

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 October 2020 at 7.30pm using
the Zoom online platform

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Robin Lock, Sarah Mardon, Tony Money, Stephen Nice, Jill West and Dave Winslow plus District Councillor Iona Parker (joined for Item 2357) and County Councillor David Finch (left after Item 2351.1).

In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

2347. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

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

2348. Public Forum - No members of the public were present

2349. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 1 September 2020

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

2350. Matters arising from the September PC meeting

1. Belchamp Otten Community Woodland project (Item 2332.1) – Former Councillor Mark Skellett had confirmed that all three landowners approached at Belchamp Otten had declined to take part in this project. The PC were not in a position to purchase land for the project, because of their limited resources and they also noted potential problems with public liability if residents used equipment to prepare and maintain such a site. Although supportive of the idea, the Council therefore concluded that this project could not be taken forward at this time. They wished to record their thanks to Mark Skellett for his work on this project.

2. ECC Salt Bag Partnership for 2020 (Item 2334.3) – Members wished to thank John Clarke for agreeing to store the salt bags at his property. There had been initial delivery problems with the salt supplies, but these had now been overcome. Members thanked Councillors Sarah Mardon and David Middleditch for their offers to assist with the delivery problems

3. Broken sign on Cole Green (Item 2334.5) – The Chairman reported that the new sign was now in place. The Chairman would send the tradesman's invoice to the former resident's removal company for payment. If there was likely to be a delay in payment the PC would pay the tradesman and recoup the cost from the removal company.

4. Wi-fi connection to The Community House (Item 2344) - The Chairman had contacted County Broadband and they had confirmed that a broadband connection would be made free of charge to The Community House. A date for the work was awaited.

5. Broken street sign at Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten (Item 2345.1) – Members noted that this damaged sign had now been repaired by BDC.

2351. Essex County Council / Braintree District Council

1. Essex County Council – County Cllr David Finch gave a verbal report to the meeting which included 3 topics associated with the Covid-19 situation: Essex moved into Tier 2 of the Government Covid-19 restrictions the previous week. Covid-19 cases were escalating rapidly and the move would protect the economy, lives and the NHS: Since March 49,000 Essex businesses had furloughed 193,000 staff. With furlough arrangements being scheduled to end on 31 October this could result in higher unemployment levels. ECC were well resourced but higher unemployment could have an impact on their future income (including Council Tax receipts) and this would have to be addressed in their budget process: County Cllr Finch had met local businesses to discuss how ECC could help ensure their survival/funding going forwards. Cllr Finch then answered questions from Councillors. Members thanked him for his report and he left the meeting.

2. Braintree District Council – District Cllr Iona Parker would deliver her report when she joined the meeting later on (see Item 2357 below).

2352. BDC Local Plan

Members noted that consultations had ended on the 'Main Modifications to the Draft Section 1 Plan' and on the revised Government housing numbers. Two inspectors had been appointed to consider Draft Section 2 of the Local Plan (non Garden Community matters).

2353. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:		IN (£)	OUT (£)
14 Sept	Transfer	66.00	
15 Sept	Don Smith – PFMC		66.00
21 Sept	E-On – PFMC		83.80
23 Sept	Transfer PFMC	83.80	
24 Sept	BDC Precept	2000.00	
25 Sept	Anglian Water – PFMC		42.51
28 Sept	Transfer PFMC	42.51	
29 Sept	Fred Eady – Litter picking Aug/Sept at Belchamp Otten		63.00
29 Sept	David Smith – Litter picking Aug/Sept at BSP		63.00
29 Sept	Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses		183.75
29 Sept	NFU Mutual – Tractor insurance		212.74

Bank account balances at 30 September 2020 were: Current account £9201.88, Deposit account £15,821 and PFMC account £6708.

2354. Flooding at Gages Road

The Clerk had written to the owner of 3 Cole Green requesting early clearance of the silt in the ditch on his property but the work required had not yet been undertaken. It was proposed by Cllr Jill West, seconded by Cllr Dave Winslow and unanimously agreed that the Clerk should contact the owner of the property again and offer the Council's help if there was a reason for the delay. The Clerk would also contact the ECC Flood Team and request that they encourage the owner to complete the remedial works as soon as possible.

2355. Tree works on Cole Green

a) Felling of mature Chestnut outside Mapleleaf House, Cole Green – Members noted that this tree had been felled on 2 September 2020 and the residual trunk wood had been removed by residents for heating their homes. The crown lifting works to surrounding trees had been carried out on the same day.

b) Mature chestnut trees opposite the Primary School, opposite The Plough, Gages Road and outside 4 Savills at BSP – The Clerk had notified UK Power Networks of the dead branches near the power lines within the Chestnut tree opposite the Primary School. They had inspected the tree on 29 September and would be scheduling the works.

