**Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 1st December 2022 The Village Hall, Plough Road Great Bentley Colchester CO7 8LG**

Present: Cllr. P. Dennitts (Chair) Cllr. G. Wright Cllr. B. Herbert

Cllr P. Harry Cllr. R. Taylor Cllr. L. Edwards Cllr. A. Clarke Cllr. K. Plummer

In attendance: Mrs Jennifer Spear (RFO) and 13 members of the public.

**12.153.22 To Receive and approve any Apologies of Absence**

Apologies received from Cllr. R Adams, these were accepted by the council, Cllr. R. Taylor gave his apologies in advance for the next 3 meetings.

**12.154.22 To Receive any declarations of Interest**

**Cllr. K Plummer** 12.161.22 – (Christmas tree), toilets & financial support 12.161.22.f, donation to Great Bentley Primary School 12.163.22c, 12.165.22 – Committee pop up team, 12.170.22 – planning application 22/01601/FUL

**Cllr. L. Edwards** donation to Great Bentley Primary School 12.163.22c

**12.155.22 Minutes of the 3rd November 2022 meeting (previously circulated) to be approved and signed.**

Clerk noted the incorrect date on the minutes, this change was accepted by the Council.

**Resolved** , proposed by Cllr L. Edwards, seconded by Cllr K. Plummer unanimous decision that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 3rd November 2022 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**12.156.22 Public Participation session with respect to items on the Agenda and matters of mutual interest (time limited to 15 minutes)**

Footpath 4 – There have been hay bales placed so you can’t get to the second half of the footpath.

Cllr G Wright interjected here and advised that these have been put there to stop the cows getting onto the turf field but also that is an access through the hay bales at the very bottom, Cllr Wright will add a sign to point to the entrance.

Mary Maskell – raised an issue about the Ukranian Government Initiative, she knows this isn’t on the agenda but wanted to speak to Cllr Goggin and Cllr McWilliams. Advised that the 6 months period has not really worked out now that the war has gone on for longer. Cllr P. Dennitts advised that as this is not on the agenda this cannot be discussed. Cllr McWilliams advised that she will speak to Mary directly.

Member of the public discussing a proposal for an outdoor gym, Cllr R. Taylor advised that during the refurbishment of the play area, adult exercise equipment was a part of the original plan, however Tendring District Council advised the wrong amount of money in the first instance, so unfortunately that part of the play area was cut out, (along with other items). Cllr P. Dennitts advised that this may be a project that the Environment Working Group could take on to move this project forward to then be able to create a proposal for the Parish Council to consider. Cllr P Dennitts apologised that this was not on the agenda for this month, and it can be added for next month.

**12.157.22 Personnel**

**a) To discuss offering the Role of Clerk & RFO for GBPC at 23 hours per week**

Cllr P. Dennitts from the Personnel Committee have proposed to have 2 members of staff with a more qualified role at 23 hrs per week with an assistant at 10 hours.

Cllr K. Plummer questioned if this is enough for the workload going forward, Cllr P. Dennitts explained that the previous clerk (before the locum clerk) was on 35 hrs pw, with this proposal totalling 33 hour per week this leaves room for overtime if needed. Cllr P. Dennitts explained the continuity in case one leaves, holiday and sickness cover.

Cllr. L, Edwards advised he was in favour for the continuity that is needed for the Parish, the flexibility of cover to help with any kinds of absence going forward having the two members of staff.

Cllr P. Dennitts also stated that having the hours as more office hours needed rather than remote hours, which will be the case going forward.

Cllr. R. Taylor questioned is the office going to be large enough for two members of staff going forward. Cllr. P. Dennitts advised that in the first instance the clerk and assistant would be together for training but after that would be in the office solo manning the office on separate days.

Cllr A. Clarke agreed that the Parish was in need of the stability and continuity. Cllr. P. Harry agreed this is needed too. Cllr G. Wright did ask how going forward will we manage the popping in of members of the public as this can be distracting. Going forward it would be an idea to advertise specific opening hours for members of the public to be able to come in.

