

BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT JUBILEE HALL, BARLEY CLOSE, BLOXHAM ON MONDAY 3 MARCH 2025 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Chairman, Councillor David Bunn; Councillors Russell Avens, Joanna Barton, Amanda Baxter, Steve Craggs, Mike Fenner, Alex Harrison, Richard Morley and Nick Rayner.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Theresa Goss (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer), County Councillor Kieron Mallon, District Councillors David Hingley, Rob Pattenden and Gordon Blakeway and nine members of the public.

169/24 Apologies – Parish Councillor David Morris submitted his apologies because he was on holiday.

Parish Councillor Neil Hegarty submitted his apologies because his wife was unwell.

Resolved that the apologies from Councillors Neil Hegarty and David Morris be approved and the absences authorised.

170/24 Declarations of Interest – There were no declarations of interest.

171/24 Minutes – Prior to the meeting, the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2025 had been circulated to the Parish Council and were taken as read.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2025 be approved.

172/24 Matters Arising – There were no matters arising.

173/24 Chairman's Announcements

- Dewey Hall Planning Application – The planning application for flood lighting at Dewey Hall, had been permitted by Cherwell District Council (CDC) from Monday to Saturday until 6pm only and there would be a Community Use Agreement created based on the approved planning application for the facility.

The application had included a reference to term time use only of the flood lights, but this was not included by the Case Officer in her report and the decision would not be amended for its inclusion. There was also a condition which stated that the new car park should be available as soon as the new facilities were in use. If the car park was not ready when the new facilities were available, Bloxham School would have to submit an application to Cherwell District Council to vary the condition.

In addition, it had been confirmed that anyone could register as a neighbour and comment on a planning application, even if they were not a neighbour. CDC would be looking at this to ensure that the system was not being abused.

- Meeting with Bertie Facon – The meeting with Bertie Facon had been arranged to enable the Parish Council to receive details of a development opportunity in the village, but there were no plans for the submission of a planning application at this point. There had also been a discussion about the community benefits for the village, if the proposal went ahead.
- Drop-In and Chat – There had been a number of themed sessions in the last twelve months, including rural policing, planning and traffic calming. If residents would like a themed Drop-In and Chat session, they should contact the Clerk with their suggestions.
- Courington Lane Footpath – The Chairman was continuing to follow up the repairs to the footpath with the County Council. A site meeting was scheduled for later that week to address the repairs which were needed in the short term, prior to a category three footway repair to resurface the damaged length of the footpath.

Action DB

BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL

- White Lining – The white lining which had been included in the County Council's budget for this financial year, had not been completed yet and there was no scheduled date for the work. The Chairman would continue to follow this up. **Action TG**

174/24 Open Forum – A resident reported that the grassed area opposite The Joiners Arms now had a tarmacked track running through it and the bank had been damaged. This would be reported to the County Council as this work appeared to have been completed during the County Council's road closure when highway maintenance was being carried out in the village. **Action TG**

A resident from Biodiversity Bloxham asked whether the Parish Council was taking part in 'No Mow May' again this year and if it could be extended into June 2025. The Chairman advised that participation in 'No Mow May' had been agreed, but it would not be extended into June 2025.

A resident addressed the Parish Council with regard to his concerns and objections relating to the proposed planning application for 120 houses on Barford Road from Ainscough Strategic land. A leaflet had been sent to residents by the developer, asking them to comment on the proposal on their web site.

The Chairman advised that a planning application had not yet been submitted to Cherwell District Council (CDC) and that comments should be submitted once the planning process had commenced. The Parish Council could not comment at the current time and would do so when it was invited by CDC as a statutory consultee.

It was suggested that leaflets could be distributed to the village as had been done previously with the William Davis development in Hartshill Close. The Chairman advised that if leaflets were to be distributed again, more support from the village was required for the delivery.

Councillor Alex Harrison reported that the resident of The Avenue was no longer cutting the verges at the end of The Avenue. Nigel Prickett would be asked to include these areas in the grass cutting schedule. **Action NR/TG**

A resident asked that the Parish Council increased its communication regarding flooding as some residents were unaware of the work which was being undertaken. The Clerk would circulate information with regard to sandbags, the Flood Mary web site and the minutes of the Working Group meetings. **Action TG**

(For information, following guidance from the National Association of Local Councils, the Parish Council did not specifically name individual residents within its minutes, unless they were speaking in an official capacity)

175/24 Reports from County and District Councillors – Prior to the meeting, County Councillor Kieron Mallon had circulated his report to the Parish Council.

Councillor Mallon highlighted that the County Council's budget had increased by 5%, which was the maximum permitted. The Local Government re-organisation would not impact Oxfordshire at the moment, therefore County Council elections in Oxfordshire would be going ahead on 1 May 2025, with District Council elections in 2026 and shadow elections for a Unitary Authority in 2027.

Councillor Mallon also advised on the County Council's consultation regarding bus services in Bridge Street, Banbury.

