

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 29 November 2022 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 (left the meeting after Item 2666.2), Tony Money, Hannah Rumsey and Dave Winslow. No members of the public were present. In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

2649. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Councillors Scott Bridge, Ruth Carter and John Pheby plus District Councillor Iona Parker and County Councillor Peter Schwier. Councillor David Middleditch declared a Prejudicial Interest in Item 2666.3 (Solar Farm proposal) and left the meeting before this matter was discussed.

2650. Public Forum – No members of the public were present.

2651. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 18 October 2022

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

2652. Matters arising from the October PC meeting

- 1. BSP Speedwatch Group – New co-ordinator required (Item 2632.1)** – The Chairman reported that a resident had expressed an interest in this role. He would pass their contact details on to the Clerk to progress the matter.
- 2. Full dog bin in Bakers Road, BSP (Item 2648.1)** – This full bin had been reported to BDC twice since the last meeting and both times it had been emptied very quickly. BDC were also reviewing the frequency of emptying this bin since it was clearly filling up much more quickly than in the past.
- 3. Publishing the Braintree District Councillor and Essex County Councillor Reports on the PC website (Item 2648.2)** - Members noted that the respective Councillors had agreed to their reports being published on the PC website and this was now in operation (under the 'Minutes' tab). The Report format would now include more direct online links to enable residents to obtain additional information more readily.
- 4. Repair of pothole on Long Lane** – Members noted that a permanent repair of this deep pothole had recently been completed by ECC Highways.

2653. Essex County Council

No report had been received from County Councillor Peter Schwier this month but Members noted the regular e-mails that he had forwarded to the PC since the last PC meeting.

2654. Braintree District Council

Members noted the report from District Councillor Iona Parker which included the following matters: 2023-24 BDC Budget - Rising inflation, fuel costs and increased pay awards mean that cost savings will need to be made but no decisions have yet been made: Cost of Living Increase – A schedule of measures available, in particular to low income families, has been prepared, circulated and copied onto the notice boards and website: Consultation by Transport East on rural connectivity and transport in rural areas: Essex Forest Initiative expanded to include privately owned land: and an update provided on the application to the BLHP for deer signage near Mashey Wood.

2655. Finance

1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:		IN (£)	OUT (£)
18 Oct	RCCE – Annual subscription		52.80
21 Oct	E-On – PFMC		24.88
24 Oct	Transfer	24.88	
24 Oct	Bitten and Gibson – p/o Community House Grant		194.68
31 Oct	Diane Smith – Clerk’s salary and expenses		192.50
25 Nov	Fred Eady – Belchamp Otten litter picking		66.00
25 Nov	Diane Smith – Clerk’s salary and expenses		192.50
25 Nov	Wendy Bird – BSP litter picking		66.00

Current account balance at 29 November 2022 was £5481.27.75, Deposit account balance £15827.34 and PFMC account £9600.08.

2. Initial consideration of Budget/Precept for 2023-24 – Members noted the 2022-23 PC Accounts Schedule to date, that had been prepared and circulated by the RFO, along with a projected expenditure schedule for 2023-24. Cllr Tony Money (RFO) briefly explained the figures and their implications. The current figures would result in a small deficit (- £677) at the end of the 2023-24 financial year. It was noted that no adjustment for inflation had been included to the draft 2023-24 figures but that this would need to be considered before final figures were agreed at the next meeting.

2656. Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Financial Procedures and Code of Conduct

Following her recent eye surgery the Clerk expected to be in a position to progress this matter shortly.

2657. Submission of a Land Registry application for Title Absolute for Churchyard Green, Belchamp Otten

The Clerk reported that she had downloaded and completed the relevant Land Registry forms and would be in a position to complete the process and submit them shortly. This would be considered again at the next meeting.

2658. Meeting Dates for 2023

Members considered the provisional dates circulated by the Clerk and agreed that meeting dates in 2023 would be as follows: Council meetings - 17 January, 28 February, 4 April (commencing at 8pm), 23 May (Annual Council meeting), 4 July, 5 September, 17 October and 28 November 2023. Annual Assembly meetings – Monday 3 April for Belchamp Otten (at the Red Lion) and Tuesday 4 April for BSP. All meetings to be held at The Community House, BSP at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise.

2659. BDC Open Spaces Plan Review

Members reviewed the existing Open Spaces Plan and agreed to request that 2 new additions be inserted by BDC. These were a) kerbing of the roadside verge at The Street, Belchamp Otten to improve landscape quality and protect this habitat for wildlife and plants and b) regeneration works (trimming/coppicing) to the hedge between the Playing Field and The Savilles at BSP to improve landscape quality.

