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

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**Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on the 07th December 2023 at The Village Hall, Plough Road Great Bentley Colchester CO7 8LG**

Present: Cllr. P. Dennitts (Chair) Cllr. B. Herbert Cllr. F. Edwards

Cllr. R. Taylor Cllr. J. Jepson Cllr. K. Plummer

Cllr. G. Wright (arrived during item 12.202.23)

In attendance: Mrs Jennifer Spear (Clerk) and 7 members of the public.

**Minutes**

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

Cllr. P. Harry, and Cllr. Wharton both sent their apologies, Cllr. G. Wright sent apologies for lateness, these were noted by the council.

Cllr. R. Taylor notified his apologies in advance of January 2024 and February 2024’s meetings as he will not be able to attend.

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

None declared at this time.

**12.198.23 Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting from the 02nd November 2023 meeting (previously circulated) to be approved and signed.**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed that the minutes of the Full Parish Council meeting held on the 02nd November 2023 are approved as a correct record, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson all in favour, and these were signed by the Chair.

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

A MOP advised that the Vice Chair of Community Reach Partnership Brightlingsea has advised her this evening to apply for £1500 from them for the Christmas Lights Fund in Great Bentley.

At this time Cllr. P. Dennitts thanked Cllr. K. Plummer and his team for the amazing Christmas lights in the village an also Mary who plays a large part behind the scenes to make them happen.

A MOP raised that she felt sad that last month the MOP’s were not able to comment at the end of the meeting on the items that had been discussed during the course of the meeting. Cllr. P. Dennitts advised that it is so important for the MOP to raise their comments and give their input at the start of the meeting rather than the end so that those views and information can be taken into consideration when the council discuss the agenda items. The council cannot take those comments on board when they are made at the end after a decision has been made.

A MOP agreed with the above comment, as she said that it can be hard to ask questions on items that have not yet been discussed as they may not know where a council discussion will go.

A MOP asked why the top end of the South Side Track was not regraded when the rest of the track was done, Cllr. B. Herbert advised that it was rollered but it was not filled with plannings, as they did run out of them.

A MOP asked Cllr. A. Goggin when the flooding is going to be looked at as the drain outside the top of Morella close is completely flooded again and it has not been raining for that long tonight and it is already flooded.

At this point the chair proposed to bring forward Agenda Item 12.216.23 for Cllr. A. Goggin to bring forward his report to be able to answer this question, all in favour. Cllr. K. Plummer advised that this is the same problem that was in this drain 5 years ago, which is silt in the drain that builds up and blocks the drain so the road floods. Cllr. A. Goggin asked if it was reported online, the clerk replied that it wasn’t on the Highways Report it Tool and so she quickly added it on and will forward the details to Cllr. A. Goggin that these needs looking at urgently.

Cllr. A Goggin advised that in addition to the report he has already sent that he attended the meeting at the primary school to discuss the new extension that is being built for the expansion, and the traffic issues were discussed at drop off/ pickups which is causing lots of issues especially for children with those who have limited mobility and maybe if they removed the wall out the front of the school that would free up space especially when the barriers were down to create more room. Cllr. A. Goggin advised that if they wanted to do anything like that then then they need to make sure they come to the Parish Council.

Cllr. K. Plummer wanted to raise a point about the funding of removing the wall etc is that the parish council will not be funding anything like that and that it is not a decision that needs to come to the Parish Council. He also asked where the budget is for improving the access to the school when the expansion was agreed? Cllr. A. Goggin advised that Essex County Council would not be paying for removal of a wall as it is not on land that they are responsible for, that would have to come from the money for the expansion.

**12.200.23 Clerk’s Report**

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

The council noted the report – the clerk did report that as of today the school clock has been repaired.

Cllr. B. Herbert asked where the clerks report was, the clerk advised its in the same folder on the one drive with all the other council documentation, one save as tasks in progress and one as completed tasks, going forward she will change the titles of them both to Clerks Report tasks in Progress and Clerks Report Completed.

Cllr. F. Edwards asked where the abandoned cars were located in the village, the clerk advised that one has now been removed but the other one is still waiting to be collected.

The clerk advised that the new assistant clerk has worked really hard this month to find her feet and is now in the office 2 days a week after a successful month of training.

