

EAST BOLDRE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Online on Tuesday 8th September 2020 at 7pm

Present:

Cllr K Holmes Chairman

Cllr B Hawker Vice Chair

Cllr M Husband

Cllr R Gabzdyl

Cllr D Drodge

Cllr I Moyse

Cllr L Clark

In attendance – Mrs Nicola Curzon, Parish Clerk, Nigel Matthews NFNPA, and 1 member of the public

1.0. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr Mans

2.0. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda.

None

3.0. To confirm minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2020.

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting. They will be signed by the Chairman when the Parish Council is able to resume public meetings.

3.1. Matters arising from the minutes.

- Cllr Holmes has checked that the website contrast meets new standards. He will send the new hexadecimal colours to the clerk who will forward them on to e-mango **Action KH/NC**
- The clerk asked all councillors email their portrait photographs to be used on the councillor information page on the website. Cllr Holmes will forward photos used in the newsletter. **Action KH**
- Other matters arising will be covered in agenda items.

4.0. To receive the clerk's report. For information only

- Our local community police officers have reported to the parish council that one of the main concerns voiced during Police Beat Surgeries has been the speed of traffic in the village. The parish council followed this up and a Speed Watch application form was sent to a resident who was keen to lead this initiative. Unfortunately, the resident cannot find the five volunteers required to run the scheme with Hampshire Constabulary. The clerk posted a request for volunteers on social media but has had no response. The parish council cannot take this any further until five volunteers are available.
- The Parish Council printer is broken. The clerk has researched and circulated costs of a replacement. **Resolved:** The clerk will purchase a new printer. **Action NC**
- Due to social distancing measures, the parish council has had to rethink the launch of the EBOH project. Following consultation with NFNPA, it has now been decided that a soft launch of the listening stations is now more appropriate (for contributors only) and there will now sadly not be an official opening of the project. The clerk is now working with the three venues and listening stations will be installed within the next couple of months. **Action NC**

5.0. To receive a report from the County Councillor. For information only

None

5.1. To receive questions on the report from the County Councillor

None

6.0. To receive a report from the District Councillor. For information only

None

6.1 To receive questions on the report from the District Councillor

None

Chairman's signature:

Date: 13/10/2020

7.0. Public session

None

8.0. Finance

8.1 To receive payments for Aug/Sept 2020 in accordance with the budget and to note bank reconciliation.

Resolved: Payments were received as shown on table below.

East Boldre Parish Council payment schedule				
Payee	Bacs date	Item	Payment	folio
Payments				
Royal Mail	15/07/2020	PO box subscription	£36.00	38
plusnet	01/08/2020	parish council phone	£7.35	39
Microsoft	05/08/2020	office 365	£5.99	40
N Curzon	06/08/2020	Clerk salary	£619.66	41
N Curzon	06/08/2020	Clerk expenses	£33.02	42
Royal Mail	17/08/2020	PO box subscription	£36.00	43
plusnet	01/09/2020	parish council phone	£7.46	44
N Curzon	06/09/2020	Clerk expenses	£27.62	45
N Curzon	06/09/2020	Clerk salary	£619.66	46
emango	03/09/2020	annual subscription	£360.00	47
Microsoft	05/09/2020	office 365	£5.99	48
Total paid			£1,392.76	
Amount transferred to current account	03/09/2020		£2,000.00	51
Receipts as at date		Detail	Amount	
Bank interest	12/07/2020	monthly interest	£0.16	49
Bank interest	12/08/2020	monthly interest	£0.16	50
Total receipts			£0.32	
Bank reconciliation				
Balance as at date				
HSBC Current			£2,273.65	
HSBC Savings			£16,376.37	
Total			£18,650.02	
Net bank balance as at date				
The net balances reconcile to the cash book for the year to date, as follows				
Opening balances			£22,261.97	
Add receipts			£11,462.12	
less payments			-£15,080.06	
uncleared cheques			5.99	
Total			£18,650.02	

8.2 To consider a grant application from Victim Support

Resolved: The council awarded the grant and the clerk will arrange payment of £50.

Action NC

Chairman's signature:

Date: 13/10/2020

9.0. Planning - To consider planning applications:**Resolved:**

20/00576	Render first floor of property	Dolphins, Heath Lane, East Boldre	8/9/20	Comment 1 We recommend PERMISSION , but would accept the decision reached by the National Park Authority's Officers under their delegated powers.
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10.0 To receive an update on Hatchet Pond.

