

Brancaster Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Council held on Tuesday 1st October 2024 at 6.30pm

The meeting was held in Brancaster Village Hall

Present: Cllr T de Winton (Chair), Cllr B Bax, Cllr S Bocking, Cllr C Borthwick, Cllr V Carpenter, Cllr S Osborn, Cllr S Ullswater

Also in attendance: Simon Bower (Parish Clerk) and approximately seven Members of the Public

Meeting began at 6.33pm

2024.10.01.01 - Declarations of Interest

- a) There were no Declarations of Interest on agenda items.

2024.10.01.02 - Apologies for absence

- a) Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Dovey, Cllr W Gardiner and Cllr T O'Sullivan.

2024.10.01.03 - Minutes

- a) The minutes of the meeting on 3rd September 2024 were accepted as a true record and duly signed.

Prop: Cllr Ullswater; 2nd: Cllr Bocking, unanimous

- b) No matters were raised from the above minutes.

2024.10.01.04 – Public Comments 1

- a) No matters were raised.

2024.10.01.05 - Reports

- a) Chair's report. Cllr de Winton noted that he had attended the Boardwalk opening.
- b) Report from Borough Councillor. Cllr de Winton noted that he had attended Planning and the Audit Committee.
- c) Report from County Councillor. Cllr Jamieson had been invited to the meeting, but had not submitted a report.
- d) Report from Clerk. The Clerk noted he had spent much time on sorting out streetlighting issues (later item). He reminded Cllrs of a meeting with a developer/agent on 3rd October – it was agreed to move this to 22nd. The bike racks were installed, and Cllrs were happy with the arrangement (this to allow grant application to be completed). He had delivered a large amount of Council documentation to the Records Office – the scanning of most of these had allowed them to be added to the website. The website now had almost all the info from the old one transferred, and he proposed to close the latter once completed. A letter box had been ordered, and, once installed, the Council address would be changed to Brancaster Village Hall.

2024.10.01.06 - Finance

- a) The Clerk presented the finance figures. Balances were c.£150K, with just under £90K being unallocated. There were no concerns on spending against budgets – total 55% in 58% of the year. A VAT refund of £6.8K had been received, and the

Signed:

(Chair)

Date: 5/11/2024

UKPN payment for the substation. One invoice had been omitted, and it was noted that a payment would be due for the hedge-cutting on the Playing Field.

- b) All expenditure as listed in the pack, and with the two additions above, was approved for payment¹.

Prop: Cllr Bax; 2nd: Cllr Osborn; unanimous

[Ref hedge – Clerk to seek quote for cutting area near table tennis table.]

- c) The Clerk noted various matters relating to the budget/precept setting arrangements for 2024/25. This included the need for approval of updated Asset/Risk Management Lists and ring-fenced funds. Cllrs were requested to consider and submit ideas for funding next year prior to November meeting (Nov 15th at latest). He noted large spending from reserves², and suggested it might be helpful to separate such spending where it was for grants – Cllrs thought this a good idea.

2024.10.01.07 - Planning

- a) One Planning Application was considered:
- a. 24/01716 - New dormer (blind), two new roof lights and re ordering internally (Christmas Cottage, London Street, Brancaster) – Council had no objection to this application.
- b) There were no late applications for consideration.
- c) Two Appeals were noted: 24/00966 (Balustrade, 22 Dale End, Staithe) – ongoing, no further comment allowed; 22/01922 (Wall move, Limes, London St, Brancaster) - Appeal rejected.

2024.10.01.08 - Delegated decisions etc.

- a) A Planning Meeting had taken place on 17th September³. The Clerk had responded in line with the discussion under delegated powers.

