

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Update on Parish Council Matters

28 April 2020

Councillors

The purpose of this update is to ensure that you are kept informed of Council matters during the current lockdown situation.

1. PC Meetings

You will all be aware that the Council meeting scheduled for 21 April was cancelled and the next meetings due on 18 and 19 May (including both Annual Assemblies) have also been cancelled. The PC meeting on 7 July will need to be held, either in person or online, so that the 2019-20 PC Accounts can be formally approved before being submitted to the external auditors by the new deadline of 31 July 2020. A decision on what format the July meeting will take will be made by the middle of June. If it is online, the Zoom platform will be used and I will circulate a 'Fools Guide' (unfortunate term please don't take it personally) to all Councillors beforehand to help everyone who wishes to do so to access the online meeting. I would also suggest that, in this scenario, we set up a trial meeting the previous week just so that everyone can familiarise themselves with using Zoom. Any Councillors not able to meet online can of course submit apologies for non-attendance in the normal way but please bear in mind that the Council still needs to be quorate.

2. Correspondence List

The Correspondence List is attached. Items I would like to highlight include:

- a) **BDC Revised procedures for dealing with planning applications** – BDC have advised that there may be delays in dealing with applications submitted after 24 March because of problems with displaying site notices and advertising the application as part of the public consultation process.
- b) **BDC Revised bin collection dates around VE75 Bank Holiday** – Friday 8 May 2020 is a Bank Holiday so Monday 10 May collections have been moved to Tuesday 11 May.
- c) **Temporary road closures for County Broadband works** - Ongoing road closures as listed
- d) **PKF Littlejohn External Audit arrangements** – As part of the Government's Coronavirus Act, The Secretary of State has used his new powers to move back the deadline for submitting the AGAR Return to the external auditors from June 2020 to 31 July 2020. Our PC has been chosen, as part of the 5% sample, to submit an Intermediate Review for 2019-20. For most Council's this would involve submitting additional, more detailed, information to the external auditors but because we are a small Council and submit a Certificate of Exemption instead of full figures, this does not involve any additional work for us.

The RFO's work on the annual accounts is well advanced and our internal auditor has agreed to carry out the internal audit again this year. Distancing rules will be adhered to during this process.

3. Planning applications

New application: 20/00072/TPO – Beech House, The Street, Belchamp Otten –

Reduce height of 3 Yews by 3m on the road and 1m on the garden side. Cut back Maple and Lime trees by 3m to suitable growth points and carry out a 20% crown clean (thin) to an Ash, Field Maple and Maple.

Application circulated to councillors on 23 March. No comments suggested.

Decisions: 19/02090/HH and 19/02091/HH – The Old Rectory, Belchamp Otten –

Removal and relocation of existing entrance gate off The Street. Removal of shed, coal store and steel cabinet and erection of garden store, greenhouse, walled garden, car port and timber clad enclosure. Approved 2 April 2020.

20/00045/HH – **The Community House, Gages Road, BSP** – Replace thatched roof with tiled roof and reduce height of chimneys. Application withdrawn. [NOTE:

Application was recommended for refusal so was withdrawn and further expert advice is being sought prior to resubmission].

4. Other active matters

- a) **County Broadband works around Cole Green** – County Broadband agreed to the PC suggestion to move the proposed trench across Cole Green to a position adjacent to The Savills access road and work is underway but not yet completed. CB administrative staff have been helpful throughout as have the contractors on site. CB are using sub-contractors for the works so were not in a position to agree to the workers on site clearing the ditch in front of The Savills.
- b) **Defibrillator at BSP** – The defibrillator on the wall of the Community House has been in situ since 2015. During a regular check a few weeks ago, it showed that a new battery was required (average lifespan of batteries is 5 years). The East of England Ambulance Service have been out and fitted a new battery and also left new pads as these expire in December 2020 (no charge). The locking keypad on the cabinet has also broken off (again). A couple of years ago the same thing happened and it was stuck back on with superglue but every time the door is opened the lock becomes less stable. I have contacted EireMed, who we purchased the cabinet from, and am waiting to hear if they can supply a replacement mechanism and if so the cost. I will keep you informed. The cabinet and defibrillator are fully operational but for the time being the cabinet is closed securely but not locked. A notice is attached to the cabinet door explaining how to access the defibrillator. The Belchamp Otten defibrillator is being checked weekly by Jon and I undertake a regular more detailed check and log the check online, as advised by The Community Heartbeat Trust. It is fully operational.
- c) **PC website** – This has been transferred to the Voice platform and the Essex.info platform has now closed. However the Essex.info site still appears on a Google search above the new site. I will be asking my son (who knows about these things) if we can do anything about that, and he will also be assisting me to set up the belchamps-pc.org site re-direct shortly.
- d) **Tree works on Cole Green** – An application has been submitted to BDC to fell the diseased Chestnut, crown lift 5 other trees between that Chestnut and the Community House (remove lower branches to maintain access for tractor and mower) and to crown reduce the 3 Lime trees on the section of the Green beyond

