

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 September 2020 at 7.30pm using
the Zoom online platform

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Robin Lock, Sarah Mardon, Tony Money, Stephen Nice (left after Item 2343.1), Jill West and Dave Winslow and County Councillor David Finch (left after Item 2335).

In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk) and one member of the public.

2331. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Councillors Scott Bridge, Norman East and David Middleditch and District Councillor Iona Parker. There were no Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Sarah Mardon to the Parish Council. The Clerk confirmed that, as the meeting was being held online, Cllr Mardon had already completed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and her Register of Members' Interests documents.

2332. Public Forum

1. Belchamp Otten Community Woodland project – This had been raised at the January 2020 PC meeting (Items 2297.1 and 2309 refer) and an update was requested. Former Councillor Mark Skellett had agreed to contact the landowners of 3 potential locations. One landowner had declined to take part but it was not known if there had been any responses from the remaining two landowners. The Clerk would obtain an update.

2. Recycling educational event – This had been raised in January 2020 (see Items 2297.2 and 2310) and an update was requested. The Clerk reported that Covid-19 Lockdown restrictions had resulted in the Village Fete being cancelled and had prevented the arranging of a public meeting to cover this topic. Any meeting would need to be put on hold until the current restrictions were lifted.

2333. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 14 July 2020

The Clerk apologised for spelling the name of the new Councillor, Sarah Mardon, incorrectly in the July Minutes. With the spelling amended, the Minutes were approved and would be signed by the Chairman at the next meeting held in person.

2334. Matters arising from the July PC meeting

1. District Councillor grant scheme (Item 2321c) – District Councillor Iona Parker had sent through an Application Form for this grant which the Clerk had forwarded to Dave Winslow, Chairman of the Playing Field Management Committee. The application would be submitted after the next meeting of the PFMC on 3 September 2020.

2. Audit Return for 2019-20 (Item 2323.3) – Members noted that PKF Littlejohn had acknowledged receipt of the Council's completed Certificate of Exemption and supporting documents. The period for the Public Inspection of the Council's accounts would end on 8 September 2020.

3. ECC Salt Bag Partnership for 2020 (Item 2328) – The Clerk had requested a supply of salt bags but ECC required confirmation of a delivery address by 3 September 2020. The Chairman would make enquiries and confirm the delivery location to the Clerk in the next couple of days.

4. Cutting back the Playing Field hedge behind Savills (Item 2329.1) – Members noted that the tree surgeon, Graham Nicholl, had submitted a quotation and been instructed to undertake the work. This would be completed in the next few days.

5. Broken sign on Cole Green (Item 2330) – The Chairman reported that he would be collecting the materials to construct a replacement sign and the work would be completed by a local craftsman. The cost of the work will be re-imbursed by the removal company, whose van knocked over the original sign.

2335. Essex County Council / Braintree District Council

1. Essex County Council – County Cllr David Finch gave a verbal report to the meeting which included: Proposals for Local Government Reform (replace the current 2 Tier system with Unitary Authorities): ECC Finances (5% drop in Council Tax income, following the Covid-19 Lockdown, but sufficient reserves to cover the immediate future. Longer term options will be considered when 2021-2 Precept is set later in the year): ECC Track and Trace system working well (Some low level spikes in Essex so essential to maintain social distancing). Members thanked Cllr Finch for his report and he left the meeting.

2. Braintree District Council – No report had been received from District Cllr Iona Parker this month.

2336. BDC Local Plan

Members noted that a Consultation was taking place on the '47 Proposed Main Modifications to the Draft Section 1 Plan', now that BDC had agreed to take the 2 proposed Garden Communities, at West of Braintree and Marks Tey, out of their Local Plan.

2337. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:		IN (£)	OUT (£)
1 July	EPFA – Annual subscription		25.00
20 July	E-On – PFMC		13.63
28 July	Transfer	13.63	
31 July	Fred Eady – Litter picking June/July at Belchamp Otten		63.00
31 July	RCCE – Annual subscription		124.80
31 July	Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses		228.17
31 July	Jayden Electrical – Part of Community House grant		72.00
31 July	David Smith – Litter picking July at BSP		31.50
20 Aug	E-On – PFMC		14.55
25 Aug	Transfer	14.55	
27 Aug	Transfer	99.24	
27 Aug	Dave Winslow – PFMC chalk for white lining pitches		99.24
28 Aug	R H Nankivell – Cutting grass at Belchamp Otten		105.00
28 Aug	Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses		183.75

2338. County Broadband works at Cole Green

The Chairman reported that all major works had now been completed by County Broadband and individual households were now being connected to the system.

2339. Flooding at Gages Road

Cllr Dave Winslow reported that ECC flood staff had carried out an investigation of the drainage route and established that the source of the flooding problem lie at the rear of 3 Cole Green where the ditch was silted up. This caused water to back up during periods of heavy rainfall. The owner of the property had been given details of the remedial works required. It was proposed by Cllr Dave Winslow, seconded by Cllr Robin Lock and unanimously agreed that the Council should write to the owner to encourage him to complete the remedial works before the Autumn. ECC had confirmed that the ditch between the Community House and the pipe across Cole Green did not require any remedial work.

2340 Parish Emergency Plan

Members reviewed the Emergency Plan and agreed that two contacts should be provided for access to the Community House (David McKee and Kathy Miller). BDC would be informed of this amendment and the Plan would be updated accordingly.

