

Belchamp St Paul and Belchamp Otten Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 7.30pm at The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul.

Present: Councillors Sarah Mardon (Chairman), Ruth Carter, Robin Lock, David Middleditch, Tony Money and Hannah Rumsey. In attendance: Cllr Iona Parker (Braintree District Council) and John Douglass (Clerk).

3020 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest Apologies were received from Cllrs Alex Bills, Holly Chaplin, Dominic Curran, David McKee, and Peter Schwier (Essex County Council). No declarations of interest were made.

3021 PUBLIC DISCUSSION TIME (5 minutes) No matters were raised.

3022 Approval of the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 January 2025 and 23 January 2025 *A resolution to approve the 14/1/25 minutes was proposed by Cllr Lock, seconded by Cllr Carter, and passed unanimously. A resolution to approve the 23/1/25 minutes was proposed by Cllr Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Rumsey, and passed unanimously.*

3023 Matters arising from the January PC meeting (not covered separately on the Agenda)

3024 Essex County Council matters Emails received from Cllr Schwier (Essex CC) were circulated to Councillors on 17 March.

3025 Braintree District Council matters Cllr Iona Parker (Braintree D C) gave a report on District matters, which will be published on the website. The main content concerned the reorganisation of local authorities into larger unitary authorities, and the likely effect on Essex C C and Braintree D C, and the budgetary implications.

3026 Finance – Approval of receipts and payments

RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS & BALANCES

No Report had been received at the time of the meeting.

Finance – 2025/26 Precept

The Precept demand has been filed with Braintree D C, and is at the same level as last year.

	<i>Belchamp St Paul</i>	<i>Belchamp Otten</i>
<i>Tax base</i>	<i>£166.34</i>	<i>£75.55</i>
<i>Parish element Band D</i>	<i>£22.54</i>	<i>£16.55</i>
<i>An increase of</i>		<i>0.18%</i>
<i>A decrease of</i>	<i>0.84%</i>	
<i>Precept</i>	<i>£3,750</i>	<i>£1,250</i>

Finance – Accounting for PFMC The matter will be carried forward to the next meeting.

3027 Vacant BSP Councillor seat The vacancy remains unfilled.

3028 Strimming/clearing the ditch in front of Savilles at Cole Green, BSP Cllr McKee has informed the Clerk that clearance of the ditch has been undertaken by a local resident.

3029 PFMC – Review of Terms of Reference - update The matter will be carried forward to the next meeting.

3030 Local Development Code Working Group – update Cllr Rumsey will continue to keep the Council apprised of developments in this matter.

3031 Speedwatch & Traffic One Speedwatch session in Gages Rd, BSP, has been undertaken by Essex police. The poor state of local roads due to potholes and broken edges was discussed at length by Councillors, including Cllr Parker (Braintree D C). Potholes were reported to Cllr Schwier (Essex C C) on a regular basis, with little apparent response from the County Council. A growing problem is delivery vans (and other traffic) using Bakers Cut (the small access road onto Cole Green), and churning up the grass on the Green. Confusion with misaligned postcodes in the area does not help. A number of options to address the issue were discussed, with new signage being the only realistic proposal.

3032 Defibrillators Monthly checks on the two machines were undertaken by Cllrs Lock and Mardon to verify good working order.

3033 StreetScene BDC Contract The Clerk reported on the 2025/26 contract from Braintree D C, received recently. The agreement funds wages for 2 litter pickers, and in return the P C has to file an activity report back to Braintree on a four-monthly basis. The amount payable by Braintree D C on invoice is £1,418.70, an increase of 3% over the previous year. There will be four channel sweeps of the Parish roads during the year, and the dates will be published on the P C website. *A resolution to approve the contract was proposed by Cllr Carter, seconded by Cllr Middleditch, and passed unanimously.*

3034 Flooding in local streets 1) Bevingdon, Belchamp Otten – reported as a matter of urgency to Cllr Schwier – site will be jetted ASAP. 2) Wakes Hall/Pollard Green Lane, Knowl Green – Cllr Schwier asked to chase. The Clerk was instructed to follow up these and other recent incidents with Essex C C.

3035 Belchamp Otten village sign Cllr Rumsey is investigating sources of funding. No clear preference has emerged from residents regarding the material of the sign.

3036 Hickford Hill Notice Board The board requires repair or renewal. The Clerk was instructed to investigate a possible s106 capital refurbishment grant with Cllr Parker of Braintree D C.

3037 BDC emergency planning review Awaiting annual review from Braintree DC.

3038 Correspondence Recent correspondence was circulated to Councillors on 17 March.

3039 Planning – New Applications / Decisions

A 24/02710/FUL Shearing Place, BSP – self build replacement rural workers dwelling - Determination by 27/2/25. *Application withdrawn.*

B 24/01669/LBC Lymburners, BSP – *Application withdrawn.*

C 25/00035/HH 1 The Myrtles, The Street, B Otten – Demolition of existing extension & replacement with new extension – *Permission granted.*

D 25/00250/FUL BSP School – Replace fencing & 4 gates. Determination 15/5/25.

E 25/00177/COUPA Fowes Lane, B Otten – Change of use to 3 houses – Planning permission now required.

Lamberts Farm/Michaels Yard BSP The Clerk was instructed to contact the owners and request 1) fencing of the open ground; and 2) change Michaels to Michael's to reflect correct English grammar.

3040 PUBLIC DISCUSSION TIME (5 minutes) No matters were raised.

3041 Any urgent matters and proposals for future agenda items The Clerk stated that his contract with the P C expires on 31/3/25. He would like to continue in the role, and requested the matter be tabled for discussion at the next meeting on 15/4/25.

3042 The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 15 April 2025 at 7:30pm in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul.

3043 The Annual Parish Assemblies will be held on: Belchamp Otten – Mon 7 April 2025 7:30 pm – Red Lion PH; Belchamp St Paul – Tues 8 April 2025 7:30 pm – Community House.

The meeting closed at 8:50 pm.

Signed(Chairman)

15 April 2025