

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18 May 2021 at 7.30pm at
The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Robin Lock, Sarah Mardon, David Middleditch, Tony Money and Dave Winslow. In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).
To comply with current Covid 19 Regulations, attendance at the meeting was limited to 9 persons.

2429. Election of Chairman

It was proposed by Cllr David Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Harvey Bamford and unanimously agreed that Cllr David McKee should continue as Chairman of the Parish Council. Cllr McKee signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2430. Election of Vice Chair

Members noted that Cllr Jill West did not wish to continue in the role of Vice Chair. No other members present wished to take on the role so the Chairman agreed to ascertain if a Councillor not present at the meeting would be interested in becoming Vice Chair. This matter would be considered again at the next meeting.

2431. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Councillors Scott Bridge, Stephen Nice and Jill West, District Councillor Iona Parker and newly elected County Councillor Peter Schwier. There were no Declarations of Interest.

2432. Public Forum – No members of the public were present.

2433. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 27 April 2021

These Minutes were unanimously approved and were signed by the Chairman. Members noted that the Chairman had also signed the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 19 January and 2 March 2021 and the Annual Parish Assembly Minutes for BSP on 16 April 2019 and Belchamp Otten on 15 April 2019.

2434. Matters arising from the April PC meeting

- 1. Highway problems (Item 2428.2)** – Members noted that the overgrown 30mph repeater sign in Vicarage Road had been cleared by ECC Highways.
- 2. Uneven block paving path at Savills, BSP (Item 2413.2)** – The Clerk had no update, so this would be considered again at the next meeting.
- 3. Tree works on Cole Green (Item 2422.1)** – The Clerk had spoken to Graham Nicholls about the damage caused to the small Chestnut adjacent to the felled Chestnut opposite Plough House. He had agreed to revisit the site and trim off the damaged branches so as to encourage the formation of a new leader. The tree would then be monitored for the next few years.
- 4. BSP Village Sign (Item 2428.1)** – Cllr Harvey Bamford reported that he had examined the Village Sign and concluded that the wooden backing board had delaminated and the paintwork was therefore beyond repair. He had produced 2 alternative designs, both of which were based on the existing sign, and Members voted for their preferred choice. It was agreed that the chosen design, printed onto weather resistant 3mm metal, would be fixed over the existing painted sign. Cllr Bamford also volunteered to sand down the sign framework and repaint/varnish as necessary. Members thanked Cllr Bamford to his work on this project.

2435. Appointment/confirmation of Council Officers and Representatives

It was proposed by Cllr Tony Money, seconded by Cllr David Middleditch and unanimously agreed to approve the following positions:

Footpath Warden – Peter Hesketh Emergency Officer – Peter Hesketh
Tree Warden – John Pheby Community House Trustees (ex officio Chairman) – Cllr David McKee

2436. Adoption of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct

It was proposed by Cllr David Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Dave Winslow and unanimously agreed to adopt these documents.

2437. Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer and Internal Auditor / Confirmation of Bank Account signatories

It was proposed by Cllr David Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Harvey Bamford and unanimously agreed that Cllr Tony Money should continue as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and that Jon Yates should take over the role of the Council's Internal Auditor. The bank signatories were confirmed as Cllrs Tony Money, David McKee and Dave Winslow (any two Councillors to sign).

2438. Essex County Council

Members noted that Peter Schwier had been elected as the new County Councillor for our ward on 6 May. His contact details had been circulated along with an e-mail of introduction. Members looked forward to meeting County Cllr Schwier at a future PC meeting.

2439. Braintree District Council

No report had been received from District Councillor Iona Parker this month.

2440. BDC Local Plan

There was no further update on this matter.

2441. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:		IN (£)	OUT (£)
6 April	Football pitch fee	30.00	
12 April	Transfer	53.81	
12 April	Dave Winslow – PFMC Matting		53.81
14 April	Football pitch fee	30.00	
21 April	Transfer		30.00
21 April	Transfer		30.00
22 April	E-On – PFMC		13.87
26 April	Transfer	13.87	
29 April	BDC – Precept 2021-22 First instalment	2307.00	
29 April	Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses		192.50
4 May	Tony Money – Payroll software		58.80
4 May	EALC – Annual subscription		183.97
4 May	Wayleave	12.48	
4 May	Football pitch fees	60.00	
4 May	Transfer		60.00

Current account balance at 4 May 2021 was £5513.72, Deposit account balance was £15,821.69 and PFMC account balance was £6155.

2. Approval of PC Accounts for 2020-21 – The accounts had been circulated. It was proposed by Cllr David Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Robin Lock and unanimously agreed to approve the accounts.

