

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall
on Tuesday 16th January 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Batchford, Cllr Bond, Cllr Brace, Cllr Drizen, Cllr Taylor
(Chairman). Also present: Clerk P Palfreyman.

617. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllrs Bell, Courtauld, Siddall, Spray and
Wilson.

**618. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS ON ITEMS SHOWN ON THIS
AGENDA** - none

617. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
- The minutes of the last parish council meeting on 21st November 2023, which
had previously been circulated, were agreed as a true record.

**618. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND
BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS** - none

619. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS- none

620. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications

23/03002/PLD 9 Colchester Road White Colne Essex CO6 2PW Application
for Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development - Demolition of
existing brick summer house and erection of a new summer house outbuilding
with dual pitched roof. Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for a
Proposed Use or Development. *There is no statutory consultation requirement
associated with this type of application.*

For information only. 24/00010/AGR Church Farm Bures Road White Colne
Essex CO6 2QA Application for prior notification of agricultural or forestry
development - Erection of steel framed agricultural building for the storage of
agricultural machinery.

(b) Applications approved by Braintree District Council

23/00769/FUL The Bungalow 47 Colchester Road White Colne Essex CO6 2PW
Change of use of office accommodation used in conjunction with Care Home
(Class E) to 1 No. independent 3 bed dwelling with new driveway from existing
access road (Class C3). Decision: Application Granted

621. COMMUNITY LIASON

(a) To consider the future provision of SID equipment and to agree disposal of the existing obsolete equipment - Cllr Bond advised that the SID is not working properly and has fallen over a number of times. The Council agreed the equipment should be dismantled and disposed of. The clerk and Cllr Taylor will seek funding for a new SID.

(b) The theatre event, Done to Death By Jove, has been booked for March 9th 2024 and the contract from Applause will be signed.

(c) The Hub started last week with 35 people attending and 4 new volunteers.

(d) Ride London cycle ride will travel through the village in May. There is a £250 grant for street parties. The café will be on the village green that day to support the competitors and residents who would like to watch. Cllr Taylor will apply for the grant.

(e) Jo Norris from BDC Community Engagement Officer, will attend the café on 26 January and take photos of the community garden, which was funded by a community grant.

(f) Community Energy project - The Project is gaining momentum. Last week we presented to Kelvedon and Feering Parish Councils. Yesterday we hosted Finchingfield Parish Council and tomorrow evening we shall be at Halstead Town Council running a public meeting. Next week we shall be holding another public meeting in Great Tey. We have also been asked to attend Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council. We hope to launch the Pay as You Go contracts in the next few weeks,

(g) It was agreed that the Council need a Facebook presence. Cllr Drizen will discuss a joint approach with Cllr Bell.

622. WHITE COLNE MEADOWS

(a) To review the Open Spaces Action plan from Braintree District Council – updates to the report were made and will be available to view on BDC website

(b) To review the latest pond health & safety report and consider the recommendations – the dipping platform should be removed, and the silt trap has been cleared by a volunteer. The clerk will obtain quotes to remove the dipping platform.

(c) To discuss the quote for pond clearing, coppicing and repairing the dipping platform – 5 days work at £310/350 + vat per day (6 volunteers) - following discussion the Council agreed not to carry out any work apart from removing the dipping platform, as the ecology report gave the pond a very good rating and it was agreed not to do anything which might change the rating.

623.FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL MATTERS 10 January 2024

