

Belchamp St Paul and Belchamp Otten Parish Council

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

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Holly Chaplin, Dominic Curran, Lucy Hood, Sarah Mardon, David Middleditch, Tony Money, Hannah Rumsey, Jay Stevens.

In attendance: John Douglass (Clerk), Cllr Iona Parker (Braintree District Council).

3152 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest. Apologies were received from Cllrs Ruth Carter and Claire Middleditch, and Cllr Peter Schwier (Essex County Council).

3153 PUBLIC DISCUSSION TIME (5 minutes). One member of the public was present. In response to a question from a member of the public, Cllr Chaplin outlined the running of the BSP playing field.

3154 Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2025. *A resolution to approve the minutes was proposed by Cllr Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Mardon, and passed unanimously.*

3155 Matters arising from the October PC meeting (not covered separately on the agenda). No matters were raised.

3156 Essex County Council matters. Cllr Schwier's emails were circulated to councillors on 18 Nov. Cllr Middleditch noted that the Government has proposed the abolition of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners. Cllr Schwier's email of 22 Oct 25 invites residents and businesses in Essex to share their views on future funding for Essex Police and Fire service.

3157 Braintree District Council matters. Cllr Parker gave a report which is attached at the end of these minutes.

3158 Essex Community Foundation donation. It was noted that potential projects should be considered in due course.

3159 Finance – Approval of receipts and payments. The report was presented by the RFO, Cllr Chaplin, and is attached at the end of these minutes. *A resolution to approve the report was proposed by Cllr Mardon, seconded by Cllr Middleditch, and passed unanimously.*

- 2026/27 budget & precept. The budget circulated to councillors on 15/10/25, on which the precept will be based, was discussed. It was suggested that, in view of the refusal of a micro-grant (see 3165 below), the cost of replacement of the Hickford Hill notice board should be added to the budget and recovered by an additional £250 in the precept for next year and the following three years.

3160 PFMC terms of reference. The updated constitution of the Belchamp St Paul Playing Field Working Group had been circulated to councillors on 25/11/25. *A resolution to approve the constitution was proposed by Cllr Curran, seconded by Cllr Rumsey, and passed unanimously.* It will be shortly be published on the website.

3161 Local Development Code Working Group – update. Cllr Rumsey has continued work on the plan, taking account of residents’ comments regarding housing, footpaths, the playing field, the Community House etc, and is liaising with Braintree D C on the matter.

3162 Speedwatch & traffic – parking on Cole Green. One Speedwatch session has been held. A concerned parishioner has raised the issues of poor white lining in the villages, and the possibility of an electronic speed sign in Gages Road. These matters are under the control of Essex Highways and their criteria for implementation has not in the past been met.

3163 Defibrillators. Monthly checks have been carried out. A report was received from The Circuit that the BSP defib may have been used, but this turned out to be a false alarm.

3164 Belchamp Otten village sign. Work on this matter is continuing.

3165 Repair of Hickford Hill notice board. Two estimates have been received for fabrication of a new notice board: £1,945 + Vat (Make Me Something Special) and £975 + Vat (Middleton Joinery Ltd). An application for a micro grant to cover the cost from the Essex Communities Initiative Fund has been refused on the ground that the provision of a notice board is regarded as a core function of the Parish Council and should be planned for within the Council’s budget. *A resolution to approve the estimate by Middleton Joinery Ltd to be paid for out of the Council’s own resources was proposed by Cllr Rumsey, seconded by Cllr Mardon, and passed unanimously.* The Clerk was instructed to request Middleton Joinery Ltd to proceed with the work.

3166 Flooding. No new incidents of flooding have been reported.

3167 Parish magazine. Various options regarding the future of the magazine have been put forward by the editor. The magazine will move to quarterly publication which should safeguard its future.

3168 Christmas tree on Cole Green. Arrangements have been made to erect the Christmas tree on Cole Green as usual.

3169 Correspondence. Correspondence was circulated to councillors on 18 Nov.

3170 Planning – New Applications / Decisions.

Shearing Place, BSP. 25/01950/FUL. Retention of storage containers & change of use of land from agricultural to B8 storage. *Application refused 20/11/25 on the grounds containers are located outside development boundary and within an isolated location.* This is despite strong local support for the application.

Browns Barn, Church St, BSP. 25/02041/DAC. Discharge of conditions for doors and windows. *Permitted 12/11/25.*

3171 PUBLIC DISCUSSION TIME (5 minutes). A member of the public commented that the Parish Council precept was very small in relation to total council tax, and on this ground the PC should proceed with expenditure on worthwhile projects (eg Hickford Hill notice board) in spite of the rise in council tax this would mean for residents.

3172 Any urgent matters and proposals for future agenda items.

Resignation of Cllr Mardon. Cllr Sarah Mardon submitted her resignation as a Parish Councillor and Vice Chairman of the Council. The Chairman tabled a vote of thanks to Cllr Mardon for her invaluable service over many years, and wished her well for the future.

Playing Field rental. Ground Zero Developments Ltd, the builder at the Lamberts Farm site, has not paid the rent due to the PC under the agreement for car parking on the hard standing area. They appear to be experiencing financial difficulties as the heavy machinery has been removed from the site. In these circumstances they have broken the contract with the PC and the PC is justified in rescinding the contract. Cllr Curran has talked to site management and apparently a new builder, Silversmith Homes, has been appointed. Councillors have requested Cllr Curran offer Silversmith a similar contract for continued car parking on the same terms if Silversmith will sign an agreement and meet the unpaid rent from GZD.

