

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
held in Carbrooke Village Hall on 10 October 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs N Defew (Chair), A Baker, W Leport, D Page, S Willmott, S Yerby. In attendance: Cllr P Bates (Breckland Council) N Hartley (Parish Clerk), P Arrowsmith (Community Hub) Two members of the public.

**Public Participation**

A member of the public requested, further to his email, that the Council resurface the footpath next to the power substation.

**1 Resignation of Cllr Mawby**

The Council noted that Mike Mawby had resigned from the Council for personal reasons.

**2 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Borrett, Cllr C Bowes (Norfolk County Council) and Cllr H Crane (Breckland Council).

**3 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**4 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 as a true and accurate record. The Chair signed the minutes.

**5 Matters Arising**

None.

**6 Report from Breckland Councillor**

A copy of Cllr Crane's report is attached to the minutes.

**7 Finance**

7.1 The following payments were made in accordance with the budget:-

N Hartley, clerk's salary, £702.12  
HMRC, clerk's Paye £175.40  
T Thurston, reimbursement of expenses on the Hunton Plough, £85.50  
Glasdon UK Ltd, replacement dog bin Caudle Springs, £351.74  
Mansfield Fencing, install replacement bin at Caudle Springs, £120  
Carbrooke Village Hall, grant toward a PA system, £1,000  
Millennium Green, grant toward a public noticeboard, £1,000  
PKF Littlejohn, audit fee, £378  
Royal British Legion, Remembrance Day wreaths, £100  
Gorts Gardening, grass cutting in Carbrooke churchyard (August & September), £450 (Section 137)  
Justin Steward, clearance of broken play equipment, £40

The Council was scheduled to make the second transfer of budgeted funds (£4,532.25) to the Community Hub, but Cllr Defew noted that the Council had not received a copy of the Hub's financial figures as per the Council's decision made in June 2023. The payment was therefore held over pending production and discussion of these figures.

7.2 The Council noted the following payment had been received:-

Breckland Council, balance of the Precept, £25,000

7.3 The Council received a report of Actual to Budgeted Expenditure. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

7.4 The Council noted the External Audit of its finances had been completed with the following observation from the auditor:-

The smaller authority has disclosed that it made proper provision during the year 2022/23 for the exercise of public rights, by answering 'Yes' to Section 1, Assertion 4. However, as was reported last year, we are aware that it failed to do this and therefore should have answered 'No' to this Assertion. It has also disclosed that it took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit, by answering 'Yes' to Section 1, Assertion 7, which, on the basis of the above, is not correct.

7.5 The Council **RESOLVED** to add Cllr Leport to its signatories.

7.6 The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Leport as its Internal Control Officer to replace Mike Mawby.

## 8 Planning

8.1 Breckland Council decisions:-

White Hart Cottage, Church Street  
Replacement of two ground floor windows in front elevation

3PL/2023/0749/LB  
Approved

Summer Lane Kennels, Summer Lane  
Change of use of land from kennels to mixed use comprising leisure and vehicle repairs (non commercial) (Retrospective)

3PL/2023/0754/F  
Refused

## 9 Hub Funds

The Committee investigating the missing Hub funds noted that in spite of measures taken, it has not been possible to trace the money. The Committee noted that a Cash Handling policy is to be introduced to minimise any future risk and proposed measures such as a triplicate receipt book and stapling the Post Office receipt to each relevant payment. Cllr Yerby asked the procedure with money taken at events. Mrs Arrowsmith noted that these monies are banked on the same day. Mrs Arrowsmith noted measures have already been put in place to reduce the amount of cash taken and to encourage online payments. The system of banking money has also been changed.

The Clerk was asked how the missing money needs to be recorded, and will take advice from Norfolk Parish Training and Support re this. The matter will be discussed further at the November meeting.

## 10 Cash Handling Policy

Cllr Leport had prepared an addition to the draft policy. The Council asked him to embed this in the draft document, and will consider the completed document at its November meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to add 'monthly' to the frequency of the Treasurer's bank reconciliation.

## 11 Amendment to Hub Terms of Reference

It was **RESOLVED** to amend the Hub's Terms of Reference to allow payment of the Manager/Caretaker's salary, as this amount exceeds the current single payment of £500. It was agreed that the Committee can pay the salary up to £1,000.

