

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall
on Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Batchford, Cllr Bell, Cllr Bond, Cllr Brace, Cllr Drizen, Cllr Taylor (Chairman), Cllr Wilson. Also present: Clerk P Palfreyman, Essex County Council (ECC) Cllr Siddall, Braintree District Council, Cllr Spray (BDC) and 2 member of the public

To note: This meeting was live streamed to a volunteer member of the public, to test the feasibility of making the service widely available.

632. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllr Courtauld

633. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS ON ITEMS SHOWN ON THIS AGENDA – Cllr Bell re item 12 Millfield and Cllrs Drizen and Batchford regarding planning application 24 00478

634. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING - the minutes of the last parish council meeting on 16th January 2024 which had previously been circulated, were agreed as a true record.

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

Cllr Siddall – the pavement on Colchester Road has been resurfaced via the Local Highways Panel. There are 12 LHP's in Essex and they are meant for minor safety improvements in your area. Larger improvements are dealt with by other organisations. Some changes will be made to the LHP and each panel will have a chairman and look into schemes up for £50K. More money will be spent on road repairs this year and the pothole scheme will be expanded to include the pavement scheme. The audit panel have now audited the 20/21 accounts. Booking at recycling centres will now be permanent and ECC have received awards for climate change. Cllr Siddall agreed to look into why Boley Rd was used as a diversion for the recent Anglian Water Road works, when it is totally unsuitable for heavy traffic.

Cllr Spray – **Budget 2024 – 2025** Braintree Council's budget for the next financial year was approved at Full Council on 19th February. Due to increasing costs: higher pay costs, inflation and demand for services, the Council is facing its own pressures although we are in a better position than many other local authorities. A Council Tax increase of 2.96% was agreed; £5.76 for the whole year which equates to 11p a week. This sets a Band D tax rate for Braintree

District Council's share of the overall bill of £200.07 and remains one of the lowest of the District and Borough Councils in Essex. Support for low-income households will continue through the Local Council Tax Support Scheme; this scheme is targeted to provide support for households most in need of help.

Councillor Grant Scheme This popular scheme will continue for the next twelve months with each Councillor having £1250 to spend on local projects.

Local Plan Review At a meeting of the Local Plan sub-Committee on Thursday 7th March (which I chair), it was agreed that BDC would start work immediately on a new Local Plan. Some details are still awaited from Government on the process for local authorities to update their current Local Plans and, of course, a General Election may well bring changes; however, it was felt that as BDC currently has the 'comfort' of an approved Local Plan we did not want to be caught on the back foot by not having at least started the work if changes are announced in a few months' time. The timescale will be tight as our new LP will have to be submitted by end June 2025 and there is a lot of work for Officers to do, including a new Call for Sites. However, Officers believe this is the right course of action and have assured me that they are willing to start the work straight away.

Minerals Plan Review A review of Essex County Council's Minerals Plan is underway and a significant number of new sites for mineral extraction are proposed. Braintree District has more minerals available for extraction than any other area in Essex and therefore we are a 'target' for sites; a further 15 sites are proposed in addition to those already approved and under development. At the Local Plan sub Committee on the 7th March, Members agreed to send a robust response to ECC objecting strongly to many of the sites on landscape, heritage, environmental, health and highways grounds.

**Note: the sites are situated mainly around Witham, Braintree (Rayne) and Kelvedon/Coggeshall

Potential Open Spaces Improvement Plan (POSI) Formerly known as the Open Spaces Action Plan, this document sets out where Town and Parish Councils would like to see S106 money spent should it become available. It was approved at Cabinet on 4th March.

Green Waste Collection Take up of this scheme has exceeded expectations and the revenue generated will go a long way towards covering the annual cost of the fortnightly collections. Just a reminder that collecting garden waste is a *non-statutory service* previously subsidised by BDC; the Council decided to continue providing the service but can only do so by making a charge to produce a balanced budget.

636. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS – a member of the public confirmed they had submitted an objection against planning application 24 00478

637. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications:

No comment application

24/00443/TPOCON 15 Colne Park Road White Colne Essex CO6 2PL Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area:
Ash tree cut down to a stump as suffering die back.

24/00478/VAR Land South of Parish Hall Bures Road White Colne Essex 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 garage ancillary and incidental to host property. Expiry date: 26 March 2024. The Parish Council objects to the variation of conditions and any change of use

No comment application

24/00561/AGR Church Farm Bures Road White Colne Essex CO6 2QA Application for prior notification of agricultural or forestry development - Replacement of existing farmyard plainings and shingle surface with concrete hardstanding.

(b) Applications approved by Braintree District Council

24/00115/TPOCON 26 Colneford Hill White Colne Essex CO6 2PJ Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area:
T1 Cherry - Fell to ground level Application: GRANTED

638. COMMUNITY LIAISON

(a) To review the report about a new SID (Speed Indicator Device) – Cllr Bond provided a summary of suitable devices. The Council agreed to purchase the Messagemaker brand at a cost of £3378. Thanks were given to Cllr Courtauld and Siddall for the grants of £750 and £1000 towards this.