District Councillor Gordon Blakeway reported that the CDC staff move to Castle Quay would take place at the end of March 2025, but there had been a delay due to a problem with a lift and a small fire. The Local Plan consultation had closed and comments were now being reviewed. CDC had also approved its budget for 2025/2026.

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council was concerned about Bloxham being categorised as a 'sustainable village' in the Local Plan. Although Bloxham met the criteria, there had not been an assessment of whether the village services could cope with the proposed numbers of new residents.

Councillor Steve Craggs asked the District Councillors whether the District Council had enough funds for the legal costs relating to appeals when planning applications had been refused. Councillor David Hingley reported that the District Council would finance appeals if it felt there was a chance of winning the appeal, but there was not an unlimited amount of money available.

BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The Councillors were thanked for their reports.

176/24 Environment/Village Matters

- i) Flooding – The Chairman reported that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10 February 2025 had been circulated to the Parish Council and were available on the Council's web site. The next meeting of the Working Group was being held on Monday 10 March 2025.

The Chairman advised that blue dye would be put into the drainage system around Courtington Lane and Workhouse Lane to establish which direction the water was running through the system. This work should have been completed during half term by the County Council, but as far as the Chairman was aware, it had not yet been actioned. This investigation would hopefully identify the root cause and where the problems were located.

The Chairman had walked the length of Bloxham Brook with an Environment Agency representative and he was pleased with the condition of the Brook and found no major issues. The two bridges along the Brook had low apertures and when there was heavy rainfall, the two bridges appeared to then act as dams and caused the water to back up and then cause flooding in the village. Jerry Wood was working on 'Slowing the Flow' and for some actions to be completed, it required input from local landowners. However, the Working Group was trying to address some of the short-term measures which could be implemented relatively easily.

Resolved that the actions of the Working Group be noted.

- ii) Remembrance Day Parade 2025 – The Parish Council discussed its role in the event in 2025.

Resolved that the current protocol be approved. **Action TG/AH**

(Councillor Amanda Baxter left the meeting at this point)

- iii) Repair of Drainage Channel at Jubilee Park – The Parish Council discussed a quote from Bloxham School regarding the repairs to the drainage channel along the access road to Dewey Hall over Parish Council land at Jubilee Park.

Resolved that the Parish Council did not wish to progress the repairs to the drainage channel until the works at Dewey Hall has been completed, following the recent approval of a planning application. **Action DB**

- iv) Replacement Dog Waste Bins – The Parish Council discussed replacing four dog waste bins located at Greens Gareth, two on Bloxham Grove Road and one at Jubilee Park.

Resolved that the four dog waste bins be purchased and Paul Lester be requested to complete the installations. **Action TG**

- v) Annual Parish Meeting – The Parish Council discussed the plans for the Annual Parish Meeting being held on 24 April 2025 and it was agreed to go ahead with a similar format to the 2024 meeting.

Resolved that the report be noted.

177/24 Planning

- i) Planning Applications/Works to Trees – Prior to the meeting, the details of the planning applications/works to trees which had been considered by the Parish Council, since the last meeting, had been circulated.

Resolved that, it be noted and approved that observations had been made by the Parish Council in respect of the following planning applications/works to trees:

24/03321/M106 OS Parcel 0006 Adjoining North Side Of Ell's Lane Bloxham

BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Modification of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for 23/00065/OUT
- 1. Facilitate Deeley Homes in delivering discounted market sale homes as opposed to affordable dwellings 2. Enable funds for a LAP to be re-allocated to Jubilee Park and David Tyrrell Recreation Ground Play Areas

Resolved that, it be noted and approved that, objections had been made by the Parish Council in respect of the following planning applications/works to trees:

24/03399/OUT Land West of The Old Piggeries, Bloxham Road, Milcombe
Outline planning application, together with associated access off Bloxham Road (all other matters reserved), for up to 50 homes (Use Class C3) together with associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping; and retained agricultural field

Resolved that, it be noted that the Parish Council is considering the following planning applications/works to trees:

25/00232/TCA Long Leys, Queen Street, Bloxham
Works to reduce crown of Yew Y1-3 by 50% and reshape to hedge.

25/00270/F Red Lion, High Street, Bloxham
RETROSPECTIVE - Erection of a Marquee

- ii) Results of Planning Applications – The Parish Council noted decisions made by Cherwell District Council since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

Resolved that the report be noted.

- iii) Bloxham Neighbourhood Development Plan – The Parish Council received an update from Councillor Steve Craggs on the review of the Bloxham Neighbourhood Development Plan and reviewed the Strategic Environmental Assessment, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Councillor Craggs reported on the information which had been provided by Neil Homer and the options to progress the Plan.

Resolved that:

- 1) the report be noted;
 - 2) the review of the Bloxham Neighbourhood Development Plan and the advice which has been received from Neil Homer, the Parish Council's consultant be noted;
 - 3) the members of the Working Group be Joanna Barton, David Bunn, Steve Craggs, Alex Harrison and Nick Rayner; and
 - 4) the scope of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) be approved, but a request be made that the focus on flooding is separate from climate and confirmation be sought from AECOM about how the proposed sites in the SEA will fit with the sites identified in CDC's HELAA. **Action TG/SC**
- v) Planning Application 24/02541/OUT, William Davis Homes – The Parish Council discussed the outline planning application (with all matters reserved except for primary means of vehicular access from the A361) for the residential development of up to 150 dwellings, alongside associated access, green and blue infrastructure (including public open space, a play area, and drainage), required ground remodeling and supporting infrastructure at land south of 3 to 5 Hartshill Close, Bloxham.