## 12 Employment of the Hub Caretaker/Manager

The role of Hub caretaker is currently offered on a self employed basis, with an invoice being required at the end of each month. The Council considered that the role should be offered as an employed role. The Council had sought guidance from Acas and an HR lawyer through Norfolk Parish Training and Support. The guidance was that it should be considered as an employed role. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council's Staff Committee will look into the process of how to evolve the current invoiced role to an employed role.

### **13 Appointment of an HR Partner re Management of the Hub**

The Council considered a proposal for an HR package from Bright HR. This will provide the Council with HR support for two employees, contracts of employment, HR advice, Health and Safety support and documentation, and risk assessments, amongst other benefits. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Bright HR.

### **14 Hallmaster Booking System**

The Council noted that the addition of the Hallmaster booking system will support the Council in terms of reducing the number of cash payments and will reduce the amount of administration. It was **RESOLVED** that the Hub will use the Hallmaster booking system at cost £240 pa. The Council's expectation is that Hallmaster will be fully operational by 1 January 2024 and contain 100% of Hub bookings, and the Council to see 30% of bookings by the end of October in Hallmaster, 60% by the end of November and 100% by January 2024. Cllr Defew will create the account so that it is accessible to all councillors as well as the Hub.

### **15 Cash Flow Reporting System for the Hub**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Hub Treasurer will provide a monthly cash flow reporting system showing a summary of income and expenditure against the budget.

### **16 Council Representative to the Hub**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Baker as the Council's representative to the Hub to replace Mike Mawby.

### **17 Community Hub Report**

A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

### **18 Community Hub Financial Report**

A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

### **19 Commuted Sum**

The Committee appointed to look into the investment of the Commuted Sum reported that it had considered ways to improve the return on the Council's funds. The Committee had considered CCLA, but discounted it due to the risk involved in the investment of public money. The Committee had considered one-year fixed rate bonds. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk will obtain rates for these bonds and report to the November meeting.

## **20 Appointment of a Grass Contractor (Blenheim Grange)**

The Council considered quotes from three contractors. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint TOP Garden Services.

## **21 Appointment of a Grass Contractor (Village Hall)**

The Council considered quotes from three contractors. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint TOP Garden Services.

## **22 Footpath by the Power Substation**

The Council had received a request to resurface the footpath on the basis of a resident's health and safety concerns. It was **RESOLVED** to obtain quotes.

## **23 Grant Application from the Friends of Carbrooke School**

The Council received a grant request for £900 from the Friends of Carbrooke School. The Clerk noted that the Council's Grants policy states the Council must have one year's accounts from applicants. The application did not contain accounts. The Friends of Carbrooke School closed its bank account several years ago and has only recently reformed. Cllr Yerby will speak with the school's head. It was **RESOLVED** to consider the application at the November meeting and to review the Council's Grants policy.

## **24 Parish Flower Boxes**

The Council will consider this at its November meeting.

## **25 Parish Partnership Scheme**

It was **RESOLVED** to apply for white gates at the entrances to the parish at Caudle Springs and Broadmoor Road. And for a Welcome to Carbrooke sign to be sited on Summer Lane.

## **26 Parish Litter Picks**

Cllr Defew will help with the risk assessment documentation.

## **27 Council Training**

It was agreed to carry out full Council financial training with Norfolk Parish Training and Support on 24 October.

## **28 Representatives' Reports**

Cllr Yerby noted the Ethos Group is to meet shortly.

Cllr Defew noted the thanks of the Village Hall Committee for the Council's grant. He noted the Committee is awaiting a decision on grant funding from Mick George.

Cllr Page noted the Millennium Green has held its AGM.

## **29 Items for Inclusion in the Next Agenda**

Application for a defibrillator for the Hub.

## **22 Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be in the Community Hub at 7pm on 14 November.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.45pm.

## **Report of Helen Crane – Breckland Council**

New advice from Natural England regarding the SPA (special protection area) and buffer areas of The Brecks has been noted at cabinet and will be used when determining planning applications.

The Queen Mothers garden in Dereham has won a national landscaping award in the regeneration category for projects under £500k. The scheme has transformed the garden which was originally opened by the Queen mother in 1983.

