

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

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 30 November 2021 at 7.30pm at  
The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul

**Present:** Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Ruth Carter (entered during Item 2508), Tony Money and Dave Winslow. Four members of the public were present.  
In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

### **2503. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Scott Bridge, Robin Lock, Sarah Mardon, David Middleditch, Stephen Nice and John Pheby, County Councillor Peter Schwier and District Councillor Iona Parker. There were no Declarations of Interest. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate as 4 Councillors were present (1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total number of Councillors).

### **2504. Public Forum**

**1. Speeding traffic** – During recent Speedwatch sessions members noted that many residents had approached the Speedwatch Group to comment on the increased speed of traffic through the village and the resulting danger to pedestrians. 3 additional residents had volunteered to join the Speedwatch Group (to deter speeding vehicles) and Essex Police were arranging training for them. The public present requested that the PC submit a new application to the Local Highways Panel for funding for a VAS sign (flashing 30mph sign) in Gages Road to increase driver awareness of the speed limit. A previous application to the LHP some years ago had not been successful because LHP survey results showed that the average speed of vehicles fell below the necessary criteria. Members discussed the request and shared residents' concerns. It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should submit an application to the Braintree LHP for a VAS sign in Gages Road.

### **2505. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on 19 October 2021**

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

### **2506. Matters arising from the October PC meeting**

- 1. Uneven block paving path at Savills, BSP (Item 2491.1)** – Members were pleased to note that the uneven path had been repaired and bollards placed near its junction with the roadway. Members recorded their thanks to Cllr Scott Bridge for his assistance with this matter and to Eastlight Community Homes for completing the works.
- 2. Remembrance Day Poppy Display (Item 2496b)** – Members wished to record their thanks to all the local residents who had contributed to the beautiful poppy display on Cole Green.
- 3. Christmas Tree arrangements (Item 2498)** - Members noted that because of illness, Cllr Harvey Bamford had taken over the tree arrangements from Cllr Robin Lock. Cllr Bamford had located a suitable trailer and would be collecting the tree on 6 December and it would then be put up on Cole Green soon after. New batteries would be required but the existing tree lights would be re-used. Members thanked both Cllrs Bamford and Lock for their work.
- 4. Bulb planting (Item 2499)** – The Clerk had collected the 400 free bulbs from BDC and members finalised the locations to be planted. Councillors would undertake the planting themselves and the Clerk would deliver bulbs to members not present who had already agreed to undertake planting.
- 5. Highway matters - Potholes in Pollards Green Lane (Item 2486.3)/ Highway road signs left behind Bakers Road bus shelter after recent accident** – Members noted that temporary repairs to the potholes had been undertaken by ECC Highways and the signs had now been collected.

**6. Planning appeal for The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green (Item 2486.5)** – The Clerk confirmed that this appeal was still “in progress” with no decision yet made. She would continue to monitor this.

#### **2507. Essex County Council**

Members noted details of e-mails received from County Cllr Peter Schwier since the last PC meeting, which had been circulated by the Clerk.

#### **2508. Braintree District Council**

Members noted the report from District Councillor Iona Parker which included the following matters: An update on the local Covid situation: Councillor Community Grants Scheme will continue next year but may be modified because of concern that some Councils are holding high levels of reserves (Members agreed to reply that our Council’s apparently high level of reserves includes funds ringfenced for the Playing Field and that other local PC’s may be in a similar situation): An update on the Local Plan process (see Item 2509 below).

#### **2509. BDC Local Plan**

The Main Modifications to Section 2 of the Local Plan have been agreed between BDC and the Inspectors and a 6 week consultation began on 30 November. The most significant of these modifications relate to bio-diversity net gain and landscaping in developments, changes to the requirements for energy efficiency and renewable energy, flood risk and the removal of a restriction on take aways near schools as it does not meet national policy. BDC are hoping that the Plan will be adopted in February 2022.

#### **2510. Finance**

<b>1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows:</b>		IN (£)	OUT (£)
22 Oct	E-On – PFMC		14.25
25 Oct	Transfer	14.25	
27 Oct	Diane Smith - Clerk’s salary and expenses		192.50
28 Oct	HMCE – VAT Refund	808.46	
28 Oct	Miss P Bowers – Verge cutting 2020-21		819.60
4 Nov	R H Nankivell – Grass cutting at Church Green B.O.		110.00
24 Nov	E-On – PFMC		14.53
25 Nov	Fred Eady – Litter picking at Belchamp Otten		66.00
25 Nov	Wendy Bird - Litter picking at BSP		66.00
25 Nov	Diane Smith - Clerk’s salary and expenses		274.25

Current account balance at 25 November 2021 was £5346.14.

**2. Initial consideration of the Precept for 2022-23** – Cllr Tony Money (RFO) had circulated account figures for 2021-22 (to date) and explained that expenditure had largely followed the expected pattern with the exception of the significantly increased expenditure on tree felling. It was suggested that a further increase in Precept for 2022-23 may be necessary but that this would be discussed fully at the January PC meeting.

#### **2511. CIF Grant application / Tree Planting Plan for Cole Green**

**1. CIF Grant application** – The Clerk reported that a decision on the CIF Grant application was expected in the next week or two.

