

**Bredgar Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting
Held at Bredgar Village Hall
On Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Chair Cllr. Brian Clarke; Vice Chair Cllr. Nigel Osmer;
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

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Mike Day.

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 11th February 2025 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. N. Osmer, all councillors agreed.

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

Matters arising

There were no Matters Arising.

5. Police/NHW Report

Cllr. S. Parfitt met with PC Richard Divers and discussed the following:

- Nuisance quad bikers – unfortunately not reported to the police
- Industrial dumping of waste at Saywell Farm
- Land Rover stolen at Deans Hill – other similar vehicles also stolen locally
- Farm Gates are targeted – get them marked as an anti-theft measure
- Register CCTV cameras with the police as an aid to identifying offenders
- Rodmersham are keen to initiate Speedwatch and will confer with Bredgar Speedwatch group.

6. Ten Minutes Representation by the Public

There were no matters discussed.

7. Authorisation of Accounts

PAYMENTS

21/10/24	Bredgar Farmshop	MP Meeting	22.29
28/10/24	Commercial Services	KCC Grds Maint	710.15
28/10/24	Lloyds Bank	Corporate Card Fee	3.00
31/10/24	Burslem	War Mem Maint	2106.00

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31/10/24	Bredgar V. Hall	Hire for Meetings	200.00
31/10/24	Unity Trust	Service Charge	5.40
01/11/24	EDF	Pond Electricity	63.00
01/11/24	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
05/11/24	Ask A Gardener	Vill Maint	225.00
22/11/24	UT	Unpaid Cheque	6.00
26/11/24	Lloyds Bank	Corporate Card Fee	3.00
30/11/24	UT	Service Charge	6.00
02/12/24	EDF	Pond Electricity	63.00
02/12/24	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
03/12/24	Ask A Gardener	Vill Maint	150.00
03/12/24	Teresa Hudson	Honorarium	450.32
07/12/24	SBC	Brown Bin,Rec Grd	59.00
10/12/24	Bredgar Farmshop	Xmas Gifts	14.28
10/12/24	Sainsburys	Xmas Gifts	3.00
23/12/24	Commercial Services	KCC Grds Maint	841.66
27/12/24	Lloyds Bank	Corporate Card Fee	3.00
31/12/24	Matthew Low	Rec Grd Hedge	4120.00
31/12/24	UT	Service Charge	6.00
02/01/25	EDF	Pond Electricity	69.53
02/01/25	Bredgar Farmshop	Po Rent	200.00
04/01/25	Ask A Gardener	Vill Maint	75.00
13/01/25	Red Kite	Consultant Highsted Park	206.40
14/01/25	Mutts Butts	Dog Waste Bags	76.02
31/01/25	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.00
03/02/25	EDF	Pond Electricity	69.53
03/02/25	Bredgar Farmshop	PO Rent	200.00
08/02/25	Commercial Services LTD	Grass Cutting	131.51
RECEIPTS			
16/12/24	HMRC	VAT Refund	2616.34
22/12/24	Bredgar Cricket Club	Rec Grd Rent	50.00
13/01/25	Bredgar Cricket Club	Grass Cut Donation	876.73
21/01/25	Bredgar PCC	Grass Cut Donation	429.19

Questions:

1. Why is there an unpaid cheque?

The clerk explained that cheques to Unity Trust are posted, one from a funeral director was lost in the post so was cancelled, another sent, then the first turned up so was unpaid.

2. Ask a Gardener is paid by the half day, how many hours is half a day?

It is presumed a half day is four hours.

3. Are any further payments due to Red Kite Consultants?

No. Red Kite have not carried out any further work.

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4. Was a payment made to Hubble Aquacare Construction Ltd for pond work?

No, the clerk has not received the invoice. Cllr. Priestley is to chase it up.

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

8. Financial Matters

Financial Report

The clerk circulated the Financial Report prior to the meeting.

Notwithstanding the invoice of £700 for Hubble Aquacare Construction Ltd as mentioned previously, the report was agreed. Proposed by Cllr. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. Priestley. All councillors agreed.

9. Planning Matters

Highsted Park

Chair, Cllr, Clarke circulated papers about 5 Parishes Group's (FPG) preparation for legal representation at the Highsted Park planning inquiry.

The papers show:

- Barrister working days and cost sharing between (FPG) and Teynham and Lynsted Action Group (TLA).
- Funds and committed costs as of 26th February.
- FPG – other potential costs, funds permitting.
- FPG Funding Backstop.

A copy of the paper is filed with these Minutes.

Funding Backstop

It is proposed that the four active member Parish Councils – in FPG – Bapchild, Bredgar Milstead and Rodmersham provide a funding backstop to enable legal representation to be engaged for the inquiry. The funding backstop being the gap between funds raised as of 26th February and the legal representation fixed cost for the inquiry. The shortfall cost to each Parish Council being £4000 maximum, less any new donations received.

Councillors debated at length the funding backstop and agreed to accept the proposal.