Parking in Otten. A resident in The Street, Belchamp Otten is causing a nuisance to neighbours by the parking of several vans on the road, causing difficulties to residents exiting their drives, and damaging the neighbours’ front gardens. The Clerk was instructed to send a letter to the resident requesting considerate parking and courtesy to the affected neighbours.

New Tree Warden wanted. The Clerk reported that adverts for a new warden have been placed in the Parish magazine, the notice boards, and on the website.

3173 The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 13 January 2026 at 7:30pm in St Andrews Church, Church Rd, Belchamp St Paul. (Please note venue).

The meeting closed at9:00 pm.....

Signed(Chairman)

13 Jan 2026.

Belchamp St Paul and Belchamp Otten Parish Council

Receipts & Payments Report

Period: 02/09/25 to 24/11/25

Opening Balances 02/09/25

Parish Council Account

£3,472.74

P F M C Account

£6,169.02

TOTAL

£9,641.76

09/09/2025		INTEREST (GROSS) - PFMC		3.37
22/09/2025	FPI	PITCH HIRE - SEPT PFMC		60
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 01115196 05OCT25	178.83	
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 01115196 05OCT25	42.65	
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 01115196 05OCT25	113.79	
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 01115196 05OCT25	43.6	
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 01115196 05OCT25	32.78	
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 01115196 05OCT25	5.99	
08/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 01115196	46.49	
09/10/2025		INTEREST (GROSS) - PFMC		3.03
27/10/2025	FPI	PITCH HIRE – OCT - PFMC		30
10/11/2025		INTEREST (GROSS) - PFMC		3.04
16/09/2025	PAY	SERVICE CHARGES-PC	4.25	
16/09/2025	FPO	MRS H CHAPLIN - PLASTIC FOR TITCH (CASH) - PC	45.34	
16/09/2025	FPO	MR P J HESKETH P3 PAYMENT – FOOTPATH - PC	17.29	
17/09/2025	DD	E.ON NEXT LTD - PFMC	42.65	
23/09/2025	DD	ANGLIAN WATER - PFMC	178.83	
25/09/2025	BGC	PAYMENTS BTREE DC (PRECEPT) - PC		2500
29/09/2025	SO	J C DOUGLASS - PC	252.13	
29/09/2025	SO	MRS A ACTON (LITTER) - PC	69	
29/09/2025	SO	MR FRED EADY (LITER) - PC	69	
01/10/2025	FPO	J C DOUGLASS (EXPENSES) - PC	88.13	
01/10/2025	SO	R. H. NANKIVELL – GRASS CUTTING - PC	120	
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 30906568 05OCT25		178.83
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 30906568 05OCT25		42.65

06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 30906568 05OCT25		113.79
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 30906568 05OCT25		43.6
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 30906568 05OCT25		32.78
06/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 30906568 05OCT25		5.99
08/10/2025	TFR	BELCHAMP ST PAUL & 309831 30906568		46.49
09/10/2025	FPO	NFU MUTUAL DISS (TRACTOR INS) - PC	161.11	
09/10/2025	FPO	SAFELINCS LTD (DE-FIB PADS) - PC	71.39	
17/10/2025	DD	E.ON NEXT LTD - PFMC	45.72	
20/10/2025	PAY	SERVICE CHARGES - PC	4.25	
28/10/2025	SO	J C DOUGLASS - PC	252.13	
18/11/2025	DD	E.ON NEXT LTD - PFMC	41.22	
18/11/2025	PAY	SERVICE CHARGES - PC	4.25	
		SUB TOTALS	1930.82	3063.57

Closing Balances 24/11/25

Parish Council Account	£4,970.18
P F M C Account	£5,804.33
TOTAL	£10,774.51

PC - Parish Council expense

PFMC - Playing Field Expense

Deposit Account Balances 24/11/25

Deposit account £4,117.65
 32 day notice account £11,609.84
 Interest approx. £ 20 per month

Report for Parish Councils November 2025

Cllr I Parker, Braintree District Council

1. Local Plan – BDC has finished assessing all the sites which have been put forward for development as part of the Local Plan Review, as well as reviewing the planning policies. Due to the rejection of a number of sites recommended for allocation for development by officers, we are still short of sites for 1,100 dwellings and the Local Plan sub-committee (which I am on) will have to revisit some of the sites which were rejected. The draft Plan will then go out to public consultation (known as regulation 18 consultation) in the New Year.
2. Waste Service Review – Officers have assessed all properties in the District to establish the suitability of properties to receive the new wheeled bins for recycling. From mid November, residents will start receiving letters advising them whether they fall into the standard waste collection category, non-standard or communal. To be considered for non-standard collection, properties must have: no garden, a steep slope for access, step only access or bins would have to be taken through the property. The standard properties will receive 2 new wheeled bins to replace the recycling sacks, non-standard will receive a wheeled bin and boxes. The letters will outline a review process if residents feel their property has been incorrectly categorised. Bins and boxes will start to arrive in February and the new service will start in June.
3. Local Government re-organisation – BDC held a debate in September on the 4 proposals that have been put forward for LGR. The majority of councillors voted in favour of a 3 unitary council model which would see north, mid and south Essex unitary councils with Braintree joining Uttlesford, Colchester and Tendring in a North Essex unitary. The final decision will be made by the Government at the end of March. The consultation on the four proposals has now opened and closes on 11 th January. Residents are asked for their views on each of the proposals. The consultation can be found at <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/essex-southend-on-sea-thurrock/>. Information on LGR can also be found on a dedicated website <https://www.essexlgrhub.org/stronger-greater-essex>.
4. Economic development – BDC is continuing its efforts to support the local economy. The Council held another jobs fair recently as well as a series of briefings for small businesses.
5. Leisure – a new operator has taken over the running of the Council's 4 leisure centres following problems with the previous operator.