**12.201.23 Finance**

**a) To review the monthly financial bank reconciliation for November.**

As at the 30th November 2023 there was a total of £245,503.01 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 renewal of the councils membership with the Open Spaces Society for £45**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed that the council renew their membership with the Open Spaces society, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**c) To discuss and approve the annual renewal of the Councils MSP Services with TMB £124 (net).**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed that the council renew their license for MSP Services, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**d) To accept the revised NALC pay scales for the financial year 2023-24, including back pay as contracted.**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed that the council accept the revised pay scales for the 2023-24 financial year, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**e) To approve final payments for December 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. B. Herbert, agreed.

Cllr. K. Plummer, agreed.

Cllr. F. Edwards, agreed.

Cllr. J. Jepson, agreed.

Cllr. R. Taylor, asked about the late addition of 5 other payments, but agreed that they were all on there, and agreed for the payments to be made.

Cllr. P. Dennitts agreed.

**Resolved** all in favour that the payments are approved and the payment schedule was signed by Cllr. R. Taylor and Cllr. F, Edwards

Cllr. K. Plummer suggested that the agenda item for next month can read as approval for the payments first at the meeting and then to nominate 2 Cllrs. to approve the online payments to be made after the meeting.

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer and Cllr. P. Dennitts will approve the online payments, all in agreement.

**Action – Clerk**

**f) To agree to 2 councillors to sign the cheque for the purchase of the new tractor at £36000, (these must be bank signatories)**

**Resolved** that Cllr. K. Plummer and Cllr. B. Herbert signed the cheque for the purchase of the tractor.

**Action – Clerk**

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

£ 366.72 Allotment Income - the clerk advised there is just one payment outstanding.

£89.16 Great Bentley Pre-School

These were noted by the council.

**12.202.23 The Green**

**a) To discuss and agree to the amendment of The Village Green policy, In Summary Section, to add in “if appropriate” for the policy to read:**

**“The Parish Council can consider any request to use Great Bentley Village green, if appropriate, they will require a full risk assessment of the event”.**

There was much discussion about parking on the green, as Cllr. B. Herbert advised that the Parish Council cannot give permission to park on the Green, however as the clerk advised we do give permission for certain things and turn a blind eye to others but by turning a blind eye the council are giving that permission by ignoring it, there needs to be more consistency in regard to the parking. As Cllr. R. Taylor advised we can’t give permission for these events for parking, but as the clerk has advised we can begin to create more consistency and regulation of the parking as much as we can.

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed accepting this amendment, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson, 4 in favour and 2 against, motion carried.

**Action – Clerk**

Cllr. G. Wright arrived at this time.

**b) To discuss the application to hold a circus on the Green in June/ July next year**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylorproposed to agree to the circus as long as it does not clash with the Carnival on the 29th June, Cllr. J. Jepson proposed an amendment the council can ask for a donation towards the maintenance of the green as part of the agreement, this was accepted by Cllr. R. Taylor, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, Cllr. G. Wright abstained, all other Cllr’s in Favour, motion carried.

**Action – Clerk**

**c) To discuss the positioning of the Funfair for the Carnival next year.**

The council discussed the positioning at length, advising that it has been moved to another location previously, but it hasn’t worked due to the football pitches being used, the mill house area is too rough, and the rest of the green is used for the carnival, which leaves only this position available.

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed that the funfair position remains where it is, as there is nowhere else for it to go, seconded by Cllr. B. Herbert, all in favour**.**

**Action - Clerk**

**d) To discuss the application by FOTG to carry out their annual fundraising activities on the Green next year.**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed to carry out their annual fundraising activities, seconded by Cllr F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**e) To discuss and agree to the annual Christmas Tree shredding to take place on the Green on the 06th January 2024 between 10 and 12 by the Cricket Club.**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed that the council agree to this going ahead, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**f) To discuss purchasing “Do not Park on the Green” signs at a cost of £23.50 (x12), £19.60 (x20), £17.50 (40).**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed ordering 20 seconded by Cllr. B. Herbert, all in favour**.**

**Action - Clerk**

**g) To discuss purchasing padlocks to secure the other noticeboards, to ensure that council information can be displayed effectively.**

The council discussed the reasons behind locking them, when its good for the public to be able to put their notices up, but the clerk advised that we can add posters into the noticeboards for MOP and local events so they will still be able to be used by MOP. The Clerk can put a notice in them to contact the parish council to add them.

