

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Remotely by Zoom
on Tuesday 19th January 2021 at 7.30pm.

Present : Cllr Batchford, Cllr Bond, Cllr Paxton, Cllr Saggars, Cllr Taylor (Chairman), Cllr Watt.
Also Present: Clerk D Williams, Clerk P Palfreyman, Essex County Council (ECC) Cllr Beavis,
Braintree District Council (BDC) Cllr Courtauld, and 3 members of the public attended.

Cllr Taylor advised the meeting was being recorded for the purposes of minutes taking.

260. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – BDC Cllr Spray

261. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – Cllr Saggars declared an interest in minute 7(a) for the planning application 21/00018/HH for Colneford House as he is the applicant. He will not comment on the application.

262. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last parish council meeting of 19 November 2020 which had been previously circulated, were agreed as a true record. They could not be signed by the Chairman as the meeting was by Zoom but will be signed, scanned, and sent to the Clerk (PP) for filing.

263. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE

The Clerk (DW) advised that the proposal for bollards to stop cars parking on the verge at 79-101 Colchester Road had not progressed.

This is being looked in to by Cllr Beavis.

264. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Cllr Taylor advised she is aware of someone who is interested in the vacancy and will speak to them this week and report back to the Council. No other candidates were suggested.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

The meeting was suspended for public questions and statements.

1 – Have the proposed footpaths between Chalkney Garage and Boley Road junction and from Cammacks Yard to Wakes Colne been taken any further? A 40mph speed limit along that road would be helpful.

2 - A parishioner thanked the Chairman for confirming by email the current situation regarding the proposed application for development on the land at the rear of the Village Hall/behind Colchester Road as it is going in for planning permission again, and confirmed comments would be added to the planning site and they would like to attend the pre application meeting if there is one.

3 – A parishioner asked for the Councils support in trying to prevent development of the land opposite their property.

4 The footpath that goes up to the old railway line is waiting for a new handrail. The Clerk (DW) advised that this is a permissive footpath and Highways are not willing to pay for it. Cllr Bond advised that the Colne Valley Country Park/Linear Path team installed the last one

which then passed responsibility to the Flitch Way Country Park team and they do not have funding for it.

The meeting was resumed.

**265. REPORT FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR & BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR
Cllr Beavis (ECC)**

Cllr Beavis agreed to put the requested 40mph speed limit through to the LHP. This would need some testing first to understand the speed and volume of traffic to decide what measures are needed. Cllr Bond said this has been raised with Highways before but failed due to the distance between the settlements is greater than their criteria.. Due to COVID 19 Highways are behind with their work as they cannot get a true picture of the volume of traffic.

Footpath rail on the old the railway line – will review with Cllr Taylor.

ECC are trying to put through a low budget of 2% and are going through a multimillion-pound deficit due to the pandemic. There is a 2% adult social care cap.

Pump House surgery is the designated vaccination centre and is covering a large area. Cllr Beavis has requested signage on the main road to let people know where the centre is. ECC are also looking for a centre in Halstead for the vaccinations.

Potholes and drains continue to be reported. A recent pothole has been filled but has recently appeared again and Highways have been made aware.

Flooding – Cllr Beavis and colleagues have put in requests for drains to be jetted in advance of the storms.

79 – 101 Colchester Road verge car parking will be put through the LHP for validation and comments.

There is a new chairman and a new officer of Braintree LHP. There is £19500 in the LHP budget for a different scheme to stop lorries hitting the wall opposite the Green. There are some issues with the Secretary of State and land ownership. Although ECC are aware that the PC dislike the scheme, if there is no decision from the PC, ECC will remove the funds from the LHP budget. Cllr Beavis wanted to understand the Council views so she can speak to the Chairman of the Committee and put the case across.

COVID lockdown grants are the same as in the last two lockdowns where ECC through BDC who are administering the grants are providing up to £9000 for local businesses. There are also welfare grants to help families with food and fuel of up to £2000. Cllr Beavis will receive any request for these. Another £90000 is available from ECC for foodbanks, CAB, children's sports and community groups.

Cllr Courthauld (BDC)

Cllr Courthauld has received several communications about the flooding and the roads being dug up and making them worse.

Also communications about the further lockdown and financial hardship. There are 5 different grants/loans/support and the BDC officers were extremely helpful in identifying what would help. In some cases, the grants will not be enough to stop people losing their livelihoods and jobs but the grants were several thousand pounds and only took 1 week to come through.

