

BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND BELCHAMP OTTEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5 September 2023 at 7.30pm at
The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul

Present: Councillors David McKee (Chairman), Harvey Bamford, Ruth Carter, Holly Chaplin, Robin Lock, David Middleditch, Tony Money, John Pheby and Hannah Rumsey. 3 members of the public were also present. In attendance: Diane Smith (Clerk).

2772. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Councillor Sarah Mardon, County Councillor Peter Schwier and District Councillor Iona Parker. Councillor David Middleditch declared a prejudicial interest in Item 2788.3 and left the meeting whilst this item was being discussed.

2773. Public Forum

1. Clearance of footpaths – Members of the public wished to express their thanks for the recent footpath clearance work that had been undertaken by members of the P3 Group with their new brushcutter (see Item 2784 below).

2774. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meetings held on 4 July and 22 August 2023

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

2775. Matters arising from the July and August PC meetings

- 1. Change to PC bank signatories (Item 2751.1)** – Cllr Sarah Mardon was now officially recorded as a bank signatory and was currently arranging her internet access to the account.
- 2. External Audit for 2022-23 (Item 2751.2)** – The External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn, had confirmed that the PC had been logged as exempt for the 2022-23 financial year.
- 3. Opening of 31-day notice bank account (Item 2755.2)** – Cllr Tony Money confirmed that the new account was now fully operational.
- 4. ECC Verge Cutting Contract for 2023-24 (Item 2757)** – Members noted that £2130.06 had been received in payment for this contract for 2023-24.
- 5. Land Registry – Change of PC contact details (Item 2713)** – Members noted that, after 5 months, the Land Registry were now actively processing this application and they had written to the PC's previous contact address to verify that the request to change the details was genuine. Hopefully the separate request to confirm full title for Churchyard Green at Belchamp Otten, submitted at the same time, would also be actioned soon.
- 6. Defibrillator at BSP 'out of service' (Item 2771.1)** – The defibrillator at The Community House remained out of service. Contact continued with the East of England Ambulance Service to rectify the battery problem with the device. It was agreed to highlight the problem on the PC website and on the village facebook page, so that local residents were aware.

2776. Co-option to fill vacant seat for Belchamp St Paul

Members noted that an application to fill the vacant seat on the PC had been received from Dominic Curran. Mr Curran was present at the meeting and he briefly addressed the Council. It was proposed by Cllr David Middleditch, seconded by Cllr Holly Chaplin and unanimously agreed to co-opt Dominic Curran onto the PC representing the parish of BSP. Cllr Curran signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took his seat at the meeting. The Chairman welcomed him to the Council.

2777. Essex County Council matters

Members noted the many e-mails that had been received from County Councillor Schwier since the last meeting.

2778. Braintree District Council matters

Members considered the report from District Cllr Iona Parker which highlighted the following 2 issues: ECC Verge Cutting Scheme – In some areas overgrown verges were becoming a problem so PC's were encouraged to investigate the possibility of joining the scheme and taking responsibility for cutting the verges in their own parishes. [Our PC have been part of the scheme for many years]: Bus Network Consultation 2023 – Because of low passenger numbers it was proposed, in the Consultation, to withdraw the DaRT3 minibus scheme. This would leave our village with no public transport provision. District Cllr Parker encouraged residents to respond to the Consultation, providing details of when they would use a bus service (day and time) so that a case could be made for ECC providing at least 1 or 2 buses a week to meet this documented demand. Cllrs Robin Lock and Dominic Curran agreed to deliver leaflets to all residents of both villages publicising this change and requesting that they respond to the Consultation accordingly. This would also be publicised on the notice boards, the PC website and on facebook.

2779. Finance

| 1. The Income and Expenditure List was approved as follows: | IN (£) | OUT (£) |
|---|----------|----------|
| 3 July Essex Playing Field Association – Subscription | | 25.00 |
| 10 July Essex County Council – Verge cutting agreement | 2130.06 | |
| 17 July BHIB Ltd – Annual Insurance premium | | 601.02 |
| 31 July HMRC – Tax on salary | | 16.60 |
| 31 July Fred Eady – Litter picking at Belchamp Otten | | 69.00 |
| 31 July Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses | | 190.07 |
| 31 July R H Nankivell – Grass cutting of Churchyard Green, Belchamp Otten | | 110.00 |
| 31 July Wendy Bird – Litter picking at BSP | | 69.00 |
| 7 Aug C T Waite – Materials for signage publicising public meeting | | 87.39 |
| 8 Aug Transfer from Deposit account (to new 31 Day Interest account) | 11000.00 | |
| 10 Aug Transfer into new 31 Day Interest account | | 11000.00 |
| 15 Aug Belchamp Rounders | 125.00 | |
| 16 Aug Transfer | | 125.00 |
| 22 Aug E-On - PFMC | | 10.06 |
| 24 Aug Transfer | 10.06 | |
| 24 Aug Wicksteed Leisure – PFMC | | 144.00 |
| 30 Aug Transfer | 144.00 | |
| 30 Aug HMRC – Tax on salary | | 16.60 |
| 30 Aug Diane Smith – Clerk's salary and expenses | | 181.32 |

Current account balance at 30 August 2023 was £5004.59, Deposit account £4904.43, PFMC account £6120.88 and 31 Day Notice account £11011.10.

2. Consider suitable future projects for Section 106 funds – With several new Councillors in post, the Clerk reminded Members that BDC was currently holding approximately £1046 (plus recent interest) in unspent Section 106 funds for use by the PC on projects identified in the BDC list of 'Potential Open Space Improvements' (formerly known as the BDC Open Spaces Plan). Members discussed some possible uses for this money and it was agreed to apply for these funds to be released when a suitable project was progressed.