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed locking them for 6 months using the padlocks from Amazon as quoted, with a notice and review afterwards seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**h) To discuss the purchase of a chain and padlock for the Flytipping area on the roundabout on the A133 to prevent further problems.**

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed writing to both TDC and ECC to get them to remove the Flytipping and not put a padlock on it as the land does not belong to the parish council, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, Cllr. G. Wright abstained, 1 Cllr. against, 4 in favour, motion carried.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.203.23 Land in Larkfield Ave**

***(legal Fees £1000, consultancy fees £500 in the budget 2023-24, legal fees £2000, consultancy fees £1000 in the budget 2024-25)***

**To discuss engaging our solicitors to carry out the transfer of the land to the Parish Council, at a quoted cost of approximately £2500 (net) plus disbursements.**

Cllr. R. Taylor corrected the location description of the land to Larkfield Road not Larkfield Ave.

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed now the council know the solicitors’ costs, asking if the landowner will share the cost of those fees with the council, to be reported back at the next meeting seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.204.23 Land Adjacent to Moors Lodge Requests – UK Power Networks, Affinity water and BT, to grant an easement request to the applicant to connect services across the Green.**

Cllr. G. Wright declared a non pecuniary interest in this item and will not take part in the discussion or decision.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed agreeing to the proposal as long as all the services are to be placed into one trench and passing this to our land agent to secure, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, Cllr. G. Wirght abstained, remaining Cllrs. in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.205.23 Catkins Cottage**

**To discuss the proposed response from the clerk to the letter received from the owners of Catkin Cottage.**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed the letter doesn’t need any changes and can be sent to the owners of Catkin Cottage, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, Cllr. G. Wright abstained, remaining Cllrs in favour, motion carried.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.206.23 South Side Track**

**To discuss the new surface options as requested from last months meeting and the approximate costs of those and to agree next steps.**

There was much discussion about the proposed new type of surface compared to the original one, the fact remains that there is not enough of a budget to tarmac the whole surface. Cllr. J. Jepson pointed out that there had not been a meeting of the South Side Track working party since he has become a Cllr. and maybe one was needed before this comes back to the parish council for a resolution.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed having a meeting of the Southside Track working group to work out what can be done within budget, amended by Cllr. G. Wright to also find a price for a simple tarmac surface in the meantime and to hold the meeting on Wednesday 10th January 07:00pm at Admirals Farm, this amendment was accepted by Cllr. J Jepson seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor all in favour**.**

**Action – Southside Track Working Group**

**12.207.23 Play Area**

**To discuss and agree to a programme of works that were detailed in the annual inspection. (**£1745 left in this years budget for maintenance plus £5000 in the Earmarked Reserves for Play Equipment).

*(£64,759.64 improvements to play and £72,677 provision and Maintenance of outside play equipment in S106 funding available)*

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed accepting the Playquip quotation, Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed an amendment that if TDC wont accept the replacement of wet pour as covered under the S106 guidance, that one area is carried out this year using our maintenance budget and one section to be carried out in the next financial year to spread the cost as budgeted for, this amendment was accepted by Cllr. J. Jepson, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.208.23 Outdoor Fitness Area**

a) To discuss applying for a deed of variation if required for some of the S106 funding from Play provision to Outdoor Gym Equipment.

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed to go ahead with the application for a deed of variation should this be needed, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.209.23 April 2024 -March 2027 Maintenance Contract *(£11,100 budgeted not including Allotment - £750)***

**To discuss the tenders received for the Maintenance Contract for the next 3 years and agree to the contractor/s.**

The clerk confirmed the tenders are anonymous but this is due to them all being provided by reliable contractors that the council use regularly at the moment.

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed that the council split the tender and award the contract to each contractor who quoted most price effectively for each part of the tender and that this would be delegated to the clerk to carry out, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.210.23 To discuss and agree to inputting an LHP request to use funds paid to ECC, to install a bus shelter in Flag Hill.**

*(Planning application 19/01021/OUT (section 10) which confirms that a payment was made by the applicant to ECC to improve bus stops in Great Bentley).*

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed that the Parish Council input this request, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**12.211.23 To note the request (prices pending from UK Power) of additional street lighting on Plough Road from the Station to Cinderpath way and Thorrington Road just beyond the junction with the Green. (Cllr. F. Edwards).**

*(£3470 left in EMR for New Installations, waiting on price for the already agreed new Columns from UK Power Networks).*

This was noted by the council pending prices from UK Power Networks.

