

BENEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 16th May 2022

722 Cllr Graham Shatford gave the following Chairman's report:

I guess first and foremost it is right to acknowledge what has been a challenging time over the past two years in terms of meetings due to COVID restrictions which blessedly ended and we are able to meet today at our AGM in normal life conditions and what better way as a village to come together as with the Queens Platinum jubilee celebration to be held on Saturday 4 June at the cricket club involving games, bbq, fun and festivities and also a celebration of hymns and Pimm's on Sunday 5 June at St. Mary's church.

I would like to acknowledge my fellow Councillors for the tireless work they undertake, voluntarily and unpaid and also to our clerk, Sue Cook.

We set our budget in January of this year for 2022 / 23 having to raise the precept for the first time in many a year. The council set the budget at £8100. The precept was raised from £7000 to £7500 per annum with the balance to meet the budget spend of £8100 coming from reserves.

Within the precept, the council has budgeted for grass cutting at 8 times per year and for litter picking, which is also supplemented with the voluntary village litter pick organised by Dan. The appearance of which is there for all to see.

In order to mitigate the ever increase in energy costs the streetlights have now all been converted to halogen and all street lighting maintenance completed organised by Alf. It should also be noted that light pollution has been reduced as a consequence of fitting halogen bulbs.

We were able to facilitate a grant request from the Jubilee committee for £965.00 for the upcoming festivities and that sum coming also from reserves built up through prudence exercised over the past years.

As a village we face a forever worsening challenge brought about with the relentless developments going on particularly at Corby.

That challenge is the exponential raise in traffic movements through the village with speeding being the result as of.

Added to that is the narrow footpaths which due to the age of the village and its initial infrastructure layout doesn't conform with today's guidelines, specifically the width, making movement from one end of the village to the other dangerous to say the least as there are no pedestrian crossing points and certainly no crossing points for pram, pushchair, wheelchair or mobility scooter and we do have quite an elderly village demographic. I know John has taken up this task one that has been agendarised on and off for the past 20 years.

I can tell you that it is very much unlikely that the footpaths will ever meet today's guideline width and to make the transit between the village safe the challenge is more

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likely to be achieved by getting the speed limit reduced from 30 mph to 20mph as is with the A427 at Weldon along with traffic calming through a series of chicane or build out as being the technical term.

We have all recently been let down by North Northamptonshire Council with the closure of the road at Weldon Park roundabout resulting with a round trip to Corby coming in at not too shy of 40 miles if one wanted to stick to the safer 'A' roads rather than rat run through dangerous and inappropriate single track roads used primarily by the farming fraternity. Coupled with that the suspended service of the X4 bus.

I must tell you the contempt shown to the peoples of Benefield along with Weldon and Oundle by North Northamptonshire Highways was mind boggling and they only decided to start talking as they chose the route of silence once Corby Councillor Mark Pengelly got involved, and he kindly kept me within the loop all the way. It was suggested that there could well have been a case of maladministration.

I believe that closer working with Weldon Parish council on matters of highway could be of benefit to Benefield, particularly as there is to be a roundabout built soon at Bears Lane to service the school being built.

To close and on behalf of the parish council would like to thank volunteers and I look forward to continuing serving the parish council for the coming year.

Thank you

723 With no questions being raised the meeting was closed at 6:40p.m.

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724 Cllr Tarbuck proposed that Cllr Shatford be elected as Chair for 2022/23, this was seconded by Cllr Pridmore. With no other nominations Cllr Shatford accepted the position and completed the Declaration to Office.

725 Cllr Tarbuck proposed that Cllr Cutmore be elected as Vice-Chair for 2022.23, this was seconded by Cllr Groom. With no other nominations Cllr Cutmore accepted the position.

726 Mrs D Pridmore agreed to be the Representative for the 401St Bombardment Group Memorial Trust USAAF

727 The following policies were all approved and signed by Cllr Shatford and the Clerk:
Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Complaint Procedure Policy, New Code of Conduct Policy, Risk Assessment, Data Protection Policy, Data Breach Policy, Access Request Procedure, Records Retention Policy, Freedom on Information – Supplementary Policy (New), ICO – Model Publication Scheme (New) And the Freedom of Information under the Model Publication Scheme (New)

With no other business this meeting was closed at 6:45p.m.

