

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL  
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 January 2020 at 7.30pm  
at the Community House, Belchamp St Paul

**Present:** Councillors David McKee (Chairman), David Middleditch, Stephen Nice, Tony Money and Mark Skellett.

In attendance: Diane Smith (Parish Clerk). Two members of the public were also present.

**2282. Apologies for absence and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Norman East, Robin Lock, Jill West and Dave Winslow, District Councillor Iona Parker and County Councillor David Finch. There were no Declarations of Interest.

**2283. Election of a Vice Chairman**

Cllrs Mark Skellett and Jill West had both volunteered to fill the Vice Chairman role. Cllr Mark Skellett left the meeting for the duration of this item. Councillors agreed by a simple majority that Cllr Jill West be appointed Vice Chair (JW 2 votes, MS 1 vote, 1 abstention).

**2284. Public Forum** - No matters were raised.

**2285. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 26 November 2019**

The Minutes were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

**2286. Matters arising from the November meeting**

**1. Parish Tree Warden (Item 2269.3)** – Members were pleased to note that John Pheby had agreed to resume the role of Tree Warden for the two parishes.

**2. The Community House roof (Item 2274)** – Cllr Tony Money reported that an application had been submitted to BDC to replace the existing thatched roof of the Community House with tiles, as the cost of maintaining the thatch was unsustainable. BDC had requested that further drawings be submitted before the application could be considered and these were being commissioned.

**3. Christmas Tree on Cole Green (Item 2277)** – Members noted that many favourable comments had been received regarding the Christmas Tree and the additional lighting and they wished to record their thanks to the Councillors and volunteer helpers who had contributed to the project. It was agreed to consider the alternative of planting a permanent Fir tree on the Green prior to Christmas 2020.

**2287. Co-option to fill two Parish Councillor vacancies**

**1. Belchamp St Paul** – The Clerk informed Members that two applications had been received to fill the BSP Councillor vacancy. One of the candidates was present at the meeting but the other was unable to attend because of a prior engagement. Members unanimously agreed to go ahead with the co-option process. The candidate in attendance briefly explained the reasons why he wished to become a Councillor and the Clerk read out a letter from the second applicant. It was proposed by Cllr Mark Skellett, seconded by Cllr Stephen Nice and unanimously agreed to appoint Harvey Bamford to fill the vacant seat for BSP. Harvey Bamford took his seat and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**2. Belchamp Otten** – The Clerk informed Members that 2 applications had originally been received to fill the Belchamp Otten Councillor vacancy but she had been unable to contact one of the candidates in recent weeks because they were away. Members unanimously agreed to go ahead with the co-option process without further delay. The candidate in attendance briefly explained why he wished to become a Councillor. It was proposed by Cllr Mark Skellett seconded by Cllr Stephen Nice and unanimously agreed to appoint Scott Bridge to fill the vacant seat for Belchamp Otten. Scott Bridge took his seat and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**2288. Essex County Council / Braintree District Council**

**1. Essex County Council** – Members noted the January Report from County Councillor David Finch

which included details of the ECC Budget for 2020-21, the Essex Climate Change Commission, the Essex Forest Initiative and Essex 2020 (a year-long programme of science and creative events) plus items on rough sleeping and homelessness.

**2. Braintree District Council** – Members noted the Report from District Cllr Iona Parker which included details of the BDC Corporate Strategy for 2020-24, a consultation on the Braintree Town Centre pedestrianisation scheme, the launch of the Visit Braintree District tourism website and the setting up of a Climate Change working group. Updates were also provided on the Local Plan hearings and the regeneration project at Manor Street, Braintree.

### 2289. BDC Local Plan

Members noted that the Examiner's Hearings, on the Garden Community aspect of the LP, were currently taking place and were scheduled to complete on 30 January.

### 2290. Finance

<b>1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:</b>		In (£)	Out (£)
25 Nov	Impressions Engine – Tractor repair		400.00
27 Nov	E-On – PFMC		46.82
29 Nov	Transfer from PFMC account	46.82	
2 Dec	Fred Eady – Litter picking at Belchamp Otten		63.00
2 Dec	Michael Ebeling – Litter picking at BSP		63.00
2 Dec	Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses		183.75
5 Dec	Transfer from PFMC – 50% of tractor repair cost	200.00	
9 Dec	Donations to Anthony Nolan (£50) and Royal British Legion (£50)		100.00
9 Dec	Robin Lock – Purchase of Christmas tree and lights		175.52
9 Dec	Dave Winslow – Diesel for tractor etc		95.00
20 Dec	E-On – PFMC		14.13
23 Dec	Transfer from PFMC	14.13	
24 Dec	Anglian Water – PFMC		39.09
6 Jan 2020	Transfer from PFMC	39.09	
10 Jan	Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses		183.75
10 Jan	Peter Hesketh – P3 Footpath Group expenses		57.48
20 Jan	E-On – PFMC		26.32
20 Jan	Transfer from PFMC	26.32	

Bank Current Account balance on 20 January 2020 was £8537.85. Deposit Account balance £15,816.29. Playing Field Management Account balance £7076.28.

**2. PC financial reserves** – Members noted that the PC currently had funds totalling approximately £24,000 plus the separate PFMC funds of approximately £7000 for the upkeep of the playing field. The PC accounts had been in deficit for the last 2 years because of the withdrawal of the Parish Support Grant and the expenditure commitment on the new tractor shed. The Precept had remained unchanged for many years but should it become necessary to increase the PC budget, Members agreed that it was preferable to increase the Precept gradually rather than be forced to make a large single increase at any one time. It was proposed by Cllr Mark Skellett, seconded by Cllr Tony Money and unanimously agreed to aim to keep a minimum reserve level of £20,000 going forward.

