

## Belchamp St Paul and Belchamp Otten Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 May 2025 at 7:30 pm at the Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul.

**Present:** Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Holly Chaplin, Dominic Curran, Sarah Mardon, and Tony Money. In attendance: John Douglass (Clerk).

One member of the public attended.

**3064 Election of Chairman and signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office.** Councillor McKee stated he would be happy to be reappointed Chairman. *A resolution to reappoint Councillor McKee as Chairman of the Parish Council was proposed by Cllr Curran, seconded by Cllr Mardon, and passed unanimously.* Cllr McKee signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**3065 Election of Vice Chairman.** Cllr Mardon stated she would be happy to be reappointed as Vice Chairman. *A resolution to reappoint Cllr Mardon as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council was proposed by Cllr Chaplin, seconded by Cllr Curran, and passed unanimously.*

**3066 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest.** Apologies were received from: Cllrs Alex Bills, Ruth Carter, Robin Lock, David Middleditch, and Hannah Rumsey. Apologies were also received from Cllrs Iona Parker (Braintree D C), and Peter Schwier (Essex C C). A declaration of interest was made by the Clerk in respect of item 3085 – Clerk's contract.

**3067 PUBLIC DISCUSSION TIME (5 minutes).** No matters were raised.

**3068 Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2025.** *A resolution to approve the minutes was proposed by Cllr Mardon, seconded by Cllr Curran, and passed unanimously.*

**3069 Matters arising from the April PC meeting (not covered separately on the Agenda).** No matters were raised.

**3070 To note the Minutes of the Belchamp Otten Annual Parish Assembly 7 April 2025 and the Belchamp St Paul APA 8 April 2025.** The draft minutes had been circulated to Councillors on 11/4/25.

**3071 Annual Administrative Matters:**

- **Appointment/approval of Council Officers and Representatives.** It was noted that Mr Robin Lock has resigned as a councillor. The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, expressed his appreciation at the sterling contribution made by Robin over the years.

The Chairman was re-appointed ex-officio as chairman of the Belchamp St Paul Community House Trust. Mr Peter Hesketh, having indicated his willingness to stand, was re-appointed Footpath Warden and Emergency Officer.

- **Adoption of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and Councillors Code of conduct.** Copies of these documents are available for reference.
- **Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer and Internal Auditor.** Cllr Chaplin and Mr Jonathan Yates, having indicated their willingness to stand, were re-appointed RFO and internal auditor respectively.
- **Confirmation of Bank Signatories.** The Chairman and Cllrs Chaplin, Mardon, and Money were re-appointed bank signatories.

*A resolution to approve these annual administrative matters was proposed by Cllr Mardon, seconded by Cllr Curran, and passed unanimously.*

**3072 Essex County Council matters.** Cllr Schwier (Essex C C) emails had been circulated to councillors on 13/5/25.

**3073 Braintree District Council matters.** No report had been received from Cllr Parker (Braintree D C).

**3074 Finance:****– Approval of receipts and payments.**

Date	Type	Transaction Description	Payment	Receipt
16/04/2025	FPO	PFMC & PC SPEEDY FUELS Tractor Diesel	491.94	
22/04/2025	PAY	SERVICE CHARGES	4.25	
22/04/2025	DD	PFMC - E.ON NEXT LTD	18.23	
24/04/2025	BGC	BTREE DC		2500.00
07/05/2025	FPO	PFMC & PC Tractor Repairs (Steering Box Seal Kit)	35.99	
07/05/2025	FPO	PFMC & PC - TRACTOR HYDRAULIC & ENGINE OIL	92.98	
07/05/2025	FPO	PC - J C DOUGLASS	252.13	
07/05/2025	DEP	WAYLEAVE		12.48
07/05/2025	BGC	ECC		2268.56
16/05/2025	DD	PFMC - E.ON NEXT LTD	19.49	

**PC** – Parish Council Expense

**PFMC** – Playing Field Expense

Balances @ 17<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Current account £4,817.90

Deposit account £4,103.49

PFMC account £4,483.78

32 -Day Notice account £11,488.72

Interest as previous £20+ per month.

*A resolution to approve receipts, payments, and balances for the period 17/1/25 to 19/5/25 as shown by this report supported by bank statements was proposed by Cllr Mardon, seconded by Cllr Curran, and passed unanimously.*

**- Asset register 31/3/25.** The register, based on 2024 values uplifted by 3% for inflation, was presented to the meeting by the RFO. *A resolution to approve the register was proposed by Cllr Chaplin, seconded by Cllr Curran, and passed unanimously.*

**-Insurance arrangement 2025/26.** Appropriate cover is being sought from various insurers.

**3075 Audit 2024/25:**

**-Approve 2024/25 PC Accounts.** Final accounts agreed by the internal auditor had been circulated by the RFO to councillors on 19/5/25. *A resolution to approve the accounts was proposed by Cllr Mardon, seconded by Cllr Curran, and passed unanimously.*

**-Consider, approve and sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).** The completed AGAR had been circulated to councillors on 20/5/25. *A resolution to approve the AGAR was proposed by Cllr Mardon, seconded by Cllr Curran, and passed unanimously.* The Clerk was instructed to file the AGAR with PKF Littlejohn (external auditors) and post to the website as required.

**3076 Vacant BSP Councillor seats.** Following the resignation of Mr Robin Lock, there were now 2 vacancies. Postings were made to the Parish Magazine, website and notice boards advertising the vacancies.

**3077 PFMC – Review of Terms of Reference – update.** The constitution of the PFMC can be amended, but alterations should be documented and approved by resolutions at both PFMC and Parish Council. Continued insurance cover should be confirmed in writing by the insurer.

**3078 Verge cutting 2025/26.** The Clerk has sent out letters to 5 local farmers requesting 2 cuts this year. Essex C C has remitted £2,268 to the P C in respect of the costs.

**3079 Local Development Code Working Group – update.** No update was available.

**3080 Speedwatch & traffic – parking on Cole Green access.** No Speedwatch sessions have been held recently.

**3081 Defibrillators.** Monthly checks have been continued and the machines are in good working order.

**3082 Belchamp Otten village sign.** Cllr Rumsey is working on drawings for a new sign.

**3083 Repair of Hickford Hill notice board.** The Clerk has approached Braintree D C regarding the availability of funds under s 106 asset regeneration.

**3084 Correspondence.** Relevant correspondence had been circulated to councillors on 13/5/25.

**3085 Clerk's Contract.** The contract, approved by resolution at the 15/4/25 meeting, was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

**3086 Planning – New Applications / Decisions.**

**25/00707/FUL.** Shearing Place, BSP. Demolition and replacement of existing rural worker dwelling – new application. Determination 19/6/25.

**3087 PUBLIC DISCUSSION TIME (5 minutes).** No matters were raised.

**3088 Any urgent matters and proposals for future agenda items.** The First Aid course to be held at the Community House on 22/5/25 at 6:00 pm was noted. It was agreed Cole Green could be used as the venue for the BSP Car Show on 20/7/25, sponsored by the Half Moon P H.

**3089 The next Council meeting** will be held on Tuesday 1 July 2025 at 7:30pm in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul.

The meeting closed at .....8:15 pm.....

Signed ..... (Chairman)

1 July 2025