

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held remotely by Zoom on Tuesday 16th March 2021 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Batchford, Cllr Bond, Cllr Saggars, Cllr Taylor (Chairman), Cllr Wada, Cllr Watt.

Also present: Clerk P Palfreyman, Essex County Council (ECC) Cllr Beavis, Braintree District Council (BDC) Cllr Courtauld, and 2 members of the public

278. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr G Spray (BDC) and Cllr Paxton

279. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS ON ITEMS SHOWN ON THIS AGENDA

None

280. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2021

The minutes of the last parish council meeting on 19th January 2021 which had previously been 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 for filing.

281. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE

None

282. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

(a) To agree the co-option of Carol Wada and receive the Declaration of Acceptance.

All councillors agreed by a show of hands to co-opt and welcome Carol to White Colne Parish Council.

283. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr Courtauld

Two points of discussion at the BDC EGM were the climate emergency declared in 2019 and the cycle strategies. For the climate emergency there is a big effort to get trees planted and recycling initiatives and much work has gone into it. There are plans in place to consider a cycle route from Earls Colne to Kelvedon and in the future possibly from Halstead to Colne Engaine to Earls Colne through to Kelvedon. BDC continue to help with grants for businesses that are struggling or going out of business due to the pandemic. Grants between £2000 and £8000 have been made and the BDC officers have worked extremely on these.

Cllr Beavis

The cycle strategy has been given a lot of time and the feasibility study has started for the complete route (Halstead to Earls Colne to Coggeshall to Kelvedon). This is a community led project and parishes around the Colne Valley are all working together and some of the funding will come from the Local Highways Panel. The study also takes in the Quiet Lanes status and will help to move some of the smaller projects on. Pump House surgery have done a fantastic job with the vaccinations and there are some talks about having another centre in the North. The director of Public Health at ECC has sent out a message that everyone must dig deep now and see the restrictions through to the

end. The main point from the ECC budget is that there is a Council Tax freeze due to the pandemic, Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner are looking at 5% increase and ECC are taking advantage of a 1.5% social care cap. Colne House in Earls Colne is closing, which is a 33-bed residential home, currently with only 3 residents supported by ECC. Nationally there are a lot of vacancies due to Covid 19 but we should be aware of what might happen in the future and if there will be gaps in adult social care in the Braintree district. The main headlines from the budget were £2.5M extra going to flood prevention, £1M extra in to environment and reducing waste at a local level, £7.2M extra in to the LHP which for Braintree means another £400000 for the next 3 years every year and £13M from the government for pot holes. The ECC Councillor grant will continue at £10000 per councillor.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

The meeting was suspended for public questions and statements

A member of the public advised that the planning application 21/00533 for a large green house/poly tunnel backs on to properties in Mill Field where the site that it is on, is very large and raises concerns about security, lack of fencing, the access track, the footfall and that the footpath is not shown on the plans. Cllr Taylor advised that as this is an agricultural application the Council do not comment on it as there are permitted development rights. Cllr Taylor recommended that the resident speaks to the farmer and the Clerk will find out if the Council can arrange that meeting.

The meeting was resumed

284. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications:

21/00395/COUPA Information Only Brambles Farm, Brambles Lane, White Colne, Essex CO6 2QG
Prior approval for the Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to a flexible use within Shops (Class A1), Financial and Professional Services (Class A2), Restaurants and Cafes (Class A3), Business (Class B1), Storage or Distribution (Class B8), Hotels (Class C1) or Assembly and Leisure (Class D2).

20/01880/FUL Information Only Planning Committee 2 March 2021 Little Catleys Farm, Catley Road, White Colne, Essex CO6 2QQ Demolition of existing agricultural building and erection of 1 x 5 bedroom two-storey dwelling house

21/00533/AGR Information Only Land At Mill Field, Colchester Road, White Colne, Essex Application for prior notification of agricultural or forestry development - Erection of a polytunnel

All applications are for information only and no comments can be made by the Council.

285. 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 WCPC.

