

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL BAWDESWELL PARISH MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY
2nd MAY 2024 STARTING AT 7.00PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: J. Mallen, D. Shannon, A. Hartley-Walder, C. Good and P. Craven

Mrs. J Boxall (Clerk), Members of the public – 7

District Councillor G Bambridge

Cllr John Mallen opened the meeting at 7.00pm and gave the following report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023 / 24

Welcome to this Annual Parish Meeting, my name is John Mallen, Chairman of the Parish Council.

This report covers the period from May 2023 to the end of April 2024.

Two major issues have dominated our discussions and actions this past year; Planning and Grounds Maintenance. Both are issues directly affecting our village.

Planning – The size of our community affects all residents and the services that we need to remain a viable and vital village. The issue of housing is a major one for the whole county and locally this became important because of the proposal for a new town between North Elmham and Billingford was resurrected last year which could have had major repercussions for our environment, traffic, roads, infrastructure and the Council joined other councils opposing the plan.

Secondly, because Bawdeswell was designated a Local Service Centre by Breckland District Council, it became more likely that the village would get additional housing allocations despite the fact that we have had an additional 40 housing units built recently. The Council continued its opposition to the designation and intends to inform Breckland about the sites that have been suggested. We have very much relied on David Shannon to convey our views.

The other issue that became more urgent as the year got on was the maintenance of the village's open spaces. Over the past few years the service provided became considerably more expensive and not very reliable. This came to a head in the autumn when the contractor could no longer provide the service we required. A member of our community came forward suggesting that we would be better off with an alternative service based in Bawdeswell. As you can guess this was somewhat radical and the Council had to take its time to sort out, not only the finances involved, but the service to be provided. Despite initial setbacks we are confident that this new system will improve the look of the village. Already we have seen improvement in the Jubilee Garden and at Adams Pit as well as the play area and football pitch here at the village hall. Some incredible work has been done by Graham Williamson to get this scheme up and running which will benefit the village and its finances.

Associated with the grounds maintenance is the vexatious subject of dog poo, especially in our play areas and the football field. I find it inconceivable that dog owners do not realise that children use a play area and the field for football and fun. After complaints from parents, the council posted notices pointing out that children play on a recreation ground. We also contacted the dog warden, took legal advice and shifted the problem to other areas of the village! We know that the problem has not gone away and will no doubt feature prominently in our discussions for 2024/25.

If villages provide no communal facilities such as play areas, open spaces, play equipment, village halls, communal gardens, what on earth do Parish Council's discuss? There seems to me that there is a very interesting equation between us providing facilities which benefit us all and the responsibility of maintenance, repair and care for these facilities. The Council are extremely aware that at present finances are difficult for lots of people and that raising the parish precept just adds to those difficulties. It makes the spending of monies a matter of great care and we are grateful to our Parish Clerk who keeps us on the financial straight and narrow.

As well as Jo, I am extremely grateful to all the Parish Councillors and all the volunteers who do the thousands of jobs in the village which people take for granted.

OPEN SESSION - TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS

Cllr Shannon encouraged everyone to keep an eye on the Breckland planning website and comment on proposals accordingly. Breckland have kept Bawdeswell as a Local Service Centre so potentially could have up to 184 additional houses. The Council need residents to respond against the proposals and sites due to a lack of improvement in infrastructure

District Councillor Bambridge confirmed that Breckland have some moveable cameras which may help with the dog poo issue. It was acknowledged that it's a long term issue and the Council may need to wait a while to get cameras.

It was confirmed that there has been regular inspections of the recreation ground and with the grass shorter, it is more difficult to hide dogs mess on the recreation ground. If a place is looked after, then people will look after it. It was acknowledged that there are weeds on The Street which isn't helping the problem of dog mess.

A resident requested an update regarding parking on The Street and bus access. It was confirmed that this was chased with Highways, as it was a County Council responsibility. Highways suggested a village survey regarding yellow lines on The Street. The Council acknowledged that there is a need to manage infrastructure considering the needs of all residents (e.g. being able to park outside the church when there are funerals). It was confirmed that in the event of a consultation, the Parish Council would ensure that the views of the bus company would be sought.

County Councillor Borrett questioned if residents would want yellow lines and it was confirmed that this would be beneficial in some places. He agreed to chase Highways to renew the white lines that are on The Street. It was confirmed that the request for a 20MPH speed limit by the school is on the list for consideration.

The idea of having a classic car show in Bawdeswell was raised. It was hoped classic cars would feature at the centenary celebrations.

On behalf of the Parish Council, Cllr Shannon thanked everyone who makes the village a lovely community. It was acknowledged that it is important to record the Council's heartfelt thanks for all the support.

There being no further comments the meeting was closed at 19.25pm