On 21<sup>st</sup> September it was recommended that council accepts the inspectors report and her recommendations to make the local plan partial update sound. The inspector considered the partial review to be sound without any modification. The outcome of the partial update is an excellent outcome for the council and once adopted the local plan will be a strong and robust framework against which planning applications will be considered whilst the full update of the plan continues.

Community engagement is still taking place on the local plan. Swaffham Market 14<sup>th</sup> October and Dereham Market 17<sup>th</sup> October. If residents cannot attend they can register for a virtual meeting on the Breckland local Plan Common place website.

## **Report for the Parish Council and Community Hub**

28<sup>th</sup> October Halloween Party this was going to be a Runway Group event, but Runway have not formed a committee so are unable to run the event. The Community Hub will run the event as we would not like to disappoint the children.

11<sup>th</sup> November fun Quiz night 19.00 -22.00 only a small uptake at the moment but we will pro-actively advertising this event.

12<sup>th</sup> November Remembrance Day event meeting at the memorial (Propeller) at 10.30 to lay a wreath then over to the American memorial to lay a wreath. All invited back to the hub for free refreshments. Action PA to ask Parish Council to purchase a wreath and ask if a representative from the PC will be laying the wreath also would any of the Parish Council wish to do a reading. PA to ask Stay and Play if they are making a wreath and who will be laying it.

We have a working party to clear and litter pick the area on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 10.00am meeting at the monument, everyone welcome refreshments afterwards at the Hub.

A cascade of poppies is being made to be used at the memorial or in the hub, this is being made by the craft group with the knitted poppies coming from all over the country. If you would like to be part of this by adding a poppy to the cascade, then the hub is open Monday am.

9<sup>th</sup> December Christmas event for the children during the day followed by the Jersey Boiz which is sold out.

**Snagging** We have one outstanding item the builders are in the process of completing this.

**Litter** Again huge amount of litter mainly alcohol related items (6 bags so far) have been removed from the cut through pathway to Washington Drive, this was done at the request of the PC. There is still more to collect but until the weeds nettles brambles etc die back it is not possible to reach them.

**Manager/Caretaker** There was a problem with August wage payment where the invoice was not added to the September Parish Council agenda for authorisation to pay the amount due. After discussions with the PC rep and the PC chair they were unable to pay the money owed until Octobers PC Meeting and said the PC Chair believes it should be approved by the Hub Committee. This is not what was agreed as the Hub is only able to spend up to £500.00 in one transaction without gaining permission from the PC.

A Extraordinary meeting was called to resolve this situation thankyou to everyone who were able to attend.

The process is -:

- 1 As the Manager/Caretaker is employed by the PC an invoice and timesheet are submitted to the Parish Clerk who then adds the payment details to the agenda.
- 2 The PC meet and authorise payment.
- 3 The Clerk instructs the Hub Treasure to pay the agreed amount and sends the invoice to him for the hubs records.
- 4 The treasure then proceeds to pay the Manager/caretaker from the budget that hub holds for the Manager/Caretaker.

Action PA to ask for clarification at the next PC Meeting

### **Bookings Payable hours and Community Hours**

	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct TBC</b>	<b>Nov TBC</b>	<b>Dec TBC</b>
<b>Total Paid Hours</b>	<b>38.00</b>	<b>87.50</b>	<b>60.75</b>	<b>51.00</b>	<b>39.25</b>
<b>Total Community Hours</b>	<b>35.50</b>	<b>37.25</b>	<b>39.00</b>	<b>43.50</b>	<b>40.75</b>

Cranswick have very generously donated £600.00 towards a collapsible stage to use in the hub, the total cost for the stage is £1000.00 with the other money being raised by the committee run events.

### **Plans for the future:-**

#### **Defibrillator**

Funding is available from Breckland Council for the Parish Council to apply for funding for a defibrillator for the Hub, Nick our Parish Clerk has the information. This would benefit Carbrooke as there are a huge amount of people living in the area. First Aid training my also be considered if successful.

