

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall
on Tuesday 18th July 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Batchford, Cllr Bell, Cllr Bond, Cllr Drizen Cllr Taylor (Chairman), Cllr Wilson. Also present: Clerk P Palfreyman, Braintree District Council Cllr (BDC) Cllr Spray and 7 members of the public

548. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Cllr Siddall and Cllr Courtauld

549. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS ON ITEMS SHOWN ON THIS AGENDA. Cllrs Batchford and Drizen declared a pecuniary interest in planning application number 23/01250, Cllr Bell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 553a, as a resident of that development and Cllr Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 559a, as an allotment holder.

550. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING on 16 MAY 2023 AND 8 JUNE 2023 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the last parish council meetings on 16 May 2023 & 8 June 2023, which had previously been circulated, were agreed as a true record.

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

Cllr Spray Wethersfield air base – Forty-six single male asylum seekers arrived last week. BDC lost their 1st court action on a point of planning and a judicial review has been agreed by the Home Office. The asylum seekers have been given booklets about how to be good neighbours, their rooms are ensuite, they have a gym and transport to Braintree and Chelmsford. Protests have been civilised, but residents of Wethersfield only have limited transport and a small shop and are upset by this.

Green waste charges are being applied from next year as they cost BDC £683 000 and there is a budget deficit. BDC are one of the last few councils in Essex to charge and there is not a statutory obligation to collect green waste. The charges will start next year but residents can sign up from 21 July 2023 for half price, costing £27.50. Bags will be provided at £8 per roll for flats or those unable to use a wheelie bin. Collection will be throughout the year apart from 2 weeks over Christmas. There is not an obligation to sign up and compost can be taken to recycling centres free of charge. Evidence from other councils that have imposed the charges suggests that there is not an increase in the green waste going in black sacks or an increase in bonfires or fly tipping.

552. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

The Heritage Orchard looks overgrown. A request for a management plan and budget for the paths through the orchard was made. Also, the planting area needs to be harrowed or scarified. The clerk will request this from the farmer.

A statement was read out by the Chalkney View Management Company representing 1 -17 Millfields.

“My name is Charlotte King. I am a resident of White Colne and I am also a director of Chalkney View Management Company Ltd, who are responsible for the up keep of the private estate serving properties 1 to 17 Mill Field. I am making this statement in response to learning about concerns from the community, who believe Mill Field provides a public access cut through.

Under a covenant, Chalkney View Management Company’s principle duties are to protect, maintain and insure their private land and the house owners in Mill Field pay an annual service charge to cover these associated costs. Mill Field is therefore privately owned and maintained, and also offers no public right of way through. Whilst this information can all be verified online, to explain this status to members of the public, private signage has been in existence at the entrance to Mill Field since occupation, and more recently, no public right of way signs has been installed having observed non-residents regularly walking and cycling over our driveways and lawns.

Chalkney View Management Co Ltd were not the applicant of the planning permission which granted consent for a developer to build on the land. However, from what can be viewed online via Braintree District Council’s website, the planning conditions for the construction of the site were discharged, and we understand this included an obligation for the developer to build the scheme in accordance with a specific Site & Location plan which included an internal link for the purpose of connecting Mill Field only, to Public Right of Way 12 (PRoW 12), and did not create a permissive right of way.

It is known, that prior to Mill Field being built, the existing footway (pavement) on the south side of Colchester Road, terminated some distance before both PRoW 12 and the original bus stop, historically forcing existing users to cross the road to the north side, and back again, to reach these facilities. It cannot therefore be concluded that the creation of Mill Field has somehow worsened that arrangement or caused a dangerous situation different to that which pre-existed.

Our common goal, with the parish council and all the community, is to live alongside each other in harmony, and I believe to achieve this, a mutual respect is required of each other’s private property. I personally, would not make an uninvited short cut through anyone’s personal driveway or garden, and I would certainly not continue to do so after being told politely not to. Unfortunately for the residents of Mill Field, some of the public are ignoring the signage, and wilfully trespassing. Therefore, without choice, we will be installing a locked gate, at our own expense, to prevent unauthorised access and protect the safety & privacy for families and their children. Whilst to some, Mill Field might look like a conventional road, it isn’t. It is our home.”

