

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7 September 2021 at 7.30pm at
The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Sarah Mardon, David Middleditch and Tony Money and County Councillor Peter Schwier (entered during Item 2475.3 and left after delivering his report). Two members of the public were also present (applicants for the two vacant seats). In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

2466. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Councillors Harvey Bamford, Scott Bridge, Robin Lock, Stephen Nice and Dave Winslow and District Councillor Iona Parker. There were no Declarations of Interest.

2467. Resignation of Cllr Jill West

Members noted that Cllr Jill West had submitted her resignation in July and BDC had been informed. The Casual Vacancy process had subsequently been followed and the PC had been given authority by BDC to fill the vacancy by co-option. Members wished to record their thanks to Jill West for her significant contribution to Council matters over the last few years and sent their best wishes for the future.

2468. Filling of Two Casual Vacancies

The PC had been given authority to co-opt to fill two vacancies on the Council, arising from the resignations of former Councillors Norman East and Jill West. Two candidates had applied to join the Council and both were in attendance. It was proposed by Cllr David Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Sarah Mardon and unanimously agreed to appoint Ruth Carter and John Pheby to fill the vacant positions. The candidates took their seats and signed their respective Declarations of Acceptance of Office. The Chairman welcomed them both to the Parish Council.

2469. Public Forum

No public were present.

2470. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 6 July 2021

These Minutes were unanimously approved and were signed by the Chairman.

2471. Matters arising from the July PC meeting

1. Uneven block paving path at Savills, BSP (Item 2454.1) – The Clerk would obtain an update from Cllr Scott Bridge prior to the next meeting.

2. Overgrown hedge between the playing field and The Savilles (Item 2454b) – Cllr John Pheby reported that the hedge had now been cut back, which had resolved the immediate problem. Because this problem would recur annually it was agreed to ask the PFM to consider the ongoing maintenance commitment of the hedge and look into the merits of replacing it with boundary fencing. The Clerk would inform the PFM Chairman.

3. Neighbourhood Watch Group (Item 2462) – Members noted that the local Nwh Group would be spending £15 of the recent PC grant to print and distribute paper copies of the Braintree District Neighbourhood Watch 6 monthly newsletter to all residents.

4. BSP Speedwatch Group resume monitoring sessions – Because of Covid-19 restrictions the Speedwatch Group had not operated since March 2020. Easing of restrictions had meant that

sessions could recommence last week. 2 sessions had been undertaken to date and 5 vehicles had been reported to Essex Police for travelling significantly in excess of the 30 mph speed limit. Regular sessions would be held going forward.

5. Highway works update – Members were pleased to note that the signpost at the junction of Church Street/Vicarage Road and Otten Road in BSP had been replaced. Unfortunately, the BSP finger of the signpost included a spelling error. ECC Highways had been made aware of the error and would be rectifying it at the same time as the misspelt sign (“Knowles Green”) near Cutbush Farm at the junction of Pollards Green Road and Bakers Road, BSP. Members also noted that works were scheduled to replace the disintegrating signpost at Ovington (junction of Bakers Road and Bradley Hill). The Clerk recorded her thanks to County Cllr Peter Schwier for his assistance in expediting these matters.

2472. Essex County Council

The Clerk had circulated details of e-mails covering various topics, received from County Councillor Peter Schwier since the previous meeting. These were noted by Members. (See Item 2476 below.)

2473. Braintree District Council

Members noted the written report from District Councillor Iona Parker which included the following matters: BDC had given more than 10,000 grants, totalling £54m, to businesses affected by Covid restrictions and they were now focusing on post lockdown recovery going forward: BDC finances have been affected by the pandemic and they are considering ways to close the funding gap over the next 4 years: BDC now has a 5 year supply of deliverable homes which puts them in a better position to resist speculative planning applications: Work on a new GP surgery in Sible Hedingham is expected to commence in early 2022, on land secured through a Section 106 Agreement: the Councillor’s Grant Scheme will continue for this year and applications are invited from Parish Councils.

2474. BDC Local Plan

Members noted that the Inspector’s decision on Section 2 of the BDC Local Plan was awaited. There would be further consultation on Proposed Modifications to the Plan and BDC anticipated that the LP would be adopted by the end of 2021.

2475. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:		IN (£)	OUT (£)
8 July	ECC Verge Cutting payment	1970.45	
14 July	Fred Eady – Coolant for tractor		12.00
14 July	RCCE – Annual subscription		52.80
21 July	E-On – PFMC		13.49
29 July	Transfer	13.49	
30 July	Braintree District Neighbourhood Watch – Grant		25.00
30 July	David Smith – Litter picking at BSP		66.00
30 July	Fred Eady – Litter picking at Belchamp Otten		66.00
30 July	Diane Smith - Clerk’s salary and expenses		192.50
30 July	R H Nankivell – Cutting grass at Church Green, Belchamp Otten		110.00
24 Aug	E-On – PFMC		13.12
24 Aug	Transfer	13.12	
31 Aug	Diane Smith – Clerk’s salary and expenses		235.35

Current account balance at 31 August 2021 was £4370.87, Deposit account balance £15,822.34 and PFMC account £11,309.30.

2. Completion of 2020-21 Audit process – The Clerk reported that there had been no requests from residents to inspect the accounts and that PKF Littlejohn had confirmed receipt of the Audit Exemption Certificate for 2020-21.

