

**Bredgar Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting**  
**Held at Bredgar Village Hall**  
**On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke; Vice Chair Cllr. Nigel Osmer;  
Cllr. Mike Day; Cllr. Stephen Parfitt, Cllr. David Priestley, Cllr. Penny Twaites and  
Cllr. Hilary Whitnell.

**Clerk:** Teresa Hudson.

**Members of the Public:** One member of the public was present.

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies to report. SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney will arrive to update the meeting on Highsted Park following two other council meetings scheduled for the same time.

**2. Declaration of Members' Personal and Prejudicial Interest**

There were no interests to declare.

**3. Declaration of any intention to record or film the PC meeting by any member of the Council or member of the public.**

There were no intentions to record or film the meeting by anyone present.

**4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the previous PC meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 were read and formally approved by the Parish Council. They are now available on the Parish website. Proposed by Cllr. B. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. P. Twaites, all councillors agreed.

The Minutes were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

**Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

The Chair reported that the Remembrance Service took place in Bredgar with many residents attending to pay their respects. Councillors praised the bugler who kindly attended from the UK Paper Band.

**5. NHW/Police Report**

Bredgar has a new police constable, PC Richard Divers, who is responsible for Teynham and the West Downs. He was unable to attend the meeting but held a surgery in the Farmshop on 28<sup>th</sup> October and also has surgeries in Rodmersham and Teynham this month.

Cllr. Parfitt reported that there remain concerns about unauthorized waste disposal at Saywell Farm. This comes under Maidstone authority and has been looked into but no concerns reported by Maidstone BC. Councillors suggested taking the matter further.

Quad bikes continue to cause a nuisance.

Signs of youths gathering in Ruins Barn Road and leaving bottles and general litter have been reported. PC Divers is to investigate.

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Burglaries in Swanton Street and Deans Hill have been noted, Cllrs urge all incidents to be reported to the police.

**6. Ten Minutes representation by the public**

Nothing to report.

**7. Authorisation of Accounts**

**PAYMENTS**

31/07/24	Absolute Airgas Ltd	Pond Filter	17.00
01/08/24	EDF	Pond Electricity	63.00
01/08/24	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
02/08/24	SBC	Cem Brown Bin	59.00
02/08/24	Ask A Gardener	Village Maint	150.00
07/08/24	R. Clack	Weedkiller	14.24
09/08/24	Unity Trust	Service Charge	3.00
01/09/24	EDF	Pond Electricity	63.00
01/09/24	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
02/09/24	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	150.00
04/09/24	T. Hudson	Honorarium	450.32
11/09/24	M. Belsom & Son Ltd	Repairs, Rec Grd	438.00
15/09/24	Cerda	Consultant Highsted P.	390.00
22/09/24	Royal B Legion	Poppy Wreath	24.49
30/09/24	Unity Trust	Service Charge	18.00
01/10/24	EDF	Pond Electricity	63.00
01/10/24	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
04/10/24	Ask A Gardener	Village Maintenance	200.00
8/10/24	Gordon Denniss	Decking/Bench Painting	550.00

**RECEIPTS**

28/08/24	High & Sons	Burial of Ashes	245.00
03/09/24	High & Sons	Burial of Ashes	914.70
04/09/24	Bredgar Book	Sales	45.00
26/09/24	SBC	Precept	6172.00
26/09/24	Bredgar Cricket Club	Rec Grd Rent	50.00

Cllrs queried the frequency of payments to Landscape Services for grass cutting. The Chair explained that there are usually three invoices annually but this year we have only received one so far.

The electricity payment for the pond lighting and pumps was queried. The cost has risen but was explained by the clerk as we now run two pumps and general costs have risen.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Priestley. All councillors agreed.

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**8. Financial Matters**

**Approve Completion of External Audit**

Cllrs approved the certified the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and accepted the External Auditor's Certificate from Mazars.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Whitnell. All councillors agreed.

**Financial Review**

The Financial Review was circulated by email by the clerk prior to the meeting. There were no queries.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Parfitt. All Councillors agreed.

