

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3 March 2020 at 7.30pm
at the Community House, Belchamp St Paul

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Scott Bridge, David Middleditch, Tony Money, Mark Skellett, Jill West and Dave Winslow.

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

2298. Apologies for absence and Declarations of Interest

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

2299. Public Forum

1. Fuel for tractor to mow Cole Green and the Playing Field – The diesel for the tractor had previously been sourced from a local farmer but this option was no longer available. Cllr Harvey Bamford offered to source the diesel and purchase 200 litres, which should be sufficient for the 2020 grass cutting season. Members thanked Cllr Bamford for offering to source the diesel.

2. Potholes in Gages Road – The Clerk confirmed that several potholes on the southern edge of Gages Road between The Community House and Mill House had been reported to ECC Highways. A further pothole in Pollards Green Lane had also been reported.

3. Drainage problem causing flooding in Church Street – A section of the ditch between High Bank and Browns Farm was at a higher level than the roadway, causing flooding issues during the wet winter weather. The problem was initially reported to ECC in September 2019 and assessed as 'being monitored'. The Clerk would request an update from ECC Highways.

4. County Broadband infrastructure on Cole Green – Members of the public and Councillors were concerned at what form the broadband infrastructure would take in the area of Cole Green. The Council would strongly oppose the erection of poles on their land which was a significant visual asset and within the Conservation Area. It was agreed to ask County Broadband for details of their plans and suggest a site meeting to discuss any possible issues before the work commences.

2300. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2020

The Minutes were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

2301. Matters arising from the January PC meeting

1. Large hole in Long Lane (Item 2294.3) – It was noted that the hole had been marked by ECC Highways but had still not been repaired.

2. List of Councillor contact details (Item 2297.3) – The Clerk confirmed that updated Councillor Contact Details had been published on the notice boards and on the PC website.

2302. Essex County Council / Braintree District Council

1. Essex County Council – No report had been received this month from County Councillor David Finch.

2. Braintree District Council – Members noted the Report from District Cllr Iona Parker which included details of the BDC Budget for 2020-21 (which had resulted in a 2.75% increase in the BDC element of Council Tax), the recruitment of several new planning officers to bring the department up to strength and an invitation to submit event and facility details (accommodation, restaurants etc) to the BDC tourism website. Members noted that the Inspector's Report on the BDC Local Plan was expected towards the end of March and also noted that the Councillor's Grant Scheme would continue for 2020-21.

2303. BDC Local Plan

Members noted that the Examiner's Hearings, on the Garden Community aspect of the LP, had taken place in January and the Inspector's Report was expected before the end of March.

2304. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:	In (£)	Out (£)
30 Jan – Fred Eady – Litter picking at Belchamp Otten		63.00
30 Jan - Michael Ebeling – Litter picking at BSP		63.00
30 Jan – John Miller – Petrol (part of PFMC & Community House grants)		114.53
30 Jan – Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses for January		281.80
30 Jan – R & R Garden Machinery (part of BSP PCC grant)		287.40
2 March – Community House – Room hire		128.00
2 March – Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses for February		183.75
2 March – Miss P Bowers – Verge cutting 2019		327.84
2 March – Community Heartbeat Trust – Belchamp Otten defibrillator maintenance		162.00

Bank Current Account balance on 2 March 2020 was £6926.53. Deposit Account balance £15,816.
Playing Field Management Account balance £7076.

2305. Closure of Essexinfo.net website on 31 March 2020

The Clerk reported that the transfer to the new 'Voice' website was nearly complete.

2306. Playing Field Management Committee

1. Section 106 funds – Cllr Dave Winslow reported that a third quote for the new children's play equipment had been received the previous day. The PFMC would consider the quotes at their next meeting and the Clerk would then submit an application to BDC to release the Section 106 funds being held for this project.

2307. Tree survey on Cole Green

Members noted that Shaun Taylor (Landscape Services Team Supervisor at BDC) had met the Clerk and Cllrs Tony Money, David McKee and Harvey Bamford on 5 February to look at the existing trees on Cole Green and provide advice on their future care/replacement. Mr Taylor's recommendations had been circulated and were discussed and it was agreed that the Tree Warden should be asked if he would be willing to draw up a plan for the future, covering the maintenance of the existing trees, the felling of diseased trees and the planting of replacement trees.

Members agreed to commission a bi-annual inspection of all the trees on Cole Green going forward. It was agreed that the Lime trees, on the section of Green to the east of the Primary School, would be included in the current tree works. They required deadwood to be removed and some trimming.