(b) To consider the two quotes of £155.97 and £165.23 for a new light in the defibrillator telephone box – following discussion it was agreed to opt for the quote of £165.23 which enabled the light to be permanently on.

(c) To discuss the terms and conditions of a Council Facebook page – the Council agreed the page would only include Council business and related information and the comments would be left open. Cllrs Bell and Drizen would have the administration rights.

- (d) To discuss the Community Hub and its future – the last Hub of the winter was last week and has proved very popular. New friendship groups have formed because of the Hub and it has been requested that it is opened earlier next winter. There are some grants available to make it viable but the council will consider employing a chef, an administrator and a coordinator to help run it. Discussions will continue to make it run next winter.
- (e) To report on the forthcoming community garden open day – the open day is on Saturday 23rd March from 10am to 3pm. Coffee and cake will be available. The new furniture was delivered last week and £75 has been spent on plants, seeds and compost. The Community Garden has been funded from the Essex Community Foundation Grant of £4523 with a further £3195 from BDC via the governments levelling up fund,

639. WHITE COLNE MEADOWS

- (a) To note the pond risk assessment and recommendations – this risk assessment recommend that the silt trap is cleared, and this will be actioned once the area dries out some more. The clerk will arrange for a contractor to put chicken wire across the fence to prevent small children from getting through.
- (b) To review the quote to remove the dipping platform and posts at a cost of £235 – the quote was agreed by the Council.

638. FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL MATTERS 13 March 2024

1. PAYMENTS

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

UNITY TRUST ACCOUNT

METHOD	PAYEE	£
DD	Lloyds - café/carol service costs 16.01.24	121.05
DD	ICO - information commissions office 25.01.24	35.00
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity 29.01.24	45.18
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall gas - 29.01.24	50.30
DD	Lloyds - café/hub - 16.02.24	265.47
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall electricity - 28.02.24	45.18
DD	Scottish Power - Village Hall gas - 28.02.24	50.30
TOTAL UNITY TRUST DIRECT DEBITS		612.48

UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT (ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS MADE)

			VAT
17.01.24	Matthew Roberts - VH refund deposit/hire cancelled	140.00	
17.01.24	Rebecca McDermott - VH refund deposit/hire cancelled	95.00	
24.01.24	C Gill - café cakes	34.00	
24.01.24	Gt Tey VH hall hire - community energy project	45.00	
24.01.24	Jade Vince - VH hire deposit refund	42.50	
30.01.24	D Overton - VH refund deposit/hire cancelled	143.75	
30.01.24	Louise Argent - community project administrator	120.00	
30.01.24	HMRC - clerks PAYE	32.20	
30.01.24	Crown Hire - Portaloo cleaning	45.60	7.60
30.01.24	C Gill - café cakes	34.00	
30.01.24	AMP Electrical - removal of Xmas lights	180.00	30.00
30.01.24	P Palfreyman - January wages	673.70	
02.02.24	Page Computers - anti virus software	60.00	10.00
02.02.24	Argent roofing - VH roof repairs	336.00	56.00
02.02.24	Jane Taylor - cakes for Hub	78.60	
02.02.24	Suffolk Cloud - website hosting & support	120.00	
13.02.24	Allotment Society - annual subs	66.00	11.00
15.02.24	J Taylor - cakes for Hub	54.51	
13.02.24	Jade Lock - VH cleaning £195 & bookings £247	442.00	
19.02.24	Gary Allen - VH window cleaning	14.00	
19.02.24	AMP Electrical - emergency lights	301.20	50.20
29.02.24	P Palfreyman - February wages	673.70	
29.02.24	HMRC - clerks PAYE	32.20	
29.02.24	Jane Taylor - cakes for café & Hub	114.60	
29.02.24	Jade Lock - VH cleaning £117 & bookings £156	273.00	
11.03.24	Hallmaster - annual subs	322.60	53.77
11.03.24	J M Watt - handyman	672.52	112.09
11.03.24	P Chillingworth - VH hire deposit refund	50.00	
TOTAL UNITY TRUST ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS		5196.68	