2024.10.01.09 - Other matters

- a) Cllr Bax noted she had attended the Saxon Shore Meeting – a 20mph zone was being proposed for Old Hunstanton; she would seek the name of someone who might be able to look at the Village Signs. A report was presented from the Working Group looking at the possible extended Car Park at Brancaster Village Hall/Playing Field. Many points were raised: e.g. guarantees that this would remain PC property (currently subject to lease to the Sports Club), precision over the exact boundary, possible public consultation, nature of current gravel – difficulties for less mobile, bank by hedge, use and future of container. The consensus was to move forward with the most extensive suggestion, though all would need to be approved formally in due course. Clerk to seek possible “project manager” to move forward with the Group, and prepare relevant documentation – for formal appointment next month.
- b) Council noted the report on possible electronic signs relating to flooding of Beach Rd. Changes to be requested of NCC included moving sign by Church closer to the telegraph pole, and the one on Mill Rd south of Boughey Close. It was also suggested that all signs should say "Flood Beach Rd". This would then allow a definitive quote to be obtained.

¹ See below

² Listed below

³ Notes in pack and online.

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- c) The Clerk noted the recent streetlighting summary, with the addition of three lamps in Saxon Field not previously on the Asset List. It contained recommendations which exceeded his spending powers, which he had already used on approval of one new lamp. Work required was one straightening of a pole, one new bracket and three new lamps. Council agreed to expenditure of between £1,500 and £2,000 on these works.

Prop: Cllr Borthwick; 2nd: Cllr Bax; unanimous

- d) CPRE had requested support for their document on the new National Planning Policies. Council agreed to support the entire document, and express its view that it was an extremely good response.

2024.10.01.10 - Correspondence and requests

- a) Thanks from the Community First Responders for the recent grant were noted. Clerk to advertise their offer of training in Newsletter.
- b) Cllr Bax to work with Clerk on Christmas arrangements, including suggesting appointment of contractor to do the relevant works. Noted issues with solar power for Brancaster Village Green.

2024.10.01.11 - AOB and agenda requests

- a) Cllrs commented on: fallen Beacon (reported to landowner – need for consideration of change in location); Freebridge housing – need for people to apply – links available on PC website, and use Citizens' Advice for help with forms; rough sleeper still in place, concerns over horse noted to NT (court case involving Chair and Clerk in November); Staithe Hard – Chair dealing with NT ref lease and condition; dog waste bins – Clerk to check BCKLWN schedule which seemed erratic.
- b) No specific agenda items requested.

2024.10.01.12 - Public Comments 2

- a) Subjects raised were:
- Shelving for phone boxes.
 - More detail on CPRE reply – Clerk to request bullet points from Cllrs, and advertise to Public on website/Newsletter.
 - Height of electronic signs.
 - Condition of PC assets – benches, village sign(s), holes in base of phone box.
 - Use of audio loop.

2024.10.01.13 - Next meeting

- a) The next meeting was confirmed as being on Tuesday 5th November at 6.30pm in Brancaster Staithe Village Hall.

2024.10.01.14 - Private session

- a) Council agreed to close the meeting under Standing Orders and relevant legislation due to the nature of the subjects to be discussed. [Public left c.8.30pm]
- b) Council considered requested changes to contract by prospective Clerk. It was agreed that the post should be readvertised.

Meeting ended at c.9pm

Signed:

(Chair)

Date: 5/11/2024

Spending from Reserves to date:

To	For	Date paid	Amount
BSBDVH	Play Equipment	13/5/24	£20,000.00
Burnham Deepdale PCC	Grant s.214	14/6/24	£2,000.00
Brancaster PCC	Grant s.214	14/6/24	£3,500.00
Burnham Deepdale PCC	Grant s.214	8/7/24	£200.00
BSBDVH	Room Hire	12/9/24	£30.00
Tony Rout	Phone Boxes	12/9/24	£2,000.00
Marshall & Williams	BVH painting	12/9/24	£2,000.00

Expenditure⁴:

