

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall
on Tuesday 15th September 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Batchford, Cllr Bell, Cllr Bond, Cllr Taylor (Chairman), Cllr Wilson. Also present: Clerk P Palfreyman, Essex County Council (ECC) Cllr Siddall, Braintree District Council (BDC) Cllr Courtauld, Braintree District Council, Cllr Spray (BDC) and 13 members of the public

582. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Cllr Drizen

583. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS ON ITEMS SHOWN ON THIS AGENDA - Cllr Bell declared an interest in item 595, as a resident of that development.

584. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
The minutes of the last parish council meeting on Tuesday 15th August 2023, which had previously been circulated, were agreed as a true record.

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

Cllr Siddall - there is more money available for the pothole scheme from the Ride London grant, where smooth road surfaces are needed for the bike race. Requests should be submitted with a photograph and WhatThreeWords location. The LHP are also looking at pavements and White Colne have been allocated to this year's budget on Colchester Road. The ECC waste strategy is being rethought and there is a consultation until November 2023. Last week there was a Sepsis Awareness day and Cllr Siddall stressed the importance of acting fast if there are any symptoms. The RAAC concrete issues in Essex have been higher than in other areas as the surveys and inspections have been carried out sooner than in other areas. ECC have a reserve fund for temporary classrooms and have negotiated with central government that some of the costs will be paid by them.

Cllr Spray – The green waste collections will be charged for from March 2024. This will help towards the £2M budget deficit with a saving of £683 000. The cost is £55 from March or £27.50 with an early bird discount if purchased before November 2023. Braintree District Council is the last authority in Essex to charge for this. There will be a major reform of the planning system in the

autumn/winter. The Local Plan is proved and in place, targets have been met and planning permission has been granted, where appropriate. If BDC can demonstrate it is performing well, there will not need to be a 5-year land supply. Local authorities are being encouraged to build wind and solar farms. There is not any information so far on the reforms about putting solar panels on listed buildings.

Cllr Courtauld – the Council is coming up to budget and corporate strategy decision time and aims to plan a strategy to provide the best service while still balancing the books.

586. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

Neighbours adjacent to a planning application site asked why they were not getting notices of planning, appeals, amendments etc. Cllr Spray will follow this up with BDC planning. Footpaths from the council houses along the A road are impassable. The clerk will send another email to Eastlight Community Homes. Representatives from the Millfields development were present and a statement from Chalkney View Management Company was read out. The installation of a locked gate has caused issues with residents and various issues were discussed including ECC providing a new pavement on the A1124 and meeting with residents from Chalkney Mill.

Requests were made to Cllr Siddall to consider buying the land alongside Bures Road (sold to the developer) to install a pavement to provide safe access to the Village Hall and The Meadows.

587. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications: 23/02188/FUL Weirstock Farm Wakes Colne Road, White Colne Essex CO6 2QE Proposed stables Expiry date: October 2023

No objections to the application but would like to ensure there are lighting controls and a biodiversity report and that the development is tied to the farm so that it cannot be sold off separately at a later date.

FOR INFORMATION

23/01776/PLD 9 Colchester Road White Colne Essex CO6 2PW Extension and refurbishment of existing summerhouse. Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Use or Development. There is no statutory consultation requirement associated with this type of application.

23/00883/HH Mannings Farm Dawes Hall Road White Colne Essex CO6 2QH Erection of part single storey, part two storey front extension. An appeal has been made to the Secretary of State following Braintree District Council's refusal of the above planning application. There is no opportunity for you to submit comments.

23/01827/HH Little Grange Boley Road White Colne Essex CO6 2QD
Demolition of existing single storey wing, two-storey side extension, raising the existing ridge and alterations to fenestration. Erection of single storey annexe. Replacement garage building with first floor accommodation. Erection of brick wall around courtyard. Application REFUSED

588. COMMUNITY LIASON

(a) To receive an update about the Community energy project and climate focus area -

Report from Cllr Taylor

“Colne Valley Community Energy Project.”

Powercircle have identified at least one social impact investor and have suggested we push for 50 self-funding households to start the project. We need 300 households to agree to a ‘pay as you go’ contract to start the funded side of the project.

I would like to discuss the possibility of WCPC being one of the first 50 by fitting out the village hall roof. Obviously, we would need a grant. We have already agreed that we should be working to de carbonise the building. Our hall would not only be showcasing the system but promoting the project as well.

The geospatial survey shows that 29 panels can be fitted on the roof which would have an energy potential of 11.7kw (11,700 watts per annum). This is an indicative figure subject to survey. At the moment there are not costs for that system but a similar system of 31 panels will cost with batteries £24,500.

At the same time we could remove the gas boiler and cooker, replacing it with an electric boiler and catering range cooker. Approximate cost of both £6,500. (if a domestic range cooker is preferred the cost would reduce by £2,000)

Also to consider an EV charging point fitted (no figure available at the moment so assume £2,000 to allow for trenching).

