**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 March 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 G. Wright Cllr. R. Taylor

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

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

Cllr R. Adams has sent his apologies and these were accepted by the council

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

None declared.

**03.247.23 Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting from the 9th February 2023 meeting (previously circulated) to be approved and signed.**

**Resolved** by Cllr L. Edwards proposing that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 9th February 2023 are approved as a correct record, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, these were signed by the Chair.

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

There was a County Broadband representative in attendance who wanted a few minutes to address the members of the public and the council he advised that they specialise in bringing broadband to rural areas he advised asking the village to register an interest with them on their website, they use the government gigabit voucher system so they need to have a pre-order amount of 20% to be able to claim this and there will be a village hall presentation in March for all the residents to attend to be able to ask any questions.

**03.249.23 Southside Track**

**a) To discuss the offer of benches / bin / tree / posts from Cadent for the upheaval to the Green because of the laying of their new Gas Pipe.**

**Resolved –** Cllr Dennitts proposed that we would like to request that cadent contribute to the cost of posts to help restrict the width of the southside track getting any wider, amended by Cllr G. Wright who proposed that the posts should be the type that were agreed previously for the Southside Track, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, Cllr. B. Herbert abstained but the rest of the council voted in favour, motion carried.

Action – Cllr. G. Wright will provide the clerk with the details of the posts and the Clerk will contact Cadent

**b) To note that because the Cadent Pipe location has been agreed to be laid in The Green running alongside the Southside Track the consent to lay has now been signed which has meant that the biannual maintenance on the Southside Track has been able to be carried out.**

Noted by the Council

**03.250.23 Update on the Cala homes footpath diversion**

Cllr K. Plummer advised that there has been no movement in regard to the path, Cala homes have been in contact with the homeowners but also Cllr. K. Plummer met with the clerk to discuss the requirements of the Parish Council for the diverted footpath. The Clerk is going to write to Cala homes with the proposal and report back at the next meeting.

**03.251.23 Clerk’s Report**

The clerk forwarded the monthly report of ongoing and completed tasks to the council before the meeting, there were no questions on this report for the clerk. Unit one of CiLca has been completed and submitted.

**03.252.23 Finance**

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

**Resolved** that as of the 31st January 2023 there is £139,536.40 in the Co op current account, on the 17th May 2022 there was £19,671. 31 in the Co op deposit account and as of the 27th February 2023 there is £25,124.33 in the unity trust account at a total of £184,332.04, this was agreed as correct by the council and signed by Cllr. L. Edwards.

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

Cllr. A. Clarke questions payment number 268, the clerk clarified that that is the working from home allowance payment that is on the clerks payslip, therefore the accompanying invoice is not in the pack.

**Resolved** that the monthly payments are correct by Cllr. A. Clarke, seconded by Cllr. L. Edwards, all in favour.

Action Clerk

1. **To note the Final External Auditors Report for year End 2021/22 and discuss any actions required from the Report, (risk management).**

“We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2021/22 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights was less than 30 consecutive working days in length and did not include the first 10 working days of July. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2023/24.

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertion in Section 1, Box 5, but it has not provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. The internal auditor has raised the same matter in the Annual Internal Audit Report by answering 'No' to internal control objective C. The smaller authority should ensure that a risk assessment is carried out and reviewed by Full Council during 2022/23.”

**Resolved** Noted that the final external auditors report has been received, and the above comments have been noted.

1. **To discuss booking the Internal Auditor for year end 2022/23**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed to book the auditor as agreed, seconded by Cllr. L. Edwards, all in favour.

Action Clerk

1. **To discuss and agree the Talk Talk price rises**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Dennitts proposed to accept the rise, amended by Cllr L. Edwards who suggested looking into an alternative to having the landline in the office, to be added to the agenda for the next meeting, this amendment was accepted by Cllr P. Dennitts – all in favour.

1. **To discuss renewing the councils membership with Friends of Historic Essex for 2023 - £12 per year**

**Resolved** Cllr B. Herbert proposed accepting the renewal, seconded by Cllr P. Harry, Cllr G. Wright abstained, the rest of the council in favour – motion carried.

Action Clerk

1. **To discuss and agree to the purchase of “No Dog Signs” for the play area**

**Resolved -** Cllr P. Harry proposed getting a couple of signs to try and deter dog owners (but the PC cannot police it) to be placed on the railing areas that are there, Seconded by Cllr G. Wright - all in favour

Action Clerk

1. **To note that the NetScout grant application has been refused**

**Resolved –** This has been noted by the council but there has been an update since the agenda was published that the Parish Councils application is being reassessed.