**12.212.23 To discuss the addition of names to the War Memorial for those members of the Village who have died in Action since 1945.**

*(Previous cost addition of 1 letter £75, £275 left in the budget, invoice for £425 for the clean and repointing of the bricks, so over budget this year, £1500 in next years budget).*

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposes that the clerk carries out some research into how other Parishes carry this out if they do and a proposed cost of how much this may be, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour. **Action – Clerk**

**12.213.23 The Environmental Working Group**

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

The council noted the report and that there was no meeting held this month.

**12.214.23 The Green Working Group**

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

This report was noted by the Council and some items were discussed.

The clerk advised that the Fencing around the Forge has now been removed.

The Mill House track needs to be filled and levelled as it was not filled last time, the clerk can get this carried out between now and the next meeting under delegated authority as part of the regular maintenance, along with the top of the South Side Track, this can be carried out as soon as there is a dry period.

The trucked parked on the South Side track causing an obstruction, needs to be addressed.

The football club going over the agreed end time on a Sunday is not something the Parish Council is willing to accept going forward, but the football club do have in their agreement that they can request it if this may happen.

The maintenance of the pond is due to be discussed in January.

The MOP are asking if they can have agendas printed out in advance of the meeting, and also at the meeting as they cannot see the screen during the meeting.

**12.215.23 Planning/Housing**

**a)** [23/01653/FULHH](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S4H7FXQB0OT00)

The Old Rectory The Green Great Bentley Colchester

Erection of two bay cartlodge (resubmission of 23/00695/FULHH).

**Resolved** Cllr. Julian Jepson proposed no comment, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour

**b)** [23/01591/FULHH](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S3T4QUQB0RE00)

Oakmoor House 66 Michael Wright Way Great Bentley Colchester

Proposed alterations single storey rear extension and conversion of double garage to annexe.

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor no comment seconded by Cllr. B. Herbert all in favour.

**c) 23/01580/DOVU5 (To be noted only)**

Land at Admirals Farm Heckfords Road Great Bentley Essex

Deed of variation, under Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 106A, of the terms of the legal agreement dated 16th January 2023, linked to (outline) planning permission 21/02176/FUL, to move the trigger of 9 Market Dwellings to 18 Market Dwellings

**Resolved** this was noted by the council.

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

Cllr. L. McWilliams advised that on top of her report that there are things behind the scenes. Regarding the flooding at the school she was contacted by Peter Jarvis and he confirmed that there is problem under that section of the road with the silt under there that goes out into the brook

**12.217.23 Council Reports:**

**a) Footpath report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

Cllr. F. Edwards asked about getting more dog bins on the footpaths, as the clerk advised those areas are not under the parish council and they wouldn’t put them there due to the difficulty of them being emptied.

**b) Caretaker’s Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**c) PCSO Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**d)TDALC**

Cllr. R. Taylor advised that it has been very good to get the attendance of the chair of TDC to each meeting, this month he advised about the issues with Veolia and their contract. The onshore power lines, are now looking into the offshore option and more direct route which may mean that the pylons don’t come through Tendring.

There is an opportunity for tree planting along highways land, Cllr. R. Taylor has asked about this tree planting initiative and has asked Cllr. A. Goggin for more information.

**12.218.23 Highways & Transport Reports:**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**12.219.23 Training/Events**

a) Reports on attended events

The assistant Clerk attended the new Clerk Training course in Dunmow.

b) Nominations for new events

Cllr Refresher Course

Cllr. P. Dennitts would like to attend and look at options of getting a larger attendance and the possibility of getting a trainer here.

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

Spotler

New Tractor

The Mill House Track and the top end of the South Side Track

The Pond Maintenance

**12.221.23 To agree to next Years Parish Council Meeting Dates:**

04th January 2024,

10th January 2024 at 10:00AM Finance Committee,

01st February 2024,

07th March 2024,

04th April 2024,

Annual Meeting of the Parish 18th April 2024,

Annual Parish Council meeting 02nd May 2024,

06th June 2024,

04th July 2024,

05th September 2024,

03rd October 2024,

07th November 2024

05th December 2024.

**Resolved** Proposed by Cllr. J. Jepson to accept these dates, seconded by Cllr. B. Herbert, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

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

The next Council meeting is booked for 7:00pm on Thursday 04th January 2024.

There being no further business the Chair wished all those present a Super Christmas and closed the meeting at 21:36

………………………………………………………..signed………………………………………..date