The Chairman reported that there were circa 230 responses on Cherwell District Council's web site and the application would probably be considered by Cherwell District Council on 20 March 2025.

Resolved that the report be noted.

BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL

- i) Parish Councillor Vacancy – There had not been any applications for co-option onto the Parish Council.

Resolved that the vacancy continue to be advertised. **Action TG**

- ii) Drop-In and Chat – The Chairman reported on the issues which had been raised at the last session held on 8 February 2025 and the next session was being held on 8 March 2025.

There had been a good attendance at the session on 8 February 2025 which had been specifically about planning and proposed developments in the village. The Chairman thanked all those Councillors who attended.

Resolved that the report be noted.

- iii) EV Charging Points – Councillor Russell Avens updated the Parish Council on the progress with the proposed EV Charging Points.

Councillor Avens had attended a meeting with another supplier and continued to gather information on the project, also liaising with the Jubilee Park Management Committee.

Grants funding was still available for the project and Councillor Avens would be following this up with the County Council.

Resolved that the report be noted.

179/24 Finance

- i) Financial Matters – Prior to the meeting, a number of financial documents were circulated to the Parish Council.

Resolved that:

- 1) the accounts for payment be approved, as detailed in appendix 1 to the minutes;
- 2) the receipts since the last meeting, the uncashed payments & uncashed receipts and the bank reconciliation, as at 3 March 2025 for the bank accounts at Unity Trust Bank be noted; and
- 3) it be noted that Councillor Joanna Barton, as Councillor for monitoring the Parish Council's internal controls, has signed the uncashed payments list, the uncashed receipts list, the bank reconciliation as at 28 February 2025 and the Unity Trust bank statements for February 2025.

- ii) Budget Monitoring 2024/2025 – Prior to the meeting, the Parish Council received budget monitoring report for 2024/2025.

Resolved that the report be noted.

- iii) General and Ear-Marked Reserves – Prior to the meeting, the general and ear-marked reserves had been circulated to the Parish Council.

Resolved that the report be noted and the reserves be approved.

- iv) Sections 106 Funds – The Parish Council reviewed its Community Benefits list, which listed a number of items which were required by the community to mitigate the impact of developments in Bloxham.

Resolved that the Community Benefits List be approved and it be forwarded to Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council and published on the Parish Council's web site. **Action TG**

BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL

- v) Parish Council Grants 2025/2026 – The Parish Council discussed a request from St Mary's Church for a £10,000 grant towards their 'Building Our Future' project

Resolved that due to the constraints of the Parish Council's spending powers relating to donations under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the application from St Mary's Church for £10,000 be refused. **Action TG**

- vi) Internal Audit Interim Report 2024/2025 – The Parish Council considered the Internal Auditor's interim report for 2024/2025.

Resolved that the report be noted and approved.

180/24 Correspondence – There was no further correspondence.

181/24 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the minutes numbered 182/24, 183/24, 184/24 & 185/24 on the grounds that it could involve the likely disclosure of private and confidential information which was not in the public domain.

182/24 Right of Access – The Parish Council discussed its agreement with Bloxham School regarding the right of access across Jubilee Park to Dewey Sports Centre.

Resolved that the report be noted.

183/24 Quote for Lights at St Mary's Church – The Parish Council considered a quote for works to the lights at St Mary's Church, which were a Parish Council asset.

Resolved that this item be deferred and David Andrews be invited to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss the issue. **Action TG/DB**

184/24 Tree Survey – The Parish Council considered a quote from Cotefield Treecare Ltd for an updated tree survey, for trees located on Parish Council owned land.

Resolved that quote from Cotefield Treecare Ltd be approved. **Action TG**

185/24 Payroll Service 2025/2026 – The Parish Council discussed quotes for the payroll service for 2025/2026.

Resolved that the quote from Handleys Accountants be accepted for the Parish Council payroll service for 2025/2026. **Action TG**

(The public were invited back into the meeting at the conclusion of this item)

186/24 Meeting Dates – The Chairman reported that the next Parish Council meetings would be held at Jubilee Hall, Barley Close, Bloxham, commencing at 7.00pm.

Resolved that it be noted that, future meeting dates for Bloxham Parish Council are as stated below.

- Monday 7 April 2025
- Thursday 24 April 2025 (Bloxham Annual Parish Meeting)
- Monday 12 May 2025
- Monday 2 June 2025

BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL

- Monday 7 July 2025

187/24 Items for Future Agendas/Items of Information

- Traffic Calming Working Group
- Wildlife Corridors
- Staffing Committee

(The meeting ended at 9.15pm)

Chairman – 7 April 2025