

## **BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 7.30pm at  
The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul

**Present:** Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Ruth Carter, Holly Chaplin, Dominic Curran, Sarah Mardon, Tony Money and Hannah Rumsey. 1 member of the public was also present. In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

### **2791. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Robin Lock, David Middleditch and John Pheby, County Councillor Peter Schwier and District Councillor Iona Parker. There were no declarations of interest.

### **2792. Recent death of Norman East**

Members were saddened to hear of the recent death of Norman East, a former longstanding Councillor for Belchamp St Paul. Norman had served on the PC for a total of 30 years, until his retirement in 2021, and had been a very active member of the village community. The PC wished to record their condolences to Norman's family.

### **2793. Public Forum**

- 1. Long Lane byway** – It was reported that the surface of this popular byway was deteriorating with ruts and deep puddles, particularly at the end nearest Cutbush Farm. This would be reported to ECC Highways for repair.
- 2. Fowes Lane drainage problem** – Although the pond adjacent to the Fowes Lane roadway had recently been cleared out by the landowner, there was still standing water at this location. BDC would be asked to re-inspect to establish if the drainage channels were functioning properly.
- 3. Flooding problems** – It was agreed that the Clerk would report flooding issues at Knowl Green (in front of The Cherry Tree) and at Otten Road (corner of the junction with the road/path to Whitehouse Farm) to ECC Highways.

### **2794. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023**

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

### **2795. Matters arising from the September PC meeting**

- 1. Change to PC bank signatories (Item 2775.1)** – It was expected that Cllr Sarah Mardon would shortly complete the process to become a bank signatory on the PC account.
- 2. Bus Network Consultation 2023 (Item 2778)** – The Clerk reported that leaflets had been delivered to every house in both villages publicising this consultation and the ECC intention to withdraw the DaRT minibus scheme. It was not known how many local people had consequently responded to the consultation online but only a handful of paper copies of the survey had been picked up from the notice boards.
- 3. P3 Footpath Group (Item 2784)** – Members were pleased to note that ECC had officially increased the P3 Group budget for 2023-24 from £220 to £360, as requested. They had also agreed to pay for a third local person to be trained to use the brushcutter.

### **2796. Essex County Council matters**

Members noted the e-mails that had been received from County Councillor Schwier since the last

meeting including those regarding the Essex Energy Switch programme and the Pothole repair trial.

#### **2797. Braintree District Council matters**

District Councillor Iona Parker had not submitted a report for this meeting.

#### **2798. Finance**

<b>1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:</b>		IN (£)	OUT (£)
11 Sept	Peter Hesketh (P3 Group expenses)		92.84
18 Sept	Transfer for diesel – PFMC share	128.12	
19 Sept	RCCE – 2023-24 subscription		52.80
21 Sept	E-On – PFMC		18.59
21 Sept	Transfer	18.59	
25 Sept	Anglian Water – PFMC		51.00
28 Sept	Braintree District Council – Precept second instalment	2500.00	
29 Sept	R H Nankivell – Grass cutting of Churchyard Green, Belchamp Otten		110.00
29 Sept	Fred Eady – Litter picking at Belchamp Otten		69.00
29 Sept	NFU MUTUAL – Tractor insurance		193.65
29 Sept	Diane Smith – Clerk’s salary and expenses		198.82
29 Sept	Wendy Bird – Litter picking at BSP		69.00
2 Oct	Transfer	51.00	
2 Oct	HMRC – Tax on salary		16.60
4 Oct	Nathan Jacobs – Clearing ditch at Cole Green		200.00

Current account balance at 4 October was £6630.00, Deposit account £4913.53, PFMC account £5934.47 and 31 Day Notice account £11045.22.

#### **2799. Land Registry – Change of PC contact details recorded**

The Clerk reported that the Land Registry had amended their records to show the current Clerk’s home address as the official contact address for the PC. It was hoped that the PC’s second submission, for full absolute title of Churchyard Green at Belchamp Otten, would soon be processed by the Land Registry.

#### **2800. Clearance of the ditch in front of Savilles**

Members were pleased to note that the ditch clearance work had now been completed. Members recorded their thanks to Cllr John Pleby for his contribution to achieving this result.

#### **2801. New dog bin on FP26 near The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green**

Members noted that BDC were currently undertaking a review of all bins across the District to evaluate the demand, costs and resources available. Once the review is complete, they will consider the PC request for an additional dog bin at Knowl Green. The PC will consider this matter again in 6 months if nothing further has been heard from BDC in the meantime.

#### **2802. Playing Field Management Committee**

Cllr Holly Chaplin reported that the Open Park Day on 17 September had been very successful with many residents getting involved. The pavilion had been repainted, areas of the playing field itself had been trimmed/ tidied up and the children’s play equipment had been repaired/repainted where necessary. Members were also pleased to note that a football team would be hiring the playing field from the end of October.

