**Great Bentley Parish Council**

*Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council: Jennifer Spear*

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**Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on the 02nd of February 2023 at The Village Hall, Plough Road Great Bentley Colchester CO7 8LG**

Present: Cllr. P. Dennitts (Chair) Cllr. B. Herbert Cllr P. Harry Cllr. L. Edwards Cllr. A. Clarke Cllr. K. Plummer Cllr. R. Adams Cllr G. Wright

In attendance: Mrs Jennifer Spear (Clerk) and 17 members of the public.

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

Apologies were received from Cllr R. Taylor; these were accepted by the council.

**02.210.23 To Receive any declarations of Interest.**

Cllr R. Adams declared an interest in any items pertaining to the Village Hall, finance (02.215.23c) and M Dorling.

Cllr G. Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest in the planning application for, The Moors

Cllr K. Plummer declared an interest in any items pertaining to the Village Hall (02.215.23c) also.

These were noted by the Council.

**02.211.23 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting from the 5th of January 2023 meeting (previously circulated) to be approved and signed.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed that these were a true record of the meeting, Cllr K. Plummer seconded, Cllr G. Wright abstained as he was not in attendance, all other councillors in favour and these were signed by the Chair.

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

**No matters raised.**

**02.213.23 Footpath Diversion**

**To discuss and agree any actions from the meeting with Cala Homes on Thursday 26th January 2023**

Cllr K. Plummer advised that there is no movement at all with the positioning of the footpath, however once the footpath is opened the Parish Council can put in a request to divert the footpath. There was finally a Network Rail representative in attendance. Cala homes are open to negotiations regarding any fencing that will be put up, it is the responsibility of all the landowners to do this themselves.

**Resolved Cllr** K. Plummer proposed that the Parish Council write to the homeowners to advise them to contact Cala about their fencing, for the Parish Council to contact Cala homes about our fencing requirements and also to prepare the diversion application for the footpath before so it is ready to be input as soon as the path is opened, seconded by Cllr R. Adams, all in favour.

Action - Clerk and Cllr K. Plummer

**02.214.23 Clerk’s Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting showing ongoing and completed tasks.

* 2 Payments outstanding for the allotments: one holder has advised they will pay at the end of the month, and the last one the clerk has not been able to contact yet.
* Received the final AGAR back this will be added to the agenda for next month.
* The letter for the landowners for an area for trees has not gone out yet, Cllr G. Wright offered to support the clerk with this.
* 28 Hours of overtime was completed in January (still on 10 hours a week contract but as of 1st February now on the full 23 hours)

Payments received: £2.38 wayleave payment from Openreach.

**02.215.23 Finance**

1. **To review the monthly financial bank reconciliation**

As at the 30th  of January there was a total of £189,042.08 in all 3 accounts, £140,107.73 (Co op Current), £19,671.31 (Co op Deposit) and £29,263.04 (unity).

**Resolved** Councillors all agreed that this is correct, reports signed by Cllr P. Dennitts,

1. **To approve new payments for February in accordance with the 2022/23 budget – please see attached payments list**

**Resolved** proposed by Cllr A. Clarke, seconded by Cllr L. Edwards, all in favour. Action - Clerk

1. **To agree to the price increase for meeting room hire from the Village Hall**

**Resolved** This was an expected rise, Cllr P. Harry proposed to accept the increase, seconded by Cllr L. Edwards, Cllr K. Plummer and Cllr R. Adams abstained, the rest of the council in favour.

1. **To discuss the new yearly contract renewal from TMB Services**

**Resolved** Cllr L. Edwards proposed to accept the renewal, seconded by Cllr P. Harry all in favour.

**02.216.23 Electric Supply – To discuss switching to Npower now the Parish Council are out of Contract with Drax, (out of contract rates with Drax are 78.4 per KWH with Npower they will be 33.8 per KWH, however this is a variable tariff and can change monthly).**

**Resolved –** After a discussion regarding the lack of options regarding switching, Cllr P. Harry Proposed to accept the change, seconded by Cllr L. Edwards all in favour.

Action – Clerk

**02.217.23 Personnel Committee**

**Proposal – To discuss offering the recommended candidate the part time position of assistant to the clerk, at 10 hours per week, beginning in February.**

Cllr P. Dennitts gave a brief outline on the proposed applicant and the application process that was gone through.

