

BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council

Meeting held on Monday 8 March, 2021

The meeting was held online using video-conferencing

Present:	Dorothy Tonge (DT; Chairman), Stephen Dance (SD; vice-chairman), Laurence Attewill (LA), Elizabeth Gillespie (EG) and John Maskell (JM) Tom James (TJ; Clerk), Sam Casey-Rerhaye (SC-R; SODC), Lorraine Lindsey-Gale (LL-G; OCC) joined the meeting, after the start, to present their reports
Members of the public:	There were ten members of the public attending the online meeting

Ref	Item	Notes	Action
062/20	1. Introduction by the Chairman	The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.	
063/20	2. Apologies for absence:	Apologies were given and accepted from Lauren Collett	
064/20	3. Declaration of Interests	There were no declarations of interests	
065/20	4. Minutes from the previous meeting:	<p>Cllr. Attewill requested an amendment to the minutes of 11 January. He wished it noted that he objected to any removal of the village pond reeds and that the council should seek professional advice before permitting any further work on the pond. It was unanimously agreed to amend the minutes.</p> <p>Amended minute: <i>A member of the public raised concerns about the village pond. Last summer a group of volunteers worked to restore the village pond. Further remedial work now needs to be undertaken to maintain the pond. This work includes removal of some of the reeds as well cutting back brambles and tree saplings. Disposing of the reeds and other plant material will require the hire of a small skip at a cost of around £250+vat. The same volunteer group was willing to carry out the work and the Council was asked to meet the cost of the skip hire. LA and EG were keen to promote biodiversity and objected to removal of the reeds. It was made clear that the volunteer group had no intention to remove all the reeds merely cutting them back to keep them under control. However, LA stressed that no reeds should be removed until the council had received professional advice on the management of the pond. It was agreed that the council would seek such advice before permitting and further work on the pond. SD reminded everyone that, under the present regulations, it was illegal for the volunteers to meet and work on the pond. The Chairman proposed that the Council holds £250 in reserve for the skip hire. A vote was taken and the proposal was agreed with 4 in favour and 2 against.</i></p>	Minutes amended

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065/20	5. Matters arising	There were no matters arising	
066/20	6. Open Forum	<p>A councillor from neighbouring Nuneham Courtenay addressed the council on a number of matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flooding of the roads with a request for councillors to work with the Sandford and Nuneham Courtenay PCs to address this problem with Thames Water. 2. Concerns over the increased traffic flow to the Golden Balls roundabout with no plans for further infrastructure. 3. The concern that the government was still planning to create an Oxford to Cambridge expressway. <p>LA agreed to support the work on road flooding and to liaise with the other councils over the Golden Balls roundabout. SD agreed to join the other councils over the expressway.</p>	LA and SD to liaise with Nuneham Courtenay and Sandford PCs
067/20	7. Village matters	<p>7.i Bioabundance The Council had now received a formal request for financial support for the legal challenge of the Local Plan. The Council was split in its support for Bioabundance with councillors for and against spending public money on the challenge. The proposal to pay £25 to join Bioabundance was proposed by DT and seconded by LA and agreed with a 3:1 vote and one abstention. DT also proposed that the Council contributes £250 towards the legal costs of challenging the Local Plan. This was seconded by LA and agreed with a 3:0 votes with 2 abstentions.</p> <p>ii. Flooding in Marsh and Toot Baldon The Chairman reported that Highways had cleared the drains at Toot Baldon and the road is now dry, although the drain is damaged and the problem likely to appear next winter. Flooding at the top of the Croft was a more complex problem related to amount of water draining from the fields and then overwhelming the drains. JM suggested that a longer meeting was required to ascertain the ownership of the ditches and drains. LA and JM agreed to meet and then report back to the Council in May 2021.</p> <p>iii. Large stones on the track Homeowners along the track were placing large white boulders on the track to protect the grass verges. While appreciating the motivation for such action, boulders placed on the track presented a hazard to walkers as well as vehicles; especially in the dark. Council restated its policy that stones, where used, must be placed on the grass and not on the track or the boundary between the track and the grass verges.</p> <p>iv. Parish Newsletter The cost of printing the Newsletter had increased, over the year, and further increases are expected over the next 12 months. The Editor often receives many requests for the inclusions of papers, leading to a larger and more expensive edition. Keeping the newsletter balck and</p>	<p>Bioabundance support approved</p> <p>LA and JM to meet concerning ditch ownership</p> <p>Chairman to remind the village about stones on the track</p>