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Councillors Present	Jason Cutmore, Dan Groom, John Naylor, Alf Pridmore, Graham Shatford (Chair), and Alan Tarbuck
Also Present	Mrs S Cook (Clerk)

- 728 Apologies had been received from Cllr Bullimore and were accepted
- 729 There were no declarations of interest
- 730 No member of the public had contacted the Clerk with concerns that they are unable to access Lower Benefield via the public footpath from Upper Benefield due to their mobility scooter being unable to go through the Kissing Gate on the Brigstock Road. Further investigation is required as to who is responsible for the Kissing Gate.
- 731 Cllr Charlie Best was unable to attend due to another appointment and had nothing to report at this time.
- 732 The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th March were approved.
- 733 Cllr Groom had organised a very successful community litter pick and will organise another one for later in the year. The grass verges have been cut twice however Longhurst have yet to cut Townsend Court. Cllr Pridmore to contact Longhurst asking for the grass to be cut before Jubilee weekend.
- 734 Both Cllr Naylor and Cllr Shatford had met with Rob Bridge, Chief Executive Office of North Northamptonshire Council, over the Footpath Width. Mr Bridge confirmed that nothing can be done about the width of the footpath however he did suggest that build outs on the road will slow the traffic down and there could be some of sort crossings put in place too.
- 735 Mr Bridge also confirmed that there is funding available from Highways to help with the purchase of Vehicle Activated Sign. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Rural Police Officer to ask for a Traffic Survey to be carried out.
- 736 No update on the War Memorial
- 737 Benefield Cricket Club Committee have agreed to have a box of Poppies in the Cricket Club in the lead up to Remembrance Day. The Clerk also confirmed that she has ordered the two wreaths from the Weldon Branch of the British Legion.
- 738 Finance
- a) Mr James has carried out the Year End Internal Audit with no anomalies. The Parish Council ended the year with an income of £7850 and an expenditure of £6718 leaving a balance of £8499 in the bank. It was resolved that the accounts be approved. Both Cllr Shatford and the Clerk signed the Certificate of Exemption, the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statement.
 - b) There is currently £15999.23 in the bank following the receipt of £7500 from North Northamptonshire Council as payment for the precept
 - c) The following payments were approved in line with currently legislation

Details	Value	Cheque
Zurich – Insurance	£542.73	732
Sue Cook – Salary plus expenses and back pay	£281.28	733
Tom James – Internal Audit	£80.00	734
Sue Cook - ICO and Website renewal	£55.00	735
N Power – Street Lighting	£447.64	736
E-on – Annual Maintenance Package	£32.40	737
Mowerman – 1 st and 2 nd Grass Cutting	£720.00	738
Benefield Village Hall – Hire of Hall	£27.50	739

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Planning

NE/22/00467/CND | Discharge of conditions pursuant to application 18/02408/FUL - Conversion of listed farm buildings to create 3 dwellings together with demolition of modern agricultural buildings and construction of 2 new build dwellings. To crush concrete on site and re use for aggregates Condition 7 - crushing etc | Rectory Farm Buildings Main Street Lower Benefield PE8 5AF – No comment required from Parish Council

Outstanding Applications waiting for Decisions since 14th March

- a) NE/22/00491/CND | Discharge of conditions pursuant to 19/01480/LBC. Conversion and extension of redundant agricultural building to create a single-family dwelling. Condition 3: Materials Condition 4: Joinery details Condition 5: Archaeology programme | Milking Parlour Main Street Upper – No comment required from Parish Council Approved by NNC
- b) NE/21/01845/FUL – Vehicular access and new detached garage at Deene End Upper - **Approved**
- b) NE/21/01698/LBC, & NE/21/01697/FUL – Various works at Rectory Farmhouse – **Still Outstanding**
- c) NE/21/01838/CND - Discharge of condition pursuant to application 18/02408/FUL: Conversion of listed farm buildings to create 3 dwellings together with demolition of modern agricultural buildings and construction of 2 new build dwellings. Condition 2 - Archaeology Condition 4 - Trees Condition 10 - Contaminated land investigation Condition 16 - Landscapes Condition 18 - Bird box Condition – **Approved**
- d) **NE/21/01164/FUL & 01165/LBC** Repair and improve the boundary wall between pavement and front garden; Change existing single glazed windows to slimline double glazed at Berkeley House Main Street Lower – **Still Outstanding**

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The following items of **Correspondence** had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. All were noted with no further action

- a) Newsletter from Jason Smithers, leader of NNC
- b) Newsletter from Police and Fire Commissioner
- c) Minutes from Joint Action Group (JAG) meeting

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Future agenda items – Cllr Groom suggested that there is a Floral Carpet for wildflowers to encourage the bees, this will also reduce the cost of grass cutting. Cllr Groom to investigate if resident would be agreeable to this.

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The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 11th July in Benefield Village Hall starting at 6:30p.m.

This being all the business the meeting was closed at 7:15p.m.