

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 7.30pm using
the Zoom online platform

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Scott Bridge, Robin Lock, Sarah Mardon, David Middleditch, Tony Money, Stephen Nice and Dave Winslow plus and County Councillor David Finch (left after Item 2367.1). Two members of the public were also present.
In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

2362. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Councillors Norman East and Jill West and District Councillor Iona Parker. Cllr Dave Winslow made a Declaration of Interest in respect of the flooding problems in Gages Road (Item 2363.) but Members agreed that because of his knowledge on the subject, he should continue to take part in the discussion of this item.

2363. Public Forum - No matters were raised by the public.

2364. Flooding at Gages Road

It was agreed to discuss this topic at the start of the meeting. The owner of 3 Cole Green explained to Councillors that the ECC Flood Team had visited the site and recommended that the ditch at the rear of his property should be dug out and then a 'concrete bagged headwall' should be constructed where the pipe emerges, from the piped section of ditch, to prevent future erosion. Members were pleased to note that the owner had arranged for a local contractor to dig out the ditch by 12 December 2020.

2365. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 20 October 2020

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

2366. Matters arising from the October PC meeting

- 1. Salt Bag Partnership (Item 2350.2)** – Members noted that John Clarke had kindly topped up the salt bins where required and a supply of salt bags had been offered to BSP Primary School. A response was awaited.
- 2. Wi-fi connection to The Community House (Item 2350.4)** - The work was in hand and County Broadband had surveyed the premises.
- 3. Christmas Tree on Cole Green (Item 2356)** – It was noted that Cllr Robin Lock would collect the Christmas tree next Tuesday and the tree would be erected, with assistance from a group of local volunteers maintaining social distancing, on Wednesday 2 December. Two new sets of lights were required to replace broken sets, along with new batteries.
- 4. Broken signposts (Items 2361)** – Members noted that the signpost at the Otten Road/Church Street and Vicarage Road junction had been propped up and was now visible to drivers. The signpost at the Bakers Road/Bradley Hill junction in Ovington had already been reported to ECC Highways and work to replace it was scheduled.

2367. Essex County Council / Braintree District Council

- 1. Essex County Council** – County Cllr David Finch gave a verbal report to the meeting which included 4 main topics: the receipt of Lord Russell's Report on Climate Change and details of measures already undertaken by ECC to address the issues (including the installation of heat pumps in ECC property conversions, the creation of new cycleways, the planting of 375,000 trees and zero carbon extension projects at Essex schools) : a major review of speed limits in Essex : the ECC budget and the Tier 2 Covid-19 regulations. Members thanked him for his report and he left the meeting.
- 2. Braintree District Council** – Members noted the written Report from District Cllr Iona Parker which included: an update on the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances: details of an expected 2% increase

in the BDC Precept for 2021-22: continued BDC support for businesses during the pandemic: the 'shop local' initiative and a new grant scheme to improve the appearance of small/medium sized industrial estates. The Chairman reported that The Community House had applied to BDC for a grant to enable it to continue operating despite the loss of income caused by the pandemic.

2368. BDC Local Plan

There were no further updates so this would be considered again at the next meeting.

2369. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:		IN (£)	OUT (£)
27 Oct	Transfer	180.00	
29 Oct	R H Nankivell – Grass cutting at Belchamp Otten		105.00
29 Oct	Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses		273.97
29 Oct	Miss P Bowers – Verge cutting at BSP		819.60
2 Nov	E-On - PFMC		21.17
3 Nov	PFMC (Wickstead)	72.00	
3 Nov	Transfer PFMC	21.27	
3 Nov	J A Griggs – PFMC - Electrical Inspection		180.00
3 Nov	Wickstead		72.00
19 Nov	PFMC – Tree and hedge works	475.00	
23 Nov	John Miller		119.23
23 Nov	Graham Nicholl Tree Services (Incl. PFMC £475.00)		1275.00
23 Nov	E-On – PFMC		9.53

Current account balance at 23 November 2020 was £7074.55.

2. Consideration of Precept for 2021-22

The RFO reported that the Council had not increased the Precept since 2000 and that in the same timespan the Council Tax elements for both ECC and BDC had increased by more than 100%. The Parish Council element of Council Tax bills was only 0.7%. The PC had agreed earlier in the year that the PC minimum reserve level should not fall below £20,000. For several reasons (including urgent tree felling works on Cole Green, possible loss of ECC verge cutting income and possible wage increases) expenses could be greater in 2021-22 and the Precept would need to be increased to maintain this minimum reserve level. It was suggested that an increase of 12.5% would be required to cover PC commitments but the Precept figure would be formally agreed at the next meeting.

2370. Tree works on Cole Green

a) Mature chestnut trees opposite the Primary School, opposite The Plough, Gages Road and outside 4 Savills at BSP – The Clerk reported that UK Power Networks had agreed to fell the Chestnut tree opposite the Primary School because of the danger it posed to the power lines. The work would require traffic light control as half the roadway would need to be closed for safety reasons. The works would ideally be scheduled during a school holiday period.

