

Blaxhall Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Date: 12th Nov

Time: 19:30

Attendees and Apologies

- **Attendees:** The number of Parish Council members present is not specified, but the meeting reached quorum.
 - **Apologies for Absence:**
 - Jo (Clerk - absent due to Covid).
 - Councillor Atkinson.
 - Councillor Oakley.
 - Councillor Cook.
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Open Forum (Public Participation)

- A member of the public provided an update on the **Church Tower** (see Church Tower Report).
 - A suggestion was raised about **publishing Parish Council minutes** in a village newsletter, citing an example from another village. This was noted as a good idea.
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Parish Council Business

1. Declarations of Interest & Dispensations

- No specific declarations or dispensations were recorded.

2. Reports from Councillors (Andrew Reed & Tim)

- Reports from County Councillor **Andrew Reed** and District Councillor **Tim Wilson** were circulated but were not available for discussion at the meeting. Members were advised to read them later.

3. Reports from Village Organisations

a) BCOST Report:

- **Work Parties:** Work has resumed since September, alternating between **Jasper's Pightle** and **Stone Common**.

- **Jasper's Pightle:** A clearing effort was completed in a few sessions, making control easier. Maintenance work was also carried out on the hedge planted a few years ago (clearing and mulching).
- **Stone Common:** Work has started on the edge of the common, including clearing and mulching. Old waste **wire mesh and barbed wire** were collected for recycling.
- **Bonfire Party:** The recent bonfire party on Stone Common was **very well attended** and successful, raising a value amount in donations.
 - *Note:* A minor criticism was that some people didn't know about it as the date was set too late for the last newsletter, suggesting future events should be advertised on **notice boards** and earlier.
- **Hedges:** The group is carrying out **gap filling and maintaining hedges** but will not be doing any new planting in Blaxhall this season as they are concentrating efforts on new areas.
- **Sheep Hurdles Grant:** A possible grant is being pursued for new, **movable sheep hurdles** for maintenance grazing.
- **Hedge Planting:** The group is investigating work to get the hedge on the **right side of the playing field** up to a similar quality as the left side.

b) Church Tower Report (from the public):

- **Structural Work:** Scaffolding went up in February. Structural building work is mostly complete, but they are waiting for **stone** for the facing.
- **Feasibility Study:** A study is underway on the tower's ability to take the weight of the **bells** so they can be rung safely.
- **Future Plans:** Provision will be made for **swift box cabinets** and **bat boxes**.
- **Christmas:** The church is still a building site, but they plan to hold the **Christmas Carol Service** at the village hall.
- **Funding:** Once the current spending is complete and certified, the church can apply for the **next phase of funding**.

4. Approval of Draft Minutes

- The draft minutes of the last meeting were **Proposed by Councillor Pictor and Seconded by Councillor Baker**.
- **Matters Arising:** None that were not on the current agenda.

5. Clerk's Report (None available)

6. Date of Next Meeting

- **Proposed Date:** Wednesday, January 7th.
- **Resolution:** Agreed.

7. Parish Council Business

a) Emergency Plan Update

- Updating the plan was **deferred to the next meeting (January 7th)** as Councillor Cook, who has been working on this, was absent.

b) Purchase of a Defibrillator

- **Status:** Funding from County/District Councillors is being sought. The defibrillator funding is likely approved, but a quote for the **installation cost** is still pending.
- **Cost:** Approximately **£1000**, potentially reduced to £600+ via a scheme.
- **Action:** The matter was **deferred to the next meeting** to finalise the installation quote and funding details.

c) Assertion of AGAR Regulations

- This matter was **deferred to the next meeting** (likely April onwards).

8. Environmental Matters

a) Meeting with Farmers

- A meeting with local farmers to discuss environmental matters was **deferred to the next meeting (January 7th)** as Councillor Oakley was absent, and he has a specific proposal that requires his presence.

b) Blocked Drains and Gullies

- **Concern:** The **grips (gullies) near Lime Tree**, dug out by New Shoots some years ago, are now full of sand and ineffective.
- **Action:**
 - The council will speak to **local contractors** for a quote for an **annual clean** (suggested twice yearly).
 - The council will also approach **New Shoots** (who have signed up for the surrounding Christmas tree fields) to see if they would assist.
 - A formal quote is required to ensure a long-term strategy is put in place.

c) Fly Tipping

- **Concern:** The presence of **fly-tipped items** (including tyres and waste) near the river and at Langham Bridge was noted.

d) Rights of Way (Railway Crossing)

- **Concern:** The vehicular right of way down to the **railway crossing at Blaxhall** appears to have been closed by **Network Rail** stating it is only a **footpath**, despite the OS and County Council maps showing it as a road.
- **Action:** Councillor Pictor intends to write to the **County Council** to inquire and clarify the right of way status.

9. Planning Applications

a) New Application: Old Stables, Station Road

- **Application:** Retrospective retention of an existing outbuilding for use as a residential annex, and erection of a single-storey link extension.

- **Issue:** Concerns were raised regarding the retrospective nature and the expansion beyond what was originally approved.
- **Action:** All councillors are to **review the floor plans and elevations** and **email their feedback** to the Chairman by **Tuesday 18th** so a formal objection/response can be submitted before the deadline.

b) Existing Applications Update

- **Stone Barns (Swimming Pool): No objection.**
- **Youth Hostel (School): No objection** to the minor revisions. The site will be a special needs school for up to 17 pupils and is undergoing extensive refurbishment.

10. Payments

Recipient	Purpose	Amount
Jo Peters	Salary	£297.83 (Paid)
Jo Peters	Expenses	£34.64
Community Action Suffolk	Membership	£66.00
Open Spaces	Membership Renewal	£45.00
Chris Knott Insurance	Allotments Insurance	£116.00
PlaySafety Limited	Annual Inspection	£96.00
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit Fee	£252.00

Proposer: Councillor Nottingham.

Seconder: Councillor Cutting.

Resolution: Approved.

11. East Suffolk Call for Sites (Housing Development)

- **Context:** East Suffolk Council has issued a "call for sites" for potential building sites of five or more houses.
- **Concern:** This could affect the ongoing potential development of the **allotments and common land** by a local landowner.
- **Action:** The council will **wait and see** if any formal application is made.

12. Chairman's Notices

- **Village Hall:** The hall has been fully renovated inside and out and looks splendid.
- **Village Hall Wi-Fi:** The Chairman is exploring wifi options for the village hall