**Resolved Cllr** P. Harry proposed employing the applicant, seconded by Cllr L. Edwards, unanimously all in favour.

**02.218.23 The Green Working Group**

**a) To note the report from the Green Working Group**

Main items to note is the work that has been undertaken on Green Corner that was left damaged after the traffic lights, M Dorling has filled in the holes and Cllr P. Harry has re-seeded it.

Cllr G. Wright updated the council on the new salt spreading machine, (it took a full day to put it together), they did go out either side of the really cold weather in the village, spreading around Tesco’s etc, lots of it did have to be hand shovelled due to the parked cars. Some of the salt has been kept in reserve in case of any colder weather that may come. The new machine does spread well and works well. The council noted their thanks that this is a voluntary service that has been undertaken.

**02.219.23 Environmental Working Group**

**a) To note the Environmental Working Group Report and that the proposed area of The Green has not been cordoned off as agreed at January’s meeting. This will therefore be organised for councillors by Cllr P. Dennitts during February.**

The Friends of the Green sent over a proposal for a different area of The Green to be looked at rather than the one suggested, so Cllr P. Dennitts is going to contact Friends of the Green to discuss this to move this forward, before next month.

**b) To discuss inviting a member of the Wivenhoe Group to the March meeting to speak and discuss any concerns about the possibility of introducing a new mowing regime for The Green.**

**Resolved -** Proposed by Cllr k. Plummer, seconded Cllr P. Harry, Cllr G. Wright abstained, one Cllr against and the rest in favour, motion carried.

Action – Cllr P. Dennitts

**c) To discuss the completed application form for the Climate Action Challenge Fund.**

The fund is not for the Parish Council, this is for MOP to benefit from, the PC would be working with Christopher Blomeley who is currently working successfully with Alresford

**Resolved** Proposed to complete and submit the application by Cllr. G Wright, seconded by Cllr L. Edwards, all in favour.

Action – Cllr A. Clarke and the Clerk

**02.220.23 Standing Orders**

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

Cllr R. Adams was tasked with comparing previous standing orders with ones that were accepted in January last year, below recommendation:

4v

1. “may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 3 [was ‘1’] days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;”

Cllr R. Adams recommended that 3 days should remain as it gives more time for the proper officer to act.

5c

“If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm. [was 7pm]”

Cllr R. Adams proposed this should be moved back to 7pm as all parish council meetings take place at 7pm.

5d

**“**In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year [was – ‘ordinary meetings of the council will normally be held monthly’] on such dates and times as the Council decides. [was – ‘directs’]”

Cllr R. Adams proposed this should be “meets monthly except for August”.

6d

“If the chairman of a committee or a sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 3 [was – ‘7’] members of the committee or the sub-committee any 3 [was – ‘2’] members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or a sub-committee.”

Cllr R. Adams proposed to leave this at 3 members rather then 7.

9b

“No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 [was – ‘9’] clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.”

Cllr R. Adams proposed to leave it at 9, to give enough time for the proper officer to change the agenda.

15bii

“subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 7 [was– ‘2’] days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;”

Cllr R. Adams proposed it stays at 7 which gives time for the proper officer to remove the agenda item, 2 is not enough.

17e

1. “The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all [was- ‘each’] councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. [was- ‘before the end of the following month of May’] The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.”

Cllr R. Adams proposed that this should be 14 days prior to the agenda.

All the above proposals were seconded by Cllr P. Dennitts, all Cllrs in favour. Action Cllr R. Adams and the Clerk

**02.221.23 Adult Gym Equipment**

**As circulated, there is £143,650 of S106 money available to Great Bentley, secured until 2032.**

**To discuss if the Parish Council want to begin looking into costings for adding Gym Equipment to the Playground area.**

The clerk confirmed that this money is all available to spend now, but it cannot be used for maintenance. The council discussed making sure that the parishioners in the village want the addition of adult gym equipment, and that there are some older sections of the current play area that do need replacing.

**Resolved** Cllr K. Plummer proposed putting a request out in the village magazine asking residents to contact the PC about the possible addition of adult gym equipment and report back at the next meeting, seconded by Cllr R. Adams all in favour.