The agent for developers has apologised for removing the trees but advised it was needed to obtain the site lines and permission is not needed for this. There have been some problems with flooding in Bures Road and the Council need to be aware and ensure that the developers put in adequate drainage to stop this. Since the brush has been cleared 2 vents are visible which the Environmental Assessment team put in some time ago to vent the land as the surface was contaminated with coal ash. Cllr Bond reported that an inspection cover on the drive entrance near the Village Hall is also blocked which may be connected to the drainage issues on Bures Road.

286. COMMUNITY LIASON

Nextdoor is still being used to communicate with the community. Cllr Taylor suggested that the Council might organise a village tea party at the end of June 2021 and the Council agreed to consider this. Cllr Bond reported there are a total of 5 volunteers carrying out the defibrillator checks so that weekly checks can be made. The SID is back in operation and it is expected that we will see an increase in speed as it is on the Earls Colne/Colchester Road

287. WHITE COLNE MEADOWS

Cllr Bond asked if the trees on the top side of the meadow should be thinned out as they are competing. Cllr Watt advised that she had removed some of the tree protections and will continue to do so. A request was made for a working party which will be notified on Nextdoor as soon as the community can get together. Cllr Bond advised the silt trap on the pond has been cleared and is running freely. The right-hand side of the allotments have been churned up by vehicles driving over the corner. The Council agreed to consider putting some bark chippings down.

288. FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payment of accounts since the last meeting

The Clerk advised that since the last report the payments shown on the financial statement had been or are about to be paid:

1.NAT WEST ACCOUNT		£	£
METHOD	PAYEE		VAT
DD	GoCardless - County Broadband WiFi at hall. £29 per month x 2	58.00	
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity. £20 per month x 2	40.00	
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall gas. £50.30 x 2	100.60	
DD	Anglian Water (Wave) - Village Hall water	136.45	
TOTAL NAT WEST PAYMENTS		335.05	
UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT (ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS)			
	Mortimer Contracts PAID	222.00	37.00
	S Beck Plumbing PAID	143.68	23.95
	G Allen Window cleaner PAID	14.00	
	Page Computers Avast Anti Virus PAID	38.00	6.33
	W Paxton - Village Hall toilet seat hinges PAID	5.94	0.99
	Hull Fencing - Village Hall picket fence PAID	720.00	120.00
	P Palfreyman - clerks salary Feb & March £499.83 x 2 (less PAYE £99.80 x 2) UNPAID	800.06	
	HM Revenue & Customs PAYE for clerks March salary UNPAID	99.80	
	J Bond Zoom account for March 2021 meeting (UNPAID)	14.39	
TOTAL UNITY TRUST		2057.87	

PAYMENTS

2. FUNDS RECEIVED

Since the last report, the following funds have been received in to:

NAT WEST

Allotment income	143.00	143.00
TOTAL NAT WEST RECEIPTS		143.00

UNITY BANK

Allotment income	20.00	20.00
Paypal adjustment	0.01	0.01
TOTAL UNITY BANK RECEIPTS		20.01

3. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BANK RECONCILIATION

Following the above transactions, the credit balances on the bank accounts are:

NAT WEST as at 2 March
2021

5384.61

UNITY TRUST as at 15 March 2021

22262.22

TOTAL BANK BALANCES **27646.83**

Balance held in reserve

Village projects from White Colne 50 Club	1260.73	
Village Hall roofing fund	11000.00	
Allotments	32.00	
Total of allocated fund	12292.73	12292.73
Balance of unallocated fund		15354.10

NAT WEST BANK

Balance	5576.66
Add Receipts	143.00
Sub Total	5719.66
Less Total Payments	335.05
TOTAL BALANCES	5384.61

UNITY BANK

Balance	23286.03
Add Receipts	20.01
Sub Total	23306.03
Less Total Payments	2057.87
TOTAL BALANCES	21248.17

b) Financial statement

The Clerk advised that the financial report had been distributed for review. There were no questions from the Council.

(b) To provide an update about closing the Nat West Bank account.

The Clerk advised she is in the process of transferring all the direct debits to the Unity Trust bank account and once that is done, the account can be closed. The Clerk suggested keeping the Nat West account for the earmarked reserves only and then transferring it to a savings account once interest rates improved. The Council agreed that the Nat West account should be closed and all the funds held in one account

(d) To provide an update about the PayPal account, setting financial limits and amending the Financial Regulations.