Members noted that planning permission had been obtained from BDC to fell all 3 trees and they considered a quotation from Graham Nicholl Tree Services to fell the mature Chestnut trees opposite The Plough, Gages Road and outside 4 Savills, BSP. Maestro Tree Services had also been asked to provide a quotation but they had declined to do so because of pressure of other work. It was proposed by Cllr Tony Money, seconded by Cllr Sarah Mardon and unanimously agreed to accept the quotation, totalling £1700, from Graham Nicholl Tree Services. The chipped branch wood would be delivered to a village resident (no reduction in cost was offered by the contractor) and the trunk wood would be cut into manageable sections and left for residents to take for heating their homes.

2371. PFMC – Section 106 funds

The Clerk had submitted details of the proposed purchase of additional play equipment to BDC and the Section 106 Monitoring Officer had confirmed that the purchase would meet the criteria for the release of the Section 106 funds. However, it was noted that the Section 106 funds would not include the cost of the VAT on the purchase, as this was recoverable by the PC from HMRC. The quoted play equipment cost of £4333.00 (excluding VAT) therefore fell short of the total amount of Section 106 available, which totalled £5224.74. The PFMC Chairman had already requested a quote for replacing the rubber safety surface under the slide (which was currently out of commission awaiting the works) and Members would consider adding this cost to the Section 106 claim at the next meeting, when further details would be available.

The PFMC Chairman informed Members that the PFMC income did not currently cover their expenditure. He was looking at the possibility of applying for a grant from the Essex Playing Field Association to help the situation but Members also suggested starting a local appeal for public funding to maintain the children's play equipment (possibly setting up a 'Just Giving' Page). It was agreed to put this on the Agenda for the next meeting and discuss the matter more fully at that time.

2372. Replacement notice board at Belchamp Otten

Cllr Scott Bridge had obtained quotations for a replacement notice board and he had liaised with District Councillor Iona Parker, Parish Councillors and the Clerk and an application had been submitted to BDC on 9 November for a Councillors Community Grant of £1000. The total cost of the notice board was £1300 and Members agreed that the PC would fund the outstanding balance. A formal decision on the application was awaited from BDC.

2373. Equal Opportunities Policy

The Clerk had circulated a draft Equal Opportunities Policy and this was approved unanimously by Members.

2374. Meeting Dates for 2021

The following meeting dates were agreed unanimously: PC meetings on Tuesdays 19 January, 2 March, 13 April (start time 8pm), 18 May (Annual meeting), 6 July, 7 September, 19 October and 30 November. Parish Annual Assembly meetings: Belchamp Otten on Monday 12 April and Belchamp St Paul on Tuesday 13 April. All meetings start at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise. All meetings will continue to be held on Zoom until further notice.

2175. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk. The following items were noted: BDC Review of Delegation process for planning applications (Members had agreed by e-mail to object to the proposals and this decision was formally confirmed) : Consultation on Reduced Frequency of Verge Cutting (Members agreed to respond supporting the continuation of 2 cuts per year for safety reasons especially on rural roads) : National Census taking place on 21 March 2021 : Essex Climate Action Commission Interim Report received.

2176. Planning applications and decisions

1. Applications – Members considered the following applications:

- 11/01116/FUL – **Lantern Cottage, Cole Green, BSP** – Side extension – Approval of details reserved by Conditions 3 and 4 (external finishes). NO COMMENT.
- 20/01849/HH – **Baytree House, Cole Green, BSP** – Proposed first floor extension (with changes to ground floor). NO COMMENT.
- 20/01912/AGR – **Shearing Place, BSP** – Single storey agricultural barn/farm feed store. SENT FOR INFORMATION ONLY.

2. Decisions – Members noted the following decisions:

- 20/01215/FUL **1 Lodge Cottage, Knowl Green** – Retention of change of use to domestic curtilage. GRANTED.

- 20/00302/TPOCON – **Lamberts Farm, Gages Road, BSP** – Clear areas of unkempt site, remove some trees and face, augment and reduce height of hedges on north, east and west site boundaries. GRANTED.
- 20/000336/TPOCON – **3 Chestnut Place, Gages Road, BSP** – Reduce regrowth from 1 Horse Chestnut of pollard structure back to original pruning points – approx. 5 metres. GRANTED.
- 20/01651/NMA – **Baytree House, Cole Green, BSP** – Non material amendment to 20/01019/HH permission SENT FOR INFORMATION ONLY. WITHDRAWN.

3. The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green – Deterioration of Listed Building - The Clerk had reported this matter to BDC Enforcement and a case file had been opened. The site had last been inspected by BDC in October 2019 when the structure had been found to be in sound condition. This would be considered again at the next meeting.

2377. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda

- 1. Past PC paperwork held by Margaret Ebeling** – Members noted that the Ebeling family had passed on a quantity of documents, previously held by former Councillor Margaret Ebeling, to the Clerk. These would be studied and retained as necessary for future historical purposes.
- 2. Ambrose Argent** – Mr Argent was a BSP resident who had died in 1924 and was buried in the churchyard. Members were unable to provide any information regarding any descendants/family members who might still live locally.

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 9.12pm.

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 19 January 2021 at 7.30pm online using the Zoom platform.

Signed: (Chairman) 19 January 2021