

Bunbury Parish Council

MINUTES

of the meeting held at The Jubilee Pavilion, Bunbury, on
Wednesday 13th December 2023 at 7.20pm

Present: Councillors: Leslie Bottomley, Pamela Brookfield (Chair), Peter Gorman, Nick Parker, Richard Slater, Mike Thomas and Andrew Thomson

In attendance: Maximilian Clay - Clerk to the Council
Four members of the public

Dec23-1. Apologies

All members were present and so there were no apologies but the clerk reported that Cllr Barton had resigned from the Council due to a forthcoming change in family circumstances.

Dec23-2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation Considerations

Cllr Gorman declared a personal interest in item 8.a.iii. There were no other declarations of interest.

Dec23-3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Council resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th November 2023 were a true record and that the Chair be authorised to sign them as such.

Dec23-4. Unitary Authority Councillor Report

Borough Cllr Posnett had been delayed at another meeting and so had sent her apologies.

Dec23-5. Public Forum

No matters were raised.

Dec23-6. Dog Waste Bins

The Council considered a proposal to place one of the new dog waste bins (due to be delivered by Cheshire East Council) at Bunbury Mill, in the position recommended by the Trustees of the Mill, as shown on a plan that had been circulated previously.

Dec23-7. Members' Reports & Items for Future Agendas

- ◆ Cllr Parker reported that the Christmas tree would be removed on the 13th January.
- ◆ Cllr Gorman reported that the latest Newsletter had been delivered to all households in the parish. The heavier weight paper had gone some way to helping with physical delivery but modern letter boxes often made delivery difficult. The cost of paper and ink for the edition had been £13.70. It was noted that there had been good feedback about the edition.
Cllr Gorman also reported that the schedule of trees with Preservation Orders on them was nearing completion and would be more accurate than the local authority version because the latter was not updated regularly. The Parish Online mapping system had been used and Cllr Gorman noted that the EPC certificates for all non-exempt houses had been added to the map.
- ◆ Cllr Bottomley reported that some dog waste bins had not been emptied according to the schedule and had become foul. The Clerk reported that he had already raised this with the contractor but had not had a response – he will follow this up and he noted that problems of reliability were putting next year's contract in doubt.
It was noted that problems with roads or pavements should be reported to Cheshire East Council and that their Fix My Street online reporting tool was fast and effective.
- ◆ Cllr Slater reported that hedges were encroaching onto the path on Whitchurch Road,

making them unusable for people pushing children's buggies or for those in wheelchairs – the stretch north of School Lane was especially bad and the useable footpath had been reduced to around 45cm in places. The Clerk will write to any households who have not attended to their hedges sufficiently if Members advise him of locations.

- ◆ Cllr Thomson reported that there had been serious damage at Stone Cottage, to the wall and to the corner of the house; this had been caused by a log lorry which had attempted to leave the scene without reporting the matter; fortunately a resident had captured the details and reported the matter to the police.

Dec23-8. Planning

a. Responses to Application Consultations. The Council considered:

i. 23/3662N - The Old Methodist Chapel, Bunbury Lane, Bunbury

New four bed dwelling to the rear of the property on the car park – amended plans and details.

In discussion it was noted that the only change appeared to be the height of the roof ridge but that although this had been lowered to below the height of the Chapel it made little difference because the Chapel is in the middle of the site and the proposed new dwelling extends to the edge of plot and is in close proximity to the small, single storey bungalows on the eastern side of that stretch of Hurst Close. In view of this it was resolved to object to the application in the same terms as for the original.

ii. 23/3305N - Foxdale, Vicarage Lane, Bunbury:

To change the use of the land from part domestic garden / part pasture to a formal landscaped garden, including engineering operations to excavate ornamental lake.

In discussion it was noted that there have been 9 applications relating to this site this year with many of them overlapping or superseding others, which, coupled with the fact that the differences between the original and superseding applications are generally not made clear, makes informed consideration difficult, if not impossible.

This particular application seeks to re-designate good agricultural land that neighbours the existing 4 acres of garden as additional garden space. Given the size of the existing garden and the fact that it has an English Heritage designation, of which this and related applications fail to take account. the Council resolved to object to the application and seek to have it called in for discussion by the relevant committee.

iii. 23/4513N - Land at Oak Gardens, Bunbury, CW6 9QN

Variation of condition 1 on application 19/5534N: Reserved matters following outline approval 16/2010N for residential development for 15 dwellings with associated works.

Cllr Gorman had declared a personal interest.

The Chair permitted Cllr Gorman to set out some factual information but he then took no further part in the debate or vote.

The Council noted that an aborial impact report that had been published on the planning portal had been removed and this made informed consideration difficult. However, the Council decided that, in order to avoid missing the deadline for comment, it would consider such infoirmation as was available.

In discussion the Council concluded that that the revision represented a serious and unacceptable deviation from the original application, which had sought to protect the trees on the site from the impact of the development. To this end, Condition 1 set out complex and significant arrangements for the layout and management of the site and especially the trees, several of which have Preservation Orders; several are also bat roosts. Amongst these a veteran Ash tree (T5 on the original plans) is of especial importance. The new plans propose changing the layout, increasing the sizes of the houses, and placing a house on the site of the veteran tree, the existence of which is not acknowledged in the latest drawings. The Council noted that the existing application already sits in opposition to the established significance of the tree belt on and adjacent to the site and the original advice in the Planning Authority's own assessmet, which classified T5 as A3 (the highest rating). In addition, the proposed variation would reduce the size of other trees, including the coppicing of oaks. The Council felt that further damage to the environment would be absolutely unacceptable and so resolved to object to the variation in the strongets possible terms.

