

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18 January 2022 at 7.30pm at
The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Scott Bridge, Ruth Carter, Robin Lock, Sarah Mardon, David Middleditch, Tony Money and John Pheby. District Councillor Iona Parker entered during Item 2523 and County Councillor Peter Schwier entered during Item 2532. Both Councillors left the meeting after delivering their respective reports. No members of the public were present. In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

2521. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Councillors David Winslow and Stephen Nice. Cllr Sarah Mardon declared a Prejudicial Interest in Item 2354.1 (Planning application 21/03717/TPOCON for tree works at The Old Rectory, Belchamp Otten) and left the meeting whilst this application was being discussed.

2522. Public Forum – No members of the public were present.

2523. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 30 November 2021

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

2524. Matters arising from the November PC meeting

- 1. Application for a VAS sign in Gages Road, BSP (Item 2504.1)** – The Clerk had submitted an application for a VAS (Vehicle Activated Speed) sign in Gages Road to County Councillor Peter Schwier. He had in turn registered his support for the application and had forwarded it to the BLHP (Braintree Local Highway Panel) for their consideration.
- 2. Christmas Tree arrangements (Item 2506.3)** - Members wished to record their thanks to Cllrs Lock, Bamford, Winslow and Middleditch and also to Andrew Weddup for their contribution towards sourcing, transporting, erecting and subsequently disposing of the Christmas tree. Many favourable comments on the tree had been received from residents. It was proposed by Cllr Harvey Bamford, seconded by Cllr Robin Lock and agreed (with one abstention) that a permanent fir tree should be planted on Cole Green for the future, as this would be more economic and require less volunteer labour than the erecting of a new cut tree every year. Members agreed however to seek the opinion of residents (leaflet drop to each house) before proceeding with this proposal.
- 3. Bulb planting (Item 2506.4)** – It was noted that the 400 free bulbs had been planted in various locations throughout the 2 villages by 5 Councillors.
- 4. Planning appeal for The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green (Item 2506.6)** – The Clerk had spoken to the BDC Planning Officer handling this application and they had confirmed that this appeal was still “in progress” but the reason for the delay with the Planning Inspectorate decision was not known. The Clerk would continue to monitor this.
- 5. Proposal to build 2 new prisons on the former Wethersfield Airbase site (Item 2518.3)** – Members noted that a Facebook Campaign Group had been set up to oppose this proposal and the Group were encouraging residents to sign a Parliamentary Petition. It was also noted that BDC had issued a Public Statement stating that they would not be commenting on the proposal until a planning application had actually been received and more details provided on the scheme.
- 6. Maintenance work on the tractor (Item 2519.1)** - Members noted that this work was now underway.

2525. Essex County Council

Members noted details of e-mails received from County Cllr Peter Schwier since the last PC meeting, which had been circulated by the Clerk. County Councillor Schwier would be attending to deliver his Report, later in the meeting (see Item 2533 below).

2526. Braintree District Council

District Councillor Iona Parker delivered her Report, which included the following matters: BDC Cabinet are recommending an increase in their Planning Enforcement budget of £200,000 to employ additional officers to deal with the increased Enforcement workload : the Councillor Community Grants Scheme will continue next year but it is expected to be reduced from £1500 to £1250 per Councillor, because of budgetary issues (D Cllr Parker thanked the PC for their response regarding ringfenced PC reserves which had been very helpful) : the BDC element of Council Tax is expected to increase by 2.5% for 2022-23 in response to the large budget gap created by the Covid 19 restrictions: Public hearings will be held at the end of March to consider the Parliamentary Boundary Review which is currently underway (3 new constituencies to be created in the Eastern Region including a proposed 'Haverhill and Halstead constituency' which would include our parishes).

2527. BDC Local Plan

Members noted that the 6 week Consultation on the Main Modifications to Section 2 of the Local Plan ends on 24 January. BDC are now hoping that the Plan will be adopted in March 2022. It was noted that BDC currently have a 4.9 year housing supply.

2528. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:		IN (£)	OUT (£)
7 Dec	Robin Lock for Christmas tree		158.83
8 Dec	VAT refund – Transfer of PFMC element		223.68
21 Dec	E-On – PFMC		14.08
24 Dec	Anglian Water		25.82
29 Dec	Transfer	14.08	
29 Dec	Transfer	25.82	
29 Dec	Diane Smith - Clerk's salary and expenses		192.50

Current account balance at 13 January 2022 was £4785.66. Deposit account balance £15,823 and PFMC account £11,589.

2. Approval of the Precept for 2022-23 – Cllr Tony Money (RFO) had circulated account figures for 2021-22 (to date) and Members discussed likely expenditure in 2022-23. It was proposed by Cllr Tony Money, seconded by Cllr David Middleditch and unanimously agreed to increase the Precept for Belchamp St Paul by £375 from £3375 to £3750 p.a. and the Precept for Belchamp Otten by £125 from £1125 to £1250 p.a. This would result in the Parish element of the Band D Tax Rate being £22.21 per household per annum for BSP and £16.53 per household for Belchamp Otten.