1. PAYMENTS

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

| UNITY TRUST ACCOUNT | | £ | |
|--|--|----------------|------------|
| METHOD | PAYEE | | |
| DD | Lloyds - cafe costs 16.11.23 | 65.07 | |
| DD | Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity 28.11.23 | 45.18 | |
| DD | Scottish Power - Village Hall gas - 28.11.23 | 50.30 | |
| DD | Lloyds - cafe costs 18.12.23 | 159.72 | |
| DD | Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity 28.12.23 | 45.18 | |
| DD | Scottish Power - Village Hall gas - 28.12.23 | 50.30 | |
| TOTAL UNITY TRUST DIRECT DEBITS | | 415.75 | |
| UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT (ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS MADE) | | | VAT |
| 22.11.23 | Paula Bull - printing | 24.00 | |
| 22.11.23 | C Gill - café cakes | 34.00 | |
| 30.11.23 | P Palfreyman - November wages | 658.50 | |
| 30.11.23 | Jade Lock - £156 VH bookings/£183 VH cleaning | 338.00 | |
| 30.11.23 | Round and About - Community Energy meeting | 25.00 | |
| 30.11.23 | C Gill - café cakes | 34.00 | |
| 30.11.23 | HMRC - Clerks PAYE | 8.40 | |
| 21.12.23 | HMRC - Clerks PAYE | 220.20 | |
| 21.12.23 | Jade Lock - £130 VH bookings/£221 VH cleaning | 351.00 | |
| 21.12.23 | Slater - VH deposit refund | 50.00 | |
| 21.12.23 | Page Computers - Microsoft 365 | 60.00 | 10.00 |
| 21.12.23 | AMP Electrical - Xmas lights on VG | 252.00 | 42.00 |
| 21.12.23 | P Palfreyman - new printer | 46.64 | |
| 21.12.23 | P Palfreyman - postage | 2.70 | |
| 21.12.23 | Bellingham - VH deposit refund | 50.00 | |
| 21.12.23 | G Allen - VH windows | 14.00 | |
| 21.12.23 | S Holt - pond fence repairs and community garden | 1005.84 | |
| 21.12.23 | C Gill - café cakes | 34.00 | |
| 21.12.23 | C Gill - café cakes | 12.00 | |
| 21.12.23 | Morgan Sports Club - VH deposit refund | 50.00 | |
| 29.12.23 | P Palfreyman - December wages and back pay | 785.70 | |
| 31.12.23 | Unity Trust Bank - service charge | 18.00 | |
| 04.01.24 | C Gill - café cakes | 44.00 | |
| 10.01.24 | V A Scullion - V H deposit refund | 50.00 | |
| 10.01.24 | CJO Plumbing - VH boiler service | 96.00 | 16.00 |
| 10.01.24 | C Gill - café cakes | 68.00 | |
| 10.01.24 | Crown Hire - portaloos hire | 160.80 | 126.80 |
| 10.01.24 | J Bond - box for Xmas lights | 28.00 | |
| TOTAL UNITY TRUST ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS | | 4520.78 | |
| TOTAL DIRECT DEBITS AND PAYMENTS FROM UNITY TRUST | | 4936.53 | |

2. FUNDS RECEIVED

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

| UNITY BANK | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------|--|
| 16.11.23 | Allotment payment | 15.00 | |
| 16.11.23 | Bellingham - VH hire | 75.00 | |
| 17.11.23 | Cain - allotment payt | 16.25 | |
| 20.11.23 | Ketteringham - allotment payt | 16.25 | |
| 21.11.23 | A P Davey - VH hire | 92.00 | |
| 21.11.23 | Shalamar - allotment payt | 18.75 | |
| 22.11.23 | Cosmi Rae - VH hire | 45.00 | |
| 27.11.23 | Roberts/Matt - VH hire | 140.00 | |
| 28.11.23 | C Upward - VH hire | 126.00 | |
| 28.11.23 | Slater - VH hire | 160.00 | |
| 28.11.23 | Sum Up - café income | 103.43 | |
| 29.11.23 | Wayleave payment/J Parrish allot payt | 92.17 | |
| 04.12.23 | Chillingworth - VH hire | 50.00 | |
| 06.12.23 | J OConnell - VH hire | 18.00 | |
| 06.12.23 | Scullion - VH hire | 105.00 | |
| 11.12.23 | PayPal - VH hire | 156.70 | |
| 11.12.23 | Sum Up - café income | 72.24 | |
| 18.12.23 | Postu Pilates - VH hire | 135.00 | |
| 18.12.23 | Vince Jae -VH hire | 50.00 | |
| 18.12.23 | Chillingworth - VH hire | 90.00 | |
| 19.12.23 | NCT - VH hire | 222.00 | |
| 20.12.23 | L J Ranson - allotment payt | 15.00 | |
| 27.12.23 | J Taylor - café income via personal Sum Up account | 105.69 | |
| 28.12.23 | Brennon - VH hire | 70.00 | |
| 29.12.23 | Price & McDermott - VH hire | 45.00 | |
| 29.12.23 | Bridge Club - VH hire | 130.50 | |
| 04.01.24 | BDC - Shared Prospertity Fund | 3195.00 | |
| 04.01.24 | J Taylor - VH hire | 140.00 | |
| 04.01.24 | P Arnold - VH hire | 50.00 | |
| 05.01.24 | C Upward - VH hire | 31.50 | |
| 05.01.24 | Vince Jae -VH hire | 67.50 | |
| 08.01.24 | Postu Pilates - VH hire | 54.00 | |
| 08.01.24 | J OConnell - VH hire | 144.00 | |
| 08.01.24 | J OConnell - VH hire | 54.00 | |
| TOTAL UNITY BANK RECEIPTS | | 5900.98 | |

3. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BANK RECONCILIATION

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

| UNITY TRUST as at 10 January 2024 | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| TOTAL BANK BALANCES | | | 36652.41 |
| 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 | 21359.68 |

UNITY TRUST BANK RECONCILIATION

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| BALANCE at 15 November 2023 | 35687.96 |
| Add Receipts | 5900.98 |
| | 41588.94 |
| Less Total Payments made | 4936.53 |
| BALANCE at 10 January 2024 | 36652.41 |

- (b) To review the budget to 10 January 2024 -as above
- (c) To agree the budget for 2024/25 – following discussion it was agreed to reduce some of the estimated expenditure for 24/25 which would keep the income and expenditure at similar levels.
- (d) To agree the precept for 2024/24 – following discussion it was agreed to keep the precept at £12394 for the 4th consecutive year.
- (e) To discuss options and costs for a new accounting package – the clerk recommended that an accounts package is sought from the new financial year, in view of the levels of income and expenditure in the past few years. The clerk will look at some examples and seek costs.

624. VILLAGE HALL

- (a) To discuss the quotes and next actions for the village hall car park improvements – Cllr Taylor has obtained two quotes and will endeavour to get one more.
- (b) To discuss an increase in village hall hire rates – following discussion it was agreed to increase the party hire hourly rate only, to £20 per hour, starting from 1 April 2024.
- (c) To discuss the recent boiler service and the costs of either replacing or repairing it – the Council do not wish to replace the boiler with another gas boiler or pay for repairs as it is hoped a new air source heat pump will be available via a grant. It was agreed to wait for the outcome of the grant.
- (d) To review the latest village hall health & safety report and consider recommendations - the report recommended that all 3 emergency lights are replaced. The clerk is obtaining quotes.
- (e) To discuss Cllr Whitbread’s reply regarding the land to the rear of the village hall – Cllr Whitbread emailed the following response “Contrary to your email on 3rd November, the Essex Forestry Initiative team are not interested in this site for planting trees or other habitat uses. Therefore, it remains Essex County Councils intention to dispose of the land and to secure the best consideration as per our statutory duty with regard to surplus land. We remain willing to pursue a Community Asset Transfer of the hall and immediately adjacent car park to the parish council, but the value of the land means it exceeds ECC’s current financial limit* for freehold transfers: officers can investigate a leasehold arrangement with you until such time as the value limit is raised to an appropriate level.”

*limit of £50000 per policy 2012. Following discussion it was agreed that Cllr Taylor would reply asking if the Parish Council could lease the land from ECC. We will also point out that following a FOI request we were advised that it was only the land which had a value listed in the asset register and not the hall.

625. WHITE COLNE VILLAGE GREEN

(a) To discuss a solution for repairs and restoration of the village green edge – further solutions were considered including 12 heavy 6ft oak post (sunk by 2ft) with concrete gravel boards in between. The cost would be approximately £3000 and the council's public liability insurance and any buried services would need to be considered. Cllr Taylor will obtain further quotes.

We also discussed EV chargers following a meeting Cllr Taylor had with Believ. They work with local authorities to install chargers at no cost. We agreed to having two 50kw chargers at the village hall and decided against a 7kw charger at the village green,

626. PLAY AREAS

(a) To review the latest play area health & safety reports and consider recommendations – most of the work required has already been passed to the Council's handyman to review. The Covid signage and the tree seat will be removed. The clerk will contact the grass cutting contractors to ensure they will use their herbicide weed killer around the equipment as soon as the weather improves.

(b) To review work already planned for the play areas – work is ongoing with the handyman.

627. ALLOTMENTS

(a) To note the current allotment plot vacancies and discuss advertising them locally – the vacancies will be advertised in the Three Colnes magazine in February and on the local Facebook page. The clerk has updated the website.

628. MILLFIELD

(a) To note the outcome of the complaint from Braintree District Council enforcement and consider any further action – BDC have confirmed they will not be pursuing the complaint for enforcement action. Their reply is as follows: *"I have visited this site, seen the gate and fence in question, and I have fully investigated the matter using the information available to me. After full*

consideration and taking advice from other colleagues on this matter, it is not expedient to pursue any further enforcement action. The fence and gate are at 2m in height, however it is not considered to be a significant breach whereby it is adjacent to the highway. There is a PROW and calming furniture between the gate and the road, therefore making an argument that the gate is no longer considered to be immediately adjacent to the highway. Unfortunately, there is no guidance which definitively tells us that a breach would occur if it was under "X" distance from the highway. Additionally, the hedging which is in place is far higher than the fence/gate and holds weight to permission being granted for the gate to be this height. If the owners of the land were to simply replace the gate with hedging the same height, then this would raise no issue. The PROW stops short of the private land, and as such the owners of this land are entitled to erect fencing, as well as remove any access permissions. I appreciate that this is perhaps not the response that local residents want, and I do hope that other suitable solutions present themselves. This case will now be closed and all information kept on file for reference."

The Council will ask Cllr Siddall to support an application to the Local Highways Panel for a pathway along the affected stretch of road.

629. COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

- (a) To review and agree a Biodiversity policy – the policy was agreed and adopted.
- (b) To discuss using Zoom/You Tube feed for members of the public to join the meeting remotely – deferred until the next meeting
- (c) To discuss local handyman work required for the council – The problems with a backlog of handyman jobs were discussed as we only offer infrequent part time work and often other commitments take precedence. Councillors were asked to come forward with ideas to resolve the situation.

630. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- (a) – Virtual meeting per 629(b)

631. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 19th March 2024

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