2308. Highway and Footpath matters

1. Severe flooding problem at Cole Green/ Gages Road – The Chairman had contacted ECC Flood Team and they had confirmed that the PC would have responsibility for keeping pipes clear under Cole Green and that respective householders would have responsibility to keep the pipes clear under each of their properties. The PC agreed that they would clear the ditch alongside Cole Green (from the Community House to Glebe Cottage) if the residents involved also agreed to clear the sections of the pipe running under their respective properties. The Chairman would speak to all residents involved prior to organising a meeting to discuss the matter further. Cllr Scott Bridge agreed to provide the Clerk with details of local contractors who could clear the ditch and remove all debris.

2309. Community Woodland project at Belchamp Otten

Cllr Mark Skellett had contacted ECC Environment and Climate Action department and provided information on the Essex Forest Project which would officially commence in October 2020. ECC would supply small native trees with protective guards free of charge if the community prepared the ground, planted and agreed to maintain the trees on the agreed site. The trees would form a thick copse within 7-10 years. The planting site must have access from a road or footpath, not obstruct significant views and maintain or improve the habitat. Three potential plots had been identified. One of the landowners had been contacted but had declined to take part in the project and the other two landowners were still to be approached. Members thanked Cllr Mark Skellett for his work to date, which would be ongoing.

2310. Community Recycling educational event

Cllr Mark Skellett had contacted BDC and they had confirmed that they would be happy to attend an

information event / workshop to explain exactly what items could be recycled locally. Councillors agreed to suggest that BDC have a 'stall' at the BSP Village Fete (to reach a wider audience) or alternatively they would be invited to attend a public meeting in The Community House.

2311. The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green – Suggestions for possible community use

The Clerk had circulated a letter from Stanfords, the agent offering The Cherry Tree for sale, asking if the PC were interested in acquiring the premises as they "would be prepared to sell the premises for any form of use that would benefit the local community". Members agreed that the PC was not in a position to purchase the premises but they would thank Stanfords for the offer. The public house had been an asset to the local community before it closed and the PC wished to encourage the owners to sell it as a public house, at a realistic figure, to provide maximum benefit to the local community going forwards.

2312. 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 11 March for 15 days and at Otten Road, Belchamp Otten on 26 March for 16 days for County Broadband fibre installation works ; communication from the owner of 1 Lodge Cottage, Knowl Green regarding planning application 19/02144/FUL ; an e-mail from Miss P Bowers re verge cutting (only one verge cut had been completed in 2019) ; letter from resident re siting a bench at The Street, Belchamp Otten. It was agreed that the villages would not enter the 2020 Essex Village of the Year competition.

2313. Planning applications and decisions

1. Applications - Members considered the following applications:

- 20/00045/HH – The Community House, Gages Road, BSP – Replace thatched roof with tiled roof and reduce height of chimneys. PC COMMENT: The PC support the proposal which will achieve cost savings for this valued community asset and so maintain viability.
- 20/00048/TPOCON – The Community House, Gages Road, BSP – Tree works in the Conservation Area - Fell 1 Maple. NO COMMENT.
- 20/00271/HH and 20/00272/LBC – Wood Barns Farm, Knowl Green – Erection of single storey rear extension and pergola, removal of front porch, 2 external sheds and outdoor toilet together with internal and external alterations to Grade II Listed farmhouse. NO COMMENT.

2. Decisions – Members noted the following decisions:

- 18/00623 and 18/00624 – The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green – Conversion of redundant public house to 2 dwellings. APPEAL DISMISSED.
- 18/02239/FUL – Hole Farm, Knowl Green – Approval of reserved details for conditions 9 (access) and 11 (waste arrangements). APPROVED.
- 19/02144/FUL – 1 Lodge Cottage, Knowl Green – Change of use of land to domestic curtilage and erection of cartlodge. REFUSED.

2314. Urgent matters and future Agenda items

- 1. Bench on Cole Green** – It was noted that parts of the wooden bench, sited near the village sign at BSP, were starting to rot. Cllr Dave Winslow offered to approach the landlord of the Half Moon, who had provided the bench, to ask if he would be willing to replace it.
- 2. Defibrillator batteries** – These would be checked by the Clerk along with all defibrillator consumables.
- 3. BSP Village Green** – Members noted that the Clerk had submitted a NIL return to the Charity Commissioners for 2019.
- 4. Essex Police** – PC Craig Wheeler had been in touch updating recent contact with the local villages. He had offered to visit PC meetings and the Clerk had responded immediately with a request for him to attend a future PC meeting.

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 9.15pm. The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 21 April 2020 in The Community House, Belchamp St Paul at 7.30pm

Signed: (Chairman)

21 April 2020