For approx £35k we could decarbonise the building, have plenty of free energy for cooking, heating and lighting, and sell back to the grid at 15p per kw. (Scottish Power Smeg rate). Once the project is up and running we can look at selling our energy back on a peer to peer rather than to the national grid.

BDC are using government money for a Rural Prosperity Grant and invite applications from £10,000 to £50,000. Projects are dealt with on a first come first served basis and usually there is a quick turn round on the application. We

meet the criteria. The fund closes March 25 or before if the monies are allocated.

It is a "paid in arrears" fund so we would need to discuss how to fund it initially. To make the application more attractive we could consider offering some match funding from our reserves."

As part of this project, it was agreed to get a survey for an air source heat pump at the village hall, costing £300, and to apply for grant funding to fund the change. Cllr Taylor will attend the Climate Focus Area meeting at County Hall and report back.

(b) To receive an update about the Community Garden – the local scouts made a great job of painting the raised beds and the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers have a competition to design a banner for the garden. The manhole near the raised beds is broken and it was agreed to pay £115, from the grant to replace it.

(c) To receive an update about the Winter Hub – the Winter Hub will not meet the grant criteria. To continue running the Hub as a valuable community event would cost approx. £1500 and a potential loss of £1170 in hire charges, if the hall is hired out for every date the Hub is run. The volunteers and chef are willing to help out again. Following discussion, it was agreed to continue with the Winter Hub and fund it from reserves.

(d) To receive an update about the Community Café – the café has started again after the summer break. The Council considered making a charge towards energy costs and Cllr Taylor agreed to insert a charge of £10 per café into the account.

(e) To receive information about holding a Sewing Bee – a weekly Sewing Bee will start on Thursday 21st September, with 20 people wanting to attend.

(f) To receive a report about the defibrillator – we have received 6 notifications that the defibrillator might have been required but it has not actually been used. This is an increase in activity from previous years.

589. WHITE COLNE MEADOWS

(a) To agree a management plan and budget for the path through the Heritage Orchard – there will be a working part next week. This item will be deferred until the next meeting.

(b) To receive a report about The Meadows grass cutting and scarifying the wildflower meadow – thanks to Bill Hadley for cutting and scarifying The Meadows recently.

(c) To discuss inspections and any works required at the playgrounds until the new inspector is qualified – the clerk advised that until our volunteer is

qualified, a regular visual check of the equipment should be carried out and documented. Cllr Bell agreed to carry the checks out.

590. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) To approve payment of accounts since the last meeting – noted and agreed.

(b) Financial statement – noted and agreed.

(c) To review the budget to 31 August 2023 – noted and agreed.

(d) To agree to another bank signatory, making the total signatories four councillors – Following discussion Cllr Bell agreed to be another signatory.

(e) To consider using Stripe payment platform, integrated with Hallmaster, the village hall booking system – the clerk will set this system up once the new bookings clerk has settled into the role.

(f) To agree to increase the spending limit on the Multipay credit card to £1000 per cardholder – following discussion it was agreed to increase the limits which should be reviewed annually.

(g) To note the Conclusion of Audit to 31 March 2023 -the clerk confirmed there were no accounting issues identified and the audit was satisfactory. The notice of conclusion will be published by the end of the month.

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL MATTERS 15 September 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 - 17.07.23 | | | | | 25.34 | |
| DD | Lloyds - café costs 17.07.23 | | | | | 41.84 | |
| DD | Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity 28.07.23 | | | | | 35.00 | |
| DD | Scottish Power - Village Hall gas - 28.07.23 | | | | | 50.30 | |
| DD | Everflow water - 15.08.23 | | | | | 22.72 | |
| DD | Lloyds - café & cleaning costs 16.08.23 | | | | | 46.86 | |
| DD | Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity - 28.08.23 | | | | | 119.00 | |
| DD | Scottish Power - Village Hall gas - 28.08.23 | | | | | 50.30 | |
| DD | Everflow water - 15.09.23 | | | | | 216.88 | |
| TOTAL UNITY TRUST DIRECT DEBITS | | | | | | 608.24 | |
| | | | | | | | VAT |
| UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT (ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS MADE) | | | | | | | |
| 03.07.23 | Gt Tey Village hall - hire for Community Energy meeting | | | | | 45.00 | |
| 03.07.23 | Wayne Tinsley - singer for summer party | | | | | 250.00 | |
| 03.07.23 | Jane Taylor - café costs | | | | | 94.73 | |
| 03.07.23 | P Palfreyman - June wages | | | | | 592.80 | |
| 03.07.23 | Jade Lock - VH cleaner | | | | | 156.00 | |
| 17.07.23 | Cherry Mckean - Community energy coordinator | | | | | 421.76 | |
| 17.07.23 | RCCE - Annual subs | | | | | 52.80 | 8.80 |
| 17.07.23 | Capita Business - TV Licence | | | | | 159.00 | |
| 17.07.23 | BHIB Ltd - annual insurance | | | | | 798.01 | |
| 17.07.23 | Gary Allen - VH windows | | | | | 14.00 | |
| 17.07.23 | JPB Landscapes - grass cutting | | | | | 489.89 | 81.65 |
| 19.07.23 | A Howe - VH Hire deposit refund | | | | | 50.00 | |
| 19.07.23 | Paula Bull - VH Bookings clerk | | | | | 180.00 | |
| 19.07.23 | Jade Lock - VH cleaner | | | | | 182.00 | |
| 01.08.23 | J Taylor - café costs | | | | | 37.00 | |
| 01.08.23 | P Palfreyman - July wages | | | | | 609.90 | |
| 16.08.23 | JPB Landscapes - grass cutting | | | | | 489.89 | 81.65 |
| 16.08.23 | Huws Gray - Community Garden materials | | | | | 791.10 | 131.84 |
| 16.08.23 | Gary Allen - VH windows | | | | | 14.00 | |
| 25.08.23 | PPLPRS Ltd - Music Licence | | | | | 128.99 | 21.50 |
| 25.08.23 | PKF Littlejohn - External Auditor | | | | | 378.00 | 68.00 |
| 25.08.23 | JRB Enterprise Ltd - dog waste bags | | | | | 306.24 | 51.04 |
| 25.08.23 | Jade Lock - VH cleaner | | | | | 117.00 | |
| 31.08.23 | P Palfreyman - August wages | | | | | 666.90 | |
| TOTAL UNITY TRUST ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS | | | | | | 7025.01 | |
| TOTAL DIRECT DEBITS AND PAYMENTS FROM UNITY TRUST | | | | | | 7633.25 | |