**Resolved** Cllr Plummer proposed to accept the new role, Cllr G. Wright Seconded, all councillors in favour. **Action – Clerk**

**b) To discuss instructing the Personnel Committee to begin recruitment for an Assistant Clerk at 10 hours per week.**

**Resolved** Cllr Plummer proposed, Cllr G. Wright proposed, all in favour**.**

**Action – Personnel Committee**

* + 1. **School Expansion Project**

**a)To receive an update from Kevin Wilby of Essex County Council**

Advised that the project is not as far along as he would hope – It is now at the consultation phase for the proposed design of the school which will be online for 2 weeks from next Thursday (8th December), all comments will be taken into consideration before the full planning application for the proposal is made. The school are writing to every address within 150m radius of the school to advise them of the online consultation, but they need help getting word of the consultation out to the rest of the residents. He will forward a copy of the proposal and consultation over to the Parish Council next week.

There is a proposed two storey building next to the railway line at the end of the carpark, the redesign has brought the new building closer to the original school building which will leave a larger play area – taking less of the playing field, but more of the car park.

The school have been looking into ways they can encourage parents to travel to school rather than by car, as they are aware that concerns have been raised by the village. There will be a count taking place before Christmas to see if the school can potentially have a crossing guard, to help. He advised that studies have shown that having a train barrier can help reduce the speed that motorists are driving at.

**b)To discuss and agree any next steps**

Cllr. L. Edwards proposed having the laptop available in the office for residents to come and fill out the online application form in the office if they don’t have internet/computer access at home.

Cllr R. Taylor asked what has been done about improving the access to the car park as this is a major issue for the village (as the staff of the school don’t seem to use the car park) because when the school is not open the green is empty of cars, which shows that it is staff parking over there and not parents. Kevin Wilby advised that there will be additional staff parking, in the car park as part of the expansion. Cllr P. Dennitts advised that the Parish Council can add that to the consultation. This however wont solve the issue of the access.

Cllr P. Harry asked if the projected numbers of students/teachers/staff/ classrooms will be on the consultation – Kevin advised that it will be.

**Resolved:** Cllr P. Dennitts proposed that all Cllrs can fill in the consultation individually as well as a formal response from the Parish Council to include the key areas of concern:

Impact on the village

Impact on the Track

Viewpoint on the railway crossing – already risky with people taking risks as the barrier comes down, with the increase in traffic this may only get worse.

Lack of attention to the access to the car park, as this has not been considered. Also that Cllr A. Clarke and Cllr. P. Harry along with the clerk formulate the Parish Councils response once the consultation has been opened.

Seconded by Cllr. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action: Clerk, Cllr A. Clarke and Cllr P. Harry**

**12.159.22 Footpath Diversion**

**a)To receive an update from the consultation meeting**

Cllr K. Plummer reported that this was not a consultation it was a presentation from Cala homes advising what they were going to do, and that they have the right to do so. This was disputed heavily by the three members of the public in attendance whose properties are impacted, they have received no personal contact from network rail or highways, Cala homes have been told they can just divert the footpath when they liked. The Cala homes representative noted the concerns that were expressed.

The residents and Cllr K. Plummer asked for a letter to confirm that no work would begin until Network Rail or Highways have been in touch with the homeowners, up until today this letter has not been received from Cala Homes.

All three interested and impacted parties (including the Parish Council because of the potential loss of allotments) are in agreeance of the diversion going to another place, so it would be an idea to all work together in the seeking of advice rather than separately.

The question was asked why Cala homes are now in such a rush to implement the footpath diversion, Cllr G Wright advised that this may be because of the Grampian Condition that they can’t occupy more than 25 houses until the diversion is in place.

Network Rail have until the end of 2024 to impose the footpath closure, one already in place has a long closure on it due to the long trains, is separate but relevant. Cllr. P. Harry advised that the order has come from the Secretary of State to divert the footpath. But all the paperwork states that the footpath is to be diverted in the field edged around allotments, public access rights will be required to allow access through the business park, Network rail followed this with the footpath going around the allotments, the building inspector advised the footpath is to go around the allotments.

