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

Tel: 01206 256410 Email: clerk@greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

Website: <https://greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk/>

**Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on the 07th March 2024 at The Village Hall, Plough Road Great Bentley Colchester CO7 8LG**

Present: Cllr. P. Dennitts Cllr. B. Herbert Cllr. F. Edwards Cllr. G. Wright Cllr. J. Wharton Cllr. R. Taylor

Cllr. J. Jepson

In attendance: Mrs Jennifer Spear (Clerk) and 22 members of the public.

**Minutes**

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

Cllr. P. Harry and Cllr. K. Plummer sent their apologies these were accepted by the council.

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

None declared

**03.272.24 Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting from the 01st February 2024 meeting (previously circulated) to be approved and signed.**

**Resolved** by Cllr. G. Wright proposed that the minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on the 01st February 2024 are approved as a correct record, Cllr. J. Jepson and Cllr. R. Taylor abstained, seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton, motion carried; these were signed by the Chair.

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

A MOP commented that the drop in session held tonight for the Essex mineral Consultation held by the parish council was disappointing and not as good as the presentation that Cllr. A. Goggin held in Brightlingsea and wanted to know why this wasn’t held in Great Bentley. The Chair advised that this presentation wasn’t offered to Great Bentley.

A MOP wanted to second this opinion that it was disappointing that residents weren’t offered the same presentation, and that he felt that the parish council haven’t done as much as other parish councils in Essex by sending out leaflets to residents in the village to make awareness of this issue much higher.

A MOP stated that item 03.283.84 that is being discussed in open session is related to agenda item 03.298.24 which is being discussed in a closed session.

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

Cllr. A .Goggin reiterated that Alresford and Thorrington held a similar drop in event to what Great Bentley held this evening and that his presentation held on Monday in Brightlingsea was attended by a lot of Great Bentley Residents.

In the Tendring District a local team will be allocated to a local Cllr for a week for one week to be able to carry out simple low maintenance issues, so roughly 1 day every 12 weeks, he requested if the parish council can get together a list of these in preparation for that.

The large repairs that have been an ongoing issue at the top of Morella Close have been carried out.

**03.275.24 Clerk’s Report (Including the monthly playground Inspection Report)**

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

The clerk wanted to just advise that at the moment there are now over 140 ongoing tasks on the list. No questions were raised at this time from the council.

**03.276.24 Finance**

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

It was noted by the council that as of the 29th February 2024 there was a total of £216,254.84 in all the bank accounts, this was signed by the Chair.

**b) To note the increase in the cost of Talk Talk**

This was noted by the council.

**c) To approve final payments for March 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, with the 2 extra that were circulated this afternoon before the meeting,

Cllr. B. Herbert, agreed.

Cllr. F. Edwards agreed

Cllr. J. Wharton, agreed.

Cllr. G. Wright, commented it was good to see the 2 for the defibrillators in there and agreed.

Cllr. J. Jepson, wanted to note that the purchase of the laptop was expensive but agreed them.

Cllr. R. Taylor, agreed

Cllr. P. Dennitts, agreed and commented that the work on the new laptop cost was quite high.

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed that Cllr. P. Dennitts and Cllr. R. Taylor complete the online payments this month, with Cllr. J. Wharton as a back up in case Cllr. R. Taylor cannot log in as he has been away for 3 months.

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

**d) To agree to the overtime worked by the assistant clerk of 2 hours – Essex Mineral drop-in meeting (to be paid in Aprils Pay)**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed to agree to the overtime worked, seconded by Cllr. P. Dennitts, all in favour.

**Action - Clerk**

**e) To agree to the 10 hours overtime worked by the Clerk in February, (to be paid in Aprils Pay).**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed to agree to the overtime worked, seconded by Cllr. P. Dennitts, all in favour.

**Action - Clerk**

**f) To discuss the current banking arrangements and agree on which new account to open**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed opening a Unity savings account and a further savings with Cambridge and County, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson, all in favour

**Action - Clerk**

**g) To discuss and agree to entering into the new SLA Agreement (footpath maintenance) with Essex County Council *(Increase in the payment from £174 to £352).***

Resolved – Cllr. J. Wharton proposed that agree to this, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action - Clerk**

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

**£95 Great Bentley Pre-School**

**£400 James Circus Donation for use of the Green**

**£100 South Side Track Project Donation**

**£2.38 OpenReach Wayleave Payment**

**£539.06 Npower Refund**

**£19,308.00 S106 Funds Playground Maintenance**

These receipts were noted by the council.

Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed bringing forward item 03.293.24b on the agenda, all in favour to be discussed now.

**03.293.24 Planning/Housing**

**b) To discuss and agree a response to the Essex Minerals Consultation**

Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed an amendment to the proposed objection that we add in more about the possible impact on the protected area that is further along the Brook with a possible hydrology report.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Wharton proposed that the council agree to object to the possible mineral site in Great Bentley, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

Cllr. J. Jepson reiterated that we do need every household to object as the parish council only count as one objection, Cllr. P. Dennitts advised that we are not a statutory consultee either to re-confirm that.

Cllr. R. Taylor advised that since the installation of the pumping station, when people lost the water in their wells, although the pumping station is now not pumping, and the water level has increased, as evidenced by how wet The Green has been this year, the parish council are not experts but recommend that we add in this concern about the water levels and how this could possibly effect this.

Cllr. G. Wright at this point wanted to declare a non-pecuniary interest in site A88 as it is land that he currently farms, but he does not own. He also stated that there is also currently an application ongoing for a reservoir that is halfway through the build at Lufkins Farm it is unconnected to this mineral review and is for water usage at the farm.

Cllr. G. Wright asked if we know if some of these sites have been instigated by the Colleges who have retained the mineral rights in some of these lands. This is a question that may be relevant that the colleges own part of Felixstowe docks and they could be sourcing their own aggregates, (possibly A68 and A74). The clerk confirmed that we do not know who has put the sites forward.

The chair brought in a MOP to comment on the discussion at this point and they advised that David Gollipher has been measuring the water outside moorlands for roughly the last 10 years and would be good to contact to see if we can have this data as it may support our objection.

The Chair brought in another MOP who wanted to ask if the parish council will consider looking at installing signage around the 2 big developments that are going on as this will negatively impact their sales as this may encourage them to actively object also.

The Chair brought in another comment from another MOP who asked if we could look at trying to get a further report of the biodiversity in the proposed area.

Cllr. R. Taylor advised it would be good to get some signage out there to raise awareness. Cllr. B. Herbert said maybe we should hold another meeting where the public can come along. Cllr. F. Edwards pointed out that people who aren’t on social media aren’t as aware of what is going on so anything we can do to get this out there as much as we can will help. Cllr. J. Wharton advised that we need to make sure that we support the residents while communicating what we can legally and lawfully do as a council and that the biodiversity ties in with the E20 strategy that the council have already adopted.

Cllr. G. Wright we do have a contact that could help support with a survey but we may have difficulty accessing the private lane which could be a barrier. Cllr. P. Dennitts suggested putting something out there to request any historical information that members of the public may hold of these sites too.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Wharton proposed investigating how the parish council can carry out biodiversity study in the associated and impacted areas, using the UK Biodiversity Duty that was implemented earlier on this year seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed purchasing larger scale signage, Cllr. G. Wright proposed amending this to include a generic sign for all householders to put up, including a budget of up to £500 seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright advised that there are already some hydrology reports that have been carried out and he could find out if these reports can be made public. Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed that Cllr. G. Wright look into this and report back at the next meeting, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Cllr. G. Wright**

Cllr. J. Wharton added that in with the home owner posters can we also put the poster up in the local businesses, noticeboards, train station etc too.

**03.277.24 To discuss and agree to the updated Risk Management plan, with the changes as recommended by the Internal Auditor.**

Cllr. R. Taylor wanted to ask about the location of the direct debit card, as the plan reads that its locked in the safe with one key, the clerk advised that the card is locked in the safe and the safe keys are locked in a locked box with keys held by the clerk and the Chair, and the plan was amended at the meeting to reflect this.

**Resolved** Cllr G. Wight proposed that the council accept this plan with the amendments, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**03.278.24 Annual Parish Meeting**

**a) To discuss the Annual Parish Meeting and agree expenditure for awards and food and drink.**

**Resolved** Cllr. R Taylor proposed that the clerk can purchase the items needed up to the budgeted amount of £150, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**b) To remind Cllrs and the public that nominations are still being received.**

The council reiterated this to the public present.

**03.279.24 Office Communication**

**a) To discuss and agree with the options for office communication and equipment in the office and for routine inspections.**

**Resolved** Cllr. P. Dennitts proposed that the Clerk check the cost of transferring to TMB’s broadband and the full cost of the transfer compared to staying with Talk Talk and to source alternative quotations for mobile phone providers to compare the cost, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**b) To discuss and agree to look into options for a new website provider.**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed that the clerk look into alternative providers, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson (with an offer to support this task), all in favour.

**Action – Clerk and Cllr J. Jepson**

**03.280.24 Trees and Bloom**

**a) To discuss the request to cut back the trees in the new allotment site from overhanging the neighbours property.**

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed to source quotations for this work to be carried out, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, Cllr. B. Herbert abstained, the rest of the council in favour, motion carried.

**Action – Clerk**

**b) To discuss the request from a MOP to cut back the lime trees in front of his property (at his expense) on the green**

There was much discussion on this item, with Cllr. G. Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Wharton proposed to speak to the tree warden to ask if these trees present a risk or issue at this time and if they do we can go ahead and get this done at the PC expense, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, Cllr. G. Wright abstained, the rest of the council in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**c) To discuss the recommendation from our contractor (£450) to pollard the white willow outside Moorlands on The Green.**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed getting this work carried out, seconded by Cllr. G. Wright, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**03.281.24 The Green**

**a) To discuss and agree any action regarding nuisance pigeons on the South Side as reported by a MOP.**

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed to go to TDC and seek advice and also the local pigeon society, seconded by Cllr. J. Taylor all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**b) To discuss the request for the Great Bentley Carnival to take place on Saturday 29th June 2024**

**Resolved** Cllr. R. Taylor proposed that we give this permission, seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton all in favour.

**Action - Clerk**

**c) To discuss the possible entry of Great Bentley Village into the Anglia in Bloom Awards**

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed contacting Bently in Bloom to find out if this is something that they are considering entering, seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**03.282.24 Land at Larkfield**

**To discuss the option of registering the land as village green, so the council can legally continue to maintain the area, instead of incurring 50% solicitors costs to have the land ownership transferred.**

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed to get another 2 quotes for legal services for transferring land ownership, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**03.283.24 Bollards green corner**

**To discuss the quotations received to move and replacing the bollards, as agreed at last months meeting, and agreed to a contractor to carry out the works.**

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed to defer this item to the closed session at the end of the meeting, seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton, all in favour.

**03.284.24 South Side Track Working Updates**

**a) To note the report from the consultation with South Side Track Residents, and ask any questions.**

There was a question from a contractor on the crossfall of the track and this will depend on the levels of the properties and the track at each location, which the clerk will give the contractor feedback on.

**b) To discuss and agree to the wider public consultation for the rest of Great Bentley Residents.**

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed inviting all residents to the Annual Parish Meeting on the 18th April to discuss the South Side Track proposal, advertising this date in the Parish Magazine, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**c) To discuss and agree to a process regarding the donation process, and a recommended amount to be requested.**

The clerk clarified that this would be confidential rather than anonymous, all donations would need a doner attached to them, in case the project doesn’t go ahead and the funds can be returned to the doners, so the clerk will know who they are as will the internal auditor.

The council discussed that it would be very difficult to put a recommended amount on this, as everyone’s circumstances are different.

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed that we clarify this is a confidential process, and once we know the amount of the projected cost, we can publicise this but the parish council will not specify a recommended donation amount, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson, Cllr. B. Herbert abstained, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**03.285.24 Office Signs at Village Hall**

**To discuss and agree to the signs required and locations for them to be placed on the village hall, and agree to a supplier.**

**Resolved** Cllr. F. Edwards proposed a sign at location B (noticeboard) and a sign on the side of the building, location C2, supplier 1, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**Action - Clerk**

**03.286.24 To discuss and agree to a resolution for the incorrectly named Marjorie Mitchell Way**

***(Cost £3,500)***

**Resolved** Cllr. F. Edwards proposed that we accept the fact a mistake was made and we need to rectify it, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour. **Action – Clerk**

**03.287.24 Community Safety Working Group**

**a) To agree to the membership of the Community Safety Working Group**

**b) To agree to the draft terms of reference for the Community Safety Working Group**

**c) To agree to the first project for the Community Safety Working Group**

**Resolved items A, B and C** Cllr. J. Wharton proposed for Cllr. J. Wharton and the clerk to come back to the next meeting with draft terms of reference and project proposals, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson – all in favour. **Action – Clerk and Cllr. J. Wharton**

**03.288.24 Chapel Terrace**

**a) To note the report from the meeting with the residents at Chapel Terrace and ask any questions**

No questions were raised by the council.

**b) To discuss and agree to the installation of a restricted access sign for the entrance and green protection measures, and to agree wording.**

The council discussed this at length as the village green does extend all the way up to the residents boundary lines, we know that they park there without parish council permission as this cannot be given due to the legislation, and a sign will not give permission for this parking but the residents need support here from their access being restricted.

**Resolved** Cllr. G. Wright proposed a sign that reads, no vehicular access and no parking on the green, amended by Cllr. P. Dennitts to look into a possible road marking on the entrance with no parking to stop the entrance being blocked, this amendment was accepted by Cllr. G. Wright, seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton, all in favour. **Action – Clerk**

**03.289.24 To discuss the quotations and agree to a contractor to carry out the installation of the SID posts, *(£2000 in the budget).***

**Resolved** Cllr J. Jepson proposed installing the one on Plough Road that we have the license for the fixed sign using the cheapest quotation option first but going for the quickest installation, and in the meantime contacting Essex County Council about having fixed posts with the addition of alternative speed limit signs, seconded by Cllr. J. Wharton, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

**03.290.24 Tractor**

**To note the report on the tractor and ask any questions.**

The clerk confirmed that at the moment the new tractor does fit where the old one does, and the EALC are looking into whether we can legally build a tractor storage shed on our land and the clerk will feed back as soon as she has it.

**03.291.24 The Environmental Working Group**

**a) To discuss and agree the new terms of reference for the Environmental working group.**

Cllr. J. Wharton proposed that the E20 strategy and action plan needs to become a key agenda item for the agenda each month, Cllr. P. Dennitts suggested that instead it should only be an agenda item when there is an action that needs to taken, so it becomes a core council approach to each decision and the council can release the members of the Environmental Working Group to take part in other working groups.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Wharton proposed having a monthly review of the action plan in accordance with the E20 strategy and informing the council of the inclusion of any new projects, and addressing any environmental issues, seconded by Cllr. P. Dennitts, all in favour.

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

**03.292.24 The Green Working Group**

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

**UKPN at the top end of the green, and the work that’s required**

**03.293.24 Planning/Housing**

**a)** [24/00144/FULHH](https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S82HGBQB0OT00)

3 Thorrington Road Great Bentley Colchester Essex

New vehicular access.

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson proposed no comment as it is in keeping with the area, seconded by Cllr. R. Taylor, all in favour.

**b) To discuss and agree a response to the Essex Minerals Consultation**

**Resolved – to be discussed earlier on in the meeting.**

**Applications Determined**

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

*The Yard, Simmons Way, Great Bentley, Colchester, CO7 8FD*

*Proposed single storey side and rear extensions.*

*Approval – Full*

This was noted by the council.

**03.294.24 Council Reports:**

**a) Footpath report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

This was noted by the council, the Chair thanked the Footpath Officer for this.

**b) Caretaker’s Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

This was noted by the council.

**c) PCSO Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

This was noted by the council.

**d) Tree Warden Report**

Circulated prior to the meeting

This was noted by the council.

**03.295.24 Highways & Transport Reports:**

Circulated prior to the meeting

This was noted by the council.

**03.296.24 Training/Events**

**a) Reports on attended events**

Open Spaces Village Greens and Commons Course

War Memorial Course

Open Spaces PROW Course

It was noted by the council that these courses had been attended by the Clerk.

**b) Nominations for new events**

**To discuss and agree to the best date for the agreed cllr refresher training course in May.**

**Resolved –** Cllrs agreed to the 30th May 6-10pm.

**Action – Clerk**

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

* **To agree to booking a stall at the carnival and the village show**
* **Speed Limit outside the school**
* **Assets of community Value for the bridleway in the proposed mineral site**
* **Community Safety Working Group**

At this point Cllr. R. Taylor proposed going into closed session, seconded by Cllr. J. Jepson, all in favour.

**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.**

**03.298.24 To discuss the next steps for possible encroachment on The Green at Catkin Cottage and Green Corner**

**With the addition of agenda item 03.283.24 as resolved to be discussed here.**

**Resolved** Cllr. J. Jepson do nothing in regard to moving the bollards, and seek legal advice, to re-affirm the parish councils position, seconded by Cllr. F. Edwards, all in favour.

**Action – Clerk**

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

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

The Annual Meeting of the Parish is to be held on Thursday 18th April 2024.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 21:41

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