553. PLANNING MATTERS

a) Applications:

23/01250/FUL

Land South of Parish Hall Bures Road White Colne Essex Expiry date:29 June 2023, extended to 19 July

The original approved application 23/00271 was for a garage to be used ancillary to 36 Colneford Hill, a semidetached property without off street parking. The building provided internal parking for two cars and a further two cars externally. The design reflected that of an Essex barn and in the applicants' words; "Continued the historic use as supplementary parking and storage". The Parish Council objected to 23/00271 believing that the building was too high for a simple garage and was dominant in the residential conservation area. Less than 3 weeks after the approval decision the applicant had a new set of drawings, and we are now asked to accept a replacement building with a change of use to class E. Class E encompasses the previous A1 A2 A3 B1 and part D1 and D2. Although it cannot become a hot food takeaway or a drinking establishment it could be changed from an office into almost any other commercial use without needing further planning permission. - The proposed replacement building has increased fenestration. - It has a ground floor space of 45.5 sq m and a mezzanine floor of 27.5 sq m. Although the plans show only two people working at desks, the legal requirements for office space are 7-8sq m per person so there is a future potential for this space to accept more workers. - There is parking for only one vehicle. The second space is designated as an EV charging station which requires more space than a standard parking area and should be clear of bin stores and bike racks. There is no overflow parking for commercial use at the village hall nor on its boundaries. - The need for off street parking in the village is greater than the need for office space. The ability to be able to park 4 cars within this site was seen as a planning gain. - We already have spare office capacity for local firms in the village. The Fox and Pheasant Centre is an established centre of employment, with a bus stop at its gate and plenty of parking within its curtilage. - Pedestrian access to the building is poor with no pavement provision either side of Bures Road. In 2010 whilst discussing an application for a 2 bedroomed house on the site, (10/00966) Highways considered it necessary to request a pavement be provided. Although BDC refused the application, as the building was too dominant, the volume and speed of traffic using that part of the road has increased over the years. We believe the footfall to this office or other use building could easily be similar to that of a 2 bedroomed house. - 10/00966 from Highways: A. The applicant to provide a 2 metre wide footway across the whole of the site frontage. B. Dedication of a strip of land adjacent to the highway in Bures Road to accommodate the construction of a 2m footway from the newly constructed footway in condition A above continuing south to tie in with the existing footway in Colchester Road. - The replacement building is to have all main services attached, including bathroom and kitchen facilities. The approved use would have been unobtrusive with a low level of activity and minimum lighting. - Condition 4 for the approved use stated "no commercial use of the building permitted "as it is situated in a residential conservation area. The village hall is a historic Victorian building and sits outside the conservation area. It is used solely as a community venue and has no commercial standing. During the 13 weeks of annual school holidays activities on site are greatly reduced due to clubs and classes only operating during term times. An office, or other permitted commercial activity, could be in use 52 weeks of the year. - We are concerned that extra external lighting required for an office, as opposed to a simple garage, will result in light pollution and disturbance to neighbours. - We believe that the design of the building now represents that of a studio flat or one bedroomed residence, given that the requirements for a studio flat are 37sq m and a

one bedroomed two storey flat 58 sqm. Should this application be permitted, we requested that the right for permitted development is removed.

23/01520/HH 65 Colchester Road White Colne Essex CO6 2PP Proposed two storey rear extension, front porch and cart lodge with link extension to existing dwelling. Expiry date: 17 July 2023, extended to 19 July 2023. The Council supported this application

23/01507/FUL Mannings Farm Dawes Hall Road White Colne Essex CO6 2QH Partial demolition of existing building and conversion into holiday accommodation. Expiry date: No date given. 19 July 2023 requested. The Council supports the decision with the following conditions: No long lets, holiday lets only, requests an ecology report, low level/controlled lighting and provision of an EV charging point.

23/01617/TPO27 Colne Park Road White Colne Essex CO6 2PL Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order TPO - 03/06 T1 - Oak Tree reduction by approximately 2 metres of excessive growth of 7 branches growing over rear boundary. Expiry date: 26 July 2023. The Council supports the application for the works listed but would not agree to a crown reduction

b) Applications approved by Braintree District Council

23/00908/HH 40 Colneford Hill White Colne Essex CO6 2PJ Erection of garden wall and installation of air source heat pump for swimming pool. Application GRANTED

554. COMMUNITY LIASON

a) To discuss public access via Millfields cul-de-sac

The meeting was suspended for Cllr Spray to speak.

“MILLFIELD - ACCESS TO PROW/FOOTPATH 12 Mat Wilde, who was the planning case officer for the original application, has looked into the issue of the link path and access to the footpath on this development. As he says, it is not straightforward and depends on how Condition 25 is interpreted.

- *It could be said that the management company are entitled to erect gates as this will still provide access to the PROW, albeit only for the Millfield residents and not the wider community*
- *Or ... an argument could be made that they would need to apply for planning permission to vary the Condition as gates were not mentioned as part of the approved plans.*

One other point, made by the officer, is that any gate in excess of 1m requires planning permission if it is adjacent to a highway, including a PROW. So, depending on what height of gate they are proposing, the management company may need planning permission anyway.

As this is, at least in part, a highways issue, Mat has forwarded the emails to a contact at ECC for an opinion. I will let the PC know of the result of these deliberations as soon as possible. “

The meeting was reopened.