2660. Playing Field Management Committee

Members noted that the overgrown hedge between the Playing Field and the access road at the rear of The Savilles had been cut back by volunteers. The Council recorded their thanks to the volunteers. Cllr Dave Winslow (Chair of the PFMC) reported that the Committee had agreed to purchase new swings to replace those removed earlier in the year because the timber supports had rotted. The new swings would cost £3700 plus VAT (not including any safety matting) and were scheduled to be installed in February 2023. Members were pleased to note that the Dog Show on Cole Green had been very successful and they wished to record their thanks to everyone who helped organise this village event.

2661. Village Design Code Working Group

Cllr Hannah Rumsey reported that she had approached the church and would be putting up notices in both villages asking for helpers to come forward to undertake recording work around the villages as part of the VDC. The Clerk would also include the request for help in Rural Rumbings and on the PC website.

2662. Defibrillator training / Second safety recall on BSP defibrillator

The Clerk had brought the defibrillator to the meeting and would be holding a short familiarisation session for Councillors immediately after the meeting.

Members noted that a second recall on the Belchamp St Paul defibrillator had been issued and undertaken and the device was now back in operation once more. New pads had also been ordered for the Belchamp Otten defibrillator as they were approaching their expiry date.

2663. Parking problem at Savilles, BSP

Members noted further information on the history of the parking situation provided by Cllr John Pheby. The Clerk confirmed that Eastlight Housing Association had contacted their tenants at Savilles and reminded them that they should not park in the hatched area, reserved for Emergency Vehicles, and on the main access road through the site. The Clerk would contact the owners of the remaining properties in Savilles with the same request.

2664. Christmas Tree on Cole Green

1. Arrangements for 2022 - Cllr Robin Lock confirmed that the existing tree lights were in good working order but that new batteries would be required at a total cost of £30. This expenditure was agreed unanimously. A commercial tree had been provisionally chosen but Cllr Tony Money informed the PC that a local farmer, who was planning to cut down a row of Norwegian Spruce trees overshadowing his barn, had offered to provide a tree for the PC free of charge. Members agreed to accept this kind offer, subject to the tree being considered suitable for Cole Green. Arrangements would be confirmed the following day and the tree would hopefully be erected the following weekend.

2. Future arrangements – The Clerk would attempt to obtain details of the route of underground utilities on Cole Green before the next meeting, so that the potential location of any permanent tree could be considered.

2665. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk and the following items were noted: BDC 2023-24 Budget initial proposals – Money saving suggestions included a review of litter and dog bin collection routes and a possible 33% reduction in Street

Cleaning Agreement payments [PC object to both these suggestions as bins are being used more, post pandemic, than ever before and any reduction in Street Cleaning Agreement payments would have a disproportionate impact on the PC's own budget. Suggest BDC reduce/stop road gully cleaning instead] : BDC Scrutiny Committee Review into Litter Management across the District [PC to respond to questionnaire noting 2 paid litter pickers plus voluntary litter picking by residents]: BDC Warm Space scheme – Request to include mobile library parked at BSP if practical [PC in favour of the scheme but unable to suggest/provide a suitable parking spot at this time]: EALC “20’s Plenty” campaign [PC agreed not to lobby ECC]: Annual Charity Commission Report for Cole Green - The 2021-22 Nil Report had been submitted to the Charity Commission by the Clerk: Braintree and District Table Tennis League were offering to supply equipment to any group willing to set up a local table tennis team [publicise in Rural Rumbblings].

2666. Planning applications and decisions

1. New Application

- 22/03036/HH – Lindsells Farmhouse, Hickford Hill, BSP – 2 storey rear extension, front porch canopy, replacement windows and doors and re-render of the building. NO COMMENT.

2. Decisions

-22/01766/HH and 22/01767/LBC – Wakes Hall, Wakes Hall Lane, BSP – Erection of 2 storey side extension, single storey side extension and detached outbuilding. GRANTED.

-22/01930/HH – Greengages, Cole Green, BSP – Single storey side extension (enlarge garage and change flat roof to pitched). GRANTED.

Cllr David Middleditch left the meeting.

3. Solar Farm proposal at Bakers Road, BSP – Members noted that following the last PC meeting BSR Energy had confirmed that due to an administrative error their mailing house had failed to deliver consultation leaflets to Belchamp Otten, Knowl Green and other outlying areas. Once the PC had highlighted the discrepancy, BSR Energy had re-opened the consultation online on 26 October and it had run until 11 November. Letters had been sent by first class post to all 300+ households missed from the original leaflet drop, publicising the consultation and detailing the extension to the deadline for comments to be submitted.

The full planning application for the scheme was expected to be submitted to BDC in Spring 2023. It was agreed to prepare draft posters/leaflets in advance to be distributed by the PC at that time.

2667. Public Forum - No members of the public were present.

2668. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda - None

Next meeting

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 17 January 2023 at 7.30pm in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul. The meeting closed at 8.53pm.

Signed: (Chairman) 17 January 2023