Some concerns about trespass which is not a criminal offence. Cllr Courthauld has spoken to the Police who are overwhelmed with work but have set up a COVID response van which will visit if there are any issues.

There is still quite a lot of the budget left in BDC and the officers are doing a very good job.

Cllr Spray (BDC)

A written report was provided by Cllr Spray and highlights are noted below.

I have attended more COVID briefings than usual as the virus numbers are high in Essex.

Hospitals are under pressure with 49% of beds space being taken up due to COVID. The Pump House surgery has started giving vaccinations.

The next full Council meeting will be on 22 February 2021 which will be the budget meeting for 2021/22. There will be challenging times for local authorities and BDC have not yet been reimbursed by Government for all their expenses.

266. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications

20/01880/FUL - Little Catleys Farm Catley Road - Demolition of existing agricultural building and erection of 1 x 5 bedroom two-storey dwelling house

We object to this development as it would be intrusive in the open countryside. Our policy, supported by our Village Design Statement, is to resist all such development outside the village envelope.

The development is not sustainable - there is no bus, no hard service footpath, nor street lighting. The development would increase the use of private vehicles down a quiet single track country lane. The farm is already supplied with a domestic dwelling and no evidence is provided to support another dwelling on site. Noise and light pollution would be increased.

20/02104/FUL - The Meadows Colne Park Road - Erection of a single residential dwelling

We object to this development as it would be intrusive in the open countryside. Our policy, supported by our Village Design Statement, is to resist all such development outside the village envelope.

The 2007 application for the erection of stables has never been developed. The only activity was to make a gravelled access in order to store several containers on the land. After many complaints over the last 14 years about this eyesore, the landowner eventually reduced the number to 2 but still did not carry out any building works. The appeal on application 17/01877 for 3 houses was dismissed and we agree with the inspector's comments.

The biodiversity plan for this application is out of date. There is no flood risk assessment. The area is marked as high risk on the recent flood maps. Perhaps changed from 2007 when the stables were approved?

In 2007 the adjacent Meadows wildlife area was very new and not as well established as today. The undeveloped green field is now used as a wildlife corridor to the Meadows. A

domestic dwelling on this land, with increased noise and light pollution will therefore have a detrimental effect on the local wildlife.

The adjacent road is narrow and dangerous for pedestrians.

20/02116/AGR – For information only Land on South Side of Colchester Road – Application for prior notification of the erection of a polytunnel.

No comment

21/00011/HH – 40 Colneford Hill – Erection of new boundary wall, replacement of pool plant room & 2 green houses.

No objection

21/00018/HH - Forge Farm, Bures Road – Single storey side/new extension

No objection

(b) Applications approved by Braintree District Council – none

(c) Any other planning matters raised by members - none

267. TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND CONSIDER FURTHER ACTION REGARDING THE HEADS OF AGREEMENT FOR THE TRANSFER OF WCPC LAND TO ECC IN RETURN FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE VILLAGE HALL LAND TO THE WCPC

The developer has been clearing the bush behind the hall and carried out some topographical work to see the boundaries. The Council has requested a pre application meeting with the developer who has confirmed they are still taking account of everything the Council said previously. The purchaser is going to sign up to the Considerate Contractors Scheme. The application is due in the Spring. Cllr Watt queried why some trees along the side of the footpath opposite the allotments, have been cut down and this will be investigated by Cllr Taylor.

268. COMMUNITY LIASON

1 – Four people have volunteered to check the defibrillator. This will ensure it complies with the recommendations by having a weekly check. The volunteers will be trained by Cllr Bond in due.... course and the checks will be recorded online.

2 – The outlying properties will be getting Fibre Broadband. There are two companies tendering for the business.

3 – A property to the rear of old railway line permissive footpath has dug out a set of steps from their back garden into the embankment and left various objects of rubbish. This has been reported to ECC

269. OPEN SPACES ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW

Following discussion, the Council agreed to leave the plan as it is. The Clerk will advise BDC.

270. WHITE COLNE MEADOWS

The Meadows were not cut in August 2020. The Clerk (PP) will make a diary note to notify the contractor in June 2021 to book it in.

ClIr Watt advised she would collect some of the green casings that have come off the trees and will look and see if any others need removing of the trees.

ClIr Bond advised the silt trap on the pond is clear. It was suggested that the regular cut around the banks of the pond could be included in the normal handyman works and then twice a year doing more detailed works getting into the pond. This would reduce the cost to £240.

271. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Payments of accounts since the last meeting

The clerk reported that since the last meeting, the following payments had been or are to be made: -

1. Payments

The Clerk reported that since the last report, the following payments had been or are to be made:-

From **Nat West** account:-

<u>Cheque</u>	<u>Payee Details</u>	<u>Amount</u> £
<u>VAT inc</u>		
D/D	GoCardless Ltd – County Broadband WiFi at hall monthly charge	£ 58.00
D/D	Scottish Power – village hall electricity 2x£20	£ 40.00
D/D	Scottish Power – village hall gas 2x£50.30	£ 100.60
D/D	Anglian Water – village hall water	£ 7.46
TOTAL NAT WEST PAYMENTS		£ 206.06

(b). By electronic payments from **Unity Bank** account:-

J Bond – reimbursement for Christmas lights on the Green PAID VAT £ 25.65	£ 153.90
Treetop Services – tree works on the Green and the Chase PAID VAT £50.00	£ 300.00
J Heathcote – hall cleaning November PAID	£ 40.00
J Heathcote – hall booking secretary November PAID	++ £ 40.83
Unity Bank- charges PAID	£ 18.00

G Allen – hall window cleaning 29.12	£ 14.00
Prolectric Services Ltd - solar light (FUNDED BY ESSEX CC VAT £ 204.00	£1,224.00
J Bond – reimbursement for Zoom virtual meeting	£ 14.39
PPL/PRS – village hall license for two years (MAY BE PLUS	£ 142.48
D Williams-clerk sal Dec/Jan£999.66-PAYE, home/office£17.30,inks £43.98 VAT £7.34	£ 661.74
H M Revenue & Customs – PAYE for clerk salary (Williams) January	£ 199.60
P Palfreyman – clerk sal Jan £499.83 less PAYE	£ 400.03
HM Revenue & Customs PAYE for clerk salary (Palfreyman) January	£ 99.80
HM Revenue & Customs PAYE for clerk salary (Palfreyman) February	£ 99.80
TOTAL UNITY BANK PAYMENTS	£3,408.57

2. Funds Received Since the last report, the following funds have been received into Nat West

Village hall sundry hires	£ 42.50
Allotment rentals	£ 14.00
TOTAL NAT WEST RECEIPTS	£ 56.50

Into Unity Bank:- Village hall regular hires	£ 1,344.75
Allotment rentals	£ 140.00
TOTAL UNITY BANK RECEIPTS	£ 1,484.75

3. Financial statement & Bank Reconciliation

Following the above transactions- There is a credit balance on Nat West account £ 5,576.66

There is a credit balance on Unity Bank account £23,286.03

TOTAL BANK BALANCES £ 28,862.69

Balance held in reserve – Village projects from White Colne 50 Club	£1,260.73
Balance held in reserve - Village Hall Roofing Fund	£11,000.00
Balance held in reserve – allotments	£32.00
Total of allocated funds is	£12,292.73

Thus the balance of unallocated funds is **£ 16,569.96**

NAT WEST BANK		UNITY BANK	
Bank Balances 19.11.20	£ 5,726.22	Bank Balances 19.11.20	£ 25,209.85
Add Receipts	£ 56.50	Add Receipts	£ 1,484.75
Sub Total	£ 5,782.72	Sub Total	£ 26,694.60
Less Total Payments	£ 206.06	Less Total Payments	£ 3,408.57
TOTAL BALANCES 19.01.21	£ 5,576.66	TOTAL BALANCES 19.01.21	£ 23,286.03

The Clerk (PP) will also consider the two bank accounts in due course and report to the Council the merits of keeping one or two accounts.

(c) To consider budgets for 2021/2022 and set the parish precept

The Clerk (DW) reported a forecasted deficit of £4000 for 2020/21 but with a small increase of 3.18% on the precept and being careful with other costs we can forecast a break even for 2021/22. The main reason for this is that village hall income is estimated at around £4000 for the year which is much less than is usually taken in a normal year.

Following discussion it was agreed that that there would be no increase to the precept. The Council discussed the reasons for this being the pandemic, general financial struggles and that reserves can be used.

The precept will be £12243 which is an increase of £217 due to an increase in the tax base.

The Parish Support grant has increased from £151 to £167

Band D equivalent - £56.24

Any costs outside budget will have to be carefully considered.