**3. Approval of 2020-21 Precept** – Members had studied the Draft Budget for 2020-21 at the previous PC meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Tony Money, seconded by Cllr David Middleditch and agreed (6 in favour with 1 against) to request an unchanged Precept of £3000 for BSP and £1000 for Belchamp Otten for the 2020-21 financial year. The necessary forms were duly signed.

### 2291. Closure of Essexinfo.net website on 31 March 2020

The Clerk reported that she had purchased a domain name (www.belchamps-pc.org) for the new PC website and had successfully registered with 'Voice'. However she was currently experiencing a problem with the Voice site accepting the domain name. This problem would hopefully be overcome shortly.

### 2292. Playing Field Management Committee

**1. Section 106 funds** – In the absence of Cllr Dave Winslow it was agreed to consider this further at the next meeting.

### **2293. Tree survey on Cole Green**

The Clerk had arranged for Shaun Taylor (Landscape Services Team Supervisor at BDC) to visit Cole Green on Wednesday 5 February at 9am to look at the existing trees on Cole Green and provide advice on the future care/replacement of the mature Horse Chestnut trees which were showing signs of the early stages of disease. Cllrs Tony Money, David McKee and Harvey Bamford would attend the meeting along with the Clerk and hopefully the Tree Warden.

### **2294. Highway and Footpath matters**

**1. P3 Footpath Group funding claim for 2019-20** - Peter Hesketh had submitted a claim to the PC totalling £57.48 for the purchase of additional safety items and tools during the 2019-20 financial year. This claim had been paid on 10 January and the Clerk would now reclaim this amount from ECC Highways.

**2. Severe flooding problem at Cole Green/ Gages Road** – The Clerk read out an e-mail from a local resident whose driveway and garden had been flooded after recent prolonged spells of heavy rain. He had protected his house and garage from the water with sandbags. The resident thought that the flooding could be caused by a blocked or badly silted pipe under a neighbour's property but requested clarification as to who should take responsibility for keeping such pipes clear of leaves and debris when the water previously runs under Cole Green and along the ditches adjacent to Cole Green? Cllr David McKee agreed to clarify the position with the Environment Agency and if appropriate approach the owner of the land where the blockage is thought to be located.

**3. Large hole at Long Lane** - Members noted that over the Christmas period a large hole (more than 1 foot deep) had developed in Long Lane a few hundred yards from the Bakers Road entrance. The Clerk had contacted ECC Highways Emergency Team to report the problem but they had concluded that the problem did not fulfil the 'emergency criteria' because it was on a byway and not a public road. Highways did however inspect the hole shortly afterwards, mark it with a cone and schedule repair works which have not yet been undertaken.

### **2295. Correspondence**

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk. They noted the following items: Road closures at Vicarage Road and Church Street, BSP on 2 March for 4 days and at Hickford Hill, Shearing Place Road and Church Street, BSP on 5 March for 6 days for County Broadband fibre installation works ; a letter of thanks from Hazel Paton for the PC donation to the Anthony Nolan charity in memory of her late husband Cllr Ian Paton ; and the Suffolk Spring Classic Cycle Sportive event on 22 March. The Clerk would place details of the road closures and the cycle event on the website. The Clerk would also respond to the BDC Review of leisure provision in villages and would complete an ECC license form for the bus shelter on Cole Green.

### **2296. Planning applications and decisions**

**1. Application** - Members considered the following applications:

- 19/02090/HH and 19/02091/LBC – The Old Rectory, The Street, Belchamp Otten – Removal and relocation of existing entrance gate off The Street. Introduction of solar panels, erection of garden store, greenhouse, walled garden and carport and timber clad enclosure. Removal of shed, coal store and steel cabinet. PC COMMENT: Ensure that The Street is kept free of mud and debris from the site by regular sweeping whilst works are in progress.

- 19/02144/FUL – 1 Lodge Cottage, Knowl Green – Change of use of land to domestic curtilage and erection of a cartlodge. NO COMMENT.

**2. Decisions** – There were no reported decisions since the last meeting.

### **2297. Urgent matters and future Agenda items**

**1. Community woodland** – Cllr Mark Skellett suggested that Belchamp Otten might want to set up a Community woodland project (including fruit trees) to offset carbon output but also to encourage community engagement. Members agreed that this was a potentially good idea and Cllr Skellett offered to undertake further research, on behalf of the PC, to ascertain the practicality of the proposal. The matter would be placed on the Agenda for the next PC meeting.

**2. Recycling education event** – Cllr Mark Skellett was aware of the variation in the recycling policies of local District Councils which caused residents to be confused as to exactly what materials could be separated for recycling in their area. Councillors agreed that a meeting to discuss what items could and

could not be recycled would be helpful to residents and they accepted Cllr Skellett's offer to make initial enquiries to set up such a meeting. This would be placed on the Agenda for the next PC meeting.

**3. List of Councillor contact details** – With the appointment of the 2 new Councillors, the Clerk would shortly be producing a new list of Councillors Contact Details for the notice boards and website. It was agreed that she would also circulate, to Councillors only, a private list of all Councillors contact details.

**Next meeting**

The meeting closed at 9.03pm

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 3 March 2020 in The Community House, Belchamp St Paul at 7.30pm

Signed: ..... (Chairman)

3 March 2020