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

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**Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on the 05th October 2023 at The Village Hall, Plough Road Great Bentley Colchester CO7 8LG**

Present: Cllr. P. Dennitts (Chair) Cllr. P. Harry (Vice Chair) Cllr. B. Herbert

Cllr. R. Taylor Cllr. J. Jepson Cllr. F. Edwards

Cllr. G. Wright Cllr. K. Plummer

In attendance: Mrs Jennifer Spear (Clerk) and 16 members of the public.

**Minutes**

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

Cllr. J. Wharton and Cllr. F. Edwards sent their apologies and these were accepted by the council

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

None Declared

**10.147.23 Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting from the 14th September meeting (previously circulated) to be approved and signed.**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed that the minutes of the extraordinary council meeting held on the 14th September 2023 are approved as a correct record, seconded by Cllr. P. Harry, all in favour, and these were signed by the Chair.

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

A MOP requested that when the parish council discuss the agenda item relating to the running clubs, green request about holding the half marathon event, that it needs to be taken into account that at the beginning the marshals are well organised but at the end, the marshals do go to watch the prize giving, and so the parked cars from the runners start to leave the green and drive all over it without instead of exiting at the agreed points.

**10.149.23 Report from Kevin Wilby about the Primary School Expansion**

The timescale for the building works is going to be compressed, because the planning permission was not granted straight away, which caused a delay, the work should be finished in August 2024 to have the larger intake at the school for reception in September of an extra 30 children, which will increase year on year of and additional 30 each time.

Concern has been raised about traffic and parking issues from the community, with the larger intake and also during the building works. The building company have sent around a letter this week about trying to limit the traffic impacts on the village as much as possible.

There is an issue with the extension in that the cabinet member only published the statutory notices on the 07th September 2023, regarding the works, therefore objections can still be raised, however work has had to be started otherwise (if granted) the buildings wouldn’t be ready for the increased intake next September.

Cllr. R. Taylor asked that of the final plans that have been agreed, is there ample parking for all the staff on the site and the further members of staff that are needed? Kevin Wilby replied that there is not because parking allocations allows for only 2 spaces for each class, there will be 14 classes which gives 28 spaces, there is no provision for support or admin staff for example. This is because of the policy of trying to reduce car usage and to use public transport or car share for example.

**10.150.23 To hear a report from Dawn Vinn regarding the Train Station adoption and to discuss the council renting a room in the station to support the scheme.**

There are 2 waiting rooms that can be used for other things, one is in good order and one that needs refurbishment. These could be used to serve the community as hubs for local residents, with different uses. They can be on time locks so they won’t require a key holder to let groups in and out. One item is asking if the parish council can look at keeping the toilets open for a longer time period than they are at the moment.

It is already an accredited Bee Friendly station therefore helping with biodiversity in the village. Dawn handed across the feasibility study that Alresford carried out during the adoption of their station.

Cllr. P. Dennitts thanked Dawn and her team for adopting the train station and coming along tonight to the council and opened the floor to the council for any other questions.

Cllr. R. Taylor asked what permissions have the railway given at this time? Cllr. P. Dennitts advised that the railway are keen to get these properties adopted. Cllr. J. Jepson asked what does adoption mean? Cllr. P. Dennitts advised it is a long term lease which makes the leaseholder responsible for the maintenance of the property with all the cost implications, and that there may be funding available from railway heritage and the national lottery among others.

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed asking the Environmental working group to arrange a site meeting with network rail, with Frank from Alresford and the railway adoption team to at the station to look at how much work is needed, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, all in favour.

**Action – Environmental Working Group**

**10.151.23 Clerk’s Report**

**To note the report circulated prior to the meeting and answer any questions**

The clerk advised that she hadn’t been able to progress many tasks this month due to the extra workloads from the 3 extra meetings and recruitment of a new assistant.

**To note that the allotment invoices and updated tenancy agreements have all been sent.**

This was noted by the council.

**10.152.23 Finance**

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

As at the 01st October 2023 there was a total of £194,886.59 in all three bank accounts.

**Resolved –** all the council in agreement that this is a true and correct record, and this was signed by the Chair.

**b) To approve the Personnel Committees resolution to increase the clerks pay from SCP23 to SCP25, as of the 01st October 2023, upon successful completion of the annual review**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed to accept this resolution from the Personnel Committee, seconded by Cllr. P. Harry, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**c) To approve final payments for September in accordance with the 2023/24 budget – please see attached payments list, and to approve 2 councillors to carry out payment checks.**

The Chair asked each Cllr if they had viewed the payments and would be happy to approve them,

Cllr. G. Wright, agreed but asked a question about the DocuSign subscription – the clerk explained that last year the payment was taken automatically (set up prior to this clerks employment) and it was found that this shouldn’t have been taken but was too late this year to refund it the subscription was subsequently cancelled but DocuSign still took the payment, but they did this in error and have now refunded it.

