/2023, 17/8/2023, 25/8/2023) Member Services (email 8/8/2023, 9/8/2023 x4, 10/8/2023, 21/8/2023 x2, 22/8/2023) Transport Planning (email 14/8/2023) c) CAPALC Bulletin (email 14/8/2023) Conference (email 7/8/2023) HR briefing (email 3/8/2023) Training program (email 14/8/2023, 30/8/2023) Legal update (email 17/8/2023) d) NALC Chief Executive's Bulletin (email 3/8/2023, 24/8/2023, 23/8/2023) Newsletter (email 16/8/2023) e) Cambs and Counties – interest rate raised (email 10/8/2023) f) QEH Kings Lynn – event (email 2/8/2023) g) CCC – Flood Action Conference (email 10/8/2023) h) NHS CAMBS – newsletter (email 7/8/2023) Hydration (email 3/8/2023) no comments-			
120/23-24	Speeding in Benwick and MVAS operation this has been fully dealt with under item 116/23-24			
121/23-24	Warm hubs to keep on the agenda			Clerk
122/23-24	Clock mechanism to be inspected at March museum by Cllr Keppel-Spoor			
123/23-24	Police Report none received meeting			
124/23-24	Poppy Wreath It was Proposed by Cllr Keppel-Spoor and AGREED to approve spending of £30 for a wreath and donation to the Royal British Legion. Clerk to purchase and claim as a reimbursement with his expenses			Agreed Clerk
125/23-24	Cemetery to discuss and agree any actions wanted including a) push testing – keep on the agenda b) hedging – to screen the allotments from the cemetery and to promote biodiversity. Clerk reports reasonable prices from the Woodland Trust for mixed native species. Cllr Keppel-Spoor to measure the distance needed			Cllr Keppel-Spoor
126/23-24	Biodiversity & habitat initiatives to contact Cllr Tim Taylor (FDC) regarding			Clerk

	wildflower seeds	
127/23-24	Agenda Items/Next Meeting - to discuss and agree the format and date of the next Parish Council meeting proposed to be Monday 2 nd October 2023. Items to be included on agenda should be with the Clerk by Monday 25 th September 2023	
128/23-24	Motion to exclude the Press and Public A resolution under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the special confidential nature of the business to be transacted under item 102/23-24 (Clerk) the public and press should be excluded for that item was Proposed by Cllr Keppel-Spoor and AGREED	Agreed
129/23-24	Clerk It was Proposed by Cllr Keppel-Spoor and AGREED to accept the recommendations of the Working Group with slight additions which were:- 1/ We would advertise in Discovering Whittlesea and Discovering March, in the Ramsey Informer, on Indeed.com, in the Doddington Diary and with notices in the pub and the shop, and on SLCC email list, the CAPALC website, through the District Council and on free to advertise job boards e.g. for veterans, on the Benwick, March and Doddington Facebook pages (councillors to post on FB), local town council newsletters if they have them and with Cambs ACRE if possible. 2/ That the Clerk is authorised to trim down the agreed adverts, if needed for publication, that the longer more detailed advert is for digital media and the shorter advert is for print media 3/ That a salary scale of 11.42-13.96 per hour is advertised initially, with the possibility to adjust if needed To have a full microphone and sound system would be too costly and to use a simple system might interfere with the dictaphone recording for the minutes. Also, the Clerk is leaving so the investment would only have a short-term use.	Agreed

Meeting closed at 20.55

Appendix 1.

Bank Reconciliation		Financial Year ending 31 March 2024	
Benwick Parish Council			
Prepared by Richard Robinson (Clerk & RFO)			
Date	01/09/2023		
Approved by		Chair	
Date	04/09/2023		
Balance per bank statements at end	31/08/2023	£	£
Current Account		39,786.83	
NS&I		21,451.24	
			61,238.07
Less: Unpresented Cheques			
Cheque Number	amount	2855	176.00
			176.00
Add: Any unbanked cash in transit			0.00
Net bank balances end 31/08/2023		61,062.07	
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book, as follows:-			
Opening Balance		58,453.87	
Add: Receipts to date		11,964.46	
Less: Payments to date		9,356.26	
Closing Balance		61,062.07	

Earmarked Reserves:

Verge Planting	£1,067.13	
Cemetery Extension	£6,604.17	
Street Lighting	£9,426.58	
The Pound	£2,410.00	
Village Sign	£2,000.00	
War Memorial	£6,000.00	
Mooring	£7,961.16	E M TOTAL
Allotments	£2,191.35	£37,660.39
General Reserve	£23,401.68	