1. **To note that the CACF Application fund has closed before the PC could apply**

**Resolved –** This was noted by the Council

1. **Receipts - £101.01 allotment rent**

**Resolved –** This was noted by the Council

**03.253.23 Environmental Working Group**

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

**Resolved –** This was noted by the Council

**b) To hear a small presentation on Biodiversity from Mark Halladay**

Mark Hallady from Wivenhoe PC who instigated a “no mow” policy in lots of their areas and displayed lots of slides which showed the huge variety of flowers that grew (5 times as many flower heads in some areas) and the increase in insects, which will lead to an increase in birds. The duty has been placed on local councils to do more in terms of increasing biodiversity in our environments. Low cost and low ecological approach (no sowing/ no mowing) surveys of the flowers that grew naturally and surveyed the residents, no complaints were received, less carbon emissions on the sites where they no longer mow.

Litter and dog mess question – Mark advised that he has not found there to be any more in the long grass than compared to the short grass, regarding the litter he has said that they have found that the longer grass acts as wind break and the litter collects in those areas, as people do drop the litter wherever they are. The fire risk is also a question especially last year when there was a drought, which did lead to the councils cutting the verges that were in residential areas rather than leaving them for longer than they wanted to.

**b) To discuss and agree to the clerk contacting John Hall from PACE to look into alternative funding streams now the Climate Challenge Action Fund has closed.**

**Resolved –** Cllr Edwards proposed to carry out the above, seconded by Cllr A. Clarke, Cllrs B. Herbert and Cllr R. Taylor both abstained, the rest of the council in favour, motion carried.

Action Clerk

**03.254.23 The Green Working Group**

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

**Resolved –** This was noted by the Council

**b) To agree to the removal of the 3 dead trees from the tree wardens report and the removal of the dead branches from the other one as part of the parish councils contracted usual spring clearance.**

**Resolved –** Cllr P. Harry proposed to agree to this recommendation, seconded by Cllr L. Edwards all in favour. Cllr R. Taylor advised that the Forestry Commission advised that when the trees in the Spinny died that they are not to be replaced.

**03.255.23 Memorial Bench Policy**

**Proposal:**

1. **To discuss and agree the installation and maintenance cost to last 10 years for any new benches.**

**Resolved** – Cllr L. Edwards proposed that we charge the cost of the new bench (this can change over time) and £150 installation cost, to be reviewed on a yearly basis, seconded by Cllr G. Wright all in favour of accepting this proposal.

1. **To discuss and agree a cost for the 10 re-sponsoring of benches already in place.**

**Resolved -** Proposed by Cllr G. Wright that as cost of £150 (as advised by the Clerk) seconded by Cllr L. Edwards, all in favour.

1. **To discuss implementing the proposed Memorial Bench Policy to take into consideration the above resolutions.**

**Resolved** - Proposed by Cllr K. Plummer to accept the policy, seconded by Cllr B. Herbert, Cllr R. Taylor puts forward an amendment that the council accept the use of recycled UPVC benches aswell as wooden ones, this was discussed by the council, but not accepted by Cllr K. Plummer, all in favour of the policy.

Action Clerk

**03.256.23 Document Retention Policy**

**Proposal – To discuss implementing the document Retention Policy**

**Resolved –** Cllr R. Taylor proposed adding Great Bentley into the header on the document, Cllr L. Edwards proposed accepting the policy, seconded by Cllr R. Taylor, all councillors in favour.

Action Clerk

**03.257.23 Risk Management Policy**

**Proposal – To discuss and implement the Risk Management Policy**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed to accept the policy, based on the current inspection levels of The Green, as the clerk advises that the Green is and of itself a risk and that as a Parish Council we are responsible for it on that basis, and also that the dates in red are updated correctly, seconded by Cllr K. Plummer.

**03.258.23 To discuss and agree the cost of Wood for Stone carrying out the name correction on the war memorial at a cost of £75 plus VAT**

**Resolved –** Proposed by Cllr B. Herbert Bill to accept the quote, Cllr P. Dennitts proposed an amendment to update the imperial war museum once the work has been carried out, seconded by Cllr K. Plummer, all in favour**.**

Action Clerk

**03.259.23 To discuss and agree to works and the cost of bollards for the following areas:**

a) Works at Mill House section of the Green – to install a 120 ft row of 4x4 treated timber posts at 6 ft intervals with one removable

Quote 1) £1200 Quote 2) *see below*

**Resolved -** Cllr Plummer proposes that we do not put posts here, seconded by Cllr B. Herbert, all the rest of the council in favour of the proposal, motion carried.

b) Works Adjacent to the Playground – to install a 40ft row of posts 4ft 4 x 4 treated timber posts at 6 ft intervals

Quote 1) £390 Quote 2) – includes both **a** and **b works** together £920

**Resolved -** Cllr Plummer proposes that we do not put posts in this area, but need to push it back to the Green Working Group to revisit the area and come back with a plan to protect the new kerbing that was put in there 2 years ago, that is being damaged by people parking over the kerb, priced with the agreed style of bollards, seconded by Cllr P. Harry, 1 vote against, the rest in favour, motion carried.

c) The road barriers at Heckfords Road – to supply and replace existing posts with new 6ft 6 x 6 treated timber posts and refix the existing poles.

