

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

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 July 2020 at 7.30pm using the Zoom online platform

**Present:** Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Scott Bridge, Robin Lock, David Middleditch (entered during Item 2318), Tony Money and Jill West and District Councillor Iona Parker (left after Item 2321).

In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk) and two members of the public.

### **2315. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Norman East, Stephen Nice and Dave Winslow and County Councillor David Finch. There were no Declarations of Interest.

### **2316. Public Forum – No matters were raised**

### **2317. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 3 March 2020**

The Minutes were approved and would be signed by the Chairman at the next meeting held in person.

### **2318. Note and approve matters covered in the ‘Updates for Councillors’ circulated on 28 April and 10 June 2020**

These documents were noted and approved including the Correspondence, Receipts and Payments and Planning application details within them.

### **2319. Matters arising from the March PC meeting and the ‘Updates for Councillors’**

**1. Potholes in Gages Road, BSP (Item 2299.2)** – It was noted that the series of potholes in Gages Road had initially been temporarily filled but permanent repairs had been completed the previous week.

**2. Bench on Cole Green (Item 2314.1)** – Members noted that the bench had been repaired and they wished to record their thanks to Dave Crook for organising and agreeing to fund this work.

### **2320. Filling of Parish Councillor vacancy for Belchamp Otten by co-option**

The Clerk reported that 2 applications had been received to fill this vacancy and these had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting for their consideration. Both were strong candidates but it was proposed by Cllr Jill West, seconded by Cllr Robin Lock and unanimously agreed to appoint the applicant who lived in Belchamp Otten, Sarah Mardon. She would be invited to join the PC at the next meeting. The unsuccessful candidate would be encouraged to apply for any future vacancy.

### **2321. Essex County Council / Braintree District Council**

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

**2. Braintree District Council** – District Cllr Iona Parker reported on the following matters:

**a) Coronavirus situation** – Many BDC staff continued to work from home/ BDC had suffered a significant loss of income from closure of car parks and leisure centres and temporary suspension of the planning process but will receive a partial re-imburement of these losses from the Government/ BDC was implementing Government support schemes for businesses and small traders and a Council Tax support scheme.

**b) BDC Local Plan** – BDC had agreed to the Inspector’s recommendation to remove the Garden Communities at Marks Tey and West of Braintree from the Local Plan. This would have an implication on housing numbers but because recent Government housing figures were less than previously, replacement housing allocations may not be required. This was being reviewed by BDC

Officers.

**c) District Councillors Grant Scheme** – Funds continue to be available for both normal and coronavirus related schemes. It was suggested that the PFMC might apply for funds for specific projects as their usual annual donation from the Village Fete would not be available this year. District Councillor Parker would send the necessary forms to the Clerk.

### **2322. BDC Local Plan**

See Item 2321 b) above.

### **2323. Finance**

<b>1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:</b>		IN (£)	OUT (£)
1 June	CAS Business Services – Council Insurance renewal		675.77
22 June	E-On – PFMC		12.26
24 June	Anglian Water – PFMC		43.23
29 June	Transfer	12.26	
29 June	Transfer	43.23	
29 June	BDC – Street cleaning contract	1324.91	
29 June	ECC – Verge cutting contract	1970.45	
30 June	Diane Smith – Clerk’s salary and expenses		183.75

Bank Current Account balance on 30 June 2020 was £8557.59

### **2. Consideration of the 2019-20 Annual Accounts, the Internal Auditor’s Report and Approval of 2019-20 Annual Governance Statement**

The RFO had circulated the 2019-20 Annual Accounts to Councillors. It was noted that the anticipated deficit at year end was less than expected because of delays to the completion of certain projects.

Members noted the Internal audit report from Peter Clayton.

It was proposed by Cllr Jill West, seconded by Cllr Robin Lock and unanimously agreed to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2019-20. The Chairman would sign the document in person as soon as possible.

### **3. Approval of 2019-20 Annual Accounting Statements and the Audit Exemption Certificate**

It was proposed by Cllr Jill West, seconded by Cllr Robin Lock and unanimously agreed to approve the Annual Accounting Statements and the Audit Exemption Certificate for 2019-20. The Chairman would sign the documents in person before publication/submission to the external auditor.

Members noted that the Council accounts would be available for public inspection from 28 July to 8 September 2020.

### **2324. County Broadband works at Cole Green**

Members considered a request from County Broadband that the PC sign wayleave agreements for a short stretch (6m) of trench across Cole Green and for a further trench across the green beyond the Primary School. The Chairman had spoken to the County Broadband surveyor on site the previous day and he had confirmed that all scheduled works had now been completed. Further investigations established that, because of inaccuracies with the mapping, the trench on Cole Green would only be about 1 foot in length to connect with the designated BT chamber, which was actually adjacent to Gages Road. It was agreed that the Chairman would sign the Wayleave Agreements on the revised basis. [CLERK’S NOTE: The trench beyond the Primary School was subsequently cancelled because of problems obtaining permission for the works from an adjacent landowner].