(d) To consider the contractor's grass cutting prices for 2021

Following discussion it was agreed to accept the new prices for grass cutting from Mortimer Contracts Ltd, equivalent to £1 per cut.

(e) To discuss setting up a PayPal account (linked to the Unity bank account), proposed use, authorisations and spending limits.

Following discussion it was agreed that the Clerk (PP) would suggest a form of wording to include in the Financial Regulations with financial parameters and a process for authorisation. PayPal will be shown on the bank statement for any purchases. The proposal has been agreed in principle but must be confirmed at a later meeting.

272. POSITION OF CLERK

Cllr Taylor formally welcomed the new clerk, Petra Palfreyman to the Council and confirmed her appointment from 1 January 2021.

273. VILLAGE HALL

(a) To update members on issues from Village Hall Management Committee

Toilets - A toilet seat had been removed to help with finding the right replacements for the hinges, and 2 more were found to be broken.

Health & Safety – Mike King who does the monthly check on emergency lights reported that 2 lights only just met the 3-hour end of year check, and that we will have to replace some batteries/lights shortly.

The Council agreed not to increase the hall hire rates at present. There may be issues when the development goes ahead and how the hall will stay open, noise issues and other problems.

The boiler gas service is due now. The Clerk (PP) confirmed that she had contacted the plumber and the service will be carried out soon. This is a requirement for the insurance.

(b) To discuss and consider whether to install a remote heating thermostat at a cost of £249

The Council have decided not to go ahead with this at present.

(c) Any other matters raised by members

New residents' newsletter – Cllr Bond has been posting the newsletter through any new resident's post box following the sale of properties. Cllr Bond agreed to email this to the Council for councillors to print and give to new residents.

Solar light - the new light has arrived but will need a spigot to go on the top of the lamp post to fit the solar panel. Cllr Bond said this would cost a maximum of £100 which the Council agreed. There has been the offer of the use of cherry picker to carry out the work.

Fencing – a picket fence to go in front of the Village Hall will be renewed. The Clerk (PP) will contact the suppliers to agree an installation date to ensure no cars are parked there on the day it is put in. If the development goes ahead, the fence may need to be moved and the developers have assured the Council that it will put it back in good condition if they need to.

274. WHITE COLNE VILLAGE GREEN

Cllr Taylor advised (per Cllr Beavis report) that Highways would like to remove the scheme from their budget. The Council disagreed with the new scheme proposed by Highways and would like to know why they cannot revert to the previously agreed scheme. The new scheme would not stop damage to the pavement and could increase speeding in the A1124.

The meeting was suspended for Cllr Beavis to speak

Highways panel will meet next week, and Cllr Beavis will give the Councils view and report back to Cllr Taylor.

Cllr Saggars commented that a lot of money was spent on the first two plans and have wasted a lot of money and the plan is not fit for purpose.

The meeting resumed

Interpretation board - The right-hand leg on the village green interpretation board is rotting and loose. Cllr Bond will get a quote from the handyman.

Christmas lights – The new lights in trees did not look quite as planned, but next year will go up the stems of the trees. In Earls Colne they had an “electrical” tree which cost over £500. Cllr Bond suggested WCPC obtained a 6 meter tree next year and suggested getting subscriptions for it. Cllr Bond will send some recommendations for next year.

275. HIGHWAYS

(a) To receive updates on issues – covered under 15. village green

(b) Any other matters raised by members

Cllr Watt advised that the ditch opposite Colneford Hill often blocks and overflows. Cllr Beavis will ask ECC to investigate ownership and report back to The Clerk (PP).

276. ALLOTMENTS

(a) To receive an update on issues

The Clerk (DW) confirmed that all payments have been made and The Clerk (PP) confirmed that all the papers had been emailed to the new plot holder.

(b) Any other matters raised by members – nothing reported

277. CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing to report from the Clerks (DW & PP)

Cllr Taylor advised that she had recently taken part in a meeting with 40 other Parish and Town Council chairs, to discuss the reformation of the Braintree Association of Local Councils. The working group will be sending out a letter to every parish to get the Association formed. Braintree is the largest district in Essex with 52 parishes and has 4 seats on the Local Highways panel, together with members from ECC and BDC. The Association would also have representation on the Executive Committee of the Essex Association of Local Councils and contacts with other committees which give the group a voice.

TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS RECEIVED SINCE THE PREPARATION OF THE AGENDA AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Nothing to report.

There being no further business the parish council meeting closed at 9.10pm