

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting

held at 7pm on Wednesday 17th April 2024

Village Hall, York Road, Earls Colne.

1. **PRESENT:** Cllr N Spelling (Chair), Cllr. N McKean (minute taker), , Cllr. L Baukham-Leys, Cllr J Jemmet, E Fitch (assistant clerk) Cllr. J Happs, District Cllr G Courtauld

Public attendees; C Cannings, R Barton, M Barrett, R Jennings, C Smith

2. **Briefing from the chair:**

The Chair welcomed councillors and members of the public to the April meeting.

3. **To receive notification of absence**

Cllr R. Ranns, Cllr K Kerslake (maternity leave), D Ellison (clerk), Cllr G Spray, Cllr T. Calton (Vice chair), County Cllr. C Siddall, Cllr. J Parish,

4. **To receive declarations of interest –**

No declarations of interest.

5. **Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda**

NS brought forward item 16 as most in attendance were present to discuss the Millenium Green

16. **Rachel Jenning (RJ) Chair of the Millenium Green Trust (MGT)** expressed her feelings that the relationship between the Parsh Council (PC) and MGT has broken down and she feels that it is important to re-kindle this relationship. Comments from members of the public relating to the finances of the MGT are not helpful, and the MGT are currently fundraising to help with the annual running of the green and to bolster the funds they have, as they are about to spend a significant portion of the current funds replacing the aging play equipment. The MGT have made appeals to the public and have been successful with donations from the public. RJ acknowledged that it could have been helpful if funds had been used for some maintenance over the years which may have prolonged the equipment, but that it was now coming towards the end of its life. RJ felt that the PC had not been helpful regarding the upcoming events for the D-Day celebrations where the MGT have been asked to light the beacon as part of national celebrations. NS explained that as the beacon was not on PC land or did not belong to the PC, they would not be insured for such events. RJ also asked if the MG was eligible for any S106 funding. NM explained that it is not a straightforward process, and that the PC first required a list of proposed projects that the S106 funds could be allocated to. This list is then added to the POSI (Potential Open Space Improvement) document held by Braintree District Council, and then funds allocated when they are generated by new projects. NM also made RJ aware that there was a current entry on the POSI document which was for footpath improvements. JH offered to look at insurance documents to see if beacon lighting was covered by any party. NS is to find out details of timelines for additions to the POSI document.

RJ announced that the Village Green Picnic would be held on the 8th of September at the Millenium Green. EF agreed to display posters on the notice boards.

RJ, MB and CS left the meeting at 19.25

6. **To approve the minutes of the following meeting (March 2024)**

LBL questioned the details of the minutes, concerned that some items had not been minuted. NS explained that this was because these items had been discussed in committee and therefore after the public session, so were not required to be minuted. LBL questioned where it is said that these items were in committee. NM apologised if his interpretation of the minutes was not clear, but as temporary minute taker, had tried to keep a true record of proceedings. NM admitted that it may not have been

clear as items had been moved around from the order of discussion, as he tried to recall them in agenda order.

NS moved this item for further discussion in committee after the public session of the meeting.

7. Finance

MB asked if the bond held by the PC had matured, and if so where was it now held and how much interest had it accrued. NS explained that it had matured with a few thousand pounds interest and was currently held in a separate account until the RFO returned and then further discussion would be had.

8. Essex County Council Matters

No report from Essex County Councillor.

9. Braintree District Council matters

GS submitted a report summarising events since the March meeting. Report explains that there are minor changes in positions within the planning department and that GS will be busy with the review of the local plan and call for sites which must be completed by June 2025. There will also be a new Design Supplementary Document (SPD) which will ensure all developments meet high standards suitable for each local area. BDC are also aware of the delay in dealing with TPO's and the council are recruiting to increase their team.

GC offered to help where he could with the MGT and suggested that they approach Cllr Siddall for funding of smaller projects.