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		<p>white might help reduce costs. Councillors agreed that the newsletter was an important part of the community and the Council should continue to support its publication. SD suggested that it might be time for a review of the newsletter's content and ideas could be emailed to the Clerk.</p> <p>v. Update on CIL payments from Durham Leys Farm development. The Clerk reported that the final instalment from the development had been paid, presumably by the developer. As yet the identity of the developer is unknown and for this reason SD and the Clerk had not begun discussions on the track.</p>																																				
068/20	8. Report from Oxfordshire County Council	LL-G circulated a report in advance of the meeting and arrived in time to answer any questions.																																				
069/20	9. Reports from the District Councillor	SC-R reported that the budget had been passed for 2021/22 and financial reserves would be used to maintain certain services. The money for protecting crested newts can come from S.106/CIL payments from developers and not from council funds.																																				
070/20	10. Treasurer's report	<p>10.i JM, in line with Council policy, had scrutinized the accounts, in advance of the meeting, along with bank statements. He confirmed that the accounts were an accurate record. Councillors questioned the VAT refund for the lawn sand and top soil for the playing surface on the village Green. The Clerk explained that this part of the Green was not only used by the Cricket Club but also the village school and members of the public (eg rounders match over the summer). Therefore, these services were for the benefit of the whole community and not just the cricket club and fell into the same category as mowing the Green and other general maintenance.</p> <p>10.ii The following payments were unanimously approved:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Payee</th> <th>£</th> <th>VAT (£)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>18.1.21</td> <td>Cutting the churchyards</td> <td>PCC Baldons and NC</td> <td>1200.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>26.1.21</td> <td>Clearing blocked ditch</td> <td>Ox. Garden Cont.</td> <td>25.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>26.1.21</td> <td>Dog bin emptying</td> <td>Scoop Dotty Dog</td> <td>36.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>26.1.21</td> <td>Clerk's wages</td> <td>T.James</td> <td>291.72</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.3.21</td> <td>Chairman's expenses</td> <td>D Tonge</td> <td>250.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.3.21</td> <td>Transfer of BCC funds</td> <td>Baldons CC</td> <td>966.78</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>10.iii Risk Register The Council reviewed the Risk Register. It was agreed that DT and JM would share the various risks with the Clerk. A revised register would be circulated for approval at the May meeting.</p>	Date	Description	Payee	£	VAT (£)	18.1.21	Cutting the churchyards	PCC Baldons and NC	1200.00		26.1.21	Clearing blocked ditch	Ox. Garden Cont.	25.00		26.1.21	Dog bin emptying	Scoop Dotty Dog	36.00		26.1.21	Clerk's wages	T.James	291.72		1.3.21	Chairman's expenses	D Tonge	250.00		1.3.21	Transfer of BCC funds	Baldons CC	966.78		<p>Accounts check by a councillor and approved</p> <p>Payments approved</p> <p>Risk Register reviewed</p> <p>Action plans discussed</p>
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		10.iv Internal Audit Action Points The Council reviewed the Actions Points from the Internal Audit 2020/21 and the responses agreed in May 2020. The Clerk explained the background to Action Point R9 and the Council felt there were no further concerns.	
071/20	11. Planning applications	(i) P21/S0027/HH The Council considered the amended plans for 6 The Green. While accepting that the Council could not object to the amended plans, a number of councillors still felt that the proposed building was still too large, given its position on the Green and close proximity to two listed buildings. The plans were passed with a vote of 3:1. The Clerk alerted the Council to amended plans for the Solar Farm at Toot Baldon. The Chairman will contact the planning officer for further information.	

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072/20	12. Items for the next agenda	Solar farm planning application Village clear-up day (DT) Statutory policies 1. Adoption of new Standing Orders. 2. Review of current policies.	
072/20	13. Dates of the next meetings	Future dates for 2021 19 April Annual Meeting of Marsh and Toot Baldon 10 May 12 July 13 September 8 November These will take place at 7.30 pm; venue to be decided	

Signed as a true record:

Date: