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

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**Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on the 01st February 2024 at The Village Hall, Plough Road Great Bentley Colchester CO7 8LG**

Present: Cllr. P. Dennitts Cllr. P. Harry Cllr. B. Herbert Cllr. F. Edwards Cllr. K. Plummer Cllr. G. Wright

Cllr. J. Wharton

In attendance: Mrs Jennifer Spear (Clerk) and 18 members of the public.

**Minutes**

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

Cllr. R. Taylor and Cllr. J. Jepson sent their apologies, these were accepted by the council.

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

Cllr. B. Herbert declared an interest in agenda item 02.254.24.

**02.245.24 Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting from the 04th January 2024 meeting (previously circulated) to be approved and signed.**

**Resolved** by Cllr. K. Plummer proposed that the minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on the 04th January 2024 are approved as a correct record, Cllr. P. Dennitts abstained, seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton, motion carried; these were signed by the Chair.

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

A MOP wanted to raise the issue of the removal of the public participation session at the end of the meeting, she just wanted to reiterate that she would like this to be reinstated at the end of the meeting, as even though the decisions have been made, there could be something at the end of the meeting that a member of the public could help with after the decisions have been made, this was echoed by a second member of the public.

A MOP made a comment for agenda item 02.254.24 and stated that at the entrance to the cricket club there is a drop kerb down to the road from the green where the CC take the roller onto the grass so perhaps more bollards could be needed down that end to stop anyone driving on the green and around to the southside track from that end.

A MOP said that she would also like to make a comment that she would like to support a motion to have the public participation session reinstated at the end of the meeting and also that although she was the MOP to suggest the Green Gym idea, she wonders if now in retrospect this was the right thing for Great Bentley.

**02.247.24 Clerk’s Report**

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

No questions from the council regarding the report but the clerk wanted to give some updates since the report was sent.

* The clerk has been in conversations with Essex County Council about the footpath diversion and they are supporting the parish council with pushing this back to Network Rail as this is their responsibility not Essex County Councils but they will need to look into the fact that the footpath still isn’t open.
* The Clerk is hoping to attend the next meeting of the Friends of the Green.
* Play Inspection App is nearly up and running we have been testing it ready or use.
* Cllr. J. Jepson has been added but we are still awaiting his log on info to be sent, then once this is completed the clerk can then add on Cllr. F. Edwards.

**b) To discuss the request to add back the public participation session at the end of the meeting.**

Cllrs discussed at length about the need to add this back onto the agenda. With the changes that the parish council office has gone through, that now the office is very approachable and active, any information raised does come back to the cllrs with the clerks report. But possibly do we need to put more information on the website before the meetings to help inform the public so they are more informed before a meeting so they can comment on items at the beginning. Is the parish council website as accessible as we could make it, can we add ongoing projects, to increase engagement – all good suggestions and the clerk will look into these, with an ongoing project to share more information with the public.

**c) Tendring District Council have agreed to the release of the full amount for the maintenance and repairs to the Heckford Road Play area from the Annual Inspection Report.**

This was noted by the council.

**02.248.24 Finance**

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

It was noted by the council that as of the 30th January 2024 (not December as on the agenda) there was a total of £207,062.04 in all the bank accounts.

**b) To note that the resolution from the January meeting for the cost of spotler is £28 per month not £14, due to having 2 users.**

This was noted by the council.

**c) To note the increase in hire charges for the office and meeting room hire for the use of village hall.**

This was noted by the council.

**d) To approve final payments for February 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, abstained as 2 of the invoices are on behalf of Plummer Electrical.

Cllr. F. Edwards agreed

Cllr. J. Wharton, agreed.

Cllr. G. Wright, agreed

Cllr. P. Harry, agreed

Cllr. P. Dennitts, agreed

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed that Cllr. P. Dennitts and Cllr. J. Wharton complete the online payments this month, all in agreement.

**Action - Clerk and Cllr. P. Dennitts and Cllr. J. Wharton**

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

£95 Great Bentley Pre-School

£185.12 St Osyth PC – 50% Cyber Insurance

£8065.61 VAT126 Oct – Dec 2023

£1580 completion money easement Weeley Road

£3206.59 – VAT126 July – Sep 2023

These were noted by the council.