However, Cllr. K. Plummer advised that the site visit with Network rail and the business inspector and they advised that it would be going straight through the allotment.

**b)To hear from Cala Homes representative**

**Resolved –** no representative present.

**c)To discuss and agree GBPC response position & next steps**

**Resolved -** Cllr Taylor proposed working with the members of public (from a legal standpoint) affected along with the Parish Council’s allotment land to write a letter to Highways, Cala homes, Network Rail and Bernard Jenkins.

Cllr G. Wright proposed an amendment to this proposal asking for Cala homes to provide access to water for the site in return for the loss of allotments, Cllr. R. Taylor accepted the amendment, there was a discussion about the amendment which was then seconded by Cllr. P. Dennitts.

Cllr K. Plummer then proposed an amendment of sharing this with the other interested parties, accepted by Cllr. R. Taylor, seconded by Cllr. P. Dennitts.

All in Favour.

**Action: Clerk, Cllr K. Plummer and Cllr P. Harry**

**12.160.22 Clerk’s Report**

Clerk has completed session two of her training provided by the EALC to support her working towards her CiLca qualification.

**12.161.22 Finance**

**a) To review the monthly financial bank reconciliation**

As at the 31st October 2022 there was a total of £140,982.19 in the Co-operative bank account ending in 983.

As at the 31st October 2022 there was a total of £45,828.29 in the Unity Bank Account.

As at the 30th November 2022 there was a total of £42,582.29 in the Unity Bank account.

*The clerk has noted that she does not have an up to date statement from the Co-op savings account and at this time does not have access to online banking.*

**Resolved –** That the above reconciliations are correct and all 3 signed by Cllr. K. Plummer.

**b)Village Christmas Tree**

**Proposal: For the PC to agree the purchase of the village Christmas Tree and to thank Plummer Electrical for both their financial contribution and their considerable effort in sourcing and installing the tree, which looks amazing**

Cllr K. Plummer wanted the Parish Council and the residents to note that there has been many years of gifted trees, and this year the weather has taken its toll and there was a big lack of these trees.

**Resolved** – Cllr R. Taylor proposed to accept, seconded by Cllr. A. Clarke, (Cllr K. Plummer abstained). All in Favour.

**c)To approve new payments for December in accordance with the 2022/23 budget – please see attached payments list**

Cllr R. Taylor questioned payment number 172, and what it was for, Cllr P. Dennitts advised it was for the recovery of The Green in 2 areas for the access to The Green that the bikers use and also the carnival, to recover that section to road height and also the heavily used area in front of the goal posts.

**Resolved –** proposed by Cllr R. Taylor and seconded by Cllr. A. Clarke – all in favour.

**d)To discuss quotes received for the Flag Hill Noticeboard and to agree action.**

**Resolved** - no quotes received – deferred to next month

**e)Fly-tipping at the Railway Station Car Park**

**Proposal: To discuss and agree for Dunmow Group to remove all fly tipping at the Station Car Park as per their quote.**

This has now changed, as Network Rail have fenced off part of the car park and will remove the fly tipping except for the tyres. Cllr. P. Harry advised that the Europit can come and remove the tyres for £1.80 a tyre, approx. 40 tyres. This is a considerably smaller costs then the Dunmow skip quote.

**Resolved**, Cllr L. Edwards proposed to get Europit to remove the tyres, seconded by Cllr G. Wright – all in favour.

**Action Cllr. P. Harry**

**f)Proposal: To discuss providing toilets and financial support to the Coronation Committee**

**Resolved –** Cllr. L. Edwards proposed to agree to this, Cllr. P. Harry Seconded (Cllr. K. Plummer abstained) – All in favour.

**Action – Cllr K. Plummer**

**g) To discuss renewing the Parish Councils membership of the TDALC at £20 for the year.**

**Resolved** Cllr. L. Edwards proposed agreeance, seconded by Cllr K. Plummer, - all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**h)To discuss renewing the Parish Councils membership of the Open Spaces Society at £45 for the year.**

**Resolved** Cllr. L. Edwards proposed agreeance, seconded by Cllr K. Plummer, - all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**i)To discuss and agree the final budget and precept request for 2023/24**

Cllr P. Dennitts proposed an addition to the budget of £200 for the Annual Parish Meeting and awards

**Resolved –** that the precept request of £133,000 be accepted with the attached budget and amendment, as agreed by the Finance Committee, this was seconded by Cllr G. Wright, all Cllrs in favour.