### **2325. Tree works on Cole Green**

**a) Planning applications to approve the tree works** – Members noted that BDC had approved both planning applications at the end of June to fell 1 Chestnut, crown lift 4 Chestnuts and 1 Oak on Cole

Green (20/00104/TPOCON) and separately to crown reduce 3 Limes on the green beyond the Primary School (20/00113/TPOCON).

**b) Consideration of quotations to undertake the tree works** – The Clerk had requested quotations from 3 local tree surgeons but one had declined to quote. Details of the 2 quotations received had been circulated to councillors.

It was proposed by Cllr Robin Lock, seconded by Cllr Tony Money and agreed by a majority (6 in favour, 1 abstention) to accept the quotation from Graham Nicholl to fell 1 Chestnut and crown lift 4 Chestnuts and 1 Oak on Cole Green at a cost of £800. All branch wood will be removed from site but the trunk of the Chestnut will be cut into slices and left on site for residents to use in their homes. It was proposed by Cllr Scott Bridge, seconded by Cllr David Middleditch and agreed by a majority (4 in favour, 3 abstentions) to defer work on the Lime trees for one year until July 2021. The village Tree Warden will monitor the Lime trees in the interim. The planning permission for the work is extant for 2 years.

**c) Mature chestnut opposite the Primary School** – Residents had highlighted that this tree appeared to be showing signs of disease (bare upper branches). The Tree Warden had inspected the tree and expressed concern that work was likely to be required to the tree in the next 6-12 months. It was agreed to arrange an inspection of the tree by a qualified tree surgeon and, if necessary, apply to BDC for permission for any works required.

**d) Mature Chestnut in centre of Cole Green opposite Norton House, Gages Road** – A resident had suggested that this tree needed trimming because it was getting too large. A tree surgeon had inspected the tree last year and found no specific problems. Members and the Tree Warden agreed that as the tree appeared to be in good health and was not causing any problems, trimming would not be appropriate at this time. It was noted that utility companies were responsible for assessing, and taking action, if trees posed a risk to their infrastructure.

### **2326. Resignation of Litter Picker for BSP**

Members noted that Michael Ebeling had submitted a letter of resignation, as Litter Picker for BSP. He had undertaken the duties since 2000 and Members wished to formally record their thanks for all his work over the last 20 years to keep the village looking at its best. The Clerk would send a letter of thanks to him and this would also be mentioned in the next Rural Rumbblings report.

An application had been received to take over the Litter Picking role and it was proposed by Cllr Robin Lock, seconded by Cllr Jill West and unanimously agreed to appoint David Smith to the position of Litter Picker for BSP.

### **2327. Planning applications and decisions**

**1. Applications** – Members considered the following applications:

- 20/00895/FUL – Rose Cottage, Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten – Build 1 x 2 bedroom house.

NO COMMENT

- 20/00163/TPOCON – Church Cottage, The Street, Belchamp Otten – Fell 1 Silver Birch, reduce crown of Sycamore by 10-15ft and remove side trunk from Sycamore on garden side. NO COMMENT

-20/00174/TPOCON – Pannells, Cole Green, BSP – Remove overhanging branches back to boundary of 7 Bakers Road. NO COMMENT

-20/01019/HH – Baytree House, Cole Green, BSP – Proposed first floor rear extension.

NO COMMENT

**2. Decisions** – Members noted the following decisions:

-20/00048/TPOCON – The Community House, Gages Road, BSP – Fell 1 Maple. APPROVED.

-20/00104/TPOCON – Land opposite The Rectory, Gages Road, BSP – Fell 1 Chestnut and crown lift 4 Chestnuts and 1 Oak. APPROVED.

-20/00113/TPOCON – Land rear of Bramley House, Vicarage Road, BSP – Crown reduce 3 Limes. APPROVED.

**3. Applications 20/00723/FUL and 20/00724/LB for The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green** – Members noted receipt of a letter from Stanfords, the Agents acting for the owner of this property. The Council agreed to seek legal advice before responding.

**2328. Correspondence**

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk. They noted the following items: the resumption of BDC fortnightly green waste collections from 13 July and the renewal of RCCE membership for 2020-21 at £44 plus VAT. It was agreed to submit an order to the ECC Salt Bag Partnership Scheme (and make enquiries about suitable storage space for the salt).

**2329. Public Forum**

**1. Playing field hedge behind Savills** – Members noted that the hedge was overhanging driveways and causing problems for resident’s vehicles. It required urgent cutting back to about 4ft in height. It was agreed that John Pheby would obtain quotes to cut back the hedge twice a year and would liaise with the Chairman to ensure that the work was completed without delay.

**2330. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda**

**1. Broken sign on Cole Green** – Members noted that a removal van had broken the ‘No driving on the Green’ sign on Cole Green near Bakers Road. The company had agreed to pay for the repair of the sign and the Chairman agreed to arrange for the sign to be rebuilt and the company charged.

**Next meeting**

The meeting closed at 8.48pm.

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 1 September 2020 at 7.30pm either online or at The Community House, Belchamp St Paul (format to be agreed in line with Government Guidance at the time).

Signed: ..... (Chairman) 1 September 2020