Action – Clerk

**02.222.23 Election – For Councillors to note the process for application, that there is one known vacancy arising and therefore encouragement for others to step forward is vital.**

The election will be taking place on May the 4th, there can be an assumption from the public that current Cllrs will always be on the council however applications are more than welcome from the. Also, this year photo id is required when voting in person. The deadline for new applications is the 24th of March, the application pack has not yet been sent to the Clerk.

Action – Clerk

**02.223.23 To note the recent correspondence from residents and discuss any updates on the Southside Track.**

All emails were circulated to members of the Parish Council prior to the meeting and have been noted. At the moment the ongoing issues on top of this is that currently Cadent want to dig up the south side track, which the PC resisted and requested this to be routed along the green instead. The problem is that as this is a registered village green, its common land and by law you are not allowed to surface it – this is not a new problem that we are dealing with. The funds it will take have to be justified for the 23 houses that are there along with those needs of the rest of the village too. There are lots of legalities which make it seem like progress may seem slow but there is a lot going on in the background. These houses always have always been situated on an unmade track.

Now it has changed online on the ECC website from a track to a private road, but it is also registered as a village Green which is causing the issues.

The usual work was not carried out this year due to Cadent fitting the new gas pipe – it is important to note that this is not just for the new houses supply but also for the existing houses – this hasn’t been fitted. Cadent want to start work on this on the 13th of February, they have advised that they will simply leave the track as it is and will not make it any better, so the PC have requested that this needs to go under the Village Green instead as the track is already weak, which leads to the PC engaging with Cadent and triggering the PCS easement policy. Cadent believe that they can carry out the work without permission from the PC because it has been an unmade track for over 20 years, however these permitted rights do not extend if this is a publicly funded road. The Southside track is maintained by the PC from a precept which is publicly funded money, but again this is a very fine line.

It was discussed to try and see if there is anything that can be done now temporarily to mitigate the issues on the track but it was argued that the problem with any work being carried out because it is an unmade track, in the winter you have the issues as have been complained about and in the summer the track is so dry its completely dusty. The PC have a duty to protect the green and the current state of the track is affecting The Green.

The Parish Council are waiting for a reply from Open Spaces, the RCCE and also Tendring District Council in regards to how the PC can move the project forward legally.

**02.224.23 Possible Tesco Relocation – To discuss any next steps for the Parish Council to take regarding a possible relocation.**

**Resolved** Cllr L. Edwards proposed contacting Tesco to find out what is the plan with the shop, Cllr K. Plummer seconded, all in favour.

Action – Clerk and Cllr L. Edwards

**02.225.23 Coronation Planning Committee**

**Proposal: To discuss a request from the Coronation planning committee to source for further funding for the coronation celebration and to investigate the Parish Council Insurance to see if this can be extended to cover the celebrations.**

The clerk advised that unless the Coronation committee came under the PC umbrella, Parish Councillors were to sit in on the meetings and brought decisions etc back to the Parish Council then the Parish Council insurance would not be able to cover the celebration, which would limit them to making decisions following the PCs protocols.

**Resolved** Cllr G. Wright proposed the clerk going back to the Village Coronation Committee and asking if they would like to work with the Parish Council going forward to be able to use the Parish Council Insurance and apply for funding or the PC apply for the funding on the Coronation Committees behalf and then the PC will hold the funds on their behalf if successful, seconded by Cllr A. Clarke, all councillors in favour.

Action – Clerk

**02.226.23 War Memorial**

**Proposal: To discuss the addition of a new line of engraving, and to discuss the maintenance required for the surrounding posts, with a proposed plan of repair.**

**Resolved** Cllr L. Edwards proposed changing the name from Pace to Page as is the fallen soldiers name, then update the IWM with the correction, Cllr P. Dennitts amended the proposal that the clerk look into a specialist to look into the work to see if this can be done. Cllr G. Wright seconded the proposal all in favour. Action – Clerk

**02.227.24 To discuss the two quotes received for works for the replacement posts around the War Memorial, posts around Mill House, posts at the play area and removal and replacement of post and rail along Heckfords Road.**

**Resolved –** Cllr P. Dennitts proposed that the Green Working Group to investigate all of these prices and break the quotes down into their separate projects with proposals for the next meeting, seconded by Cllr K. Plummer, all in favour. Action – Green Working Group

**02.228.23 To discuss a new request for a memorial bench outside Oaklea**

The clerk suggested that the Parish Council need a memorial bench policy in place before the addition of any new benches.