Invoice Date	To	For	Amount	of which VAT	budget
5/9/24	Tomato - A - jul/aug	Streetlights	£77.76	£3.70	utilities
5/9/24	Tomato - B - jul/aug	Streetlights	£419.02	£19.95	utilities
5/9/24	Tomato - C - jul/aug	Streetlights	£53.07	£2.53	utilities
10/9/24	Marshall & Williams	BVH painting	£2,400.00	£400.00	reserves
10/9/24	Noticeboard company	Locks	£32.96	£5.49	contingency
	ECS - oct	Computer	£38.40	£6.40	admin
	Tomato - sep - tbc	Streetlights			utilities
31/8/24	Heronwood	Grass Cutting	£262.00	£0.00	open spaces
	TT Jones – tbc – item 10c	Streetlights			utilities/cont
19/9/24	Parish Online	Mapping	£67.20	£11.20	admin
	Tbc – item 5B	Hedge-cutting			reserves
	Barclaycard (£101.68?)	various			admin
31/10/24	Salaries/tax/Nl/pension	Salaries	£1,754.26	£0.00	salaries
INCOME					
	VAT claim	Refund	£6,822.71		VAT refund
	UKPN	Wayleave-substation	£265.02		reserves

⁴ Includes notes of payments made in September under delegation or where exact amounts were not known.

Signed:

(Chair)

Date: 5/11/2024

BRANCASTER PARISH COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF BANK ACCOUNTS 2024/25

DATE: 30/10/2024

Balance Savings Account		£142,050.71
Balance Current Account		£20,557.14
	<i>Incomplete Transactions</i>	-£7,465.97
	<i>Current A/C statement balance</i>	£28,023.11
Actual Balance		<u>£162,607.85</u>
Balance at start of year	Savings	£173,286.10
	Current	£11,457.62
	Total Barclays	<u>£184,743.72</u>
Expenditure		£73,474.68
Income	to current	£50,074.20
	to savings (interest)	£1,264.61
	Balance	<u>£162,607.85</u>
<i>Outstanding invoices due to BPC</i>		<i>£0.00</i>
Protected - CIL		£12,043.95
Protected - other ring-fenced		£41,970.00
<i>General Funds Available including creditors</i>		<i>£108,593.90</i>
	check - difference	£0.00

SPENT AGAINST BUDGET Financial Year 01/04/24 31/03/25

AS AT **30/10/24** payments until 31/10/24
% of year **58%**

Budget Area	24/25 budget	spent	income	yr balance	budget bal	note
s.137	£8,000.00	<i>£6,520.00</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£6,520.00	82%	2
Open Spaces	£8,000.00	<i>£5,019.28</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£5,019.28	63%	1
Utilities	£6,500.00	<i>£3,548.84</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£3,548.84	55%	1
Admin	£6,500.00	<i>£3,442.00</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£3,442.00	53%	1
Salaries	£23,000.00	<i>£14,512.11</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£14,512.11	63%	1
Insurance	£2,500.00	<i>£2,024.31</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£2,024.31	81%	2
Events	£1,000.00	<i>£448.50</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£448.50	45%	1
Biodiversity	£1,000.00	<i>£363.39</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£363.39	36%	1
Allowances	£4,500.00	<i>£0.00</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£0.00	0%	1
Contingency	£2,600.00	<i>£1,919.05</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	£1,919.05	74%	3
Miscellaneous	£0.00	<i>£1,630.00</i>	<i>£1,630.00</i>	£0.00		
Total - excl VAT	<u>£63,600.00</u>	<i>£39,427.48</i>	<i>£1,630.00</i>	<u>£37,797.48</u>	<u>59%</u>	
		spent	income	yr balance		
<i>Refundable VAT</i>	<i>so far totals</i>	<i>£2,174.00</i>	<i>£6,822.71</i>	<i>-£4,648.71</i>		
<i>Precept</i>		<i>£0.00</i>	<i>£23,320.00</i>	<i>-£23,320.00</i>	<i>income only</i>	
<i>Reserves - General</i>		<i>£4,173.20</i>	<i>£19,566.10</i>	<i>-£15,392.90</i>	<i>income incl interest</i>	
<i>Reserves - PC Grants</i>		<i>£27,700.00</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	<i>£27,700.00</i>		
	TOTAL SPENT	£73,474.68		<i>budgeted, VAT and reserves</i>		
	TOTAL INCOME	£51,338.81		<i>all sources, incl interest to reserves</i>		
	<i>YEAR BALANCE</i>	<i>-£22,135.87</i>		<i>income less expenditure</i>		
	<i>YEAR BALANCE</i>	<u>-£39,162.34</u>		<i>balance excluding ring-fenced/CIL</i>		

