

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of White Colne Parish Council Annual Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall on Tuesday 21st May 2024 at 19:30hrs.

Present: Cllr Paul Batchford
Cllr Kris Bell
Cllr James Bond MBE (Vice-Chairperson)
Cllr Jane Taylor (Chairperson)
Cllr John Wilson
Petra Palfreyman, Parish Clerk & RFO
Jim Morris, Deputy Clerk

Also Present: Cllr George Courtauld, The Colnes Ward
Cllr Chris Siddall, Halstead Division
Cllr Gabrielle Spray, The Colnes Ward
1 member of the public

Apologies: Cllr John Brace
Cllr Denise Drizen

001/24 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON (item managed by the Proper Officer)

Cllr Jane Taylor was nominated by Cllr Bond, seconded by Cllr Wilson, and was unanimously elected Chairman of White Colne Parish Council for 2024-25. Cllr Taylor signed the Acceptance of Office and continued to chair the meeting.

002/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr John Brace and Cllr Denise Drizen.

003/24 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Cllr Jim Bond was nominated by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Bell, and was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman of White Colne Parish Council for 2024-25.

004/24 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Taylor declared an interest in Agenda item 8(a): *Planning Matters; 24/00881/FUL*. Cllr Taylor owned property adjacent to the proposed development site.

005/24 MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 19.03.2024, 16.04.2024; MATTERS ARISING

Cllr Bond proposed approval of the Minutes of White Colne Parish Council meetings held on 19.03.2024 & 16.04.2024, seconded by Cllr Bell. The Minutes were received, confirmed, and signed as a true and correct record by the Chairman.

Cllr Bell had been unable to set up social media channels for the council since the previous meeting due to work commitments. Quotes for livestreaming equipment had been received and would be shared with members via email.

006/24 REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

Braintree District Councillor Gabrielle Spray Offered a report to the meeting. BDC was reviewing its Local Plan with a view to submitting an updated version by June 2025. It was to be a large project, albeit 'doable.' The District Council's call for sites was due to close on the approaching Friday. Hundreds of site submissions had been received at the first call. Cllr Spray had been appointed Chairperson of the Local Plan Sub-Committee, the meetings of which members of the public would be able to attend. Cllr Spray would not sit on BDC's Infrastructure Committee in 2024-25.

Although BDC's financial position was not as precarious as some local authorities, its 'Fit for the Future' programme would assess where budget savings could be made with no loss of services.

RESPONSE: Cllr Taylor asked that the land at the rear of White Colne Village Hall be considered for protection from development in the revised BDC Local Plan.

Braintree District Councillor George Courtauld discussed his involvement with assessing the Council's Corporate Governance and defining the Council's duties.

Essex County Councillor Chris Siddall apologised to the meeting for having missed recent items due to a health issue. ECC had resolved a budget of £2m for local highways projects. The cancelled HS2 project had provided ECC with a further budget to allow for each Division member to use a repairs team for one week for works to repair potholes, including on footways. Cllr Siddall was due to meet with ECC Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Cllr Whitbread, in order to consider options for Public Rights of Way through the Millfield development.

007/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A local resident noted that very few '20 is Plenty' stickers could be seen around the parish. It was thought that greater visibility for the campaign would have a positive effect on vehicle speeds. The parishioner also asked for support in organising a community litter-pick day.

Response: Members agreed to source more campaign stickers and reiterated the council's support, although it was noted that the scheme was not universally popular. Cllr Taylor would organise a delivery of purple rubbish sacks to every household in an effort to raise community engagement for a litter-pick day.

008/24 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications

Ref: 24/00856/HH

Location: Orchard Cottage, 44 Colchester Road, White Colne, CO6 2PP.

Proposal: Single storey rear extension.

Expiry date: 22.05.2024 (extended)

Response: White Colne Parish Council offers no comments on 24/00856/HH, subject to any viewpoints expressed by neighbours to the proposed development site.

Cllr Taylor left the meeting, having declared an interest in the upcoming Agenda item. Cllr Bond acted as Chairperson for the item.

Ref: 24/00881/FUL

Location: 1-2 Fox & Pheasant Centre, Colchester Road, White Colne, CO6 2PS.

Proposal: Change of use from Use Class E to mixed Use Class E and Sui Generis (Dog Grooming Salon). Replace windows and doors.

Expiry date: 24.05.2024

Response: White Colne Parish Council would like to draw attention to points raised by Consultees and that their comments are considered.

Cllr Taylor re-entered the meeting and resumed as Chairperson.

(b) Decisions

Ref: 24/00478/VAR

Location: Land South of Parish Hall, Bures Road, White Colne.

Proposal: Variation of Condition 4 (Use of garage) of approved application 23/00271/FUL granted 19.04.2023 for Erection of garage / storage building to be used ancillary to 36 Colneford Hill. Variation would allow the use of the garage ancillary and incidental to host property.

Members noted the decision. An objector to the scheme had not been notified of BDC's resolution of the application. It was also noted that the building remained in an unfinished state. BDC Cllr Spray noted that the works would have to be signed off by Building Control.

009/24 COMMUNITY LIAISON

(a) Community Energy project update. Cllr Taylor had attended a public meeting at Steeple Bumpstead to discuss White Colne's upcoming works. The project would be actioned as soon as contracts had been finalised.

(b) Free defibrillator training. Cllrs Bell and Drizen would be asked to forward potential date availability to the Clerk.

010/24 WHITE COLNE MEADOWS

(a) Confirmation of instructions to observe *No Mow May*, with exception of Village Green. Members noted that the contractor had erroneously mown the area around White Colne Village Hall.

(b) Play area health & safety inspections and recommendations. Covid-era signage needed to be removed; new signage was required for the pond.

(c) Operational training for playground inspections. The council's volunteer playground monitor would be offered extra training on equipment health & safety.

011/24 FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Approval of payments made since previous meeting. The list of invoices and payments received and actioned since the previous meeting was approved.

(b) Financial statement. The council's financial statement since the previous meeting was approved.

(c) To agree the insurance renewal for the forthcoming year. The council's Fixed Asset Register would be provided to the insurers and the best value supplier would be appointed.

(d) Annual accounts to year ended 31.03.2024. Members noted that the accounts to year-end 2024 had been healthier than expected.

(e) To receive the Internal Auditor's Annual Report. Members noted the Auditor's highly favourable report and thanked the Clerk for her efforts in ensuring compliance.

(f) To approve the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR Section 1). The Annual Governance Statement was agreed by all members, signed by the Chairperson, and counter-signed by the clerk.

(g) To approve the Accounting Statements (AGAR Section 2). The Accounting Statement was approved by all members, signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, and counter-signed by the Chairperson.

(h) To notify dates for the Exercise of Public Rights. The dates for the Exercise of Public Rights, 03.06.2024-12.07.2024, were proposed by the Responsible Financial Officer and agreed by full council.

012/24 HIGHWAYS

(a) To note delivery of the new Speed Indicator Device (SID). The new SID had been delivered and installed by Cllrs Bell and Bond. Cllr Bond would provide a comparison of data collected at a future meeting.

(b) To receive an update on Bures Road drainage and manhole cover. The council's contractor had excavated and rodded the problematic drain on Bures Road. Members agreed a budget of XX for further works, provided by unused funds from the XX budget.

013/24 POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

To reconfirm the council's Policies and documents:

- Standing Orders
- Annual Risk Assessment
- Safeguarding Policy
- Village Design Statement
- Model Councillor/ Officer Protocol
- Scheme of Delegation
- Habitual or Vexatious Complaints Policy
- Allotments Policy
- Customer Service Policy
- Data Breach Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Village Hall Privacy Policy

It was RESOLVED: That the council's Policies and documents be approved. New Model Financial Regulations would be assessed and approved at a future meeting.

014/24 VILLAGE HALL

(a) Health & safety reports and recommendations. Members noted that the fire extinguishers in the Village Hall were under a service contract, although it was assessed as being expensive in comparison to self-servicing.

(b) The grant for works to make the Village Hall more sustainable, intended to include solar panels, electric vehicle charging points was in place, although it would be paid in arrears. The Responsible Financial Officer would need to ensure that VAT126 returns were entered promptly in order to ensure the council's financial situation remained solvent. Six to eight workers were expected to be onsite in order to complete the project within two weeks. It was noted that some regular users of the Hall may experience disruption to their usual schedule of activities.

Members asked Cllr Siddall to seek clarification on ownership of the Village Hall. Members resolved to suspend White Colne Parish Council Financial Regulation 11.1.B in order to progress the Village Hall sustainability project.

015/24 ALLOTMENTS

Two Allotment plots were available. Cllr Taylor would ask for Allotment availability to be advertised in Three Colnes Magazine.

016/24 COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

- (b) Cllr Bell.
- (c)

017/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of White Colne Parish Council was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 16th July 2024 at White Colne Village Hall at 1930hrs.

The meeting closed at 20:40hrs.

Signed.....

Date.....

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

MATTERS ARISING & ONGOING

007/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

ACTION ARISING: Clerk to purchase '20 is Plenty' stickers

ACTION ARISING: Cllr Taylor to organise delivery of waste sacks to White Colne residents

009/24 COMMUNITY LIAISON

010/24 WHITE COLNE MEADOWS

(a) Confirmation

011/24 FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a)