Following several complaints from residents about the behaviour of members of the public at Hatchet Pond, representatives from both Forestry England and NFNPA were invited to the parish council meeting to explain measures which have been put in place since the easing of lockdown in May. Nick Wardlaw from Forestry England sent the following statement:

Unfortunately, we are unable to get someone along to the meeting this evening, but we wanted to let you know our current position with Hatchet Pond, as we appreciate the Parish Council's interest in the site especially over the last six months. We would be happy to set up a follow up Zoom/Teams call with any Parish Councillors with follow up questions, but hopefully the below is helpful and answers some of the questions they may have.

The lockdown and subsequent easing has created huge pressure on outdoor spaces around the country and unfortunately the New Forest has been no different. Over recent months our team have been working around the clock with colleagues from other forest organisations and the emergency services to patrol the Forest and advise the public. We have also had much support and help from local people who have reported to us incidents of wild camping, fires, and other anti-social behaviours threatening the Forest.

At Hatchet Pond specifically we have taken a number of actions to address anti-social behaviour and talk to the public about how they can help to look after and respect this special location. We have increased the frequency of patrols and had larger teams on duty at busier times such as the weekends or bank holidays. We have also carried out a series of joint patrols, working with the fire service to reinforce the no BBQ and fire safety message, with the Police to communicate on issues such as verge parking and anti-social behaviours, and with colleagues from the New Forest NPA. This has allowed us to speak with a great many people about the special nature of this place and why activities such as BBQs, swimming, boating and irresponsible parking are not acceptable. During these patrols our rangers have put out many BBQs and moved on a number of groups who were attempting to illegally camp on the site.

To reach a wider audience we have added additional signage in many of our popular car parks, including Hatchet Pond. These address very specific behaviours such the prohibition of swimming, wild camping, BBQs and overnight stays in car parks.

Whilst our team do not have the enforcement powers of the police, where they see unacceptable behaviour, such as people touching Forest stock and it is safe to engage with members of the public, they do so. We work closely with the police and continue to inform them of any identified 'hotspots' where any illegal activities are happening.

With the increased number of people visiting outdoor locations, we like many other parts of the country have also seen a steep rise in littering. This is a major challenge for organisations managing these special places and for the local communities who live here. Here in the New Forest litter is not only anti-social but poses great risks to wildlife, nature and public safety.

Despite increased and clear signage NOT to litter, more regular patrols by our staff, and engaging face to face with visitors, sadly we continue to see a growing trend of people carelessly discarding and leaving their rubbish. To help manage this issue we have contractors currently working significantly extended hours, picking litter and emptying bins at key locations including Hatchet Pond. At the peak of visitor numbers during the summer they have literally collected truckloads of litter that has been left on the Forest. We continue to strongly communicate, together with other local organisations, that litter is not welcome on the Forest and that the best way to deal with waste is to take it all home where it can be safely disposed.

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In line with Covid-19 restrictions and social distancing requirements the public toilets on Crown Lands were temporarily closed. The toilets at Hatchet Pond had already been closed due to flooding in the winter months and the risk of pollution into the Special Area of Conservation. Public toilets are available at nearby Beaulieu and, as restrictions ease, at a greater number of outlets and public facilities.

As the peak pressures caused by the initial Covid-19 lockdown and subsequent easing begin to reduce we are now able to review and plan the next stage of our management plan of key locations such as Hatchet Pond. We have begun to look at a range of options to support this important conservation site, reviewing the best way to manage facilities here and the impact of the recent, wider pressures on this location.

Our approach will be informed by public feedback gathered in a drop-in session held in East Boldre in 2018 asking for views on the future management of Hatchet Pond, and more recent comments and information sent into us by local residents and members of the public.

