

# Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**Present:** Cllr J. Hills (Chair), Cllr B. Herbert, Cllr P. Dennitts, Cllr G. Wright, Cllr K. Plummer, Cllr R. Taylor & Cllr P. Harry, K. Paradise (Clerk) and 13 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr R. Adams, Cllr L. Edwards, County Councillor A. Goggin & District Councillor L. McWilliams. Representatives from Great Bentley Cricket Club, Great Bentley Cub Pack, Bentley in Bloom & the Village Hall.
2. **Village Residents Awards:** Moved from item 5 to item 2 on the agenda. These are to award people who work on our behalf without pay and without thanks. This is the opportunity to say thank you very much.  
A Garden Centre voucher was awarded to:  
Mary Maskell for fund raising, mainly for the village Christmas lights  
Ken Drew for organising the 'litter picking' and with his wife for maintaining the Village Hall gardens  
  
**Councillor Award:** Cllr Robert Taylor was awarded a voucher funded personally from other Councillors to acknowledge the amount of work it took to organise the new play equipment purchase
3. **Chairman's Annual Report:** Cllr Hills read his annual report. The report is published on the Parish Council's website, in the Appendix in the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting and also in the Parish Magazine. Appendix A
4. **Reports:** Invitations to attend the meeting were circulated to all the organisations that received a financial grant from the Parish Council in 2018/19.
  - i) Bentley in Bloom: Unfortunately Mrs Dorothy Nowak was unable to attend. Her report was read by Cllr Robert Taylor
  - ii) Bentley Green Players: Cllr Peter Harry gave a report on behalf of Lynda McWilliams who unfortunately was unable to attend.
  - iii) 1<sup>st</sup> Great Bentley Cub Pack: Unfortunately Mrs Samantha Smith was unable to attend. The report which also showed pictures was read by Cllr Kevin Plummer
  - iv) Great Bentley Cricket Club: Unfortunately Mrs Carole Kerridge was unable to attend. Cllr George Wright (who declared an interest as Chairman of the Cricket Club) read her report.

- v) Great Bentley Football Club: Mr Andrew Walker gave a report on the activities and achievements of the club and gave thanks for the grant.
- vi) Great Bentley Good Neighbours: Mrs Agnes Walters gave a report and thanks for the grant.
- vii) Great Bentley Scout and Guide HQ: Jan Bovingdon gave thanks and a report about the new quiet area achieved
- viii) Great Bentley Youth Club: Cllr Robert Taylor gave a report giving thanks for the grant.
- ix) Great Bentley Village Hall: Unfortunately Mr Derek Burdett and Mr Matt Plummer were able to attend. Cllr Kevin Plummer gave a report about work updating the Village Hall
- x) Great Bentley Youth Football Club: Mr Tony Nash gave thanks and a report about the standards upheld by the club and the new group of 4 & 5 year olds entering into league football next season.

**5. Open Forum:**

A resident noted the encouraging comments regarding our PCSO in the Chairman's report. Clerk to write to her Inspector to acknowledge her good work.

A resident noted that the fuel for the tractor is given for free each year. Clerk to write to Alan Gosling

Cllr Peter Harry noted that there are many defibrillators in the village – Football Club, Doctor Surgery, Tesco, Village Hall & Bentley Country Park. He is happy to provide training

**6. Closure:** The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance.

**Chairman's Report 2019**

Good evening and Welcome

Being a Parish Councilor is a time-consuming task for which you often get little thanks and lots of criticism. However, it can be rewarding if you feel you want to put something back into the community, and try and do some good for others.

With that in mind we welcome Peter Harry as a new Councillor and look forward to working with him in the future. Peter has been our transport Rep for many years and so should be a familiar face to all.

We must also thank the retiring Peter Balbirnie for his previous efforts with the Council and pay tribute to his tremendous work that he did on behalf of the village. Like Robert Taylor, Peter was Chairman of the Tendring District Council and his experience has been invaluable with a variety of matters. We have been lucky to have had such an experienced pair of hands guiding the ship. Peter always spoke out for what he thought was right, even if it was sometimes unpopular. This quality is rare these days and he will be missed.

The rest of your Councillors continue to work hard for the community and along with our wardens, contractors and helpers, strive to be the best custodians that we can be, for our village.

There is a large amount of work that goes on to keep things on track, particularly with the business that needs to be done, and the meetings that need to be organized. Our Clerk Karen Paradise is the instigator of the works that we instruct and is invaluable. She works hard to keep up to date with all the latest legislation, training, and problems that we encounter on a year by year basis. We are very lucky to have her; and on behalf of the village, I thank her for the work that she does.

There is also however a huge amount of work that goes on in the background by not only Councillors, but also other members of the public that do this work for free, for essentially the love of the village and their community. Kevin and Matt Plummer, Mary Maskell, Bill Herbert, Mick Dorling, Farmer George, Glenn Hammond, and numerous others.

Of course, some people get paid for doing the work, but many do not, and we must all be very appreciative of everything that goes on in the background. These people do it quietly and away from the public view. They deserve our respect and also our thanks. I would particularly like to thank Bobby McWilliams for the work that he does as our village caretaker. Without him our village would not be nearly as tidy and would look very different.

Alan Goggin, our County Councillor, continues to be an outstanding Councillor attending many meetings on all our behalf. He has an extremely difficult job and does it as a consummate professional. He strives to advise us on our Highways problems and particularly our continual pothole problem. I personally thank Alan for his proactive work this year and look forward to continuing to work with him in the years to come.

Lynda McWilliams has recently been re-elected as our District Councillor and has continued to work hard on behalf of the village this year. Her area of responsibility has been extended this year with the enlargement of her catchment area. Lynda is a very popular councillor and sits on many of the committees at Tendring including the planning committee. But these responsibilities do not stop her getting involved in other areas outside her direct area of responsibility. She is a great asset to our village and is always immediately available; she is helpful, and proactive. Thank you, Lynda.

