

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Belchamp Otten Parish Assembly held on
Monday 15 April 2019 at The Red Lion, Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr John Pheby (Chairman), Cllr Ian Paton (entered during Item 4.1), Cllr Norman East, Cllr Tony Money, Diane Smith (Parish Clerk) and one member of the public (entered during Item 4.1)

1. Apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Apologies had been received from Cllr Stephen Nice, District Cllr Iona Parker, County Councillor David Finch and Peter Hesketh (Footpath Representative).

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the APA held on 21 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.

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.

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 two village centres 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 for all his work organising the P3 Scheme which has proved extremely successful.

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. 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.

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.

4.5 District Councillor’s Report (District Cllr Iona Parker)

District Councillor Iona Parker was not present but had submitted a written report detailing ‘BDC Achievements in 2018-19’, which had been circulated to Councillors. This included updates on the Millenium Way sliproads off the A120, the BDC Investment Strategy, Energy Switch, the removal of 800 fly tips within 24 hours of being reported and the prosecution of residents for littering, dog fouling and fly tipping, the very successful BDC Careers Fair, the launch of the District Tourism Plan and the continued delivery of the successful LiveWell programme.

4.6 County Councillor’s Report (County Cllr David Finch)

County Cllr David Finch was not present but had submitted a written report detailing ‘ECC Key messages: 2019-20’, which had been circulated to Councillors. The key achievements detailed that: ECC had been rated the most efficient/effective Council of its size in the country and ranks 7th overall, 94% of Essex schools were judged good or outstanding by Ofsted and ECC Childrens 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 only 3% of properties in Essex now had no existing or planned superfast coverage, a pilot 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. Siting of a defibrillator in the Belchamp Otten former telephone box

The Chairman reported that the defibrillator was now fully operational. It had recently been confirmed that the Ambulance Service had the correct access code on record following two incidents in BSP where incorrect access codes had been provided for the BSP defibrillator. A defibrillator training session had been held on 27 March, which was attended by 10 local residents who had found the session very worthwhile.

6. Public Forum

6.1 Election correspondence – The cost of BDC sending out 3 letters in quick succession confirming election Nomination, details of nominations received and then the uncontested election result was queried. It was concluded that this was in accordance with regulations and agreed procedures and so was unavoidable.

6.2 Damaged footpath bridge between Belchamp Otten and Puttocks End – The planks on this footbridge have rotted and require urgent repair. This would be reported to ECC Highways.

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

The meeting closed at 7.48 pm

Signed: (Chairman)

..... May 2020 (Date)