3. CIF Grant application / Tree Planting Plan for Cole Green

The Clerk had submitted an application for a CIF grant to plant 3 new trees on Cole Green and to dig out the ditch in front of Savilles. The total project cost was estimated to be £934 and the CIF grant would cover 50% of the cost. The cost of the trees, stakes and delivery was £334. A final quotation was still awaited to dig out the ditch as this was subject to prior strimming of the ditch. A quotation for this preliminary work was being sought.

2476. Essex County Council (continued from Item 2472 above)

The Chairman welcomed County Cllr Peter Schwier to the meeting. County Cllr Schwier reported on the following matters: the new ECC administration had been in place for 100 days and he would forward a film that has been made of their achievements, as soon as it was available: NHS treatments had been delayed because of the Covid pandemic but 3 mobile operating theatres were now making a real impact on reducing the operation waiting lists: further information on the Covid booster vaccinations was expected shortly. The Chairman thanked County Cllr Schwier for the updates and County Cllr Schwier left the meeting.

2477. Reconsider project to crown reduce 3 Lime trees in Vicarage Road, BSP

In July 2020 the PC had agreed to defer the crown reduction work on the 3 Lime trees in Vicarage Road, BSP (see Item 2325b) for 1 year. Members briefly reconsidered this project but agreed not to proceed with it at this time because of current financial circumstances.

2478. Playing Field Management Committee

a) Application for Section 106 funds – Members noted that the PFMC were progressing the improvements to the Children’s Play Area. However, investigations had identified that the cost of removing the existing ‘locomotive and 2 carriages’ would be prohibitive. Following a request from the Chairman of the PFMC, the Clerk had enquired whether BDC would amend the Section 106 fund approval to include the purchase of a baby swing instead of a replacement train and 2 carriages? A quotation for the new specification (Monkey Bars and Baby Swing plus necessary safety matting) had been received from Wicksteed Leisure Ltd totalling £4178.20 excluding VAT. This is £154.80 less than the original grant application for £4333.00. Members unanimously endorsed this amendment and a response from BDC was awaited.

2479. Review of speed limits in Church Street, BSP – It was agreed that the Clerk should send details of the road speed limits around Knowl Green to County Cllr Peter Schwier, as this was experiencing similar speeding problems to those at Church Street. At Knowl Green there was a stretch of national speed limit between the 30 mph restriction at Gages Road, BSP and the 40mph limit on entry to Knowl Green. The roadway also narrowed significantly on entry to Knowl Green, where the bridge over Belchamp Brook was sited on a bend. It was hoped that this road could then also be part of the wider ECC review covering the increasing multi-purpose use of highways.

2480. Review of BDC Emergency Plan

The Clerk and Emergency Officer had studied the existing Emergency Plan and identified the need for updates to the BSP Primary School staff contact details. It was agreed that the relevant amendments should be submitted to BDC.

2481. Village Design Code

The Clerk confirmed that information on a Village Design Code would be placed on all noticeboards and in the next edition of Rural Rumbings, which would be circulated in early October. Volunteers would be sought to take part in the project. This would be considered further at the next meeting.

2482. Resignation of BSP Village Litter Picker

Members noted that David Smith had resigned as the Litter Picker for BSP. A volunteer had come forward to take over the duties and it was unanimously agreed to appoint Wendy Bird as the new Litter Picker for BSP with effect from 30 September 2021.

2483. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk. The following items were noted: Parliamentary Boundary Review Consultation: Review of BDC Councillors' Community Grant Scheme (PC to submit favourable comments): Invitations to join ECC Highways Devolution Scheme and Salt Bag Partnership (no action at this time): Software update required to BSP Defibrillator (temporary replacement defibrillator will be provided): Replacement of existing sign detailing service times at Belchamp Otten Church (PC have no objection).

2484. Planning applications and decisions

1. Applications – Members considered the following applications:

- 21/02201/HH – **Baytree House, Cole Green, BSP** – Erection of 1st floor extension above existing ground floor. NO COMMENT.
- 21/02389/HH – **Mill House, Gages Road, BSP** – Demolition of part of existing outbuilding and replacement with a single storey addition. Conversion of existing outbuildings and use of single storey addition as annexe. COMMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION.
- 21/02451/AGR – **1 Hobarts Hall, Borley Road, Belchamp Otten** – Prior notification of agricultural development. Erection of a general purpose agricultural building. FOR INFORMATION ONLY.
- 21/02386/HH - **Lantern Cottage, Cole Green, BSP** – Installation of outdoor swimming pool in rear garden and associated plant room. NO COMMENT.

2. Planning Appeals -

Refs: 3270942 and 3270944 - **The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green** – Conversion of redundant public house and self-contained flat to 2 dwellings. COMMENT: PC CONTINUE TO HOLD THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THEIR ORIGINAL SUBMISSION TO BDC ON THIS PLANNING APPLICATION.

3. Decisions –

- 21/01288/FUL – **Mill House, Gages Road, BSP** – Proposed conversion of existing outbuildings to single dwelling with central section replaced. WITHDRAWN.
- 21/00505/FUL - **The Community House, Gages Road, BSP** – Replace thatched roof with tiles. APPROVED.

2485. Public Forum

a) Covid precautions – Ventilation - Members noted that opening the highest windows in a room was the most effective way of ensuring adequate ventilation to protect against Covid-19. This would be considered for future meetings.

b) Broken signpost – The Clerk would report to ECC Highways that one finger had broken off the signpost at the junction of The Street and Stettles Road, Belchamp Otten.

2486. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda

Members agreed to discuss the ECC Verge Trial Consultation at the next meeting, as the deadline for comments was 30 November 2021.

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 8.32pm.

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

Signed: (Chairman) 19 October 2021