Cllr. B. Herbert, agreed.

Cllr. R. Taylor, agreed, he had previously sent over 2 queries to the clerk which she resolved.

Cllr. P. Dennitts agreed.

Cllr. J. Jepson agreed.

Cllr. K. Plummer agreed.

Cllr. P. Harry, abstained due to not viewing the payments.

**Resolved** majority in favour and in agreement so the payments were approved, Cllr. J. Jepson and Cllr. G. Wright will authorise these by signing the payment list.

**d) To agree to the purchase of a poppy wreath for Remembrance.**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed that the council purchase the poppy wreath, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**f) To agree to the bank transfer of £60,000 from the Coop Savings account to the Unity Account for the remaining 6 months of the year, and to sign the cheque for this transfer.**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed agreeing to the bank transfer, seconded by Cllr. P. Harry, all in favour and the cheque was signed by 2 authorised signatories.

**Action – Clerk**

**g) To note the following Receipts:**

£200 Friends of the Green – Taylor Wimpy Donation for the Coronation Tree

£100 Peppercorn Rent – Football Club

£243.52 Allotment Income

£96 Refund from DocuSign

These were noted by the council

**10.153.23 The Green**

**a) To hear a request from Jo Worboys to support making Great Bentley a hedgehog friendly village.**

Jo provided each of the Cllrs with a folder with the details of the problems for hedgehogs in the village, with an informative talk, requesting if she can put signs around the village to make people more aware of the hedgehogs.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed to put the signs up where they can go, Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed an amendment to this, that the applicant work with the clerk to find some suitable places for the signs to go, accepted by Cllr. J. Jepson, seconded by Cllr. R Taylor all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**b) To discuss a request for the permission of the use of The Green by the War Memorial for the annual Christmas Light Switch on, on Sunday 26th November 2023 at 17:00pm**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed giving permission for this, seconded by Cllr. P. Harry, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**c) To discuss a request for permission to use The Green by The Great Bentley Running Club for the half marathon, on Sunday 04th February 2024.**

Cllr. P. Dennitts reminded Cllrs of the comment by the MOP in the open session.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed granting permission for the event, but with the agreement with them of the exit and entrance at the agreed location as specified with the parish council (supported by Cllr. B. Herbert) seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor**.**

**Action – Clerk**

**d) To discuss and agree to purchasing an official copy of the land registry certificate for Catkin Cottage.**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed that the council purchase this certificate, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, all other Cllrs in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**e) To discuss retaining the services of our solicitor to put in place a policy and procedure for preventing illegal access across The Green.**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed trying to get an idea of costs from either our solicitors or other sources, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**10.154.23 Land and tree in Larkfield Ave**

**To discuss and agree the maintenance on the tree on Larkfield Ave and to discuss taking over ownership of the land that is already maintained in Larkfield Ave that is owned by Wright Ruffell (Sturricks) Ltd.**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed that the parish council are happy to take ownership of the land free of charge and we will continue to maintain it, amended by Cllr. J. Jepson that the parish concil carry out the maintenance of the tree that’s needed in the meantime, this amendment was accepted by Cllr. R. Taylor, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, 1 Cllr against, the rest in favour, motion carried.

**Action – Clerk**

**10.155.23 South Side Track and Mill Track**

**a) To agree to the levelling work that was carried out under delegated authority to level the mill track, while the South Side Track was being levelled.**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed by ratifying this decision that was made via delegated authority, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson, Cllr. G. Wright abstained, all the other Cllrs in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**b) To give an update on the South Side Track progress**

Cllr. P. Dennitts advised that the council have received 2 quotations, both have raised specific queries that are being addressed by the parish councils’ consultant so that the parish council can move the project forward.

**10.156.23 Streetlighting**

**a) To discuss the quotation from A&J lighting for works to replace the blue lights in the lampposts,** *(to be carried out under lighting maintenance)*

There was much discussion on how to proceed with this due to the maintenance issues and costs.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed going ahead with the quotation to get this replaced, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**b) To discuss and agree to the quotation to change the remaining sodium lamps to LEDS (at £349 per LED)** (*to be carried out under earmarked reserves £8000 remaining)*

Remaining 35w SOX: 9 Lamps 9053, 9058, 9066, 9122, 9129, 9119, 9134, 9135, 9137

Remaining 50w SONT: 2 Lamps, 9057, 9060

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed going ahead with this quotation, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson, all in favour. **Action – Clerk**

**10.157.23 Tractor/Mower**

**To discuss and agree the purchase of a new tractor/ Mower – Cllr. G. Wright**

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed to request finance options for the 2 quotations from Ernest Doe based on our budget with a service plan, amended by Cllr. P. Dennitts to ask our current contractor which one would do the job effectively, and have this feedback, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer – all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**10.158.23 To discuss the request from a MOP about installing toilets at the playground.**

The council held a lengthy discussion about this possibility, but ultimately the land by the play area is village green and you cannot legally build on it.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed that the parish council do not look into installing toilets by the playground, seconded by Cllr. B. Herbert, all in favour.