the Primary School. Separate quotes for the different elements have been requested from 3 local tree surgeons. [Plus a separate quote for tree works at The Community House for the Community House Trustees].

- e) **Councillor vacancy for Belchamp Otten** – The PC were given authority by BDC to co-opt to fill this Casual Vacancy on 1 April 2020. Because the PC will not ‘meet’ until July I have not yet advertised the vacancy or approached residents who previously applied to join the PC to see if they are still interested. I will do both prior to the July meeting.
- f) **Flooding problem on Cole Green** – I have no update on this. Not sure if the Chairman has anything additional to report?
- g) **Potholes** – The series of potholes reported in Gages Road between Walnut Tree House and The Mill House have all been filled, as has the pothole reported in Pollards Green Lane. The deep pothole in Long Lane has been largely filled but I am not sure if this work has been undertaken by Highways or a local resident/farmer (I suspect the latter). A new pothole in Gages Road opposite Spindrift has been reported to ECC Highways.
- h) **Broken manhole cover on grass opposite the Primary School** – During the County Broadband works a dangerous rotted manhole cover was unearthed on the edge of the Green. Thanks to Cllr Harvey Bamford for highlighting this to me and borrowing a cone to mark the hazard. Affinity Water, after a couple of false starts, have now replaced the damaged manhole cover.
- i) **Precept** – First instalments due on 30 April 2020. Belchamp St Paul £1540. Belchamp Otten £513.
- j) **BDC – Street Cleaning Agreement 2020-21** – This has been received from BDC and the figure for 2020 is £1324.91, an increase of 2.4% on last year. Assuming that you wish to continue with the arrangement for another 12 months, I can confirm this with BDC and submit the required Activity Report and invoice as normal before the deadline of 30 June. I will send out a separate e-mail to you all, requesting that each of you confirm to me that you agree to this action (or not as the case may be).

If you have any queries on any of the above, or on any other matters, please let me know.

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Correspondence received 4 March to 28 April 2020

Councillors wishing to see any of these documents, please contact the Clerk.

1. Coronavirus situation - Frequent and regular updates on the Covid-19 situation have been received from ECC, BDC, EALC, NALC and other companies and organisations. Many notifications of cancelled meetings/events/ services have also been received.
2. BDC – Use of Electoral Register as part of the emergency response to the current Covid-19 crisis -Revised procedures for dealing with planning applications during Covid-19 crisis - Adoption of first Local Development Order – Horizon 120 at Great Notley - Revised bin collection dates around VE75 Bank Holiday.
3. ECC – Temporary road closures: Stettles Farm Road, Belchamp Otten – 13 April for 10 days (County Broadband) The Street, Stettles Farm Road and Puttock End, Belchamp Otten – 4 May for 10 days (County Broadband) Bakers Road, BSP – 25 May for 12 days (County Broadband) - ECC Highways Highlights newsletter – March 2020
4. EALC – Legal Update – March 2020 - County Update – February 2020
5. PKF Littlejohn – Revised External Audit arrangements. AGAR Return (Certificate of Exemption) to be submitted by 31 July 2020. - BSP and BO PC selected for Intermediate Review for the 2019-20 reporting year as part of the required 5% sample.
6. Essex and Herts Air Ambulance – Letter of thanks for donation
7. Stansted Airport Consultation on Future of Airspace Deadline 20 April
8. Public Consultation on proposals for new nuclear power station at Bradwell on Sea -Details at https://bradwellb.co.uk/ Deadline 1 July
9. RCCE – Cancellation of Essex Village of the Year competition 2020 - Essex Warbler – April 2020
10. Superfast Essex Programme update – March 2020
11. Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project – Monthly update – March 2020