3. Approval of Internal Audit Report and 2020-21 Annual Governance Statement – These documents had been circulated. It was unanimously agreed to receive and note the Internal Audit Report from Jon Yates. It was proposed by Cllr Sarah Mardon, seconded by Cllr David Middleditch and unanimously agreed to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21. The document was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

4. Approval of 2020-21 Annual Accounting Statements and the Audit Exemption Certificate – These documents had been circulated after being certified and signed by Cllr Tony Money (RFO). It was proposed by Cllr Jill West, seconded by Cllr Dave Winslow and unanimously agreed to approve the Annual Accounting Statements and the Audit Exemption Certificate for 2020-21. The Chairman signed both documents. Members noted that the Councils accounts would be available for public inspection from 28 June to 6 August 2021.

2442. Filling of Casual Vacancy

Current Covid-19 regulations restricted the number of people attending this meeting so it was agreed to consider the 2 applications received for this vacancy at the July PC meeting. Both applicants had been informed of the situation and would be invited to attend the July meeting, if restrictions permitted.

2443. Tree Planting Plan for Cole Green

The Working Group had met and produced a draft Plan which had been circulated. This showed all existing trees on Cole Green and also recorded the condition and estimated lifespan of each tree. The Plan detailed the preferred species and position of new planting to replace those trees felled in the last 2 years. Members recorded their thanks to Cllrs Harvey Bamford and David Middleditch and Tree Warden John Pheby for their work on this comprehensive Plan and it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Tree Planting Plan for Cole Green.

Cllr Harvey Bamford agreed to obtain costings for the 3 proposed replacement trees and Cllr David Middleditch would investigate the cost of clearing the ditch in front of Savills which was recommended before new trees were planted in that vicinity.

The Clerk would speak to the contractor who had felled the 3 trees off Gages Road and ask if the top of the residual stumps could be levelled.

2444. Playing Field Management Committee

a) Application for Section 106 funds – Members noted that the play equipment had been ordered but an installation date had yet to be confirmed.

b) Public fundraising appeal – The Just Giving fundraising page had raised the amazing total of £4005 and would be closed shortly. The Table Sale on Sunday 2 May had raised a further £1125 and the raffle (which would be drawn on Cole Green on 30 May at 1pm) had, so far, raised £625. Public fundraising therefore totalled £5711 to date. Most of this would be spent on new play equipment with some being reserved for ongoing maintenance costs.

Members noted that football teams had stopped using the pitches at the Playing Field because of a lack of players. The availability of the pitches for hire would therefore be advertised in local parish magazines.

2445. Village Design Statement

The Clerk had spoken to the Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE) and briefly outlined the process, and options, for producing a Village Design Statement. It was agreed to arrange a Zoom meeting with Jan Stobart from RCCE to obtain further information before making a decision as to whether to proceed with this project.

2446. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk. The following items were noted: BDC Consultations on Climate Change and Cycling Strategy: ECC Solar Development Consultation: National Grid Consultation on new 44kw power line from Bramford to Twinstead (PC respond supporting the placing of cables underground within the Stour Valley): First edition of a new Essex Police monthly update: Letter from resident informing the PC of a Street Party being arranged on 4 July to mark the easing of Covid restrictions (subject to Government Guidelines): Request from resident for a public meeting to discuss The Community House re-roofing plans (the next edition of Rural Rumbings will include a letter from the Community House Trustees explaining the situation more fully to residents. The Trustees are awaiting the BDC decision on their planning application before considering the matter further).

2447. Planning applications and decisions

1. Applications – Members considered the following application:

- 21/01288/FUL – **Mill House, Gages Road, BSP** – Proposed conversion of existing outbuildings to a single dwelling with central section replaced. COMMENT: PC support this application.

2. Decisions – There had been no new decisions since the last PC meeting.

2448. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda

1. Road signage problems

– Members noted that the spelling of “Knowl Green” varied on different signposts in the area. It was agreed that the Clerk would highlight this problem to ECC Highways.

- The Clerk had previously reported the badly damaged signpost in Ovington to ECC Highways (opposite Ovington House at the junction of Bakers Road and Bradley Hill). The work had been designated “scheduled” by Highways but the signpost was now literally falling apart so required urgent action. The Clerk would update Highways and also ask County Councillor Peter Schwier to expedite a replacement sign.

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 8.49pm.

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 6 July 2021 at 7.30pm in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul. Government Covid-19 guidance will be followed.

Signed: (Chairman) 6 July 2021