**02.249.24 To discuss the Finance Committee’s recommendation of a purchase of a replacement Laptop for the assistant Clerk from the Finance committee.**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed to go ahead and purchase the new laptop, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, all in favour.

**Action - Clerk**

**02.250.24 To discuss and agree to the further maintenance repairs on the cone climber as reported by the contractor while they have been carrying out the repairs at a cost of £1309.00**

(To be carried out under S106 maintenance costs)

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed carrying this work out, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, all in favour.

**Action - Clerk**

**02.251.24 Street Lighting**

**a) To discuss the street light and agree a solution at 65 Birch Ave.**

*(Lighting Maintenance with £299 left in budget)*

The clerk advised that since the agenda was published we have spent the last £299 in the lighting budget for this year on another street light that blew down and needed an emergency call out.

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed putting on the back shield based on the advise that lowering the wattage won’t make that much difference, seconded by Cllr. P. Harry, all in favour.

**Action - Clerk**

**b) To discuss and agree to installing the 3 remaining fibreglass columns and the fourth that was blown down in the wind along Larkfield Ave.**

*(Capital Expenditure Project with £16,510 in earmarked reserves)*

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed going ahead and completing this project seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, all in favour. **Action - Clerk**

**02.252.24 To discuss the quotes received for adding new repeater signs along plough Road to Aingers Green**

Cllr. P. Harry advised this is a recommended project from Highways which is to increase the size of the repeater with roundels on the road to each. We have not carried this out yet because the 30/40mph limit is going to be on Plough Road, plus the addition of a bus stop that’s positioning is not confirmed.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed to put in a LHP request to Highways to get the repeater signs increased at Aingers Green on Plough Road and have the roundels on the road, then once completed, we can push for the new gateway feature with the 30mph limit at this end of Plough Road where the train station is, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, all in favour. **Action – Clerk**

**02.253.24 To discuss the successful application for match funding for the installation of 2 new defibrillators at a cost of £750 per unit to the parish council.**

*(There is no budget for this expenditure so the council will need to vire funds from general reserves, predicted general reserves at year end £100,754.76).*

Cllr. B. Herbert advised there is a MOP that wants to contribute, Cllr. P. Dennitts advised that they still can towards these after the decision is made.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed vire money from general reserves to match fund for the installation of these, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed moving Agenda Item 02.263.24 for Cllr. L. McWilliams to give her report currently, all in favour.

Cllr. L. McWilliams sent her report ahead of the meeting and no questions were raised from the council. She will send a further report over with some updates next week and in the meantime was pleased to re-confirm the funding for the S106 maintenance on the play area.

**02.254.24 South Side Track Working Party**

Cllr. B. Herbert declared an interest in this item and will not participate in this discussion.

**a) To discuss the proposal to move ahead with the SouthSide Track project proposal:**

* + **Preparation of Southside West track for re-surfacing**
  + **Tarmac Re-surfacing of Southside West track**
  + **Supply and Installation of Vehicle Barrier**
  + **Supply and Installation of Timber Bollards**
  + **To ask for donations towards the project from residents along the track.**

Cllr. P. Harry thanked Cllr. J. Jepson for putting together the project proposal and gave an overview of the application. He stated that we have lost up to 1.5m in width of village green over the last 5 years as shown in the pictures due to the deterioration of the track, the working party feel that the developments in the area have not helped this, to date up to 50% of the developments have been completed adding …… vehicle movements to the village each day. The increased parking down the middle of the green is increasing this through traffic use of the southside track. 12,000 patients at the surgery with 4,000 residents in the village all coming in by car, also going the wrong way up the one way system up station road. To compound this the weather pattern has changed which has made this worse.

This proposal will limit access onto the green, prevent it becoming a through road, lay a surface

barrier on the track where Chase End is situated with pedestrian access along the side, with timber bollards spaced 1.8m along up to where Caldew Cottage is now situated. Possible thoughts to bollard all the way along but this is not proposed at this time, but around the corners at the concrete tracks to prevent people from driving off across the green to enable the village to reclaim the lost green to the track. The proposal suggests a more robust track is needed this does not have to be adopted to highways standards as this will only be a private road and an unadopted road at a thickness of 50mm.