Nigel Matthews from NFNPA explained how they have supported Forestry England:

1. What's happened since mid-May

- Much of the Forest has experience unprecedented numbers of people – as have outdoor spaces (and beaches) across the UK
- Numbers of people have often been weather dependent; places with water have attracted many people on hot days
- These people include both local residents (on day trips) and people on holiday from further away
- Many are 'first time visitors' who do not know the Forest well – they simply Google / check websites / Instagram etc. and go to attractive, free, countryside places with what they hope will be space to spread out – Hatchet Pond must be one of the most photographed places in the New Forest
- Simplified New Forest Code agreed with partner organisations and widely publicised / lots of social media work

2. National Park Authority ranger work

- We have had 4 rangers/staff out each day including weekends, with revised mode of operation (patrolling, rather than staying in one location e.g. with the Mobile Information Unit). We have not attended events or done other work we would normally have done.
- Very close working with Forestry England staff – we have helped them (Crown Land is their land and primary responsibility). Fire Service and Police have also helped (including recent Bank Holiday weekend)
- Our initial focus was on BBQs (with associated call for a ban on sales) because of high risk of very damaging wildfires – Fire Service help with this. 50+ local retailers have stopped selling BBQs. Thankfully we didn't have a huge fire like the one in Wareham.
- Rangers have been litter picking whilst patrolling – we find this helps us to then talk with people having picnics etc. (Thanks also to many volunteers, e.g. Litter Pickers of the New Forest, and more recently hundreds of New Forest Ambassadors)
- Plus Rangers have done their best to deal with everything else!
- We have deliberately covered daytime so that Forestry England keepers could rest and then do evening/night/early morning when some of the more serious and potentially damaging activities tend to happen

3. Hatchet Pond in perspective

- One of the very best wetland sites in the New Forest / rich in wildlife
- Popular with visitors for many decades
- One of quite a few places across the Forest with *water* and multiple issues (inc. Eyeworth Pond, Janesmoor Pond, Puttles Bridge, Balmer Lawn, Ober Corner and Wootton Bridge)
- Issues definitely worse this year: boating, petting and feeding of ponies, BBQs, litter, gazebos, and especially verge parking...

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- Type and number of signs increased by Forestry England but not everyone reads them / some think they know better
- Large site to manage – would need 4+ staff from 9am – 9pm to keep on top of everything
- Police use the four 'E's: Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce (as a last resort). The vast majority of people we have engaged with have been happy to comply with requests when reasons are explained

4. The future

- We will be reviewing how things have gone / how we can do better / including how we work with the Police
- Improving how organisations deal with illegal recreation-related activities is one of the Recreation Management Strategy actions agreed last year – ongoing discussions / various avenues being explored
- Option to involve more trained volunteers, including CDA members who have recently received engagement training.

Nigel Matthews received questions:

It was noted by a member of the public that there was a marked improvement in engagement with the public at Hatchet Pond over the August Bank Holiday however:

- Signage needs to be smarter and clearer at Hatchet Pond
- FE call centre staff are unaware of the unique environment and bylaws in the New Forest and can be unhelpful when answering calls.
- There needs to be improved communication of bylaws.
- There should be consequences for verge parking.

In response Nigel informed the meeting that FE, working with the local police, have placed over 3000 stickers on cars who have parked illegally.

Another member of the public emailed a query about proposed alterations to the car park at Hatchet Pond. Nigel was not aware of this plan.

Cllr Husband asked if more protection to verges could be implemented around Hatchet Pond.

Cllr Hawker requested better signage and enforced rules about car parking, with possible charges in car parks.

Cllr Clark noted that many local residents as well as most tourists are unaware of the importance of the National Park as a SSSI. She suggested that New Forest should be rebranded as a Nature Reserve rather than a park. This should include re-messaging and non-confrontational engagement with the public about protection and conservation of this precious habitat.

Resolved: Forestry England staff are willing to set up bespoke meeting with parish councillors. The clerk will organise a site meeting at Hatchet Pond with Nick Wardlaw of FE and several councillors. **Action NC**

11.0. To discuss the role of the allotment association

For transparency, Cllr Hawker chaired this agenda item.

Bruce and Ruth McDermott provided the following document which was circulated before the meeting to inform councillors of the history and role of the allotment association:

EAST BOLDRE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed prior to the Parish Council taking over the management and running of the allotments.

At the time there was a small committee and all monies involved with the running of the allotments were paid into this account to pay the bills and any excess was used to improve the allotments. The bank account with Santander was held under the title of East Boldre Allotment Association and that is why it is still called an Association today.

Following the resignation of the Chairman, the committee ceased to exist and Bruce and Ruth McDermott continued in the day to day management and running of the allotments which included rent collection, paying water bills and insurance plus any other ongoing costs. Following the resumption of the management

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of the allotments by the Parish, Bruce and Ruth continued as a link between the allotmenters and the Parish, the main functions being to fundraise, arrange social events, form working parties to do small onsite works and deal with on site problems as much as possible.