**Precept 2025**

Due to increased expenditure and costs, councillors agreed unanimously to increase the precept by 3% next year. Proposed by Cllr. Twaites, seconded by Cllr. Day.

The Clerk was asked to temporarily leave the meeting whilst Cllrs discussed and agreed to apply the same 3% increase to the honorarium next year.

**9. Planning Matters**

**Highsted Park**

The planning authority scheduled Planning Committee Meetings to decide the two Highsted Park applications starting on 7th November. Two members of the public, several ward councillors (including Cllr Monique Bonney), many parish council representatives from affected villages and their consultants prepared statements to present a valid opposition to the application. However, three hours prior to the start of the meeting it was called in by Central Government. This means the decision was taken away from the local authority and will now be made by the Secretary of State. The councils now have a total of 22 weeks to prepare to go the Inspectorate. The meeting was still held and all the statements read out. Cllr Twaites and Cllr Clarke spoke for Bredgar. Just three speakers spoke in favour of the applications, a development director at Quinn Estates, Maurice Dunk, Chairman of Sittingbourne Football Club and Locate in Kent. The meeting closed following unanimous votes for recommendations that noted the committee had been minded to refuse the applications and that delegated authority to the head of planning to manage and progress all aspects of the borough council's case against each application.

Cllr. Bonney reported that work continues in the ongoing Local Plan meetings to support the borough council's case. Most recently Swale councillors looked at the Exceptions Report to identify issues, constraints and countryside gaps etc. Councillors agreed to continue working towards the desired outcome, which may prove to be costly especially for SBC. More in depth submissions are to be employed to affect the optimum response at the Government Inspector's enquiry. Councillors agreed for Cllrs Clarke and Twaites to continue representing Bredgar.

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**Footpath Diversion**

**Footpath ZR166**

An application to relocate footpath ZR166 has been discussed by councillors. The route is currently diagonally across an orchard. The farmer would like to relocate to the edge of the field. Councillors debated the issue and agreed 5 votes to 2 that the ancient path should be rerouted since many walkers already use the new path.

Cllr. Twaites is to respond to the Planning Authority.

**10. Highways Improvement Plan**

The Highways sub committee have not met since the previous meeting. The only pressing item to discuss is a proposed 30mph limit at the top end of Bexon Lane. This issue would require a community engagement survey, feedback and a discussion with KCC Highways. If agreed, the project would cost around £5000. Speed surveys would also be required at a cost.

Councillors felt that, especially at school times, the road was self-limiting as it is quite narrow. Councillors decided not to proceed at this time and will wait until the outcome of the Highsted Park development and the prospect of another M2 junction is decided as this would affect Bexon Lane.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Day. A majority of councillors agreed.

**11. Village Matters**

**Grass Cutting Contract/Rec Ground**

Bredgar Cricket Club informed councillors that the mower used by Landscape Services to mow the recreation ground cricket pitch is unsuitable. Therefore, Bredgar Councillors decided not to accept the grass cutting quote from Landscape Services for the coming year. There are options in discussion for maintaining the recreation ground which will hopefully be more financially viable.

**Recreation Ground Hedge**

Cllr. Osmer created a specification to renew the hedge between the recreation ground and Gore Road. This involves scrubbing out the existing hedge and completely renewing with a mix of suitable hedge planting. Care has been taken to protect users and dogs from the road whilst the work is carried out. Three quotes were sought and councillors decided to employ Matthew Low who supplied an acceptable service and price. Work is due to begin very soon depending on weather.

Bredgar Cricket Club are supportive of the proposal and agreed to supply water where necessary.

Councillors thanked Cllr. Osmer for the detailed work involved.

**Hugo Fox Update**

The Chair informed the meeting that HugoFox now also supply gov.uk domain websites and email boxes which are recommended for use by Parish Councils by the government.

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Cllr. Clarke is to apply for a gov.uk domain website to comply with good practice.

Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Parfitt. All councillors agreed.

**War Memorial Repairs**

Renovations have been completed to Bredgar War Memorial and were appreciated by villagers who attended the Remembrance service on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Councillors thanked Bill Best who came to the rescue with a compressor when the contractor's one failed.