2780. Quotations to clear the ditch between The Savilles and Cole Green, BSP twice yearly

The Clerk reported that the original contractor had now decided not to quote for this work but two other local tradesmen had subsequently submitted quotations. These were considered and it was proposed by Cllr John Pheby, seconded by Cllr Robin Lock and unanimously agreed to accept the quotation from Nathan Jacobs to complete the initial cut and remove the cut material from the site at a cost of £200. Future cuts would be completed as required.

2781. New dog bin on FP26 near The Cherry Tree, Knowl Green – Nothing further had yet been heard from BDC.

2782. Playing Field Management Committee

Cllr Holly Chaplin had attended her first PFMC meeting in early August. She reported that the PFMC would be organising an Open Park Day on 17 September where volunteers would be sought to undertake routine maintenance tasks at the playing field, the children's play area and the pavilion. A leaflet drop to all residents would publicise the event. Some maintenance work on the play equipment had already been completed along with flailing of overgrown boundary hedges.

2783. Local Development Code Working Group

Members noted that the date of the Public Exhibition in The Red Lion, Belchamp Otten had been re-arranged to 4 October. This exhibition, and the one in The Community House, BSP on 28 September, will show residents the assessment work completed to date and their feedback will be sought along with their priorities going forward. These events will be publicised on the PC website and notice boards, on facebook and on roadside boards at Cole Green, BSP and The Street, Belchamp Otten.

2784. P3 Footpath Group

Members were pleased to note that 2 volunteers from the P3 Group had now been trained to use the new brushcutter, which had recently been provided by ECC. The costs relating to the operation of the brushcutter had resulted in a revised funding application being submitted to ECC for 2023-24. The revised current P3 Group expenses claim will now total £92.84. The PC will re-imburse this amount direct to the P3 Group (Peter Hesketh) and then will claim this amount back from ECC.

2785. Christmas Tree on Cole Green

Cllr Tony Money agreed to confirm if another free conifer tree would be available from a local farmer this year [CLERK'S NOTE: This was subsequently confirmed]. Cllr Robin Lock agreed to organise for the tree to be erected and decorated and Cllr Ruth Carter offered to assist.

2786. Car parked on roadway at the junction of Church Street and Otten Road

In recent weeks there had been two separate instances of agricultural vehicles mounting the pavement opposite the parked car, in order to pass along the road. It was understood that the pavement in question did not belong to ECC Highways but had been installed (with the necessary consents) by the adjacent householder on their own land. Two concrete planters on the pavement had been destroyed by the agricultural vehicles. Cllr John Pheby had contacted Essex Police to inform them of the incidents and request that they reconsider their previous advice regarding this dangerous parking. Members supported this action and noted that correspondence with the Police was ongoing.

2787. Correspondence

Members considered the Correspondence List which had been circulated by the Clerk and the following items were noted: BDC decision to charge residents £55 p.a. to collect their Green waste from March 2024 (50% 'early bird' discount if you sign up before 30 November 2023) : Half price offers on compost bins and water butts via BDC : ECC Bus Network Consultation (see Item 2778 above) : Essex and Herts Air Ambulance request for continued funding : Copy letter from BSP resident highlighting the traffic speed problem to County Cllr Peter Schwier : London Stansted Airport Draft Noise Action Plan consultation: Volunteers sought to join a Community Reference Group for the Levelling Up project in 'rural Braintree': Local road closures during September.

2788. Planning applications and decisions

1. New Applications

- 23/01806/HH and 23/01919/LBC – Coles Barn, The Street, Belchamp Otten – Proposed conservation style roof lights and oak door with external flue and internal alterations – NO COMMENT.
- 23/01894/HH and 23/01895/LBC – Wayside Cottage, Borley Road, Belchamp Otten – Proposed installation of air source heat pump and PV panels. NO COMMENT.
- 23/02124/TPO – Baytree House, Cole Green, BSP – Tree works in the Conservation Area. Beech – Cut back 3 branches by 3m. Fell Holly. Fell Bay. NO COMMENT.

2. Decisions

- 23/01894/HH and 23/01895/LBC – Wayside Cottage, Borley Road, Belchamp Otten – Proposed installation of air source heat pump and PV panels. WITHDRAWN BY APPLICANT.

3. Solar Farm proposal at Bakers Road, BSP – Application 23/01413/FUL

Cllr David Middleditch had declared a prejudicial interest in this item and he left the room while this matter was being discussed.

Earlier in the day the Clerk had been notified by BDC that a re-consultation was being undertaken on the above application because the applicant had submitted a revised description of the proposal and the red line defining the site boundary had been extended to include the line of the underground trench to the electricity sub-station. Members agreed that the Clerk should clarify the situation with the BDC Case Officer before the PC considered whether any further comments should be submitted to BDC. [CLERK'S NOTE: The Case Officer subsequently provided additional clarification and Members agreed via e-mail that no further comment was necessary on the revisions].

2789. Public Forum - No matters were raised by the public present.

2790. Urgent matters and proposals for future Agenda

1. Hedges overhanging the roadway at Gages Road and Knowl Green - Members noted that complaints had been received from cyclists, walkers and horse riders, regarding overhanging hedges at 2 properties. These would be reported to ECC Highways.

Next meeting

The next Council meeting will be held in The Community House, Gages Road, Belchamp St Paul on Tuesday 17 October at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm.

Signed: (Chairman) 17 October 2023