

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5 July 2022 at 7.30pm at
The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford (entered during Item 2596), Robin Lock, Sarah Mardon, David Middleditch, John Pheby and Dave Winslow. One member of the public was also present. In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

2590. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Councillors Scott Bridge, Ruth Carter and Tony Money plus County Councillor Peter Schwier and District Councillor Iona Parker. Cllr David Middleditch declared an Interest in Item 2605.2 (BDC decision on application 22/01348/SCR). Cllr Sarah Mardon declared an Interest in Item 2605.1 (Planning application 22/01212/HH).

2591. Public Forum – No matters were raised.

2592. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 24 May 2022

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

2593. Matters arising from the May PC meeting

1. Planning appeal for The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green (Item 2575.1) – Members noted that this appeal had been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on 30 May 2022.

2. Parking problem at Savilles, BSP (Item 2575.4) – A response from Eastlight Community Housing was still awaited.

3. Deeds for Parish Council owned land and property (Item 2575.6) – Cllr Scott Bridge had provided scanned copies of the larger documents to the Clerk. Scanned copies of all the documents would be circulated to Councillors shortly.

4. Defibrillator training session (Item 2575.8) – Members considered quotations, to run a Defibrillator training session, from both The Heartbeat Trust and the East Anglian Ambulance Service. It was agreed to delay a decision on these quotations until the Chairman had spoken to the village's First Responder to ascertain if he would be in a position to organise a training session. The matter would be considered again at the next PC meeting.

5. Audit for 2021-22 (Item 2581.4) – The Clerk confirmed that she had submitted the Audit Return and received a 'confirmation of receipt' from PKF Littlejohn. Their formal acceptance of the return would follow in due course. Members noted that the period for the 'Public Inspection of Accounts' was underway and would end on 22 July 2022.

6. Highway problems/works – Members noted progress on the following matters previously reported to ECC Highways: the roadside hedge at The Studio, Bakers Road, BSP had been trimmed by the owner, ECC Highways had repaired the 3 deep potholes on the side of the road near the Bradley Hill / Bakers Road junction, Ovington and they had also cut back the grass verges at the bottom of Bradley Hill to improve visibility at the junction.

2594. Co-option to fill Councillor vacancy for Belchamp Otten

The Clerk reported that no applications had been yet received for the Councillor vacancy for Belchamp Otten. Members agreed to 'spread the word' regarding the vacancy and the matter would be considered again when an application was received.

2595. 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. No report had been received from County Councillor Schwier this month.

2596. Braintree District Council

District Councillor Iona Parker had submitted a report which covered the following matters: the BDC proposal to introduce a Members Forum as part of the process for considering larger planning applications (see Item 2605.4): the annual BDC performance reports which showed that they had delivered 417 affordable homes in the last 12 months (the highest number ever delivered in a single year), they had also prevented 246 cases of homelessness, provided support to 1433 local businesses, provided 5800 passenger journeys as part of the Community Transport Scheme, launched a new Locate Braintree website and worked with partners to support Ukrainian refugees arriving in the District.

2597. BDC Local Plan

District Councillor Iona Parker reported that Section 2 of the Local Plan had recently been found “legally sound” by the two Planning Inspectors who had undertaken the examination. The BDC Local Plan Sub-Committee were expected to approve the document at their meeting tonight and the Full Council would then finally adopt the whole plan at their meeting on 25 July 2022. Adoption of the Plan will put BDC in the best position possible to fight against speculative, unsustainable and poorly designed housing developments. Residents will also have greater certainty as to where new developments will be built and the infrastructure and facilities that will accompany them,

2598. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:		IN (£)	OUT (£)
18 May	HMRC – VAT refund	1917.24	
24 May	E-On – PFMC		14.06
24 May	Transfer	14.06	
24 May	Transfer (VAT to PFMC)		1536.46
26 May	BDC Street Cleaning Agreement 2022-23	1377.38	
30 May	Fred Eady – Belchamp Otten litter picking		66.00
30 May	Diane Smith – Clerk’s salary and expenses		192.50
30 May	R H Nankivell – Grass cutting, Church Green, Belchamp Otten		110.00
30 May	Wendy Bird – BSP litter picking		66.00
1 June	BHIB Ltd – PC Insurance		554.58
9 June	ECC – Verge Cutting Agreement 2022-23	1970.45	
21 June	E-On – PFMC		15.36
22 June	Transfer	15.36	
27 June	Diane Smith – Clerk’s salary and expenses		192.50
27 June	Anglian Water – PFMC		35.89
27 June	Transfer	35.89	

Current account balance at 28 June 2022 was £5364.88, Deposit account balance £15823.65 and PFMC account £5291.82 (including £1822.35 received from 2022 BSP village fete).

2599. Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Financial Procedures and Code of Conduct

The Clerk had reviewed the Council's 2017 Code of Conduct document and incorporated several modifications endorsed by the National Association of Local Councils in the interim. The draft revised Code of Conduct had been circulated to Members and revised copies of the remaining documents would follow in due course. These would be considered at the next PC meeting. The Clerk highlighted the importance of all Councillors reading through the Code of Conduct so that they understood their legal responsibilities in fulfilling the role of a Parish Councillor.