591.VILLAGE HALL

(a)To agree to the appointment of a new bookings clerk – Jade Lock, the current cleaner of the village hall has been appointed as bookings clerk, (as well as cleaner) from 4 September 2023

(b)To discuss an increase to the village hall hire rates – rates have not been increased since May 22 and will be reviewed at the next meeting.

(c)To receive an update about the land behind the village hall – the ecology report carried out earlier this year has still not been provided. Cllr Taylor will contact the new ECC cabinet member, Cllr Cunningham, to try and progress.

(d)To agree to wall mount the fire extinguishers – following discussion it was agreed to wall mount the fire extinguishers to prevent them from being moved and hidden around the hall.

Village Hall car park – a further quote for more work including tarmac chipping, digging out to the edge of the hedges, skimming off the grass and up to the bins, squaring off the football and basketball area and a poled fence for extra parking. This cost will be £17589 and we will not use £14000 from reserves as The Awards for All grants for up to £20,000 are open in November but take 16 weeks. More quotes will be sought.

592.WHITE COLNE VILLAGE GREEN

(a)To discuss whether there is a need for a bin on the village green – following discussion it was agreed to remove the bins from the village green.

(b)To discuss repairs or replacement required to the dog waste bin on the village green – the clerk will request a new bin from BDC.

593. HIGHWAYS

(a)To receive an update about Bures Rd drainage – the investigation into the drain uncovered a manhole under 1 meter of soil. The drain was rodded to just past the village hall where it was blocked again. There are not any plans for this drain but it was recommended to raise the manhole cover so it can be seen when blocked. It was agreed to put £325 into the car park grant application to pay for this work.

(b)To discuss next actions following the damage to the pavement at Colneford Hill – various solutions from Highways have been suggested over previous years which the Council were unable to agree. Cllr Siddall will contact Highways and ask for a solution which does not entail using village green land.

(c)To discuss the next actions for the Quiet Lanes signs and overgrown bus stops – three out of 4 of the posts are still in place but the signage is missing. This has been reported to Highways but not rectified. The overgrown bus stop on

Colchester Rd has also been reported. This makes it difficult to wait for a bus or to alight at these locations. The clerk will forward Cllr Siddall a link to the reporting tool.

594.ALLOTMENTS

(a)To discuss a letter to be sent to plot holders regarding maintenance of the plots – following discussion it was agreed to send a letter out to all plot holders reminding them of their responsibility for maintaining their plots and giving them a time frame to bring them up to the expected standards, with their invoices for the coming year.

595. MILLFIELD

(a)To discuss the new gate and public right of way and consider registering a complaint with the BDC enforcement team.

The footway was part of the original discussion with BDC, Highways and the developers but the plans were amended, the proposal removed and ECC determined that the most suitable and safest access was through the Mill Field development. ECC take no responsibility or access rights as they have not adopted it or have any jurisdiction over it. The situation could be improved if a pavement could be installed without having to move the hedge and it is felt that ECC were negligent when it was built. Cllr Spray advised that it would be difficult to install a pathway there and suggested that BDC enforcement officers should be contacted to review the gate, if over 2 meters high. Cllr Siddall agreed to review and consider for the LHP, although there is not any budget for it this year. Cllr Bond proposed that he would contact BDC to object to their failure to prevent significant risk to pedestrians.

596.COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

(a)To confirm the Councils advertising policy – the updated policy was agreed and will be published on the website.

597. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - none

598. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA – as stated above

599. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Tuesday 21 November 2023

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