

MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 26th January 2010

Time: 7.30 PM

Venue: COMMUNITY HOUSE, THE STREET, BIRDBROOK VILLAGE

PRESENT: Councillors (5)

T R Walker (Chairman), R Bolton (Vice Chairman), Mrs H Hodge, T Fenner, J Rook

Officers (1)

S De Luca - Clerk to the Council

(A Jones was present to take notes of meeting, however was not formally part of the meeting)

Members of the Public (0)

There were no members of the public present.

09.10.44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)

NOTED that apologies had been received from ECC Finch, R Kirby and D Hoye.

09.10.45 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None necessary.

09.10.46 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 3rd November 2009 were **AGREED** as a true record. Members would like it minuted that their thanks be extended to the Clerk for everything she has done over recent months, despite struggling with health issues. Thanks were also passed to Adriana for her assistance during this time.

09.10.47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Walker declared a personal non prejudicial interest in item 5 (c) - Request from St Augustine's Church regarding Grass Cutting.

09.10.48 COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk advised Members of the following documents all of which were **NOTED**:

- a) Quality Council Reaccreditation – The Clerk advised Members that due to her current health problems, she had not been able to apply for reaccreditation, however following discussion with EALC, it had been anticipated this would be submitted during 2010.
- b) Parish Support Grant – Cllr Bolton reported that responses had been placed before the Halstead Area Local Committee, and Cabinet Members, and that it had been agreed that the Parish Support Grant would continue for the foreseeable future, however there would be no increase.

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- c) Request from St Augustine's Church regarding Grass Cutting – Reported that the Church had forgotten to request these funds, however a cheque had now been drawn. These payments will form part of the normal payment in the precept for 2010/2011.
- d) BDC Promoting Your Venue – The Clerk stated BDC are looking to promote village venues / functions such as a Village Fete or Church Fete, and that Parish Councils should contact them with information.
- e) BDC Activity Days Summer 2010 – BDC are asking if the Parish Council would like to take part in this activity this coming year. The Clerk stated it was quite successful last year. Members **AGREED**. Clerk to liaise with the Chairman who will in turn book the room.
- f) BDBSA – Snippet newsletter available for Members.

09.10.49 PRECEPT (*item was moved for discussion at the end of meeting*)

The Clerk tabled for Members perusal full draft precept documentation, complete with financial details and background information. Members spent some time perusing these documents. The suggestion of a 5% increase on last year's precept (equating to approx 3.3% following award of the Parish Support Grant) was proposed by Cllr Bolton, and seconded by Cllr Fenner. All **AGREED**. The Precept amount for financial year 2010/2011 is £9,061. The Chairman stated that this Council had the second highest precept in the district. Members understood the need to try and increase the Councils general reserves, however felt caught between a rock and a hard place.

09.10.50 DOCUMENTS ON DEPOSIT

There were no documents on deposit received.

09.10.51 FINANCIAL REPORT (*item was moved for discussion at end of the meeting*)

Members **APPROVED** the Statement of Accounts, summary of monies received and the account balances at the end of the month including cheques signed up to 25th January 2010.

09.10.52 MEMBERS' REPORTS

a) Pond

The Chairman stated that he and the Clerk had had a number of conversations earlier in the day, and that it was felt that as the Parish Council do not own the pond, it was extremely unlikely that a grant would be awarded direct to the Parish Council to complete clearance works. It was also stated that the Parish Council would be unable to raise the £13,000 required to clear out the pond and clear the rubbish (this would result in an increase in the precept of 150%). The only possible option would be the possibility of parishioners raising these funds. It was stated that should £13,000 be found, and works completed, the issue would return in 4/5 years anyway. It was suggested that the Parish Council had pursued this issue enough, and the time had come to move on. It was felt however that the removal of any excess plants would help, and Cllr Hodge suggested that perhaps Mary-Anne's husband could assist with this? Members **AGREED** to continue to monitor this situation, and help as best they can.

b) *Play Areas*

Reported there was no problem with the parks. The repairs from the inspection have not yet been completed due to the cold weather; however the contractor has been instructed to complete these works.

c) *Chairman's Report*

The Chairman stated that things had been fairly quiet. He reported on the number 89a route, stating that he has been unable at this stage to obtain passenger number from Burtons. There are between 12-16 passenger journeys per day. 16 journeys at £125 per day equates to more than £5/head per journey. The Chairman stated that a Friday evening bus operation would work, however Essex County Council will not fund leisure journey. It has been 6 months, and the Chairman **AGREED** he will complete a report asking for a contract / further funding for another year, and to show people the Parish Council value this service and would like it to continue.

d) *Highways Report*

The Clerk stated that at this stage she had not received any news from Essex County Council; however she understood that the CIF Bid letters were going out this Friday. The Chairman commented that the state of the Highways were atrocious. The Energy company who are replacing the cables have caused damage to the verges, and work is expected to continue for some time. The road repairs completed by Morris's are falling apart (cracking, etc) and the Chairman confirmed he will contact Matt Reeve and ask for an earlier visit. In summary, the whole Parish is looking a mess. It was also stated that there was another accident at Baythorne End before Christmas, and that a slippery road sign has been erected. It was also stated that the hatched markings at Baythorne End were making the road more dangerous. It was suggested that the 30mph speed limit should begin by Abbots Farm and finish by Rowley Hill, with everything else being 40mph limit.

e) *Dates of Meeting for forthcoming Year*

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- 2nd March 2010
- 4th May 2010 (Annual meeting of the Parish Council)
- 6th July 2010
- 7th September 2010
- 2nd November 2010
- 10th January 2010

The Annual Parish Assembly will take place on 27th April 2010. The Chairman will arrange for this to go into Birdbrook news. The Clerk to email Carrie Webb.

09.10.53 **CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

NOTED there were no documents to report on.

09.10.54 **PLANNING MATTERS**

Members **NOTED** the following planning applications received from Braintree District Council and commented on under delegated powers given to the Clerk and the Chairman:

No	Application Number	Location	Proposal
1	09/01524/FUL	Finkle Green Cottage Finkle Green	Erection of Wind Turbine
The Parish Council OBJECTED to this application on the grounds previously objected upon. Councillor Bolton confirmed this application was passed with conditions on Tuesday evening.			
2	09/01516/FUL 09/01517/LBC	Whitley House Birdbrook	Conversion of existing coach house and stables in to overflow domestic accommodation
The Parish Council had NO OBJECTION to this application, however requested that the changes to the exterior are agreed with the Conservation Officer.			

There were no other planning issues or correspondence to be discussed.

09.10.55 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- Cllr Hodge stated that she had been asked by a resident living adjacent to the hall to cut back the hedge near the hall as it is encroaching onto the roadside. It was also noted that there was overhanging foliage along the Street and at various points throughout the Parish, and that a complaint had been received from a parishioner with a pram saying that she had to move into the road as hedges were blocking the pavement. The Chairman suggested that Essex Highways are contacted stating that we have received a number of complaints and ask them to look into this issue
- The Finger posts at the top of Station Road are obscured by overgrowth (outside Willow Pitt Cottage, junction of Station Road / Moat Road / Stambourne Road).
- Fell Road – Street Sign is missing – Essex Highways have been informed about this before.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at
20.29**

.....Chairman

Date