The Clerk advised that a PayPal account can be opened but Zoom would still need a card account for a subscription. An alternative is a Unity Trust Charge card at a one-off cost of £50 and £3 per month per card. For these cards, administrators can be set up, transaction limits, monthly limits and merchants blocks. The Council agreed not to pursue either option at this time.

(e) To agree payment of the Clerks wages monthly instead of bi-monthly.

The Council agreed payment to the Clerk monthly. The bi-monthly option was an historical arrangement because payment was by cheque and authorised at the bi-monthly meetings.

(f) To agree the engagement of an Internal Auditor at a cost of up to £200.

The Clerk advised an auditor had been sought and her appointment could now be confirmed.

289. VILLAGE HALL

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

Cllr Bond reported that the pole is too big for the solar light and he is getting a spigot to fit the lamp on to it. The Council has offers of a cherry picker and a scaffold tower so it should all be installed by the end of April. The new picket fence has been installed and an extra section was added in free of charge. The fence is treated timber and the Council agreed not to paint it at this stage as it might have to be removed for the contractors to get access in due course.

(b) To confirm the date from which the Village Hall will reopen for hire

The Council discussed a recent document from ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) which suggested the Village Hall should not open from 12 April. The Council agreed it would be more likely from 21 June 2021 but will review again in the May 2021 meeting.

290. WHITE COLNE VILLAGE GREEN

The meeting was suspended for Cllr Beavis to speak

(a) To receive an update on issues.

Cllr Beavis will suggest some dates for a meeting to discuss the Village Green around mid-April after the LHP meeting. The status of the scheme has still not changed but ECC need to understand the Council's views and combine the thoughts.

The meeting was resumed.

Cllr Bond advised that some of the daffodils need splitting and some replanting will be needed. The Council agreed buy another bag of bulbs and for a working party to be set up in the autumn.

291. HIGHWAYS

(a) To receive an update on issues

Cllr Batchford advised that the drains are still blocked in Bures Road. This creates a constant flow of water when there has been a lot of rain, which ices over when it is freezing.

The meeting was suspended for Cllr Beavis to speak

Cllr Taylor asked Cllr Beavis if Bures Road could be gritted. Cllr Beavis confirmed that she thought it fitted the criteria for gritting and will request this is added to the route by ECC. Cllr Beavis confirmed the jetting lorries are due to come out and jet the drains.

The meeting was resumed

(b) Any other matters raised by members

The grit bin disappeared from Boley Road and then turned up outside the old Carved Angel. It looks like a vehicle pierced it and carried it along and it is now damaged beyond repair or use. The Council agreed to wait until the autumn and buy a new one.

Cllr Beavis advised that the speed checks will not start until April and the footpath extensions have been put in. Also, some speed surveys from Riverside to Colneford Hill area. When they have been validated, Cllr Beavis will refer back to the Council with the options.

Quiet Lanes (Boley Rd) is on the panel budget and has been validated and priced but will need to go to public consultation. Cllr Beavis agreed to ask the lead volunteer for the group to include WCPC in the group for the cycle lanes.

Salt bags will be requested later in the year and they can still be stored at Insteps Farm.

292. ALLOTMENTS

Nothing to report.

293. PARISH MEETING

(a) To confirm the date of 20 April and agree a format for the Parish meeting by Zoom.

The Clerk advised that there was no requirement for the Council to have a Parish Meeting. If the residents want to have a meeting, they can call it and if Cllr Taylor attends, she is required to chair it.

The Council agreed that the meeting will go ahead as an open forum on 20th April 2021 at 7.30pm. This will be advertised on Nextdoor and the parish notice board.

294. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report.

295. Chairman to MOVE that the press and public be excluded during the transaction of the following items on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

296. VILLAGE HALL HIRE RATE

(a) To discuss the current hire charges for the village hall and consider an increase to the hourly rate and other charges

Cllr Taylor proposed various options to increase the rates. After discussion, the Council agreed to reconsider the hall hire rates in September 2021. One regular hirer has not had the rates reviewed

since April 2017 and it was agreed to increase them by £1.00 per hour from the re-opening date of the village hall.

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