A vote was taken on the proposal as follows:

It is proposed that Bredgar Parish Council will guarantee 25% of any shortfall in the Five Parishes Group ("FPG") funds to allow for full legal representation during the Inquiry, as committed up to 26 February 2025. Bredgar Parish Council's share is set at a maximum of £4,000. The 25% will be calculated on the actual shortfall, being £16,000 as at 26 February 2026, less new and future income from fundraising and donations after 26 February 2025.

Bredgar Parish Council also confirms that it agrees to Rodmersham Parish Council as the lead authority for the purpose of the appointing and administering professional services and out of pocket expenses in relation to the Highsted Park applications. All decisions as to the appointment

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of consultants to which FPG have not yet committed will be taken by unanimous agreement of the four active parishes comprising FPG.

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

Councillors would also like to be able to fund other consultants if enough is raised and are considering several options to raise more money. It was also thought that it would help if more information was circulated to residents and visitors to the area in the form of leaflets, a map showing areas affected and visual displays.

Blind Marys Lane

The clerk received an email from SBC Enforcement Officer Paul Casey concerning the lack of progress in the eviction at Blind Marys Lane site. A reply was received as follows:

'We have been in touch with the owners planning agent and they are compiling evidence to show continuous use of the land and may submit an application for a Certificate of Lawful Use (Existing). If we do not receive an application a review of the Councils evidence will commence and a decision will be taken on enforcement action.'

Councillors felt that SBC were failing in their duty to honour the enforcement notice given previously and would like clarification on the dates of any action to be taken by SBC. The clerk is to respond to SBC.

10. Village Matters

Grass Cutting Contract – Recreation Ground

For many years, Landscape Services, (LS), have carried out the grass cutting service in the recreation ground, with the cost split between Bredgar PC (playground area/boundary) and the cricket club (outfield). The cricket club had been unhappy with the service since the type of mower was changed to a less effective model and they decided they would prefer a different contractor. Bredgar PC responded to the proposed quote for 2025/6 from LS and declined to renew the contract. Bredgar PC obtained a quote through the SBC contract with Blenwood, who currently cut most other areas of grass in the rest of the village.

Bredgar Cricket Club have sought several quotes and are considering one from Steve Wakeling but it does not include the weed spraying in Bexon Lane.

After comparing the various quotes and service, it was proposed that Bredgar PC continue to use the same supplier as the cricket club in the recreation ground. The Bredgar PC cost for the playground area and boundary, in the Steve Wakeling quote, is comparable to that paid in past years. An alternative supplier will need to be found for weed spraying in Bexon Lane. Mr Wakeling has carried out work for Borden PC so the clerk will ask for a reference from them.

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

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11. Policy Updates

Finance Policy

The Financial Regulations are reviewed every year.

The current Internal Auditor, Keith Scott, has agreed to continue in the role.

Policy point 5.2 'Cheques or payment transfers...etc. shall be amended to

Payment transfers and cheques to reflect that cheques are no longer the main method of payment.

Similarly on point 6.1, bank transfers are the preferred method of payment if possible.

The current PC laptop has reached the end of its life and can no longer get the latest upgrades. Chair, Cllr. Clarke proposed to dispense with the laptop as all relevant paperwork is on the website. There will then be no requirement to update a PC.

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

Statement of Internal Control

The policy was reviewed, no amendments required

Data Protection Policy

The policy was reviewed, no amendments required

Data Protection Management Procedure

The procedure was reviewed, no amendments required.

Freedom of Information Act Schedule

The schedule was reviewed, no amendments required.

12. Reports from Councillors

Cllr. P. Twaites

Nothing to report.

Cllr. H. Whitnell

The installation of unsuitable stiles on footpath ZR141 have been reported and the owner has been told to rectify them. He will install kissing gates but there is no time scale. The clerk will write to the PROW team. All councillors agreed.

There are numerous parcels of dog waste along Primrose Lane, Cllr. Whitnell suggested placing a new dog waste bin in the vicinity. The clerk is to look at costs. Proposed by Cllr. Whitnell, seconded by Cllr. Twaites, all councillors agreed.

Cllr. N. Osmer

The new hedge along the recreation ground boundary with the road has been successfully installed by Mr Low. Councillors are pleased with the result.

Cllr. S. Parfitt

MP, Helen Whateley has responded to the PC letter regarding the future of Bredgar Post Office and the lack of a bus service in the village. There are no plans to shut the post office, but unfortunately no funds for any bus service.

Ms Whateley has promoted the Unsung Hero Awards.

Cllr. Parfitt has reported numerous damaged or missing road signs locally. The clerk will chase Highways for a timeline.

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Cllr. D. Priestley

The removal of 1000 fish from Bredgar pond has been completed. The water is less murky now.

Cllr. B. Clarke

Following the reply from Post Office Ltd on the matter of the future of Bredgar Post Office, the PC Committee will respond to POL and will proceed with any future negotiations on the Post Office lease in the knowledge that there are no plans for closure in the immediate future.

13. 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.

14. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

15. Dates of Future Meetings

7th May 2025

13th August 2025

26th November 2025

The meeting concluded at 9.50pm.