There is no formal constitution and no elected committee. This was raised at a previous Allotment AGM and despite some enthusiasm for a committee nobody put their name forward.

The Association's responsibilities as we see it are :

With the Parish Clerk, to conduct several inspections of the plots a year (this has not been done this year due to Covid 19)

1. To do quarterly risk assessments and flag up any problems to the Parish that cannot be sorted on site.
2. The Rules state that the Association should be informed by plot holders when and what they are spraying on their plots or though this has never been put into action.
3. To monitor the water consumption to try to ensure that there is not an overspend at the end of the year.
4. To deal with any disagreements between plot holders whenever possible.
5. To show prospective plot holder's vacant sites on the allotment.
6. To liaise with the Parish on Allotment matters that cannot be settled on site.

Since there is now a full allotment site and things are very much more up together, the present situation with the Association seems inadequate and perhaps it is time for someone to form a committee, write a constitution and involve the plot holders more. We do not however feel that more responsibility should be put on the allotment members and hope that the main running of things will remain with the Parish.

Cllr Hawker acknowledged the amazing job which has been carried out by Ruth and Bruce McDermott over the years. On behalf of the Parish

Allotment holders need to be informed by the McDermotts that they intend to stand down as the representatives and the future of an association discussed at the next allotment association AGM in October.

Cllr Hawker felt that if it is not possible to establish a working association then the Parish Council will need to think of an alternative way to carry out the tasks. This would inevitably cost and that cost would have to be recovered from the allotment tenants.

Resolved: Cllr Holmes will get in touch with Bruce and Ruth McDermott to discuss how to formalise an allotment committee or association with representatives who will liaise with the parish Council. This will be reported back to the next parish council meeting. **Action KH**

12.0. To receive an update on the convex mirror

The clerk has emailed Cllr Mans, Cllr Harris, Nick Wardlaw of FE, the verderers court and a representative from NFNPA to request a meeting to resolve this issue. No response has been received from anyone yet. Cllr Gabzdyl would also like to hold a separate meeting with Jayne Albery to discuss the shop layby options.

Resolved: Cllr Gabzdyl will earmark a specific date and time and the clerk will invite the above representatives to the meeting in East Boldre. **Action RG**

13.0. To consider the cost of replacing the East Boldre/East End village sign.

NFNPA are offering a grant of 50% of the cost of manufacturing replacement signs for the village. With the grant, the cost of manufacture will be £742 to the parish council. The cost of timber posts and installation will be additional.

Resolved: The clerk will order two new signs. **Action NC**

14.0 To consider the costs of installing two defibrillators in the two adopted BT kiosks in East Boldre.

The costs of purchasing new defibrillators, and the budget to date where circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

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Resolved: It would cost around £1500.00 to purchase a new defibrillator. There is currently £2000.00 in the budget for this. The clerk will see if the parish council can obtain grant funding to help with the purchase of the second defibrillator. If this is not possible, the council will purchase a defibrillator for the kiosk at East End this financial year, and purchase the second one next year. **Action NC**

15.0. To receive reports from external meetings

Cllr Clark asked on behalf of the School Fields Trust committee if an annual grant would be offered automatically to SFT because they maintain the play equipment, a much-loved village amenity. Cllr Hawker confirmed that SFT would need to make a specific annual grant application to the parish council. According to the parish council grants policy, this application can be made at any time.

Resolved: Cllr Clark will report this back to the SFT committee. **Action LC**

Cllr Hawker had a telephone meeting with PC Pressey who offered advice on security for both School Fields Trust and the Village Hall. Cllr Hawker then had a subsequent telephone meeting with a School Fields Trust committee member who was keen for the parish council to implement the security advice. Cllr Holmes asked Cllr Hawker if School Fields trust were happy to monitor the usage of the equipment and take responsibility for data capture and its security. He was assured by Cllr Hawker that School Fields Trust were. Cllr Holmes will contact the secretary of the Village Hall to discuss how the parish council can help them with security. **Action KH**

16.0. Agenda items for next meeting.

Budget review

12.0 To confirm the next Parish Council meeting as 7.00pm on 13th October 2020. This meeting is likely to be held online due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Meeting closed 9.40pm