Cllr Taylor requested a report from the Clerk of the proposed budget in regard to the capital in the earmarked reserves in respect to the Southside Track, he is concerned that there will not be enough money left to cover a substantial increase to this project. The clerk advised that as it stands there will be an amount unspent from this years budget to be able to be moved across. She will repair a report and send this across to the Cllrs before the next meeting to break this down.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.162.22 The Green Working Group**

**To note Green Working Group Report & the supplementary information provided by Cllr Herbert**

**a)Proposals: To discuss contacting Power On regarding easement & any further action following works to the Eastern end of the Green**

**Resolved** - the Power On work has been carried out and they have now disappeared with no easement agreement, Cllr P. Harry proposed that he carries on chasing them for this, seconded by Cllr P. Dennitts, all in favour.

**Action – Cllr P. Harry**

As an aside Cllr B Herbert reported about his meeting with Cadent– no arrangement from Cadent has been received from their legal team (who need to write to the Parish Council to discuss the easement before they can carry out any work on the green) Cadent advised that Essex county council have given them an easement along the southside track, Cllr B. Herbert advised that ECC cannot give permission for this as the Southside Track does not belong to them. Cllr R. Taylor asked that as ECC have given permission does that mean they take responsibility for it as a highway? If they are claiming that then the PC should write to ECC about their responsibility.

**Resolved** – that Cllr P. Harry and Cllr. B. Herbert propose that Cadent put the gas supply to go across The Green rather than the southside track, but they have to go through the PC’s easement process through the PC’s land agent. Seconded by Cllr. L. Edwards – all Cllrs in favour

**Action – Cllr B. Herbert and Cllr P. Harry**

**b)To discuss contacting UK Power Networks regarding making good of the green and any other actions following their emergency works**

They did originally make the area good, and the damage has been caused by other people.

**Resolved –** Proposed by Cllr P. Dennitts to repair the green with a budget of £300 using Turf in Tendring, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright – all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

As an amendment, Cllr R. Taylor proposed writing to all the utilities about the ownership of The Green, amended by Cllr A. Clarke to write to the ones we know of – Cadent, Uk power and Power on – accepted by Cllr R. Taylor , Seconded By B. Herbert, all in favour.

Cllr G. Wright proposed to ask M. Dorling to protect that area of the Green once the work is done also.

**Action – Clerk**

**Cllr P. Dennitts proposed to set aside standing orders to continue for another half an hour – Cllr. R. Taylor seconded, all in favour.**

**12.163.22 Environmental Working Group**

**a)To note Environmental Working Group Report.**

The report was circulated prior to the meeting.

**Proposals:**

**b) To discuss a proposal from Cllr Bill Herbert to make this an independent group from the Parish Council**

After much discussion Cllr. B. Herbert’s proposal did not have a seconder therefore no vote was required, and the proposal was not passed.

An invitation was extended to Cllr B. Herbert to attend the meetings and become a member to be much more involved with the working group (EWG) as this is very much a project that involves the whole of Great Bentley. It was noted by the EWG to get the supporting documents onto the cloud in as much time as possible before the meeting.

**c) To discuss the Parish Council commissioning an environmental award for the children of Great Bentley Primary School with a £400 donation from the Grants fund.**

This project involves the Headteacher writing modules for the children to carry out in GB there is no work for the PC other than to support it and be involved in the award ceremony with the of aim deepening the connection between the school and the PC. This is a one off for this year.

