

Belchamp St Paul and Belchamp Otten Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 7 July 2026 commencing at 7:30pm in the Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Rob Bowden (Vice Chairman), Dominic Curran, and Jay Stevens.

In attendance: John Douglass (Clerk), Cllrs Iona Parker (Braintree D C), and Nathan Robins (Essex CC). 1 member of the public attended.

3253 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest. Apologies were received from Cllrs Clair Middleditch, David Middleditch, and Tony Money.

3254 PUBLIC DISCUSSION TIME (5 minutes). No points were raised.

3255 Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 19 May 2026. The Minutes were considered. *A resolution approving the minutes was proposed by Cllr Curran, seconded by Cllr Stevens, and passed unanimously.*

3256 Matters arising from the May PC meeting (not covered separately on the agenda). No matters were raised.

3257 Essex County Council matters. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Nathan Robins, the recently elected councillor for Essex C C, Hedingham division, to the meeting. Cllr Robins gave a report of recent developments at the Council.

3258 Braintree District Council matters. Cllr Parker gave a verbal report of recent developments. The new recycling system has now been running for one month – one complete cycle. A significant increase in recycling volumes has been achieved. Black bin waste is now incinerated rather than going to landfill. There have been some teething problems, particularly in the Knowl Green area, and these have been dealt with quickly. New routes for the crews, severe hot weather and staff sickness have been a negative factor. Residents can now make problems directly known to BDC via the web portal.

The local development plan issued by the government calls for 1,132 new houses in the BDC area in 2027/28. This is a very ambitious target and will need the co-operation of developers and builders to be achievable.

3259 Finance – Approval of receipts and payments. Bank statements for the period 18/5/26 to 29/6/26 had been circulated to councillors on 1/7/26, and will be published on the website. *A resolution approving the statements was proposed by Cllr Stevens, seconded by Cllr Curran, and passed unanimously.*

Insurance arrangement 2026/27 – renewal 1/6/26. The Clerk confirmed that a premium of £956.33 had been paid on 28/5/26 in respect of the insurance year commencing 1/6/26.

Audit 2025/26: Confirm filing of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return with external auditors. The Clerk confirmed that on 28/5/26 PKF Littlejohn, the external auditors, had confirmed receipt of the 2025/26 notification of exempt status.

3260 Local Design Code – update. Hannah Rumsey has confirmed that photos and paintings by a local artist are being collated and will be attached to the code.

3261 Speedwatch & traffic. No Speedwatch sessions have been held. The Clerk was requested to put a notice in the P C website advertising for a new co-ordinator to replace Cllr Curran, the acting co-ordinator. The Clerk stated that Essex C C has advised that road surface repairs are scheduled for Bakers Rd near the Bradley Hill junction and Bakers Cut (the small road alongside Cole Green), but no timings have been given.

3262 Defibrillators. Monthly checks of the machines have been carried out. The Clerk reported that he has been unable so far to obtain a repair estimate by a local locksmith for the broken cabinet lock for the BSP machine.

3263 Belchamp Otten village sign update. No update has been provided.

3264 Correspondence. Correspondence had been circulated to councillors on 30/6/26.

3265 Cars on the Green Show 11 July 2026. No objections have been received from councillors and accordingly the show will go ahead on 11 July.

3266 Telegraph pole Cole Green. The Clerk entered into correspondence with Openreach regarding the siting of the pole on the Green. Openreach stated they did not require planning permission for the pole, and had fulfilled all necessary regulations. Discussions were cut short when the pole was erected on 19/6/26 and the broadband hardware fitted. Openreach have informed us that they have closed the case, and further that no wayleave agreement is required.

3267 Planning – New Applications / Decisions.

Butlers Farm, Bakers Rd, BSP. 26/00495/COUPA. COU agricultural building to 3 residences. *Planning permission now required.*

Stettles Farm, The Street, Belchamp Otten. 26/00821/AGR. Prior notification erection of grain shed. Site notice now required owing to comment by Place Services (near Heritage Asset). *Prior approval granted 28/5/26.*

Eastfields, Bakers Rd, BSP. 26/00669/PLD Application for Certificate of Lawfulness – conversion of garage to habitable room. *Permitted 29/5/26.*

1 Hobarts Hall, Borley Rd, Otten. 26/01056/AGR. Application for prior notification – building for storage harvested crops. *Approval given 19/6/26.*

Pannells, Cole Gn, BSP. 26/01167/HH & 26/01168/LBC. Application for single storey rear extension. *Determination 28/7/26.*

Little Barn, Shearing Place Rd, BSP. 26/01299/DAC. Discharge of landscaping condition. *Determination 6/8/26.*

Endway, The Street, B Otten. 26/01340 & 1/HH. Single story extension & solar panels. *Comments by 14/7/26. Determination 10/8/26.*

Ongoing

Solar Park, Bakers Rd, BSP, 25/00861/DAC.

A delivery lorry went through BSP village on 30/6/26. This was reported and the developer apologised and said they will ensure drivers know the correct route. *If you see a delivery lorry obviously for the solar park (not agricultural lorries) going through BSP village, please report the date, time, and company to the Clerk who will take it up with the Solar Park developer.*

3268 PUBLIC DISCUSSION TIME (5 minutes). No points were raised.

3269 Any urgent matters and proposals for future agenda items. 1. In order to comply with the latest General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) the Clerk requested authority to investigate the position as it affects the P C, and to make any recommendations, particularly in regard to P C email systems. *A resolution authorising this action was proposed by Cllr Curran, seconded by Cllr Stevens, and passed unanimously.*

2. The Clerk made a general request for new councillors to avoid the risk of an inquorate meeting which would be a significant waste of time and resources. (There are currently two vacancies each for BSP and Otten).

3270 The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 8 September 2026 at 7:30pm in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul.

The meeting closed at8:32 pm.....

Signed
(Chairman)

8 September 2026