Cllr B. Herbert proposed that there is a place near Oaklea where a new memorial bench can go in replacement of another bench.

**Resolved** Cllr P. Dennitts proposed responding to the applicant with the current cost of the bench plus the installation, and that the Parish Council would agree to this, and bring to the next meeting a memorial bench policy for the council to discuss, seconded by Cllr G. Wright. Action – Clerk

**02.229.23 To discuss and agree the new Service Level agreement from TDC for cutting the public rights of way, for the year 2022/23**

**Resolved** Cllr G. Wright proposed accepting the service level agreement provided the cost doesn’t change by too much of a margin, seconded by Cllr P. Harry, all in favour.

Action – Clerk

**02.230.23 Planning/Housing**

1. **22/01818/FUL, Land to The South of Weeley Road Great Bentley Essex**

**Full planning permission for the erection of 154 dwellings, informal recreation space, a local area of play and associated development.**

Amount of houses in the originally agreed planning application to increase them from 136 to 154.

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed the PC object to the variation on the grounds that Tendring have their given planning permission for their required number of houses for the next few years so these extra houses are not needed, seconded by Cllr A. Clarke, all cllrs in favour. Action Clerk and Cllr P. Harry

**b) 23/00005/FULHH Land at Sturrick Lane, Great Bentley, Essex, CO7 8PT**

**Proposed conversion of existing barn to ancillary residential accommodation in association with dwelling approved under 22/00619/TDCPIP.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed no comment as the overall size hasn’t changed, and they are using the same materials, – seconded by Cllr A. Clarke, all in favour.

**c) 22/01732/FUL, The Oaks, 14 St Marys Road, Great Bentley**

**Proposed extension to disused garden area, to provide single storey wing which will accommodate 12 rooms, including en-suites and external patios areas. Demolition of existing front gable wing and reconfiguration of the car park.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed that the PC object to this application on the basis that the transport accessibility report was not acceptable to Highways due to the lack of safety on St Marys Road, it’s a short walk to the station, and the residents can access local amenities by foot or by bike and using local bus services, (3 of which don’t even run past the proposed location of this), the objection was seconded by Cllr L. Edwards, unanimous decision all in favour. Action Clerk and Cllr P. Harry

**d) 22/02134/FULHH, 5 Weeley Road, Aingers Green, Great Bentley**

**Proposed erection of a workshop to rear of garden and solar panels.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed that the PC object to this because this will not meet policy SPL3 that it doesn’t fit into its surroundings, these are long narrow back gardens and the size of this in a back garden is not in keeping with the area. Seconded by Cllr B. Herbert, all councillors in favour of objection. Action Clerk and Cllr P. Harry

**e) 23/00037/FULHH, 13 The Paddocks Great Bentley Colchester Essex**

**Proposed single storey side extension to form study.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed no comment, Cllr B. Herbert seconded all in favour.

**F) 23/00012/FULHH, 32 De Vere Estate, Great Bentley**

**Proposed first floor rear extension to form bedroom and en-suite.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed no comment, Cllr A. Clarke seconded all in favour.

**02.231.23 To discuss the new request from UK Power Networks for a new electricity connection to The Forge.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed that the clerk write back to the applicant as the application is not complete because the permission is only for A – B, but they have forgotten the bit from A – Bentley House connection where the mains is, which is all village Green aswell, this proposal is seconded by Cllr R. Adams all in favour. Action – Clerk

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

Reports circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr A. Goggin advised that his pot hole initiative has meant that all pot holes reported in Great Bentley should be filled by the end of march. As of next month, all recycling centres will only let you in by appointment only, this is available to book online. The diversion from Plough Road was advised to the Parish Council previously and it should be being changed. However, as the PC pointed out this still hasn’t happened and the roads are being destroyed all round the village, and who is going to repair these, Cllr A. Goggin replied that it would be difficult to know which vehicles caused the damage, Cllr P. Dennitts pointed out that if the diversion had been put in for more suitable roads by Highways the roads wouldn’t have been so damaged.

Cllr L. McWilliams wanted to pass on some good news about Great Bentley Primary School, the Health and wellbeing hub initiated as an after-school activity and supported by herself was so successful it was rolled out to the head teachers other primary school in Frinton and has now spread to 21 other schools around Essex.

**02.233.23 Council Reports:**

**a)Footpath report**

Circulated prior to the meeting.