GC explained that he is part of BDC's corporate policy committee, looking at records, and in some cases the fact that there are no records of services that BDC have been undertaking. This is with a view to find areas to reduce costs as BDC are looking to find reductions in the region of £2m.

GC has asked for a list of TPO's to be made public as this would help determine whether applications need to be made for tree work, reducing the backlog in this area. He also updated on the cycleway, explaining there were different ambitions from different groups of how this should be achieved, and whether the design should be simplified. This has been well funded by both BDC and ECC.

BDC to hold their AGM on 22/4/2024

10. Planning

No objections to current applications

LBL reminded the PC that TC had made comments regarding the voting date for the referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan. This will now not take place on the same day as the local elections as BDC will not have completed their duties by this date.

11. Update on Village Hall

NM explained matters regarding the upkeep and running of the Village Hall. The deposit has been paid for the replacement front doors with a date to be confirmed for installation. LBL questioned what items were to be put on the calendar. NM explained this was to create a record of what had to be addressed on a recurring basis in respect of checks and regular maintenance. It was agreed that general calendars should be created for the PC and available to everyone. EF and DE to collaborate.

LBL – are decoration quotes for inside and outside, NM replied both, funding needs to be found Decision required regarding the caretaker / cleaner position, as to whether we should employ more than one person to allow cover. It was agreed by the PC present that 2 employees would be more beneficial.

EF and NS are to arrange interviews with interested candidates.

NM had asked if the PC should hold events when the hall is empty to raise funds and offer alternative events to the village. This was agreed in principle. LBL happy to look at options as part of the Social / Christmas committee.

12. D-Day Celebrations

NS reminded the PC that Gordon Brown has booked the hall for talks during the day of the celebrations.

LBL questioned if we could add to the celebrations after the talks. Suggestion is to have an afternoon tea in a 1940's style, with background music etc. Amerio's bar to be approached.

LBL to liaise with the museum.

EF to contact hirers regarding altering booking times.

13. Annual Parish Meeting

NS explained that this was the meeting to allow the Parishioners the opportunity to meet and engage with the PC. The date must be between March and May, and it is suggested by EALC that this is made flexible and ideally at a weekend to encourage attendance. Proposed date is 19/5/2024.

Groups to be invited to showcase their involvement in the village. NS suggested a guest speaker to attend, ideally from BDC, possibly waste management team.

EF to send invites to village groups.

General suggestion was to have cheese and wine at this event too.

Date proposed by NS

Seconded JH

14. Annual Meeting

NS explained the Annual meeting is where voting is carried out for the positions in the PC.

LBL questioned if anyone can be voted on as chair, and asked if there was any fixed term.

NS gave background from other councils, and that some vote on chairs at times of local elections. Also explained that nominations can be made on the night of the elections, and that nominees can decline.

NS is happy to stand again if nominated, and that TC (vice chair) has indicated that he is unlikely to stand due to work commitments.

15. DaRT

NM explained that he had been approached by a member of the public regarding the DaRT (Demand Response Transport) service offered by ECC. There have been issues with booking. NM had hoped to discuss this with Cllr Siddall but will forward correspondence from the member of the public and bring it to his attention for the next meeting.

GC acknowledged that ECC had been in discussion with BDC regarding this service.

17. Wombles

NS said that there had been positive feedback from residents after the Wombles litter picking event, and asked if this was to be regular. EF suggested contacting the Wombles for a June date. Wombles are currently looking to arrange a date in May. NM suggested they contact the MGT to host an event from there.

18. Grass Cutting

NS proposed to leave the grass on the North Green long to encourage wildflowers and wildlife. Signs to be put out for the public so they understand what is being carried out. Community workers to be advised of the suggestion. Paths to be mowed in for children to wander through, edges to be kept crisp to show maintenance is being carried out.

Proposed by NM

Seconded by JH

GC, RB and CC left the meeting.

Meeting closed to public at 21.00

End of public session. Parish council went into 'committee' to discuss item 6 on the agenda.

Meeting closed at 21.25

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Chair

Date.....