### **2803. Local Development Code Working Group**

Members noted that the Public Exhibitions on 28 September and 4 October had been very well attended and important feedback had been obtained from residents regarding their individual priorities on the assessment work undertaken so far. This feedback will be reflected in the drafting of a village wide survey which is the next step in the LDC process. Councillors recorded their thanks to the members of the WG for all their work compiling and manning the exhibitions and to residents for their engagement in the process.

### **2804. Car parked on roadway at the junction of Church Street and Otten Road**

The Clerk reported that Cllr John Pheby had not received any response from Essex Police to his most recent e-mail, sent on 8 September. The car is still being parked in this dangerous location and the lack of response from the Police is very disappointing.

### **2805. Defibrillator at BSP out of service**

Members noted with deep concern that on 5 October a local person experienced a health emergency and when they rang 999 they were advised to go to the The Community House at BSP to access a defibrillator. When they arrived at the defibrillator they saw the Out of Service notice placed there by the Clerk. Thankfully on this occasion an ambulance responded to the 999 call shortly afterwards and treated the patient successfully.

The Clerk had informed 'The Circuit' on 9 August that this defibrillator was not available, because we were waiting for spare parts, and had received an e-mail from them by return confirming that their records had been updated, yet they had subsequently directed someone to the broken defibrillator in an emergency situation. It was agreed that the Clerk would raise this potentially serious error with the East of England Ambulance Service and also continue to expedite repairs so that the defibrillator could become operational once again.

### **2806. New Speedwatch co-ordinator found**

Members were very pleased to learn that Cllr Dominic Curran had agreed to take over the Speedwatch Co-ordinator role. Members of the Speedwatch Group would be contacted to confirm that they were still available for the Speedwatch sessions which would hopefully resume in the next few weeks.

### **2807. Correspondence**

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk and the following items were noted: ECC consultations on the Recycling Centre Booking System and the Essex Waste Partnership Waste Strategy: New Essex Energy Switch opportunity: The Electoral Commission – Important changes for applications to vote by post or proxy from 31 October 2023: New account set up with The Charity Commission to submit future reports and information for The Village Green at BSP: Woodland Trust Free Tree Pack Giveaway.

### **2808. Planning applications and decisions**

#### **1. New Applications**

- 23/02345/HH – Greengages, Cole Green, BSP – Single storey side extension. Following a discussion it was agreed to make 'No Comment' on this application.

- 23/02438/HH and 23/02439/LBC – Wayside Cottage, Borley Road, Belchamp Otten – Proposed installation of air source heat pump and PV panels. NO COMMENT.
- 23/02301/DAC – Larks Farmhouse, Sewells Lane, Belchamp Otten – Approval of details reserved by Condition 4 of 22/01138/LBC – Replace brick infill to timber frame with wood fibre board insulation and internal lime plaster. External appearance unchanged (render over). NO COMMENT.

**2. Decisions**

- 23/02124/TPO – Baytree House, Cole Green, BSP – Tree works in the Conservation Area. Beech – Cut back 3 branches by 3m. Fell Holly. Fell Bay. GRANTED.

**3. Solar Farm proposal at Bakers Road, BSP – Application 23/01413/FUL**

Further investigations/developments had taken place and identified the need for 2 further submissions to BDC Planning Department regarding this application. After studying the draft submissions, Councillors unanimously agreed to submit them to BDC, the first consisting of the PC’s response to the LPA’s Independent Landscape and Visual Issues Advice and the second expressing concern about a perceived and/or actual conflict of interest that has arisen regarding BSR and their planning agent.

**2809. Public Forum** – It was agreed that the submission detailed in 2808.3 above would be copied on the PC website to keep residents updated.

**2810. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda**

**1. Proposed national analogue phone changeover to digital (The Big Switch Off)** – The national switch off of analogue telephone connections is scheduled for December 2025 and those with landline phones will need to switch these over to an internet-based service. Concern was expressed that this changeover had not yet been sufficiently publicised especially to residents who did not use digital technology. It was suggested that BT were expecting to provide a full digital service to BSP (fibre to premises) in the next 18 months or so.

**2. Trees recently felled in Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten** – Members noted that residents are concerned that one of the felled trees might have been the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. The Clerk had raised this concern with BDC and was awaiting a response.

**3. Community House hirers using the Playing Field parking facility** – It was noted that hirers can currently only use the Playing Field parking facility if they request for special arrangements to be made and if they pay a small additional charge. Members felt that it was to everyone’s advantage for more hirers to use this facility and Cllr Dominic Curran agreed to speak to the Community House Bookings Secretary to suggest that hirers should be routinely informed of this additional facility.

**Next meeting**

The next Council meeting will be held in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul on Tuesday 28 November at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.41 pm.

Signed: ..... (Chairman) 28 November 2023