Notes:

0 - on target - no concern

1 - under - no concern

2 - over - large items - no concern

3 - over - monitor - main item defibrillator

4 - spent - further expenditure to come from reserves

5 - no set miscellaneous budget: used for monies going in and out and grants, or where allocation tbc

NB CIL money into reserves which is not accessible for everyday spending = £17,026.47

BRANCASTER PARISH COUNCIL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE - FOR NOV PAYMENT**EXPENDITURE**

Date	Ref	To	For	Amount	of which VAT	budget
22/10/24	M-1/10	TT Jones - tbc	Streetlights	£2,571.84	£428.64	gen reserve
20/10/24	M-1/10	AD Masters	Hedge Cutting	£432.00	£72.00	open spaces
7/10/24	DD	Tomato -sep	Streetlights	£302.34	£14.39	utilities
Date	Ref	To	For	Amount	of which VAT	budget
	DD	ECS - oct	Computer	£38.40	£6.40	admin
	DD	Tomato - oct - tbc	Streetlights			utilities
28/10/24	M-5/11	CloudNext	Website hosting	£119.98	£19.99	admin
30/9/24	M-5/11	Heronwood	Grass Cutting	£208.00	£0.00	open spaces
	DD	Barclaycard	various	£109.20	£17.70	admin/cont
29/11/24	contract	Salaries - incl tax/NI/pens/back pay	Salaries	£2,232.29	£0.00	salaries
INCOME				£2,232.29		
21/10/24		BCKLWN	Bike grant	£930.00	£0.00	misc
24/10/24		BCKLWN	CIL	£17,026.47	£0.00	all reserve

BUDGET

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	TO: 30/10/2024					NOTES
	<i>AGREED</i> 23/24	<i>SPENT</i> 23/24	<i>AGREED</i> 24/25	<i>SPENT</i> 24/25	<i>PRED</i> 24/25	<i>SUGGEST</i> 25/26
s.137 (donations)	£5,500.00	£7,250.00	£8,000.00	£6,520.00	£7,500.00	£8,250.00 based on 3.5% RPI
Open Spaces	£6,500.00	£6,460.33	£8,000.00	£5,019.28	£7,000.00	£8,000.00 keeping same?
Projects	£3,500.00	£251.01	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00 removed 24/25
Utilities	£6,500.00	£5,657.75	£6,500.00	£3,548.84	£5,750.00	£6,500.00 keeping same? - NB replacement lamps from contingency/res
Admin	£7,650.00	£5,705.58	£6,500.00	£3,442.00	£5,750.00	£7,500.00 adding £1K for extra training
Salaries	£21,000.00	£21,068.01	£23,000.00	£14,512.11	£22,500.00	£24,250.00 assuming 5% increase
Insurance	£1,600.00	£1,600.00	£2,500.00	£2,024.31	£2,025.00	£2,500.00 checking if any effect due to legal issues - can't predict at moment
Repairs/Fees	£500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00 removed 24/25
Coronation (events)	£3,000.00	£2,053.46	£1,000.00	£448.50	£450.00	£1,500.00 will be VE/VJ day
Allowances	£3,500.00	£3,007.20	£4,500.00	£0.00	£3,500.00	£4,600.00 BCKLWN suggesting 2.5% rise
Biodiversity			£1,000.00	£363.39	£500.00	£1,000.00 keep same?
Contingency	£2,687.50	£2,172.87	£2,600.00	£1,919.05	£2,500.00	£2,792.50 ?set at 5% of total (less s.137)
Miscellaneous	£0.00	£100.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00 reminder this only a tidying up figure - moneys going in and out; not a budget
Operating budget (excl.137/cont)	<u>£53,750.00</u>		<u>£52,000.00</u>			<u>£55,850.00</u>
Total budget - excl VAT	£61,937.50		£63,600.00			£66,892.50
Total spent		£55,326.21		£37,797.48	£57,475.00	