Late Applications - Two applications had been received after the agenda was published and it was resolved that Members would consider these and provide any views to the Clerk, to whom the nature of a response would be delegated:

iv. 23/4484N - Prior Approval COU: Clays Farm, Calveley (Bunbury Parish)

Change of use from agricultural barn to three residential dwellings.

v. 23/4480N and 23/4481N - (Planning and Listed Building Consent), The Old School, College Lane, Bunbury.

Installation of 13 Solar Panels to be installed to the roof pitch of the existing dwelling.

b. Updates on Application Consultations considered previously or other planning matters:

Cllr Thomson had circulated a response from Baroness Penn (the new Minister for Housing and Communities) about First Homes policy. This response contradicted the response from the previous minister and asserted that a previous ministerial statement was *de facto* national policy. It was felt that this may not be accurate as ministerial statements do not normally constitute law.

Dec23-9. Final Christmas Eve Arrangements

The sound system needed to be tested and this would be carried out on Monday the 18th. Cllr Thomson and Mr Peter Brookfield would act as traffic marshals and a printed sheet of the running order of the carols will accompany the word sheets that will be distributed to everyone attending.

After discussion it was decided to donate half the proceeds of the collection to the Village Tuesday Lunch Club and the other half to the Nantwich Food Bank.

Dec23-10. Allotments Working Group

The Council received the notes of the AWG held on the 7th December 2023.

Dec23-11. Correspondence and Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that:

- ◆ The contractor who had agreed to undertake the work to clear-back the growth on the track on the playing fields has still failed to confirm his verbal quotation in writing or to give any indication of when the work might take place. Accordingly, the Clerk planned to seek new quotations in the New Year, so that the work can be undertaken as soon as possible. The Council supported this decision.
- ◆ Subject to approval by the full Cheshire East Council, Mr Rob Polkinghorne had been appointed as its new chief executive.
- ◆ The Council had been notified of consultations on a variety of matters, several of which were intended to find budget savings: Leisure Review, School Transport Plan, final draft Environment Protection Plan, Adult Social Care Charging, and draft Developer Contributions policy.
- ◆ There will be changes to the refuse collection dates over the holiday period.
- ◆ The Playing Fields Charity had now put up 'No Dogs' signs on all entrances to the playing field.

Dec23-12. Parking at the School

The meeting heard a report from the Chair and Clerk about a recent meeting with the Head and car parking committee of the school. The school is contemplating development of part of the land that they own to the north west of their main site as a car park for staff. This would remove between 20 and 30 vehicles from the streets during the school day and the car park could also be made available for use of residents outside school operating times (i.e. school holidays and most evenings and weekends). Initial work on potential design and costing will be undertaken by the school which will then need to find ways of funding the work as they have no existing budget for that type of improvement. The clerk had suggested that some of the S106 money that had been allocated to education by the planning authority could be applied for and

the head of the school will explore this possibility with CEC Cllr Posnett.

Councillors welcomed the possibility and felt it likely that any reasonable planning application for such a development would meet with support from the Council. In discussion it was also felt that development of parking could also be a sensible use for some of the Community Infrastructure Levy funds that the Council is holding.

The School also stated that it would be supportive of the introduction of a 20mph limit across the village.

Dec23-13. Defibrillator Case at School

Ancillary to the above meeting, there was a discussion about the placement of a publicly available defibrillator at the school. The school has a defibrillator and would be happy to place it in an accessible place on its exterior wall near their main office, subject to the Council providing a heated cabinet for the purpose.

In discussion there was agreement that this would be a positive addition to the village and it was resolved to approve £450 for acquiring the cabinet and a sign, and for this expenditure to be vired from the surplus in the fixed asset maintenance budget.

Dec23-14. Finance & Governance

a. Receipts and Payments – The Council received the schedule of receipts and payments and resolved to approve the payments.

b. Initial Draft Budget for 2024/25 – The Council considered the initial draft budget, which had been prepared with several different options (A, B & C).

Until Cheshire East Council approve the tax base for the coming year (which they are due to do imminently) the impact of changes to the precept could not be accurately forecast and so the discussion focused on expenditure. The Clerk highlighted changes to the budget from the current year and in discussion it was agreed to also allow for 'Take Your Litter Home' signs for the playing field, where it has been decided to remove bins in the Spring and to add a further £500 (an additional £2,000 altogether) for grass cutting.

The Council provisionally agreed to move forward with Version C for discussion and final approval at the next meeting.

c. Financial Regulations - The Council reviewed the revised and updated Financial Regulations and, after discussion, resolved to adopt them as drafted.

Dec23-15. Items for WhatsApp Bulletin Arising From This Meeting.

It was agreed to communicate the following via the WhatsApp Group: change to bin collections over the holidays (the Clerk), and reminders re Carols on Christmas eve (the Clerk) and Fix My Street (Cllr Gorman).

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chair

Date