Quote 1) £580 Quote 2) £1020

**Resolved** – Cllr P. Harry proposed to accept quote 2 with the hardwood option, seconded by Cllr G. Wright all in favour.

Action – Clerk

d)The War Memorial – to supply and install 5 x 5 hardwood posts (to match existing style), reuse existing iron fixings to rehang existing chains

Quote 1) Hardwood - £1150 or Treated Timber £900 Quote 2) 1350

**Resolved –** Cllr P. Harry proposed to go with quote 2, Cllr G. Wright proposed an amendment to instead accept Quote number 1 using the hardwood option, Cllr P. Harry accepted the proposal, seconded by Cllr G. Wright, Cllr B. Herbert abstained, the rest of the councillors in favour, motion carried.

Action – Clerk

**03.260.23 To discuss the proposal to consolidate the signage into one/two new signs to cover current notifications and include “CCTV in operation” at the train Station.**

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed that we source prices for signage that can be used at the railway station, Cllr R. Taylor proposed an amendment in that the wording required can be agreed at a future meeting, amendment accepted by Cllr P. Harry, the proposal was then seconded by Cllr R. Taylor – all in favour.

Action – Clerk

**03.261.23 Village Green Requests**

**a) To discuss giving permission to the Carnival and Fete association for use of the village Green on Saturday 24th June 2023 for the Carnival**

**Resolved** Cllr L. Edwards proposed to agree to the use of the Green, seconded by Cllr P. Harry, all in favour.

Action – Clerk

**b) To discuss the grant request for the portaloos for the Carnival on Saturday 24th June 2023**

**Resolved –** Cllr R. Taylor proposes we agree this proposal as an s137 payment instead of a grant as the Parish Council spend the money and provide the toilets rather than giving the money to the carnival committee, seconded by Cllr G. Wright, all in favour.

Action – Clerk

**c)To discuss giving Friends of the Green Permission to fundraise on The Green on the Wednesday Biker Nights that will soon be returning.**

**Resolved** Cllr G. Wright proposes to give permission for this and seconded by Cllr B. Herbert, all in favour.

Action – Clerk

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

**Resolved** Cllr P. Harry proposed to involve the land agent for the part across the green with UK Power Networks, seconded by Cllr B. Herbert all in favour

Action – Clerk

**Resolved** Cllr R. Taylor proposed that parish council need to contact the builders to find out who is connecting the section from A on The Green to the property, seconded by Cllr G. Wright, all other Cllrs in favour.

Action – Clerk

**03.262.23 County Broadband**

**a) To discuss raising awareness of County Broadbands Intentions for a full fibre broadband in the village**

**Resolved** Cllr A. Clarke proposed that the Parish Council cannot promote County Broadband as a company but will promote fibre in the village, seconded by Cllr L. Edwards, all in favour.

**b) To discuss asking what Community Support County Broadband can offer Great Bentley if the project goes ahead.**

**Resolved** Cllr A Clarke proposed that the Parish Council let County Broadband promote themselves, making their own presentation to the village, seconded by Cllr R. Taylor, all in favour.

**03.263.23 To note the receipt of the Agronomy report and to discuss and agree any actions from it.**

**Resolved** Cllr G. Wright proposed to defer this item to next month as the report has not yet been received, all in favour.

**03.264.23 VAS/ SIDS Sign Update**

The VAS sign has been received by Cllr P. Dennitts. To note that the clerk and the chair have photographed all of the prospective sites for the application, Frating Parish Council have agreed to split the costs for the lamppost survey assessment. Highways have advised not to put in any applications until mid march.

**03.265.23 Coronation**

To note that a grant has been applied for from the National lottery for £7709, this is made up of £1700 live band, £2500 Marquee. £825 hire of tables & chairs, security required for 3 nights £588, Generator £388, magician £150, small marquee £150, Band £500, first aid £460, banner for the sponsors £348, £100 choir. There is a contingency in place if the grant is not awarded or less is awarded.

To note that the Coronation group are covered under the Parish Council insurance at no extra cost to the Parish Council, there may be an extra cost for the generator the clerk is awaiting this from our insurance provider.

