

# LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD PARISH COUNCIL

ACTION

Chair: R Eacott

Clerk to the Council: C Bennett

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 1930 IN ST MARY'S CHURCH, LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD

**PRESENT:** R Eacott, R Bosworth, A Clark, R Owen, G Troughton, and C Bennett (Clerk)

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** County Councillor Ian Gardener, R H Martin, C Rogers

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** N Cook

### **2. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

**(a)** The Chair welcomed County Councillor Ian Gardener to the meeting and thanked him for his attendance. Councillor Gardener explained that he represented 27 Parishes in the area including Leighton Bromswold and served on the following Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Committees: Highways and Transport; Environment and Green Investment; Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion; Planning, and the Fire Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Major issues being addressed at present were the state of the highways; the dangers of lithium batteries catching fire; the shortcomings of the Combined Authority/Ting bus service; the need for more school governors; the lack of focus on rural areas.

**(b)** Councillor Gardener also drew attention to the development of the Huntingdon District Council Local Plan which was out for consultation and counselled the need to look at the document as a whole and not just at what might impact on Leighton Bromswold. Industrial development was being proposed along the A 1, A14 and A428 corridors with housing planned for the Ellington, Buckden and Grafham areas. It was important to be aware of all the plans and to respond to what was relevant to Leighton Bromswold.

**(c)** Councillor Owen, outlined a number of problems relating to the local highways within the parish of Leighton Bromswold, namely the unacceptable number of potholes; drains and drainage problems in The Avenue and attendant public safety issues.

(d) The Chair also drew attention to the status of the local roads which were under considerable pressure when problems occurred on the A14. If the local roads were redesignated as link roads, they would receive 4 inspections a year instead of just one. The Chair was co-ordinating with the surrounding parishes on this issue. **Councillor Gardener agreed to arrange for Sarah Budd (the local highways officer) to visit the village. He also agreed to speak to Julie Skinner from the drainage team to review the drains and drainage issues.**

**ACTION**

(e) Councillor Bosworth drew attention to the need to make safe all the trees on highways land and not just those at the roadside in the village. Councillor Gardener reported that Dan Wiggs was the Footpaths Officer for the whole of Huntingdonshire. He dealt with grass verges as well. He agreed to contact Dan Wiggs and to organise a visit to the village.

(f) The Chair reported on grass cutting and the CCC contribution (£181.28) to the cost. After further research, the Parish Council would be reporting back to CCC.

**RE  
CLERK**

### **3. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 4 JULY 2024**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 4 July 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

Proposed: A Clark

Seconded: R Bosworth

All agreed

### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

(a) HDC had approved the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 11 July 2024. Work had progressed well with some early drafting on housing, vision and objectives, climate change and history. The Steering Group was planning an 'Open Day' on Saturday, 19 October 2024 to explain more about the Plan and to seek detailed views from parishioners and stakeholders.

(b) An application for grant funding (£2,896.00) to support the development of the Neighbourhood Plan had been successful. The Parish Council would act as the accountable body, for contracts receiving the grant and for paying the consultants, contractors and materials to progress the Plan during 2024/25

(c) Councillor Declarations of Pecuniary Interest had been updated and submitted to HDC.

**ACTION**

(d) Mr West's review of the Asset Register was nearing completion, and a full report would be submitted to the November meeting of the Parish Council.

**7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME** – None reported

**8. COUNCILLORS' QUESTION TIME** – None reported

**9. PLANNING (COUNCILLOR CLARK)**

Councillor Clark's report considered Planning Application 24/00883/FUL – Construction of a Solar Farm and Battery Energy System (BESS) together with associated work, equipment and necessary infrastructure at Stowe Longa. Councillors had a full discussion about the complex nature of the application.

(a) Council noted the implications of the proposed plan. Although the solar panels would face away from the village, the security lighting and a 25m security tower would be clearly visible from the village and particularly at night when the lights were illuminated. This would mean the loss of the dark night sky which would impact on the Northern Wolds and the Parish of Leighton Bromswold, part of which was in a Conservation Area. Farmland amounting to 270 hectares would be lost. There were no plans to divert three bridleways that currently crossed the proposed site. Of equal concern was the fact that HDC had not consulted Leighton Bromswold about the proposals.

(b) Council agreed:

- The Chair should write a formal letter of complaint to HDC objecting that the Parish had not been consulted about these proposals which clearly impact on the village.
- The Parish Council should, with reference to responses made by the village of Stowe Longa and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, object to the plans (in accordance with material planning considerations) by the deadline of 20 September 2024.
- Leighton Bromswold residents should be made aware of the proposals and Councillor Bosworth agreed to post a notice on the Friends of Leighton Facebook page.

**RE**

**AC/RB**

**RB**

Proposed: A Clark  
Seconded: R Owen  
All agreed

**ACTION**

**10. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT (CELIA BENNETT, CLERK)**

**(a)** The Clerk's Financial Report summarised the current financial position:

Income to 29 August 2024 (inc NP Grant)	£11,260.37
Expenditure to 29 August 2024	£2,879.87
Current bank balance	£21,582.05

**(b)** It was agreed to allocate a proportion of the funds to the deposit account in order to gain some interest.

**RE  
CLERK**

Proposed: R Eacott  
Seconded: R Bosworth  
All agreed

**(c)** It was agreed to endorse payment agreed prior to the Council meeting to pay Mr R H Martin £635.25 for village grass cutting.