## **Warm Space**

We are in early planning to set up 2 warm space areas in Carbrooke, one would be at the Hub the other in Carbrooke village Hall (to be confirmed). This would entail using some of the budget to buy food/newspapers/ refreshments/ games etc for both venues. A team of volunteers would be recruited to work along side the hub to enable people to come together in a calm relaxing environment for a warm meal and some social interaction during the winter months. Depending on demand the costing for this project would be:-

10 people attending would equate to £25.00 - £30.00 per week

20 people attending would equate to £30.00 -£40.00 per week

We would need a volunteer policy, possible food hygiene training

At the moment I am unaware of any funding available for this year, donation will be sort which will reduce the overall food cost. Fundraising will also take place to enable some of the food costs to be covered.

## **Warm baby project**

For anyone who is not aware the warm baby project provides children 0-5 with knitted clothing, this service is free of charge the hope is that no child will be cold at any time. The knitters are all over the country the hub is one of the bases for the project.

It is hoped to extend this service to more local families within Carbrooke and surrounding areas. Further planning is required as to how and when this will happen.

## **Financial Report for the Community Hub (summary)**

September 2023 Cash Movements and Bank Balance

The Opening Balance on 01/08/23 was £10176.94

Payments out were £1770.37

Payments in were £1217.09

Closing balance on 30/04/23 was £9614.03

Expenditure against Budget is doing well within expected parameters. Overall the budget and our bank balances are looking to be healthy.

Hallmaster Booking System will begin trialing soon to become the system by the new year 2024.

## Carbrooke Parish Council Actual to Budgeted Expenditure

Category	Budgeted	Expenditure	Notes
<b>Running Costs</b>			
Insurance	1,200	754.76	
Clerk's salary, paye & expenses	11,400	5,549.49	
Payroll	100	36.00	
Office supplies	50		
Internal Audit	150	120.00	
External Audit	400		
Council training	200	404.00	
NPTS subscription	400	396.00	
Microsoft & McAfee subscriptions for council laptop	100	59.99	
Website costs (Wix)	110		
Community Action Norfolk subscription	50		
Information Commissioner fee	35		
<b>Community Hub</b>			
Caretaker		2,280.00	
Payments made before Hub bank account opened		7,586.92	
Bin lid play area/water softener		1,505.60	
Funds transferred		4,532.25	
Shelves for container and slabs		1,049.60	
<b>Blenheim Grange – open spaces</b>			
Grass cutting	Commuted Sum	579.60	
Remove flytips	Commuted Sum		
Tree survey	Commuted Sum	834.00	
Tree maintenance	Commuted Sum		
Flower bed maintenance & weed killing	Commuted Sum	550.00	
Clear Cabin site/signage	Commuted Sum	441.32	
<b>Blenheim Grange Play Area</b>			
Play equipment repairs	1,000	7,136.40	
Play equipment safety report	160	156.00	
Safety surfacing	2,000		
<b>Blenheim Grange Capital costs</b>			
Dog waste collection	3,000	563.34	

Remove flytips, benches, fencing, war memorials, signs, noticeboards, drop down locks	1,000	769.00	
New noticeboard	-	1,090.80	
New bin/other		2,678.26	
<b>Village Hall car park</b>			
Grass cutting	450	100.80	
<b>Capital costs</b>			
Defibrillators	250	68.34	
Phone box	100		
Street light charges Trenchard Crescent	100	75.59	
Broadmoor road bus shelter and fence repair		550.00	
SAM2	200	100.80	
<b>Grants &amp; donations</b>			
Grants	8,500	354.00	
RBL Poppy wreaths x 3	100		
Donation to Watton Fireworks display	150		
Christmas tree and lights	400		
Elections (May 2023)	3,000		Not spent as no election was held
		£40,322.86	

The Council's Precept has been set at £50,000. Allowance has been made for income from the Community Hub.

Bank reconciliation as at 30 August 2023

Barclays Current Account	£10,072.78	
Barclays Deposit Account	£20,114.98	
Lloyds Blenheim Grange	£ 3,302.84	
Lloyds Hub	£ 4,919.49	
Scottish Widows	£60,159.02	
Unity Trust	£86,739.93	£185,309.04
Less unpaid cheque (HMRC)		<u>£ 175.40</u>
		£185,133.64
Balance c/f	£188,851.53	
Add receipts	£ 36,604.97	
Less payments	£ 40,322.86	£185,133.64