**Fish Reduction**

Cllr. Priestley has organised for excess pond fish to be rehomed. Work is due to take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

The duck house will also be renovated as necessary.

**Christmas Tree**

The Christmas tree on Bredgar pond is to be erected in December following some pond maintenance.

**Bredgar House Update**

The Parish Council received a response from SBC concerning the ongoing building work at Bredgar House. Site visits have been conducted by SBC and contact made with the owner. The roof tiles at the rear were removed to reduce the weight load whilst the wall was repaired. The tiles will be replaced according to conservation requirements. A planning application has been received by SBC but has yet to be uploaded onto the planning portal.

**Blind Marys Site**

Councillors enquired on the current situation at Blind Marys Site. There has been no further communication from SBC enforcement since BPC submitted a complaint in March (24/500114/CHANGE). The clerk is to follow up with SBC as concerns have been raised.

**Post Office**

Councillors met with Helen Whateley MP to discuss the future of Post Offices and Bredgar Post Office in particular. A letter to the CEO of Post Office Ltd generated a generic response. Even though there are no immediate plans to close any post offices across the country, the Parish Council continues to look for ways to continue enjoying postal services in Bredgar as long as possible.

**SBC Cllr. Monique Bonney arrived at 9.25pm.**

**Village Hall Gate Proposal**

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A resident proposed installing a gate from their property into the village hall car park. The village hall committee were consulted by the resident, but the committee declined due to safety, planning and insurance reasons. It would also cause problems if the resident came to sell their property with unauthorised access. This is not a matter under the jurisdiction of the parish council.

**SBC Cllr. Bonney left at 9.45pm**

**Proposed change in parking at The Street**

A resident approached the PC to gain support for a proposal to remove the grassed frontages of the bungalows in The Street opposite the Church and replace with five/six parking spaces increasing parking from the four/five current spaces. The Parish Council discussed the matter and a majority voted against the proposal due to the conservation area regulations and safety reasons.

The clerk will write to the resident.

**Tree Preservation Applications**

SBC have a policy whereby a multiple application for tree preservation orders is preferable to individual applications, saving time and money. Bredgar PC currently do not require any preservation orders.

**12. Policy Updates**

**Health & Safety Policy**

The H&S policy was reviewed and updates will be made.

**Safeguarding Policy**

The Safeguarding policy was reviewed and updates to contacts will be made.

Both policies will then be available on the Parish website.

**13. Reports from Councillors**

**Cllr. Priestley**

Adrian Martin continues to carry out maintenance work around the pond. The casings by the bus stop are to be looked at as they are possibly failing. The pond fence will be added to the project list.

**Cllr. Parfitt**

A litter pick in September was well supported for the fourth year, with 40 bags of litter collected from 10 local roads.

Speed watch has been rejuvenated with three new volunteers. Numerous cars have been noted as speeding through the village.

Street signs that were damaged have been repaired by SBC.

The decking edge has been painted, for safety reasons, and a bench repainted opposite the recreation ground.

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Fly tipping continues to be a problem but is reported promptly. Unfortunately dumped fridges are more of a problem due to the gases inside. A specialist removal is required which is expensive to SBC.

**Cllr. Twaites**

Nothing to report

**Cllr. Osmer**

Nothing to report

**Cllr. Whitnell**

Nothing to report

**Cllr. Clarke**

The Chair proposed the usual Christmas gifts for residents who contribute to the village. All councillors agreed.

**14. Community Assets**

Designating a local amenity as a Community Asset safeguards the first option to purchase should an owner decide to sell.

Councillors agreed to revisit Community Assets on a three-monthly basis.

**15. Any Other Business**

A planning application which includes a Right Of Way to the new property at Primrose Corner is to be followed up by Cllr. Twaites.

**16. Dates of Future Meetings**

Future meetings are:

5<sup>th</sup> March 2025

7<sup>th</sup> May 2025

13<sup>th</sup> August 2025

26<sup>th</sup> November 2025

The meeting concluded at 10.20pm.