2529. CIF Grant application / Tree Planting Plan for Cole Green

1. CIF Grant application – The Clerk was pleased to report that the CIF Grant application had been approved. Following consultation with Members via e-mail, the Clerk had accepted the offer of the grant within the designated 30 day period. This action was formally approved by the Council.

2. Quotation to clear/trim the ditch in front of The Savilles - Members considered the revised quotation for the initial ditch works from RW Landscapes and Fencing. It was proposed by Cllr David

Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Harvey Bamford and unanimously agreed to accept the quotation of £470. Subject to suitable weather conditions it was expected that the works would commence on 3 February.

3. Quotation to trim the ditch in front of The Savilles twice a year in future – The Clerk detailed a quotation received from RW Landscape and Fencing to undertake this regular work going forwards. It was agreed to await completion of the initial clearance work (see Item 2529.2 above) and consider the matter again in the summer.

4. Order of replacement trees for Cole Green – The Clerk had obtained an updated quotation from Barcham (The Tree Specialists) to supply and deliver 2 Aesculus Indica and 1 Prunus Shirotae pot grown trees at a cost of £294.00 plus VAT (it was agreed that a Plant Kit was not required as these items were available locally). These trees would replace those felled on Cole Green over the last 2 years, in accordance with the PC Tree Re-Planting Plan which had been agreed in May 2021. It was proposed by Cllr David Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Harvey Bamford and unanimously agreed to accept this quotation.

2530. Playing Field Management Committee

Cllr Dave Winslow (Chairman of the PFMC) had provided an update by e-mail. The new play equipment was still expected to be installed in February 2022 and the PFMC had accepted a quote totalling £3350 + VAT for a ‘wetpour’ safety surface to be installed under the large slide. The invoice for the wet pour would be sent to the PC.

2531. Village Design Code

Members agreed that the VDC workshop would be held in The Community House, BSP on Saturday 23 April from 10-3pm. The Clerk would book the hall and confirm the date with RCCE. The Clerk would publicise this event in Rural Rumblings, on the PC website and notice boards and by including details of the workshop in the leaflet drop (see Item 2524.2 above).

2532. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk and the following items were noted: Transport East Consultation on Regional Transport Strategy (NO COMMENT) : Offer from BDC Chairman to attend local events : Newly launched ECC Transport and Travel Newsletter : Petition calling for Parliamentary legislation to enable Councils to have the choice to hold meetings online (MEMBERS TO RESPOND INDIVIDUALLY) : Renewal of PC domain name at £33.58 : National Grid proposals to construct an electricity sub-station near the A131 at Twinstead (CLERK TO REQUEST FURTHER DETAILS FROM HENNY, MIDDLETON AND TWINSTEAD PC).

2533. Essex County Council

County Councillor Peter Schwier delivered his Report, which included the following matters: the ECC Budget for 2022-23 would be increased by 4.5% to cover increased social care costs, inflation and general economic pressures (this is made up of a 2% increase in the main Precept figure plus a 1% increase in the Adult Social Care Precept for 2022-23 and a further 1.5% Adult Social Care increase deferred from 2021-22) : the ECC Public Rights of Way team has been working with Rambler’s Groups to identify problems with cross field footpaths. The new system has resulted in increased local engagement which has significantly improved the number of problems being solved: Warm Home grants were available to residents who met certain income criteria : the second stage of the Solar Together programme had commenced, enabling residents to purchase solar panels and batteries at reduced cost.

2534. Planning applications and decisions

1. New Applications –

- 21/03371/FUL – **Rose Cottage, Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten** – Erection of 1 bedroom timber framed cabin with joint use for family and short-term holiday let. COMMENT: (Considered by e-mail). Maintain road and footpath access during works. CLERK’S NOTE: Supplementary comment on parking provision not submitted as application already under active consideration.

- 21/03717/TPOCON – **The Old Rectory, The Street, Belchamp Otten** – Fell 3 Hawthorn trees, in front hedge, plus 1 Field Maple and 1 Poplar and cut down trees in corner of rear garden. NO COMMENT. Cllr Sarah Mardon declared a prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting whilst the item was discussed.

- 21/03456/TPOCON – **The Bockens, Gages Road, BSP** – Lift crown to 10 feet and thin crown by 30% on 1 Yew.

2. Decisions –

- 21/02899/HH – **1 Lodge Cottage, Knowl Green** – Retention of vehicular access. GRANTED.

2535. Public Forum - No members of the public were present.

2536. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda

1. Van abandoned in layby on Shearing Place Road, BSP – Members noted that the abandoned vehicle had been removed by BDC.

2. Moles on Cole Green – The Clerk reported that a series of large molehills had appeared on Cole Green. Cllr Tony Money agreed to make arrangements to deal with this problem.

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 8.52pm. The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 7.30pm in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul.

Signed: (Chairman) 1 March 2022