Friends of the green have offered financial assistance towards the cost of posts.

A contribution has been suggested from the residents along the track along with a consultation with the residents of the southside track on the 21st February at 19:00 here.

Cllr. G. Wright stated that rather than spending more money on the maintenance of the track every year which is only increasing by adopting this more simplified plan it will reduce the parish councils costs in the long run. It would be ideal to move into the tender process to have prices during the consultation process to help aid this to know possible projected costs.

Cllr. F. Edwards stated that she was very shocked at the deterioration of the track and the loss of the green. But what is the plan for the other end of the track, (Eastern end of the track) Cllr. P. Harry advised that the plan would be to grass it depending on the success of this end of the project.

Cllr. J. Wharton is this financially viable in the log run? Cllr. P. Harry proposed that this is a spend to save exercise by spending out more in the beginning the council will be saving money on maintenance cost in the future. The Council looked at the maintenance costs on the track in the last 5 years which show an increase not only in the costs of materials but also in the time frame as the maintenance is beginning to become more regular.

Cllr. P. Dennitts asked for the project does there need to be bollards on the right side of the barrier from Chase End and then around the turning circle, if the bollards were removed there would be no need for the turning circle, but the working party advised that the turning circle was requested by TDC as a provision to be able to access the houses. Although there is a possibility of having the gate open on rubbish collection days too.

The clerk advised that at this time, although this is a good proposal it may create further problems down the line, what will the council do if residents are parked in the turning circle, as we already know that parking on the Southside is already an issue with residents parking there, what if residents park along the new surface and this then restricts access for emergency vehicles etc, there is still a concern about the levels of the track and the water displacing into the houses that are lower than the track at the bottom end of the track towards station road. Have all the options been explored, is an option to carry out the preventative measures first to stop the through traffic and monitor the track surface in the meantime to see if this works rather than laying the surface first?

Will full consultation ensure that all residents are being allowed their say before carrying out the proposal, the clerk advised that the consultation can run alongside going out to tender to try to keep the pace going on the project.

Cllr. J. Wharton who provided the specification of the track? Cllr. G. Wright advised that this was provided by DA Cant based on our consultation with an expert. He said that we need to make sure that as we go through the consultation process even if its not an adopted road the department of transport state that it needs to be 3.7 metres wide for emergency vehicle access not 3.5 metres wide. It’s important to try to eliminate these risks without slowing the project down.

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed to move ahead with this proposal as worded above, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, Cllr. B. Herbert abstained, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk and SouthSide Track Working Group.**

**b) To discuss going out to tender for quotations for the above proposal.**

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed going out to tender for quotations with the proposal, seconded by Cllr. P. Harry, Cllr. B. Herbert abstained, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk and SouthSide Track Working Group.**

**c) To discuss scheduling a Consultation Meeting with the South Side Track Residents** *(suggested date Wednesday 21st February at 19:00).*

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed going out to tender for quotations with the proposal, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, Cllr. B. Herbert abstained, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk and SouthSide Track Working Group.**

At this time Cllr. G. Wright wanted to thank Cllr. J. Jepson for his work with preparing the proposal.

**02.255.24 Outdoor Fitness Area**

**To discuss and select a provider for the new Equipment.**

Cllr. F. Edwards asked what are the additional benefits between the different priced proposals? Cllr. K. Plummer thanked Cllr. J. Wharton for laying out the floor plan at the site which helped focus on the smaller footprint of the Green , Cllr. P. Harry agreed with this and thanked Cllr. J. Wharton for the comparisons and the work that has gone into this proposal.

Cllr. J. Wharton discussed the different proposals and their layouts and only that the TGO one was the smallest footprint, it is the only green design, it is a modern design, the equipment is more expensive as it is more functional and we can keep an eye on the usage of it, with a much lower impact on the green. The expert panel came back with TGO as their recommended supplier, also that they provided a full body work out over the other applicants.

From this selection of a contractor, this doesn’t mean that the money has to be spent, we still need to have a further public consultation once the contractor is agreed on the proposal.