2600. Playing Field Management Committee

Cllr Dave Winslow (Chairman of the PFMC) reported that the Section 106 monies had still not been received from BDC and this was causing financial problems for the PFMC. The Clerk agreed to chase BDC again and if no response was forthcoming she would ask our District Councillor for her assistance in expediting the £4178.20 owed.

Cllr John Pheby requested that the PFMC make arrangements to cut back the boundary hedge at the rear of the residential properties in The Savilles. The hedge was now encroaching over the access road and causing problems for the owners of the 13 vehicles which regularly used it. Cllr Dave Winslow agreed to cut back the hedge and would raise the issue at the PFMC meeting the following evening, to consider a longer term solution (possibly funded by a CIF grant – see Item 2604)

2601. Village Design Code Working Group

The Chairman had not yet had an opportunity to discuss membership of the VDC Working Group with certain residents so it was agreed to consider this again at the next meeting.

2602. Bi-annual review of Tree Planting Plan for Cole Green, Belchamp St Paul

The Clerk suggested the following updates to the Tree Planting Plan a) Tree 6 had been felled in January 2022 after a significant branch had fallen off and made it unstable and b) Add the Flowering Cherry and 2 Indian Chestnuts which had been planted recently in front of The Savilles. She would revise the Tree Planting Plan accordingly and circulate it to Councillors. Cllrs John Pheby and Harvey Bamford confirmed that the newly planted trees were being watered regularly during dry weather. All trees on Cole Green would be re-inspected in late Spring 2023.

2603. Strimming of ditch between The Savilles and Cole Green, Belchamp St Paul

Members noted that the contractor had been expected to clear the final debris from the February works on 24 June 2022 but that this work had not actually taken place. She would continue to chase the contractor for an explanation/ alternative date. It was noted that Eastlight Housing had recently undertaken their regular strimming of the top of the ditch on The Savilles side but on this occasion they had also cut down into the ditch on their side.

Members would consider the ongoing maintenance arrangements at the next meeting.

2604. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk and the following items were noted: ECC scheme to encourage the planting of Wildflower Seeds by PC's on specific stretches of verge (License required): BDC Long Service Presentations for Councillors and Clerks with over 35 years of service: CIF grant scheme for 2022-23 (No application to be made this year but Clerk to put CIF grant on Agenda for May 2023 to consider suitable projects for next year): ECC "Levelling Up" proposals: Renewal of RCCE membership for 2022-23 at £44 plus VAT

2605. Planning applications, decisions and appeals

1. New Applications

- 22/01212/HH – **The Old Rectory, The Street, Belchamp Otten** – Construction of new glasshouse, attached potting shed, accompanying cellar and associated walled garden. Cllr Sarah Mardon declared a Prejudicial Interest in this application and took no part in the decision-making process. Because of the deadline for responses to this application, Councillors considered this application via e-mail and agreed to make NO COMMENT. This decision was formally approved at the meeting.

- 22/01404/FUL – **Shearing Place, Shearing Place Road, BSP** – Retention of rural workers dwelling on a permanent basis, including erection of single storey side extension and associated operational equipment. Because of the deadline for responses to this application, Councillors considered this application via e-mail and agreed to make a COMMENT IN SUPPORT of the application. This decision was formally approved at the meeting. The comment had already been submitted to BDC.

- 22/01598/AGR – **Cutbush Farm, Bakers Road, BSP** – Prior notification of General Purpose agricultural building to store machinery and fertilizer. FOR INFORMATION ONLY.

2. Decisions

- 22/01348/SCR – **Land north of Cutbush Farm, Bakers Road, BSP** – Erection of solar photovoltaic (PV) array, with a total export capacity up to 49.99mw. Cllr David Middleditch declared a Prejudicial Interest in this item (see Minutes of previous meeting). ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT NOT REQUIRED.

3. Appeal decision

- APPS 3270942 and 3270944 – **The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green** – Conversion of redundant public house and self-contained flat to 2 dwellings (Original refs: 20/00723/FUL and 20/00724/LB) – APPEAL DISMISSED.

4. Formation of BDC Members Forum – Members discussed the BDC proposal to form a Members Forum, which would discuss larger (more than 10 houses) planning applications with the developers prior to their consideration by the BDC Planning Committee. The Forum would include up to 2 PC members from the individual parishes concerned as well as members of BDC Planning Committee and the relevant District Councillor(s). Members welcomed the opportunity to obtain more information on larger planning applications for the 2 parishes and BDC would be informed that the PC were therefore in favour of the proposal.

2606. Public Forum - No matters were raised.

2607. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda

As part of a primary school community improvement project a local youngster had approached the Chairman and suggested that posters be placed around the villages highlighting the ongoing problem of pet owners not picking up after their dogs. The possibility of providing an additional dog poo bin was also discussed. The PC unanimously supported the poster campaign as it was agreed that the dog poo problem had increased significantly since Lockdown.

Next meeting

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 7.30pm in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul. The meeting closed at 8.31pm.

Signed: (Chairman) 6 September 2022