**2. Quotation to clear/trim the ditch in front of The Savilles** - Members noted that a revised and lower quotation had been received from one of the original companies that had tendered for the

initial ditch clearance. This would be fully considered once the CIF Grant decision had been received. A quotation was still awaited for regular twice yearly strimming of the ditch going forwards. This would be considered again at the next meeting.

#### **2512. Playing Field Management Committee**

Cllr Dave Winslow (Chairman of the PFMC) reported that the new play equipment was still expected to be installed in February 2022. The PFMC had received a quote totalling £3350 + VAT for a 'wetpour' safety surface to be installed under the large slide (with a 20 year guarantee). The PFMC were actively considering the quote which, if accepted, would be funded by the Just Giving money raised during Summer 2021.

#### **2513. Village Design Code**

Following extensive advertising of this project and feedback from residents, it was proposed by Cllr Ruth Carter, seconded by Cllr Dave Winslow and agreed (4 in favour, 1 abstention) to progress this project. The Clerk will inform RCCE and suggest a public meeting/workshop be held in the Spring.

#### **2514. Local IT courses**

The Clerk reported that despite extensive advertising only 1 expression of interest had been received to join the proposed courses and that was from a resident of a neighbouring village. In the circumstances members reluctantly agreed not to pursue this project which would have been run by Community 360 volunteers.

#### **2515. BDC Open Spaces Action Plan – Review for 2022**

Members reviewed the Plan with respect to the entries for Belchamp St Paul and Belchamp Otten. In recent years the PC have needed to undertake extensive tree felling and regeneration works on Cole Green because several of the mature Horse Chestnut trees have contracted fungal infections/disease and become a danger to the public. This problem was likely to be ongoing so it was unanimously agreed to suggest adding the following to the Open Spaces Action Plan "Regeneration works to the drainage and trees on Cole Green, to enhance the public amenity of this significant Open Space in the centre of the village".

#### **2516. Meeting Dates for 2022**

The Clerk had circulated suggested meeting dates for 2022 to follow the established pattern. Members unanimously agreed the dates as follows: 18 January, 1 March, 12 April (starting at 8pm in order to follow the BSP Annual Assembly), 24 May (Annual Council meeting), 5 July, 6 September, 18 October and 29 November. The Annual Parish Assemblies will be on 11 April (Belchamp Otten at the Red Lion) and 12 April (Belchamp St Paul at The Community House). All meetings start at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise. These dates will be published on the PC website.

#### **2517. Correspondence**

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk. The following items were noted: BDC free Winter Resilience Packs and Green Homes Grants available: ECC Bus Service Improvement Plan Consultation (NO COMMENT): Lottery funding available for 2022 Jubilee events: Requests for funding from Essex and Herts Air Ambulance and Dedham Vale and Stour Valley AONB: Charity Commission Return covering 2020-21 submitted for BSP Village Green (NIL RETURN).

## **2518. Planning applications and decisions**

### **1. New Applications – None**

### **2. Decisions –**

- 21/02201/HH – **Baytree House, Cole Green, BSP** – Erection of first floor extension above existing ground floor. GRANTED.
- 21/02386/HH – **Lantern Cottage, Cole Green, BSP** – Installation of outdoor swimming pool in rear garden and associated plant room. REFUSED.
- 21/02733/HH – **Dollery, Bakers Road, BSP** – Erection of porch extension, changes to fenestration, cladding of dwelling and removal of existing conservatory. GRANTED.
- 21/02947/HH - **Rose Cottage, Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten** – Construction of 1 bedroom annexe ancillary to the main dwelling (and holiday letting). WITHDRAWN.
- 21/02738/HH – **Dollery, Bakers Road, BSP** – Construct a replacement detached garage with annexe accommodation. GRANTED.
- 21/02384/PLD – **Ashdowne House, Gages Road, BSP** – Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed replacement of the oil heating system with an air heat exchange pump. REFUSED.

**3. Ministry of Justice Consultation on proposal to build 2 new prisons on the former Wethersfield Airbase site** – The proposal is to build 2 new prisons, adjacent to each other on the above site. One will be Category B and the other Category C and each will hold 1700 male prisoners. No planning application has yet been submitted to BDC and the Consultation is designed to obtain preliminary opinions from the public, prior to submitting an application. Because of the submission deadline to the Consultation (8 November), this matter was considered by Members via e-mail and it was agreed, because of the lack of detailed information available, to make no formal comment on the proposal until the full planning application is submitted.

## **2519. Public Forum**

**1. Maintenance work on the tractor** – The Chairman had asked the contractor to contact Mr Eady direct but this had not happened. The Chairman agreed to speak to the contractor again, to establish the current situation regarding the work.

## **2520. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda**

**1. Reduction of the existing 40mph speed limit at Knowl Green to 30 mph** – Cllr Ruth Carter raised this matter. Because of the narrow bridge at Knowl Green, Members agreed that this was a dangerous stretch of roadway where vehicle ‘near misses’ are frequent. The Chairman explained however that ECC Highways had strict criteria for speed limit restriction areas and historically the settlement pattern at Knowl Green did not meet that criteria. Members had referred the situation to County Councillor Peter Schwier, a few months ago, so that it might be considered as part of a scheduled review of highway use in Essex.

### **Next meeting**

The meeting closed at 8.37pm. The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 18 January 2022 at 7.30pm in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul.

Signed: ..... (Chairman) 18 January 2022