**CLERK**

Proposed: A Clark  
Seconded: G Troughton  
All agreed

**(d)** Bearing in mind the requirement to maintain reserves at no less than 50% of annual expenditure, Council agreed to proceed immediately with the following initiatives:

- training for parishioners in the use of the defibrillator (£353 plus VAT for 12)
- additional costs for data sharing arrangements for Councillors (Dropbox)
- conversion to a gov.uk website and email addresses for Councillors (£100 plus VAT and an annual fee of £100.00)
- payment of £300 to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) as a contribution towards renovation of the paving at the Church door.

**CLERK**

**RE  
CLERK**

**CLERK**

**CLERK**

Proposed: R Eacott  
Seconded: R Owen  
All agreed

(e) Council received draft budget proposals for the next financial year and the subsequent two years, together with proposals for the annual precept. It was agreed to consider these figures in detail at an informal meeting during October and to agree the final budget and recommended precept for 2025/26 at the Parish Council meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 November 2024.

**ACTION**

**CLERK**

Proposed: R Eacott  
Seconded: R Bosworth  
All agreed

#### **11. PARISH COUNCIL AND PARTNERS PLAN TO APRIL 2026 (CHAIR)**

The Chair emphasised the intention of the Parish Council and Partners Plan, namely: working with the wider community and the various groups within the Parish; greater Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness (EDI); more transparency and improving the working of the Parish Council and delivering the Neighbourhood Plan. Council noted the following work in progress and that future developments would be presented to Council in due course.

- (a) A dialogue over future collaboration had been established with the PCC and the Social Committee
- (b) Greater female representation on the Parish Council
- (c) Necessary improvements to the Parish Council Website
- (d) Greater transparency in the preparation of Council papers
- (e) An independent review of assets and insurance
- (f) A review of grass cutting arrangements
- (g) A review of risk, health and safety policy

#### **12. REPORT ON TRIP HAZARDS ON THE VERGES OF THE AVENUE (COUNCILLOR OWEN)**

Councillor Owen reported that since The Avenue had no footpaths, pedestrians had to walk either on the road or on the verges where metal drainage grids, often below the level of the verges, were considerable trip hazards. In addition, despite the number of drains some parts of the village roads flooded regularly. Council endorsed the proposal that Sarah Budd (the local highways officer) and Julie Skinner, from the drainage team, should visit the village to address these issues.

**CLERK**  
**RO**  
**GT**

Proposed: R Eacott  
Seconded: A Clark  
All agreed

### **13. REVISED COUNCILLOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (CHAIR)**

The Chair had reviewed the roles and responsibilities of all Council members and in the light of proposals for a Neighbourhood Plan recommended a more holistic approach with new portfolios being held jointly in some cases.

#### **Councillor Russell Eacott (Chair) – Relations (external role)**

External communications and Engagement  
Links with other groups in the Parish  
Neighbouring Parishes  
External Organisations

#### **Councillor Rachel Bosworth – Planning**

Neighbourhood Plan  
Planning Matters

#### **Councillor Andy Clark and Councillor (Vacancy) – Place**

Playing Field  
Grass Cutting

#### **Councillor Richard Owen and Councillor Gavin Troughton – Environment**

Transport  
Highways – Principal County Council link  
Footpaths  
Trees  
Flooding

#### **Councillor Neville Cook (Vice Chair) – Resources (internal role)**

Trees  
Assets (working with the Clerk)  
Financial resources  
Health and Safety, safeguarding and risk  
Website development and reach

**Celia Bennett – Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer**

**ACTION**

Main Asset Register  
Preparation of accounts, budgets and annual returns  
VAT Returns  
Insurance matters  
Precept  
Payments and issuing works and orders  
Implementation of policy

This would be reviewed on an annual basis in May. The Parish Council remained the accountable body for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Council endorsed the proposals.

**ALL**

Proposed: R Eacott  
Seconded: A Clark  
All agreed

**14. PARISH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN (CHAIR)**

Council members noted the Parish Council Forward Plan for 2024/25. It was agreed it was a useful guide to matters that needed to be addressed. Future items could be added in due course.

**ALL**

**15. CORRESPONDENCE – NONE**

**16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2024**  
**THURSDAY, 9 JANUARY 2025**  
**THURSDAY, 27 MARCH 2025**

**CLERK**

Meeting venues to be confirmed in due course.

The meeting closed at 2057.

**Copies of these Minutes may be found on the Parish Council Website at: <http://leightonbromswold-pc.org.uk/>**

**All enquiries should be made to the Clerk to the Parish Council at [leightonbromswoldpc@hotmail.com](mailto:leightonbromswoldpc@hotmail.com)**

*cb: 22 September 2024*