

## **BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Belchamp St Paul Parish Assembly held on  
Tuesday 16 April 2019 at The Community House, Belchamp St Paul at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr John Pheby (Chairman), Cllr Norman East, Cllr Robin Lock, Cllr David Middleditch, Cllr Dave Winslow, District Cllr Iona Parker, County Cllr David Finch, Peter Hesketh (Footpath Warden), Diane Smith (Parish Clerk) and 3 members of the public including future Cllr David McKee.

### **1. Apologies for absence**

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He introduced all Councillors present.

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Jill West and Dave Crook.

### **2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the APA held on 22 May 2018**

These Minutes were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

### **3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **4. Annual Reports**

#### **4.1 Chairman's Report (Cllr John Pheby)**

Firstly, I would like to start by thanking Diane Smith, our Clerk, for all the help she has given me during the past year – it is invaluable to me. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Tony Money, our Finance Officer, for all his hard work keeping our books balanced. During the year we have also had a great deal of support from our District Councillor, Iona Parker and David Finch, our County Councillor and I would like to thank both of them for their time and assistance. The defibrillator that was fitted into the former Telephone Box in The Street, Belchamp Otten has been commissioned and is now fully operational. The presence of the defibrillator has been advertised on the notice boards and website and details of how it operates have been placed in the village magazines. A training session recently took place for residents to familiarise themselves with the equipment.

Plans are afoot to turn the old telephone box opposite The Half Moon into a Book Box – a place where people can go and exchange books or just pick up a book to read. This is not intended to replace the mobile library but rather to enhance it.

I would like to extend my thanks to Fred Eady for cutting the grass on the green – he has now been doing this for well over 50 years. Thanks are also due to both Michael Ebling and Fred for the stalwart job they do in litter picking in both villages.

The Playing Field Committee have continued with a program of hedge cutting and keeping the trees neat and tidy. The construction of the tractor shed is almost complete and is just waiting for the doors to be constructed. We are attempting to obtain from Braintree District Council Section 106 money due to the parish as a result of the two houses built in Savilles. We want to spend this money upgrading and repairing the children's play area on the playing field but whatever we suggest, Braintree have always found a reason to stop us getting what we rightfully believe is due to the village. We will continue to try and work towards a satisfactory outcome.

I have already thanked many individuals but I would like to conclude by thanking all the Councillors for their considerable input and work during the year.

#### **4.2 Footpaths and Bridleways Report (Peter Hesketh – Footpath Warden)**

The Partnership Scheme has been successfully working to improve the rights of way across both parishes. Starting in April 2018, over 280 hours of 'on the ground' work has been undertaken by 20 active volunteers. The concentration has been on the paths immediately proximate to the 2 village centre's but the forthcoming work areas will see activity more towards the edges of both parishes. 33 waymarker posts have been erected (20 in the parish of Belchamp Otten and 13 in

Belchamp St Paul) with appropriate direction discs, and 4 bridges (all in Belchamp Otten) have been replaced. Lengths of overgrown hedges have been trimmed back to ensure the paths follow the correct line as well as making it easier to walk along them.

The tools and equipment necessary to undertake the work are provided by Essex County Council (including PPE for the volunteers) and we supply the labour locally. The programmes of work are surveyed before being submitted to ECC for approval which includes checking with Statutory Undertakers to be certain we are not going to dig up any high voltage cables or water mains. When approval has been given, we have 3 months to get the work completed.

The work days not only make a difference to the local area, they are also social occasions where we enjoy each other's company. If you would like to be included on the list or would just like to know more, please contact the Parish Clerk.

The Chairman thanked Peter Hesketh and his team for the huge amount of work undertaken in the last 12 months. Peter Hesketh went on to answer a number of questions relating to the P3 project and footpaths generally.

#### **4.3 Tree Warden Report (Cllr John Pheby)**

We have not yet replaced the two Horse Chestnut trees that were removed from the green last year. This should be achieved in the forthcoming autumn with the replacements being native species. I have raised concern about the condition of the older Horse Chestnut trees on The Green. These are going to be examined in the near future and once the report has been received an assessment can be made as to their future.

The incidence rate of Ash Dieback is rapidly increasing. It is the landowner's responsibility to destroy those affected trees but there seems to be a general reluctance for this to be done.

Those present wished to record their thanks to Cllr Pheby for all his work as Tree Warden. Council.

#### **4.4 Emergency Officer Report (Cllr Norman East)**

This is not a very onerous role because emergencies are thankfully rare in the village. I am happy to report that there have been no emergency situations in the last year. Concern has been expressed at the speed of traffic from Knowl Green to the Primary School and this needs to be addressed before there is a serious accident.

#### **4.5 District Councillor's Report (District Cllr Iona Parker)**

District Councillor Iona Parker had submitted a written report detailing 'BDC Achievements in 2018-19', which had been circulated to Councillors. She highlighted some of the main points which included: a recycling rate of 51% throughout the District, an update on the Millennium Way sliproads off the A120 (funding secured by BDC for this project), the BDC purchase of a strategic employment site at Great Notley, Energy Switch, the removal of 800 fly tips (within 24 hours of being reported), the installation of 'in cab technology' for refuse collection vehicles to improve efficiency, the issuing of 80 fixed penalty notices for littering, dog fouling and fly tipping offences, the very successful BDC Careers Fair, the launch of the District Tourism Plan and the continued delivery of the successful LiveWell programme.

Members noted that the District Councillors Grants Scheme would continue for 2019-20.

In response to a question, District Cllr Parker went on to explain the regulations applying to the spending of Section 106 funds. These stipulated that Section 106 funds should be used for schemes which concentrated on new facilities or the renewal/improvement of existing facilities rather than purely for repair works.

The Chairman thanked District Cllr Parker for all her assistance during the last year.

#### **4.6 County Councillor's Report (County Cllr David Finch)**

County Cllr David Finch had submitted a written report detailing 'ECC Key messages: 2019-20', which had been circulated to Councillors. He highlighted some key achievements including: that ECC had been rated the most efficient/effective Council of its size in the country and ranks 7<sup>th</sup> overall, 94% of Essex schools were judged good or outstanding by Ofsted and ECC Children's Services and the Essex Youth Offenders team were also both rated outstanding, the number of potholes reported had reduced by 45% (bucking the national upward trend), £1.4m had been invested in Broadband rollout and 97% of properties in Essex now had existing or planned superfast coverage, an additional £1million had been invested into mental health projects, a pilot scheme was underway to devolve certain highway functions to Parish Councils, there had

been a 40% reduction in the number of unauthorised traveller encampments and there had been an extensive consultation on Future Library Strategy.

**5. Playing Field Management Committee Report**

See Chairman's Report above.

**6. Public Forum**

No matters were raised.

Cllr John Pheby was thanked for all his work on behalf of the Council.

The meeting closed at 8.13 pm

Signed: ..... (Chairman)

..... May 2020 (Date)