At this point in the meeting Cllr. P. Dennitts thanked all the cllrs for their work on these projects and the work and engagement from the various working party groups to bring these projects forwards.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed that the potential provider for the new equipment is the recommended one of TGO, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, Cllr B. Herbert abstained, the rest in favour, motion carried.

**Action – Clerk and Cllr. J. Wharton**

**02.256.24 The Green**

**a) To discuss and agree the letter prepared for the next steps for the land in front of Catkin Cottage**

Cllr. B. Herbert proposed one amendment to the letter, changing the date from 1967 to 1857, and pointed out that Great Bentleys Lord of the Manor did not own any land and was only a custodian.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed that the letter with the amendments as advised be sent to the owners of Catkin Cottage, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, Cllr. G. Wright abstained, the rest in favour, motion carried .

**Action – Clerk**

**b) To discuss any action required for the posts located at Green Corner**

Due to the sale of bungalow on the corner there is a potential here for issues seen in other areas of the green.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed getting quotes to shortening the area and reduce the width with similar bollards to reclaim that area of the green, to be brought back to the next meeting, seconded by Cllr. B. Herbert, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**c) To discuss and agree the request for permission for the village show to be held on the 31st August 2024**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed giving this permission, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**d) To discuss a request for the supply of the mobile toilets for the village show.**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed giving this permission, seconded by Cllr. B. Herbert, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**e) To discuss applying for a late license until 11:00 for the event after the Annual Flower show in September at a cost of £21. – on the 31st August**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed giving this permission, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**f) To discuss the request from Bentley in Bloom and Friends of the Green to replace the watercart and Oak Tub which is located near the village sign.**

The council discussed this and agreed that both of those items are past their best and could do with replacing, but any replacement needs to be mindful of the points for the Christmas tree.

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed working with Bentley in Bloom and friends of the Green to replace these items, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**02.257.24 Tractor**

**a) To discuss and agree to the storage of the new tractor.**

The council discussed the proposed cost and thought it was a fair amount but want the clerk to go back and ask if as this is only outdoors they would be happy to store it for 9 months of the year as this is an outdoor option – or do they have any indoor space available and the possible cost of that too for the clerk to come back with this to the next meeting.

**Resolved** – that this decision is to be deferred until the next meeting.

**b) To agree to the purchase a new log book for the sale of the tractor at a cost of £25**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed that the clerk purchase the new log book, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, all in favour.  **Action – Clerk**

**c) To discuss and agree to finding quotations for a second hand mower. *(£10,000 in the EMR for this).***

**Resolved** Cllr. K. Plummer proposed that we source quotations for the replacement mowers, for the next meeting, seconded by Cllr. P. Harry, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**d) To note the update about the sale of the old tractor and agree any arrangements for the delivery of it to the auctioneers.**

To take the old tractor to the auction house will be at a cost of £150 to the council, Cllr. G. Wright offered to take the tractor to the auction to save this cost and he clerk confirmed the sale would be at a cost of 5% of the final sale price.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed Cllr. G. Wright taking this up and agreeing to the 5% fee, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action - Clerk and Cllr. G. Wright**

**02.258.24 To discuss setting up a working party regarding the vehicle issues within the village centre.**

*(Recommended items including, parking by the recycling bins, parking along plough road, parking outside Tescos and subsequent damage to the Green)*

Cllr. J. Wharton drafted a community safety action plan last year and actually think we need a community safety group, with the parking initiative, 20 is plenty, speedwatch.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Wharton proposed that we re-share the community safety strategy to be able to clearly define the roles of the various working groups, draft terms of reference for the proposed group and called it a community safety group, and bring this back to the next meeting, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action - Cllr. J. Wharton**

**02.259.24 To discuss and agree to opening the nominations for the Great Bentley Awards 2024, and agree on a nomination process, for the Annual Parish Meeting**

The council discussed the process last year and proposed if this can be amended to include previous winners to possibly be on the panel for the judging, to involve the community in this process.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Wharton proposed that we open the nominations inviting previous winners to be involved in the decision, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**02.260.24 The Environmental Working Group**

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

Cllr. J. Wharton will be canvassing this month for increased and new volunteers of the working group

Cllr. J. Wharton wanted to personally thank Cllr. P. Dennitts for her work on the Environmental working group as she has temporarily stepped back from it at this time.