Consultation on proposed closure of Brancaster School

By email to info@ dneat.org

Response of Brancaster Parish Council, approved at a meeting on 5/11/24

Dear Sirs,

I have been asked to write by Council expressing our grave concern over the proposed merger of the Village School with Docking Primary Academy from January 2025. We thank you for allowing a short extension to the response time for us to be able to consider at a formal meeting.

There has been concern and considerable distress among our parishioners; we know that you will have received many letters expressing this, which we would seek to support wholeheartedly.

The first point to raise is the unseemly haste with which this decision appears to be being taken. A letter to parents dated 14/10 noting a three-week consultation period, the first consultation meeting on 17/10, with a decision being taken, we believe, on 20th November hardly seems appropriate for a decision of this magnitude. If the situation is as difficult as has been suggested, it must have been known about for much longer, in particular by the Transition Board.

A school is more than just a place for education; it represents a focus for the community, and one which gives our young people a sense of that wider community which is important for its long-term survival. As is well-known, the coastal parishes of North Norfolk are trying to encourage young people and families to stay in the area, and this is another blow to those efforts.

Teachers, we are told, will be offered posts within DNEAT schools. Given the distance involved this may not be possible, and staff may face redundancy, further affecting the Community.

The announcement itself will become a self-fulfilling prophecy – the moment there is doubt about the future of the School, parents will quite understandably look for alternatives. This will strengthen the case for closure.

We believe that there is a strong possibility that numbers of children will increase across the whole area, despite projections given at the meeting; the addition of a large new development of housing in Brancaster Staithe and the possible effects of VAT on school fees pushing some parents from the private sector back to state education are

significant factors. Neither of these can be known at the moment and time should be allowed so that the effects can be monitored, given the permanence of any closure.

Further, regarding the timing of the decision, a group of children in Year 6 will be required to change schools twice during one year – three schools in four terms. These are children of an age who will already have suffered adversely from COVID and for whom it is well known that stability is very important.

Your figures seem contradictory. You state there is an oversupply of school places in the area (which is not defined), yet the current numbers for Brancaster and Docking combined total 118, and you list the maximum at Docking at 120. This suggests a very close margin should the merger proceed. Should there be even a small increase in the number of children looking for places, it would imply bussing to schools even further away. Council is mindful that there has been a large increase in house-building in Docking.

The transport of children to schools at a distance is of concern. There is not only the fact of the addition to the school day, but issues with sustainability. The costs will also fall on County, already facing budget issues. It should also be noted that Brancaster is not always easy for access to larger vehicles, potentially causing delays.

We believe that Brancaster has space and facilities which make it an eminently suitable place for a school, moreso than Docking in fact – Council is not aware of any encouragement being given to pupils from outside the Parish to attend which we feel would benefit the School itself and pupils from villages nearby.

We do not accept the premise that “The educational provision that can be offered in schools with fewer than 50 pupils is not acceptable...” (your letter), with its implied criticism of the School and its staff.

There is a strong feeling that there has been insufficient activity on the part of the Trust to support and promote the School – “constructive collapse” was a phrase used. If the situation was as dire as we are now being told, an active and urgent call for Governors might have been expected, with a report to Council requesting help. We believe this would have led to additional options being considered, including an increased role for Brancaster within the Trust. This highlights with the widely held perception within the Parish that the School was deliberately being allowed to “fail”.

Finally, Council believes that, should the above arguments not be convincing, and the School indeed be forced to close, this should be done at the end of the academic year.

This is supported by all local elected representatives. We strongly urge all those involved in making this decision to reconsider.

Kind regards,

Simon Bower

Parish Clerk, November 2024

DRAFT