**b)Caretaker’s Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting.

**c)PCSO Crime Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting.

**d)Tree Wardens Report**

To discuss a plan for the following trees that have died or need work, (from the Tree Wardens Report):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ///lengthen.tactical.flaunting | Mountain Ash - has some die back - memorial Morton |
| ///towel.snips.daylight | Oak - dying? |
| ///laptops.deriving.cherry | Oak? - dead |
| ///marshes.overhear.alerting | Oak - not happy |
| ///boss.glows.ripen | Oak? - dead |
| ///revolting.exulted.expose | Oak - not good |

For the Parish Council to note that a tree was reported damaged in the Spinny, this has since been inspected and Clive Dawson agreed for it to be removed, which has been carried out already.

**Resolved** Cllr G. Wright proposed that the Green Working Group visit the trees and make proposals on the trees for the next meeting, seconded by Cllr P. Dennitts, all in favour.

Action – Green Working Group

**f)Annual Parish Meeting - To consider changing the proposed date for the APM to the 11th May to avoid the pre-election period (purdah) as recommended in the EALC election training.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Dennitts proposed to agree to the above, seconded by Cllr G. Wright all in favour.

**02.234.23 Highways & Transport Reports:**

Cllr P. Harry just wanted to draw attention about the lifts at Colchester mainline station are all being replaced and are out of action there are alternative arrangements in place. Also, that the pot hole outside the pharmacy and the top of plough road has not yet been filled. Also to note that, Weely road is going to have traffic lights from the on the 6th February and closes on the 13th ,Plough Road should be re-opened on the 10th February.

**02.235.23 Training/Events**

**a) Reports on attended events**

Cllr P. Dennitts attended Election Training run by the EALC, as reported above.

Cllr L. Edwards attended the 5 estuaries webinar, doesn’t impact us but it does impact neighbouring parishes in a huge way, another consultation is running for 8 weeks with more – cables make landfall across Frinton golf club – 60m wide trenches the difficulty here is that the energy being produced will be going straight to London, it doesn’t benefit Tendring. Received an email from the environment secretary who said there may be another option, using Pylons and making landfall at Sizewell which is already in a position to handle that power, this has been asked by the Stop Pylon Group and no answer with a reason why this cannot happen has yet been forthcoming.

**b) Nominations for new events**

None raised.

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

* Southside track
* Agronomy report
* Extraordinary meeting Thursday 9th February at 4:00 pm

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

The next Parish Council meeting is booked for 7:00pm on Thursday 2nd March 2023

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

* A MOP asked if the s106 money can be used for another purpose such as the cricket club / football club/running, clerk responded that this cannot be changed as this is only for improvement to play provision, and advised that Great Bentley Parish Council do have a grant policy that these clubs could apply to.
* MOP raised that the Southside track is a danger to life now with the state of what it is, and that protecting The Green is important but so is protecting people.
* MOP argued that adding posts to the side of The Green is only going to make it worse because it forces people to drive on the track when they are trying to avoid it. Cllr P. Dennitts advised that the post proposal are also part of stopping the through flow of traffic to try to protect the track aswell.
* MOP asked if the Parish Council asked where the drawn-up plan has gone that was put in, Cllr G. Wright advised that the plan was considered as a basis and has been re-drawn and the final design has not yet been agreed. Cllr P. Dennitts advised that at the moment the PC are waiting for legal confirmation that they can go ahead and actually carry out any work on there.
* Cllr P. Harry advised that if you look at the Village Green Act and the Common Land Act which will show MOP how tied the PC are with what they are able to do at this time.
* A further request from a MOP to try and get the track levelled before the funeral at the end of the month, but this is before the next Parish Council meeting to be able to make a decision.
* MOP also thanked the PC for their suggested offer of support for funding for the Coronation.
* MOP raised the issue of dog waste has increased in the village and what can be done, Clerk advised that TDC have reinstated their dog wardens who can fine dog owners on the spot.
* MOP raise the issue of Tesco possibly looking to close their doors, she advised that the lease for the shop is up for renewal next year and it may not be Tesco’s decision. If the shop closes is there any community transport available to take older people who also don’t have cars shopping. Cllr P. Dennitts suggested that there already are 2 that are run by TDC, dial a ride and Tendring Community Transport.

There being no further business the chair closed the meeting at 21:33pm

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