**02.261.24 The Green Working Group**

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

This was noted by the council.

**b) To discuss if the clerk should look into what options are available to remove trespassing vehicles parking on The Green.**

**Resolved –** Cllr. P. Harry proposed that this item should be one looked into with the new community safety working group, seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton, all in favour.

**Action – Community Safety Working Group**

**c) To discuss engaging parking partnership to make more visits to help deter the illegal parking.**

**Resolved –** Cllr. P. Harry proposed that this item should be one looked into with the new community safety working group, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action – Community Safety Working Group**

**02.262.24 Planning/Housing**

**a)** [24/00028/FULHH](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S6ZKUDQB0RE00) - The Yard Simmons Way Great Bentley

Proposed single storey side and rear extensions

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

b) 24/00034/FULHH - Casa Mia Sturrick Lane

Single storey flat roof rear extension, replacing existing conservatory. Construction of front open oak frame porch

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

**c) The Extension of the 30mph limit further along Weeley Road**

This was noted by the council.

**Applications Determined**

*d)* [*23/01717/COUNOT*](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S58UJTQB0MT00) *, Restaurant 43, The Green*

*prior approval not required for change of use, Delegated Decision*

*e)* [*23/01777/NDPNOT*](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S5PNZGQB0OT00)*, Plough Road Centre, Plough Road,*

*prior approval not required for solar panels, Delegated Decision*

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

*Erection of two bay cartlodge - Approval – Full*

These were noted by the council.

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

Cllr. A. Goggin confirmed that the money for the bus stops has been found by Essex County Council, and that the terms of the agreement are that bus shelter has to be placed on a piece of land that is owned by the parish council or highways with permission. (As previously advised by Cllr. P. Harry on behalf of the parish council at the request of a member of the public that the shelter is to be installed in Flag Hill) the parish council need to apply to the local highways panel and copy in the integrated transport unit to show there is money there for the bus shelter for the project to be able to ahead.

Also that he is currently sitting on the Wivenhoe Quarry Liaison Group which is discussing the route these lorries take and he wants to prevent them from coming through Great Bentley.

The speed reduction proposal on the B1027 has begun the consultation process.

**02.264.24 Council Reports:**

**a) Footpath report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

No comments or questions raised.

**b) Caretaker’s Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

No comments or questions raised.

**c) PCSO Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

None received this month.

**d) TDALC**

The clerk advised that the head of the local highways panel was in attendance and answering questions from the members.

**02.265.24 Highways & Transport Reports:**

Circulated prior to the meeting

**02.266.24 Training/Events**

**a) Reports on attended events**

* Minerals Local Plan Review

Cllr. P. Harry and the clerk attended this meeting and this will be going on next months agenda to be discussed, there have been 52 sites offered with 3 within our parish, each one is scaled with 16 points of likelihood of success, once we have the documents to be released on the 06th February this can be shared.

**b) Nominations for new events**

* Cllr Refresher Course

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Harry proposed that we arrange this at a date suitable for as many of cllrs as possible, seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

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

* Minerals
* Tractor
* Mowers
* SouthSide Track

**This section of the meeting is closed and will exclude members of the press and public from the meeting (Admissions to meetings Act 1960) due to the confidential matter of staffing being discussed.**

**02.268.24 To discuss the next steps from the proposal from the personnel committee**

Cllr. P. Harry lead the discussion of what had been discussed at the personnel Committee meeting referring to the draft minutes from Tuesday 30th January and confirmed that the assistant clerk has successfully completed her probationary period and is now confirmed as a permanent member of the team.

As advised from the minutes the caretaker is going to step down from May, and with this the personnel committee have made the recommendation that the responsibilities are taken on by the clerk with the increased hours, which will still be under budget for the 2024 – 25 year for salaries and associated costs.

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed that the clerks hours are increased by the 4 a week from May seconded by Cllr. K. Plummer, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk and Personnel Committee**

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

The next Council meeting is booked for 7:00pm on Thursday 07th March 2024.

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