In the normal way, I shall run through the various aspects and what has been going on.

#### Allotment Site

The allotments continue to thrive and are used extensively. We are getting close to full capacity and shall monitor the need to potentially open up the new area if there is a significant and consistent increase in demand.

I report that little has changed since last year with regards the possible diversion and even possible closure of the footpaths across the new allotment area. We are monitoring this as closely as we can, and expect that a decision will be made within the year.

#### Footpaths

David Gollifer continues to monitor the footpaths and report any deficiencies to the appropriate body. As I have just mentioned, there have been attempts to close a number of footpaths and crossings over the railway. This is an ongoing area of interest.

#### Car Parking

The station car park is very busy. Vandalised cars are still an issue but perhaps again we have not suffered this year as much as before. We are continually monitoring this and working closely with our PCSO. Maintenance is problematic and whilst the use increases, we will need to monitor this evermore closely. We thank our Green Committee and our caretaker to inform us of any deficiencies.

#### The Green

The diary system used with regard to the functions and use of the Green continues to work well because of the hard work of the Clerk. Another year passes and I don't believe that we have had any serious clashes because of this system.

We are fortunate to have this wonderful open space that we can all benefit from, as well as use as a general thoroughfare across the village, and we are lucky that we don't get the wide variety of problems that others do.

Again this year, we have seen the green used by all sorts of different people for all kinds of different reasons. With hard work, and a little common sense, everybody has had successful events without any major or long-lasting damage to the green surface. I would like to mention again George Wright in particular for his continued generosity with regard to the many applications and works that he does with his tractors sprayers and spreaders and all sorts of other gear. He does this with good will and without payment. Thank you, George. Bill Herbert also is a tremendous asset and has been very supportive over the year.

### Street Lighting

Through Robert Taylor's and the Clerk's continued vigilance, repairs to our street lights are always carried out quickly and efficiently. We continue to upgrade the old lights and hope that this expensive operation pays dividends in the future.

As I always say, we ask members of the public to report to us when lights are out so Robert and the Parish Clerk can take appropriate actions.

### First Responders

We are still lucky enough to have First Responders covering our village and this is due to the hard work and determination of a few individuals. As the village grows and the population generally gets older, these people offer valuable support to our ever-stretched NHS.

### Young People Activities and Clubs

Fit Clubs, Youth Clubs, Gym Clubs, Nurseries and Pre-School - all of these activities happen within our village. We are lucky enough that we do not have to go to other villages to partake of these facilities. We encourage all types of sport and outdoor activity. Support for these clubs is most important, as it promotes not only social responsibility and team building, but also brings the family unit together, as well as creating a greater village spirit.

### Play Area

Our play area has had a huge revamp this year. A great deal of work was done by Robert Taylor in particular, in bringing this scheme to fruition. It's a real success story of delivery. He and I have both been heavily involved in the leading of this project of updating the very outdated equipment, and I thank him for all the work that he has done. The feedback from children and parents has been very gratifying to hear and the area is hugely popular. This is one of the positives of having extra homes in the village, in that this has all been paid for from 106 payments that developers have made to our community.

### Mowers and Tractors

I make no secret that I am personally very disappointed to say that another year will have to go by without replacement. Our equipment is old and antiquated and is far beyond its sell buy date. The council have decided not to make use of funding channels that are available to it at the present time and continue to patch up and use obsolete equipment.

### Police

Julia our current PCSO continues to be brilliant. She builds lasting relationships with members of the public. She is visible, she is brave, and she is just what the village needs. She also continues to have her speed gun, so slow down!

### Pond

The pond continues to look healthy and ecologically well.

### Surgery/Pharmacy

Our Surgery thrives and again we are lucky to have this and the Pharmacy as a facility. Our Doctors and their staff work hard and we are lucky to still have this facility in the village.

Many villages have lost their surgeries, or are about to lose them, as the NHS policy changes. The Gt Bentley patient numbers are still on the increase and head towards the 10,000 figure. This is a major concern to the PC and we will continue to monitor over the coming year.

The long-term future of our surgery being located in Gt Bentley is still currently uncertain and we must not take anything for granted. We must continue to support our surgery to the best of our ability.

### General Facilities

We are still lucky to have restaurants, a small hotel, shops, pubs, cafes, garages and a thriving business centre. Our local pub has had a significant investment and I urge everyone to visit it and support all our local businesses. If we don't support local business, we must not moan if in the future they disappear because of lack of use. Look what happened to the Post Office!

### Highways

Highways and road repairs are a constant source of frustration to the Parish Council. Unfortunately, it seems that budgets, are still very tight, and the whole process still seems to be a very sorry and unsatisfactory way of dealing with highway repairs.

The highway verge continues to be cut by us the Parish Council as this allows the work to be carried out more often and at more appropriate times of the year. This year we must also endure road works that are being carried out to support the new developments that we have around the village

### License for use of green for entertainment

Anyone wishing to use the green for organised functions must have written permission and sign up to the conditions that the Council has to apply. Once again, I would like to remind members of the public that if you would like to erect signage on the green for a limited amount of time for any reason, you must have written permission.

### Housing

We have had another year of growth as further completion of homes being built in Gt Bentley come on stream. We welcome our new residents and enjoy the diversity, input and skills that they can bring into our community. We also welcome the money that they spend in our shops and the strength they add to our rural economy.

The quality of our village life is precious, it has to be sustainable, it is hard won and easily lost. Crime, litter, anti-social behaviour are all dangers that are a threat to the way we live our lives. We must all set an example.

I thank you all for coming this evening.

Chairman's Signature

Dated: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019