The Council concluded that no further discussions should take place until a response from ECC was received.

b) To discuss organising a celebration to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D Day in June 2024 – Cllr Taylor advised this 6 June 2023 is a Thursday so would be difficult to organise a tribute for that night but would consider organising a fish and chip suppers with drinks and lighting the beacon for 7th June 2023.

c) To agree the purchase of 20000 dog bags costing £243 + VAT. It was agreed to purchase the dog bags.

d) To receive an update about the community energy project. The project is moving along well. There was a public meeting at Great Tey and Earls Colne. The housing association Eastlight has 12000 properties and is considering joining the project. ESCO have also found a social investor who is willing to invest. The project is hoping to include Pebmarsh, and the next public meetings will be in Pebmarsh, Chapel and Great Tey. A geospatial survey for the whole of Essex has already been carried out.

555. WHITE COLNE MEADOWS

a) To review the annual play area inspection reports and discuss any outstanding maintenance issues – Cllr Taylor will check the outstanding issues with the handyman

b) To discuss and agree how the play areas will be inspected in future – a local volunteer has agreed to undertake the playground inspection course and exam in October, which the Parish Council will pay for. Inspections will be carried out every month.

c) To discuss works needed on the pond dipping platform – the clerk will ask the conservation group to give a quote for this work.

556. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Payment of accounts since the last meeting – noted and agreed.

(b) Financial statement – noted and agreed.

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL MATTERS 30 June 2023

1. PAYMENTS

The Clerk advised that since the last report, the following payments have been made:

UNITY TRUST ACCOUNT		£	
METHOD	PAYEE		
DD	Everflow water - 16.05.23	18.41	
DD	Lloyds - 16.05.23	6.00	
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity 30.05.23	35.00	
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall gas - 30.05.23	50.30	
DD	Everflow water - 15.06.23	41.57	
DD	Lloyds - Café & celaning costs 16.06.23	91.58	
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity 28.06.23	35.00	
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall gas 28.06.23	50.30	
TOTAL UNITY TRUST DIRECT DEBITS		328.16	
UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT (ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS MADE)			VAT
02.05.23	Jane Taylor - café costs	30.45	
02.05.23	Paula Bull - leaflet printing	32.14	
02.05.23	P Palfreyman - April wages	592.80	
02.05.23	J Bond - postcrete	22.00	
12.05.23	G Allen - VH window cleaning	14.00	
12.05.23	P Palfreyman - stamps	6.00	
12.05.23	Mortimer Contracts - grass cutting & bins	217.20	36.20
12.05.23	Jade Lock - VH cleaning	169.00	
31.05.23	Paula Bull - bookings clerk	900.00	
31.05.23	Jade Lock - VH cleaning	185.50	
31.05.23	Jane Taylor - café, electors meeting & coronation costs	162.53	
31.05.23	P Palfreyman - May wages	592.80	
31.05.23	Suffolk Cloud - domain fees & emails balance due	50.00	
31.05.23	CLO Plumbing - VH cooker repairs	252.20	42.70
31.05.23	D Overton - VH deposit refund	50.00	
31.05.23	J Bond - sign	2.94	
31.05.23	Mortimer Contracts - grass cutting & bins	302.40	50.40
31.05.23	Playsafe - playground inspections	180.00	30.00
08.06.23	S Newson - VH deposit refund	50.00	
08.06.23	Sainsbury Bank (JT) - Pavillion kitchen units	692.00	115.13
08.06.23	Jade Lock - VH cleaning	3.00	
08.06.23	Paula Bull - leaflet printing	30.14	
08.06.23	BALC - annual subscription	48.00	
16.06.23	Treetops - treeworks at VH	280.00	46.67
16.06.23	Jan Stobart - Internal Auditor	230.00	
30.06.23	Unity Bank - bank charges	18.00	
TOTAL UNITY TRUST ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS		5113.10	
TOTAL DIRECT DEBITS AND PAYMENTS FROM UNITY TRUST		5441.26	

continued over

2. FUNDS RECEIVED

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

UNITY BANK			
02.05.23	J Oconnell - VH Hire	54.00	
02.05.23	C Upward - VH Hire	94.50	
03.05.23	Sum Up - Café income	88.97	
05.05.02	County Broadband - refund	37.18	
09.05.23	Paypal	106.51	
16.05.23	Sum Up - Café income	72.75	
18.05.23	BDC grant	293.75	
23.05.23	Sum Up - Café income	28.51	
24.05.23	Sum Up - Café income	35.39	
30.05.23	C Upward - VH Hire	126.00	
30.05.23	ECC grant	2500.00	
31.05.23	Sum Up - Café income	118.93	
09.06.23	Essex Community Foundation grant - Community garden	4523.00	
09.06.23	Postu Pilates - VH Hire	216.00	
13.06.23	Sum Up - Café income	38.83	
21.06.23	Postu Pilates - VH Hire	216.00	
26.06.23	BDC Street Cleansing agreement	1006.39	
27.06.23	Sum Up - Café income	77.17	
TOTAL UNITY BANK RECEIPTS		9633.88	

3. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BANK RECONCILIATION

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

UNITY TRUST as at 30 June 2023		TOTAL BANK BALANCES	41285.38
Balance held in reserve			
Village projects from White Colne 50 Club		1260.73	
Village Hall reserves (£11000 prev VH roof fund)		14000.00	
Allotments		32.00	
		Balance of alloc fund	15292.73
		Balance of unalloc funds	25992.65
UNITY TRUST BANK RECONCILIATION			
BALANCE at 30 April 2023		37092.76	
Add Receipts		9633.88	
		46726.64	
Less Total Payments made		5441.26	
BALANCE at 30 June 2023		41285.38	

(c) Budget to 30 June 2023 – noted and agreed.

The Unity Trust cheque book will be retained by Cllr Taylot in case of absence of the clerk.

557. VILLAGE HALL

a) To discuss the current electricity costs and consider a fixed contract – the Council agreed a 1 year deal. Rates vary from day to day but at the time of the meeting they were Standing Charge 44.05p Unit rate 30.03p per kwh

b) To receive an update about the ECC land to the rear of the village hall – on 5 July an ecologist visited the site to carry out a survey. The report has not been received yet. The ECC Forest Initiative Officer cannot see any reason why it cannot be a forest and would also like to add a tree nursery. There could also potentially be a space for community composting for properties that do not have green bins.

c) To receive an update about the community garden project – the Council have received a grant of £4500 to create a community garden which would have been managed by the Youth Club, which is no longer going ahead. The local Scouts have agreed to help if someone else could build it and put up a potting shed. The grant did not include a labour charge which the Council would have to pay. A quote for £600 was agreed to build the raised beds and the potting shed.

d) To review the design and costs of a solar car park canopy – the company that made these canopies now only make very large ones which are too big for the car park. One of the project installers might be able to make a metal one. The Council would need to check whether permitted development would be allowed for this.

558. WHITE COLNE VILLAGE GREEN

a) To review the quotes for the bell bollards to prevent further erosion of the village green – The cost of the bollards and equipment needed would make this project too expensive. A suggestion of granite horse troughs was also considered which would cost £2500 plus transport and installation. The clerk will ask Cllr Siddall to find out if permission is needed for these and to consider a contribution towards them. The Council still feel that the solution should come from ECC.

b) To receive a report about the new telegraph pole on the village green – the Clerk confirmed that County Broadband are still looking into ownership documents

559. HIGHWAYS

c) To discuss taking part in the Salt Bag partnership for the coming winter – the clerk agreed to find out what stock was left from previous years before ordering any more.

560. ALLOTMENTS

a) To discuss the overgrown and no dig plots – the Council agreed that a letter should be sent to all plot holders advising them of the terms of the agreement, and requesting plot holders plans to make them presentable within the next 3 months, before formal proceedings are considered.

561. COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

a) To receive an update about the gov.uk email addresses – the email addresses, including an info@ address are set up and ready to be used. A meeting will be arranged to apply them to councillors accounts.

b) To receive feedback on councillor training at the EALC and funding of training – Cllr Bond advised the recent EALC new councillor training was very good. The Council confirmed that new councillor training would be paid for by the Council.

c) To review councillors' responsibilities and interests – Agreed as follows:

Allotments including community garden project **Denise John**

Climate action including Community Energy Project **Jane**

Community liaison incl events, regular activities, working parties, volunteer groups **Jane.**

Defibrillator - managing volunteer group and maintenance **Denise Kris**

Environment including footpaths, litter and dog waste issues. **Paul John**

Grant funded projects. Researching funds, writing applications. Supporting delivery of projects **Jane**

Highways. Reporting defects. SID. 20s plenty campaign. Public transport. **Jim**

Meadows- managing assets and maintenance issues. **Paul**

Planning. All applications including liaising with the tree warden **John**

Policies, including emergency planning. **John**

River including drainage and flooding issues. **Paul John**

Village green. Xmas lighting. Managing of assets and maintenance issues. **Jim**

Village hall with outside areas- managing booking clerk, cleaner and maintenance issues. **Jane**

Village hall - ECC land at the rear. **Jane Jim Denise Kris.**

Web site/IT including social media. **Kris and Petra**

d)To agree an increase of one hour per week to the clerks working hours – the clerk advised that having another 4 hours per month would help with the workload. Following discussion, the Council agreed the extra hour with immediate effect.

562. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS RECEIVED SINCE THE PREPARATION OF THE AGENDA WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT – none

563. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - EGM Tue 1 Aug for a planning application and Full Council meeting on Tuesday 19th September 2023

There being no further business the parish council meeting closed at 21.40pm