TOTAL DIRECT DEBITS AND PAYMENTS FROM UNITY TRUST

5809.16

continued over

2. FUNDS RECEIVED

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

UNITY BANK

15.01.24	Liz Roets - VH hire	140.00
15.01.24	Felecia S - VH hire	34.66
15.01.24	Sum Up - café income	79.62
17.01.24	D Overton - VH hire	143.75
22.01.24	Liz Roets - VH hire	15.00
23.01.24	East Anglian Centre - VH hire	50.00
26.01.24	C Upward -VH hire	126.00
29.01.24	Sewing Bee - VH hire	60.00
30.01.24	L Brennan - VH hire	50.00
30.01.24	Sum Up - café income	95.37
05.02.24	A Yapp - VH hire	57.96
05.02.24	J OConnell - VH hire	54.00
08.02.24	Clear Insurance - Insurance refund	52.93
12.02.24	Liz Roets - VH hire	35.00
12.02.24	Sum Up - café income & ticket sales	198.85
13.02.24	Sum Up - ticket sales	47.19
16.02.24	Postu Pilates - VH Hire	120.00
20.02.24	Liz Roets - VH hire	35.00
20.02.24	Sum Up - ticket sales	187.20
20.02.24	Sum Up - ticket sales	11.80
21.02.24	Sum Up - ticket sales	81.90
22.02.24	Sum Up - café income & ticket sales	46.80
26.02.24	C Upward -VH hire	126.00
26.02.24	A Yapp - VH hire	57.96
26.02.24	Alison Davey - VH hire	236.00
26.02.24	Sum Up - café income & ticket sales	210.88
27.02.24	J OConnell - VH hire	54.00
28.02.24	HMRC VAT refund	5113.03
05.03.24	L Brennan - VH hire	25.00
06.03.24	Sum Up - ticket sales	23.59
06.03.24	R Frost - allotment fee	10.94
12.03.24	Sum Up - café income	102.98
12.03.24	L Brennan - VH hire deposit refund	25.00
TOTAL UNITY BANK RECEIPTS		7708.41

3. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BANK RECONCILIATION

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

UNITY TRUST as at 13 March 2024

TOTAL BANK BALANCES 38551.66

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	23258.93

UNITY TRUST BANK RECONCILIATION

BALANCE at 10 January 2024	36652.41
Add Receipts	7708.41
	44360.82
Less Total Payments made	5809.16
BALANCE at 13 March 2024	38551.66

- (c) To review the budget to date – noted and agreed.
- (d) To confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor at a cost of £230.00 – noted and agreed.
- (e) To confirm the 2022/23 VAT refund of £5113.03 - noted and confirmed paid.
- (f) To review the 3 quotes for new accounts systems – the clerk confirmed that she had sat in on demos for Scribe, Edge and RBS Rialtas. All systems would do a good job but in view of the price variations, the clerk recommended the cheapest system of RBS Rialtas. However, it was agreed to postpone this until a new clerk is appointed.
- (g) To confirm the hourly rate increase for the village hall cleaner to £14.30 per hour from 1 April 2024 – noted and agreed
- (h) To note the request for a donation to the church and note the reasons why a donation cannot be made – the clerk confirmed that there is not any legislation under LGA 1972 which allows a Parish Council to donate to a church. There is provision for a closed churchyard but that is not the case with the church in White Colne. The church has been offered free use of the village hall for their meetings, subject to availability.

639. VILLAGE HALL

- (a) To discuss the ECC response to the request to transfer the land behind the village hall and the village hall building and car park as a community asset transfer to White Colne Parish Council – Cllr Whitbread has confirmed that the Parish Council cannot lease the land for 25 years as ECC still want to sell it for development. Previous minutes Jan 2024 ref 624e refer. The village hall is now valued at over £100000 so a Community Asset Transfer is not possible. The Council agreed that car park resurfacing project will not go ahead as any potential development will ruin the surface with the construction traffic. Cllr Siddall agreed to talk to Cllr Whitbread on our behalf.
- (b) To consider engaging the Community Payback scheme to redecorate the village hall – the Council agreed to look into how the project works.

640. ALLOTMENTS

- (a) To receive an update about allotment vacancies – the clerk advised one plot has now been filled and one plot remains vacant.

641. MILLFIELD

- (a) To receive an update from Cllr Siddall – Cllr Siddall advised that the development should have had a pavement when it was built. If a pavement is

built, the oak tree and hedge may need to be removed and the telegraph pole relocated. Alternatively, ECC could consider a compulsory purchase though the development for a footpath. A meeting will be requested between Cllrs Taylor and Siddall and the ECC officer. A study into traffic slowing measures could be carried out and the data from the new SID will help this.

642. COUNCIL ADMIN

(a) To discuss live streaming and recording Council meetings – the volunteer advised that sound quality was poor if the microphone wasn't near the person speaking. A camera to show the Council is session would be useful also. Cllr Bell agreed to review costs and requirements.

(b) To record the clerk/RFO resignation - Petra Palfreyman resigned on 13 March 2024 and hopes to leave by the end of May. A vacancy advert will be publicised, and interview dates for candidates set.

643. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

(a) The next meeting will be the Annual Parish meeting on Tuesday 16th April 2024. At this meeting, electors of White Colne can discuss matters of local interest.

(b) The next council meeting will be the Annual Meeting of the Council on Tuesday 21st May 2024. At this meeting the Chairman and Vice Chairman for the ensuing year will be voted in.

There being no further business the parish council meeting closed at 21.50pm