2341. Tree works on Cole Green

a) Felling of mature Chestnut outside Mapleleaf House, Cole Green – Members noted that a large branch had fallen off this tree about 3 weeks ago and the Clerk had contacted Graham Nicholl and he had attended to cut up the branch. The tree itself was scheduled to be felled the following day (2 September 2020). 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 (this has been publicised in Rural Rumbings). The crown lifting works to surrounding trees will be carried out on the same day.

c) Mature chestnut opposite the Primary School – The Chairman and Clerk had arranged to meet Graham Nicholl on site the following day to inspect this tree which was showing signs of disease (bare upper branches). [CLERK'S NOTE: The tree surgeon advised that E-On should be informed about the dead branches near the power lines, to take any necessary action. He assessed that the tree was in poor condition but he was reluctant to condemn such a dominant specimen without considering all alternatives, so he recommended that Sean Taylor from BDC should be asked to look at the tree to provide a second opinion on its condition.]

d) Mature Chestnut on Cole Green opposite The Plough, Gages Road, BSP – The Chairman and Clerk had arranged to meet Graham Nicholl on site the following day to inspect this tree which was showing signs of disease (bare upper branches). [CLERK'S NOTE: The tree surgeon advised that this tree should be monitored going forward, especially in Spring 2021 when new growth may show an improvement in its condition. If there was no improvement, works may be required during 2022].

2342. Christmas tree on Cole Green

Members considered the respective merits of planting a permanent fir tree on Cole Green and purchasing a cut tree annually. It was proposed by Cllr Stephen Nice, seconded by Cllr Jill West and unanimously agreed to purchase a cut fir tree annually from the same supplier as used in previous years. Cllrs Robin Lock, Dave Winslow and Harvey Bamford would make the necessary arrangements and would confirm that no new lights were required.

Members commented favourably on the subtle lighting that had been placed along The Street at Belchamp Otten last Christmas and the Chairman agreed to investigate who had supplied and erected the lights.

2343. Planning applications and decisions

1. Applications – Members considered the following applications:

- 20/00895/FUL (Revised 22.7.20) – Rose Cottage, Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten – Build 1 x 2 bedroom house. COMMENT ON MAINTAINING VEHICLE ACCESS TO EXISTING PROPERTIES IN FOWES LANE DURING BUILDING WORKS
- 20/00215/TPOCON – 3 Chestnut Place, Gages Road, BSP – Fell 1 Chestnut tree. OBJECT AS NO EVIDENCE TO SHOW TREE IS DISEASED OR DANGEROUS.
- 20/01217/HHPA - Kellow Cottage, The Street, Belchamp Otten – Single storey rear extension. FOR INFORMATION ONLY
- 20/01215/FUL – 1 Lodge Cottage, Knowl Green – Retention of change of use to domestic curtilage – NO COMMENT.
- 20/01234/OUT – Dollery, Bakers Road, BSP – Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of 2 new dwellings. OBJECT. MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED TO MAKE A MEASURED RESPONSE. (Proposed by Cllr Jill West, seconded by Cllr Robin Lock and agreed unanimously)
- 20/00263/TPOCON – Lymburners, Cole Green, BSP – Fell 1 Sycamore. NO COMMENT.
- 20/01107/FUL – Land east of Pentlow Hill, Pentlow – Solar Farm. SUPPORT PENTLOW PC COMMENTS REGARDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED TO ENABLE A DECISION TO BE MADE. (Proposed by Cllr Stephen Nice, seconded by Cllr Jill West and agreed unanimously)
- 20/01318/FUL – 11,12,13 and 14 Hickford Hill, BSP – Alterations to existing vehicular access and erection of detached cartlodge to serve 4 dwellings. SUPPORT THE APPLICATION TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY. (Proposed by Cllr Robin Lock, seconded by Cllr Jill West and agreed unanimously).

2. Decisions – Members noted the following decisions:

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

-20/00215/TPOCON – 3 Chestnut Place, Gages Road, BSP – Fell 1 Chestnut tree. WITHDRAWN

3. Applications 20/00723/FUL and 20/00724/LB for The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green – Members noted the legal advice received regarding this matter, particularly in relation to the Data Protection Act.

2344. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk. They noted the following items: confirmation of the ECC grant of £160 for the BSP P3 Group for 2020-21, the Government 'Planning for the future' consultation and the adopted Suffolk County Council Minerals and Waste Plan. It was noted that Community 360 were offering free IT training for residents but this would require internet availability at the agreed venue. It was suggested that County Broadband were offering to fund wi-fi connections to village halls and the Chairman agreed to investigate this possibility.

2345. Public Forum

1. Broken footpath fingerpost – Members noted that the fingerpost at the junction of Otten Road and the concrete track (opposite 1 Windmill Houses) had been knocked over. The Clerk would report this to the P3 Group (or ECC Highways as appropriate).

2346. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda

1. Broken street sign at Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten – The Clerk had reported this broken sign to BDC.

2. Overflowing dog bin opposite the church at BSP – The Clerk had reported this to BDC and the bin had been emptied.

3. Overflowing bin on Cole Green near village crest – The Clerk would arrange for this bin to be emptied. Members noted that since Lockdown all litter bins were being used more extensively but BDC had a fixed schedule of emptying so they were often getting full. Residents were encouraged to take their litter home if a bin was already full.

4. Defibrillator cabinet at BSP – Members noted that a replacement handle had recently been received from EireMed and would be fitted shortly.

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 9.16pm.

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 20 October 2020 at 7.30pm online using the Zoom platform.

Signed: (Chairman) 20 October 2020