Shaun Taylor from BDC had met PC representatives on site on 23 September 2020. He had examined these 3 trees and concluded that all were in poor/dangerous condition and required felling. The Clerk would submit a planning application to BDC for these works within the Conservation Area and also obtain quotes for the work from local tree surgeons, for consideration at the next meeting.

2356. Christmas tree on Cole Green

Cllr Robin Lock reported that a 20ft high spruce, as agreed at the last meeting, would cost £90 plus a £10 cutting charge. New batteries to supply the lighting would also be required at a cost of £50. Members endorsed this expenditure and noted that the tree would be selected in early November and collected/erected in early December. Members thanked Cllrs Robin Lock, Dave Winslow and Harvey Bamford for overseeing this project.

2357. District Councillors Report

District Councillor Iona Parker gave a verbal report to the meeting which included: the effects of the Covid-19 situation on BDC finances (reductions in Council Tax and Business Rates income and increase in applications for affordable housing have resulted in a projected deficit of £500,000 to £1m for the current financial year) : Horizon 120 Business Park awarded £7m from the South East Local Enterprise Zone and Section 106 developments funds : Government Consultation on Planning for the Future ends 29 October : Government Guidance on Remembrance Sunday events : the availability of small grants from the District Councillor's Community Grant scheme.

Members thanked Cllr Iona Parker for her report and she left the meeting.

2358. PFMC – Section 106 funds

Wicksteed had recently undertaken an inspection of the playground equipment and their report had identified problems with the slide where the rubber tiled safety surface required replacement and one of the metal supports had rotted. The slide had accordingly been roped off to prevent children using it, and a "Keep Off. Dangerous" sign would be placed on it. Wicksteed would quote for the new rubber tiles and a local metalworker would be approached to quote for the repair to the metal support.

Quotes had been received from 3 play equipment companies for additional play equipment to be purchased using Section 106 funds being held by BDC. The Clerk would contact BDC to obtain updated details of the sum available and to ensure that this expenditure would be an appropriate use of the Section 106 funds.

2359. Planning applications and decisions

1. Applications – Members considered the following applications:

- 20/00336/TPOCON – **3 Chestnut Place, Gages Road, BSP** – Reduce growth from 1 Horse Chestnut of pollard structure, back to original pruning points (approx. 5m). NO COMMENT.
- 20/00302/TPOCON – **Lamberts Farm, Gages Road, BSP** – Clear areas of the unkempt site. Remove some 'unimportant' trees and face, augment as necessary and reduce height of hedges on N, E and W boundaries. COMMENT ON RETAINING BOUNDARY HEDGES AND SILVER BIRCH AT REAR OF SITE.
- 20/01651/NMA – **Baytree House, Cole Green, BSP** – Non material amendment to permission 20/01019/H (Brick bond and detailing to rear extension). SENT FOR INFORMATION ONLY.

2. Decisions – Members noted the following decisions:

- 20/00895/FUL **Rose Cottage, Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten** – Build 1 x 2 bedroom house. REFUSED.
- 20/01217/HHPA - **Kellow Cottage, The Street, Belchamp Otten** – Single storey rear extension. PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED AND GIVEN.
- 20/01234/OUT – **Dollery, Bakers Road, BSP** – Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of 2 new dwellings. WITHDRAWN.
- 20/00723/FUL and 20/00724/LB for **The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green** – Conversion of redundant pub to 2 x 4 bedroom dwellings. REFUSED.

The condition of The Cherry Tree had deteriorated significantly over the last few years and the Listed Building had fallen into disrepair. It was unanimously agreed to report this to the BDC Heritage section and encourage them to inspect the building and ensure that the owner was aware of his duty to maintain the Listed Building.

2360. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk. They noted the following items: Essex Forest Initiative : Demand Responsive Transport survey : Reports of rubbish being burnt at Park Farm, BSP (which had been reported to BDC by the Clerk) : Request for funding from Age Concern Essex : Letter of thanks from the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance for past donations and a request for future support.

2361. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda

- 1. Broken signpost at Otten Road, Church Street and Vicarage Road junction** – This sign had been knocked over in early 2019 and had been reported 3 times to ECC Highways, most recently in July 2020. ECC were scheduling works but frequently drivers were having to stop and ask directions or risk getting lost. Arrangements would be made for the sign to be propped up and made visible, as a temporary measure.
- 2. Broken signpost at Bakers Road/ Bradley Hill junction in Ovington** – This sign was literally falling apart and would be reported to ECC Highways.

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 8.52pm.

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 7.30pm online using the Zoom platform.

Signed: (Chairman) 24 November 2020