**Resolved -** Cllr R. Taylor proposes accepting the proposal, seconded by Cllr. A. Clarke, (Cllr. G. Wright, Cllr. L. Edwards, Cllr B. Herbert and Cllr. K. Plummer abstained) all other Cllrs in favour

**Action – Cllr Dennitts and the Clerk**

**d) 20s Plenty: To discuss the Parish Council writing to ECC supporting the 20s Plenty Campaign for Essex**

**Resolved –** Cllr. G. Wright , seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer – all in favour

**Action - Clerk**

**e) 20s Plenty: To discuss the Parish Council via the Clerk to promote this to other local councils through her contacts & Clerk network inviting them to make contact with the GBPC EWG.**

**Resolved** – Cllr K. Plummer proposed to accept this proposal, seconded by Cllr. A. Clarke – all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**f) EWG Biodiversity: To note the contents of the report provided by Dr Chris Gibson & to agree to an alternative regime for 2023 of the area marked in red on the additional map.**

There are questions about the exact size left once the fire breaks have been implemented.

**Resolved –** to defer this item once the specific size and width of the area is seen**.**

**Action - Cllr P. Dennitts**

**12.164.22 Southside Track Working Group**

**Proposals:**

**a)To discuss and agree a letter provided by Cllr Robert Taylor & who to send it to.**

**Resolved** Cllr R. Taylor proposes that the letter should be sent to Essex County Council and TDC – but also to all departments and organisations like the Open Spaces Society – seconded by Cllr K. Plummer, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk and Cllr R. Taylor**

**b) To discuss and agree any further actions / next steps**

**Resolved** Cllr R. Taylor proposed to leave as a standing agenda item while he is not in attendance for the next 3 meetings, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright – all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.165.22 Community Safety Team Pop-Up Surgeries – Anti Social Behaviour**

**Proposal: For the PC to agree to liaise with the team & the Village Hall Committee to support:**

**• Use of a room at the Village Hall**

**• Use of Internet access to enable use of our laptops**

**• Assistance in advertising our event prior to it taking place**

**Resolved -** Cllr P. Harry proposed agreeing to this proposal but that they need to write to the Village hall to book the room etc. Cllr. G. Wright proposed accepting the proposal with the PC paying for the cost of the hire at £27.50 proposed, Cllr. P. Harry accepted the proposal, seconded by Cllr. L. Edwards – all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.166.22 Speed Indicator Device**

**To receive a brief update on this project**

The Invoice has been received, it has been authorised for payment but not to pay it until the devices have arrived, due to arrive any day, to Cllr P. Dennitts.

**Action – Clerk once the devices have been received**

**12.167.22 Boundary Commission Review**

**Proposal: For the PC to discuss and agree to support the work being done by Cllr McWilliams to leave the Parliamentary Constituency boundaries unchanged and add comments to the consultation process to this effect.**

**Resolved –** Cllr. A. Clarke proposed we agree to support Cllr McWilliams, Cllr G. Wright Seconded – (Cllr. R. Taylor abstained) all in favour.

**Action - Cllr Dennitts**

**12.168.22 Standing orders**

**Proposal: To discuss and agree proposed updates to the Standing Orders previously circulated**

**Resolved -** This item is to be deferred until January as not all Cllrs in attendance to discuss.

**12.169.22 Christmas Tree Shredding**

**Proposal: To discuss the Christmas Tree Shredding for charity to take place on Sat 7th January on the Green in the usual manner.**

**Resolved –** Cllr L. Edwards proposed to accept the proposal, seconded by Cllr. B. Herbert – all in favour

**Cllr Dennitts proposed to set aside Standing orders once again to go through the Planning applications, seconded by Cllr K. Plummer – all in favour.**

**12.170.22 Planning/Housing**

a) Applications for discussion at meeting

**22/01596/VOC – Land to the South of Weeley Road** - Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act, to allow a variation of condition 4 of 20/01176/OUT: 4(a) to change the form of junction specified in the Condition from a priority junction with right turn lane to a simple priority junction. 4(c) to re-word the Condition to specify footway provision and dropped kerb/tactile crossing points on Weeley Road.

**Resolved** – Cllr P. Harry proposed to have no comment as there are multiple applications for this proposal, seconded by Cllr Dennitts, (Cllr. G. Wright abstained) – all in favour.