**10.159.23 To discuss the request for Bus Shelters on Flag Hill opposite the noticeboard and further down the road opposite the creek with no hard standing.**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed letting him taking the proposal to the next transport meeting and reporting back to the parish council at the next meeting, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**10.160.23 To discuss and agree to the placement of a memorial bench on Thorrington Road from a member of the public.**

*The clerk has agreement from Highways that the bench can be placed here if the council take ownership of it.*

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed that the parish council agree to place a bench here, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**10.161.23 To discuss and agree cleaning the signage as you enter and leave the village (Heckfords road is particularly bad).**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed that the signs do not need cleaning but the vegetation around the signs need to be cut back, seconded by Cllr J. Jepson, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**10.162.23 The Environmental Working Group**

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

This report was noted by the parish council.

**b) To discuss working with Great Bentley Primary School to use the WOW initiative to encourage more walking/ scooting / cycling to school.**

Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed to ask the Environment Working Group to see if the school want to use this scheme and what the council can do to support this going forward, and bring it back to the next meeting, seconded by Cllr. P. Harry, all in favour.

**Action -Environmental Working Group**

**10.163.23 The Green Working Group**

No meeting

**10.164.23 Planning/Housing**

None

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

Cllr. A. Goggin updated the council that the work at the Morrella Close bellmouth that needs a partial road closure has to have permission from Network Rail to carry out the work due to the proximity of the work to the railway crossing, ECC are ready to go and carry out the work and now this will be held up by network rail.

Cllr. L. McWilliams wanted to draw attention to the new Dog Wardens and PSPO’s that are being implemented by TDC.

**10.166.23 Council Reports:**

**a) Footpath report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**b) Caretaker’s Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**c) PCSO Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

Cllr. J. Jepson asked what is being done about the constant reports of speeding sent over by the PCSO? Cllr. P. Harry advised that there are plans in place to increase the size of repeater signs and add corresponding roundels to the road surface once advised by CALA homes where the 30/40mph divide will be located. The PC could see if any other properties at that end want to put some of the 30mph wheelie bin stickers out on their wheelie bins.

**d) TDALC**

There has been a meeting but the report has not been received yet.

**f) Tree Wardens Report**

Circulated Prior to the meeting

**10.167.23 Highways & Transport Reports:**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**10.168.23 Training/Events**

**a) Reports on attended events**

The clerk attend the EALC AGM, there was an agreement from the Fire and Crime commissioner about lowering speed limits throughout the district. Also that the fees for next year are going up, and that with the excess expenditure in their accounts they are launching a training bursary for cllrs. The clerk also visited the houses of Parliament with Cllr. L. McWilliams and MP Giles Watling which was an amazing trip.

**b) Nominations for new events**

The clerk asked if she could look into the course offered by Open Spaces on how to protect our open spaces.

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

* **Railway Car Park and infill for the mill track - road plannings to fill, same price per tonne**
* **Tractor, storage, insurance**
* **Bank Transfer from Coop Current to the Savings Account**

**10.170.23 To confirm date of the next Parish Council Meeting**

The next Council meeting is booked for 7:00pm on Thursday 02nd November 2023.

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

A MOP asked when the playground equipment being extended to adults, Cllr. P. Dennitts advised that this would be on the agenda for next months meeting.

A MOP about the Simmons site that is with enforcement, Cllr. L. Mcwilliams advised she would have a look.

A MOP doesn’t think that cycling to school should be included in WOW proposal as its not safe at that entrance.

A MOP stated that since their neighbour has now started work on their extension the end of morello close is now so much worse more so than when the first complaint was filed, it is so dangerous and lots of children cross that road on a daily basis.

A MOP asked about the pond and when that is going to be done, the clerk confirmed that this will be done within the next few weeks, Cllr. G. Wright confirmed that we were waiting for the temperatures to drop before we could clear out the pond.

A MOP wanted to state that she feels that the crime rates are not being recorded correctly, there are no police around and it took her 3 days to report a crime of items being stolen from her front door.