To note that the risk assessment has been completed and handed to the clerk.

**Resolved –** This has been noted by the Council.

1. **To discuss and agree to the hiring of the mobile toilets for the Coronation to come out of the Councils agreed budget under Grants from the 2023/24 budget.**

**Resolved –** Cllr L. Edwards proposes we agree this proposal as an s137 payment instead (as agreed above under item 03.261.23b) seconded by Cllr G. Wright, all in favour.

Action Clerk

1. **To discuss and agree to the £500 donation earmarked for the Coronation in the 2023/24 from the agreed budget.**

**Resolved –** Clerk advised that if an extra cost is incurred by the addition of the generator to the insurance, that this can be taken out of the £500 agreed from the budget, however if the National Lottery Grant is awarded this won’t be needed. It was proposed by Cllr R. Taylor to accept this amendment of the proposal, seconded by Cllr B. Herbert, all in favour.

Action Clerk

**03.266.23 Planning/Housing**

**To discuss and agree any comments for the following planning applications:**

**a)**[**23/00112/FULHH**](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=ROXZHIQB0OT00) **- The Poplars The Green Great Bentley Colchester , Proposed conversion of existing detached barn within the grounds of 'The Poplars' into ancillary accommodation associated with the dwelling and**

**construction of an attached car port**

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

**b)23/00119/NMA, Land at Station Field Plough Road Great Bentley Essex, Non Material Amendment to application reference 18/01981/DETAIL for the relocation of substation to eastern boundary of site and re-positioning of driveway to plot 124**

**Resolved –** Cllr P. Harry proposed no comment, seconded by Cllr L. Edwards all in favour.

**c)23/00055/FULHH - 4 Morella Close Great Bentley Colchester Essex, Proposed single storey rear extension to form kitchen/garden room.**

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

**d)21/00022/FUL, The Pit Stop Colchester Road Great Bentley Clacton On Sea, Proposed extension to Garage Workshop to include 2 new bays.**

Having had previous applications turned down, Cllr P Harry advised that they must now be meeting the advised recommendations for them to apply. However, Cllr B Herbert proposed making a neutral comment on the application that the Parish Council want to raise the concern about vehicles still being parked alongside the highway, Seconded by Cllr K. Plummer, all Cllrs in favour.

Action Clerk

**Cllr P. Dennitts proposed setting aside the standing orders to run through the last items on the agenda as the time is now 21:16, this was Resolved that all Cllrs were in favour of continuing.**

**To note the following planning decision:**

e) 22/01601/FUL, The Grange Heckfords Road, Great Bentley, retrospective application for the erection of a building for storage of machinery and ancillary domestic/leisure use.

To note that this application was refused by the Planning Committee.

**Resolved** – this was noted by the Council.

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

Circulated to Cllrs Prior to the meeting.

**03.268.23 Council Reports:**

**a)Footpath report**

**Proposal – To discuss appointing Melanie Griggs as the New Footpath Officer**

**Resolved** –Cllr L. Edwards proposed accepting Melanie as the new Footpath Officer, seconded by Cllr B. Herbert, all in favour. Cllr R. Taylor asked about getting the footpath map on the website, clerk will contact and ask.

**b)Caretaker’s Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**c)PCSO Crime Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**d)Tree Wardens Report**

Actions from last months report were carried out by the Green Working Group and proposals added to the agenda above in item 03.254.23.b

**03.269.23 Highways & Transport Reports:**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**0370.23 Training/Events**

**a) Reports on attended events**

The clerk attended the elections training provided by SLCC and also her CiLca session 4 online session.

**b)Nominations for new events**

None

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

* Alternatives for the landline in the office
* Chapel Terrace Posts

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

**Resolved** that the next Parish Council meeting is booked for 7:00pm on Thursday 6th April 2023

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

* The state of the pavements and the road in Birch Ave, the road by Uber Salon and Morella close have been raised as areas of concern.
* Suggestion from the MOP to as for the people who park on the green to make a donation towards this – eg the running club/ football etc –
* Football – trying to stop people from parking on the green as much as they can and they do have a problem with the away teams but do try
* Maybe plant wild grasses at the edge of the green instead of posts

**This section of the meeting is closed to the public (Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, s 1 (1) g)**

**03.274.23 To discuss the outcome from the Personnel Committee Meeting**

The Personnel Committee discussed the outcome of the personnel meeting which was to increase clerk pay scale from level 21 to level 23

**Resolved** Cllr L. Edwards proposed accepting this, seconded by Cllr G. Wright all in favour.

Action Clerk

There being no further business the meeting was closed by the Chair.

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