**22/01601/FUL – The Grange, Heckfords Road** – Retrospective application for erection of a building for storage of machinery, materials, and ancillary/domestic use, all related to the existing property.

**Resolved** – objected to it originally and now it has been called back in as it is not the height agreed on the original application to defer to Februarys meeting.

**Action – Clerk**

**22/01732/FUL – The Oaks, St Mary’s Road, Great Bentley -** Proposed extension to disused garden area to provide a new single storey wing which will accommodate 12 new rooms, including ensuites and external patio areas. Demolition of existing front gable wing and reconfiguration of car park.

**Resolved** – Proposed No comment by Cllr R. Taylor, seconded by Cllr K. Plummer – all in favour

**12.171.22 Reports from District and County Councils** (ECC Alan Goggin, TDC Lynda McWilliams)

Reports circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Goggin replied to the Ukranian question – that they have hosted 650 families in Tendring and that the grant to host is being increased for the next 6 months with a £500 christmas bonus.

The 20 is plenty proposal, is actually one of 5 different proposals so GBPC need to decide which one they would like to go for.

Cllr McWilliams discussed the proposed changes in the rural constituencies – raised it at the TDALC and was given unanimous support from all the parishes. There are 4 new CCTV camaras available if needed to be hired.

**12.172.22 Council Reports:**

**a)Footpath report**

None Received.

**b)Caretaker’s Report**

None Received

**c)PCSO Crime Report**

None Received

**d)Tree Wardens Report**

None Received

**e) TDALC Report**

Discussed the highways panel, limitations of the Highway Rangers, not being able to work in areas over 30mph. Lack of money inflation is causing another issue as their budget is not going as far.

The issue was raised with the lack of enforcement and the TDALC have been advised that this is due to the lack of staff due to the loss of the whole of their staff.

There is another consultation taking place which closes on the 12th December for the Five Estuaries pylons project which does majorly affect our neighbouring parishes.

**f)2023 Elections - For the Clerk & Chair to revert to the January PC meeting with a plan for promoting the 2023 Parish Council elections**

**Resolved** – Proposed by Cllr R. Taylor to accept this proposal – all in agreement.

**g)Annual Parish Meeting - For the Clerk & Chair to begin preparation for the APM in line with last year’s meeting.**

To note that there is one recommendation for a Parish Award so far.

All in favour – one recommendation for a parish award

**Resolved –** Noted

**h)Great Bentley Cricket Club – conversion of wicket pitch to all weather pitch.**

**Resolved –** the Cricket club haven’t come back with any other information.

**i)Power On**

**Resolved –** discussed under Agenda Item 12.162.22b

**12.173.22 Highways & Transport Reports:**

**a)Transport Report**

Cllr P. Harry advised that the drain cover outside the pharmacy has made it onto the list of work to be done.

**12.174.22 Training/Events**

**a)Reports / attended events**

As reported above the clerk has completed the EALC Standing orders coursed and has started the CiLca.

**b) Nominations for new events**

None

**12.175.22 Information Exchange/Items for next agenda**

Cllr L. Edwards - War Memorial – lettering on it for February’s meeting.

Adult Gym Equipment for the Play Area

South Side Track

Standing Orders Amendment

**12.176.22 To confirm date and time of next meeting**

Date of next meeting: Thursday 5th January 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

**12.177.22 Public Open Forum** (Maximum 10 minutes)

MOP wanted to just put out there that the consultation for the school being put online at this time of year is not good enough, as they feel that this will get lost in the season , with the time frame being 2 weeks, is this is a coinciding with the Christmas holidays, nativity’s, end of term etc. will mean that people just won’t have the time to respond fairly. Also the fact that it is an online consultation only puts lots of residents at a disadvantage as they may not be able to comment at all.

The January agenda will be closed on the 22nd December 2022, to new additions.

EWG meeting on the 20th December 2022, Cllr P. Dennitts suggested The Green working group meet on the 18th December 2022.

There being no further business the chair closed the meeting at 21:53 Meeting closed at 21:53pm

………………………………………………….sign……………………………………..date