



Pebmarsh Parish Council



Chairman: Cllr H Anderson

Clerk: Mrs P Potter: 20 Gore Lane, Rayne, CM77 6TU: 07790 598363;
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MINUTES of the meeting held 26 October 2016

Present: Cllr H Anderson (Chair) County Cllr David Finch
Cllr P Crimmins District Cllr Gabrielle Spray
Cllr M Sharp (following co-option at item 3) Philippa Potter, Clerk
Cllr J Tufnell Mr J Nott
17 members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from District Cllr Chris Siddall and Cllr Jim Holder.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Co-option of Parish Councillor

It was Proposed Cllr Anderson, Seconded Cllr Tufnell and unanimously Resolved to co-opt Michael Sharp to the Parish Council. Cllr Sharp took his seat following the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was Proposed Cllr Anderson, Seconded Cllr Crimmins and unanimously Resolved to accept the minutes of the meeting held 12 July 2016 as a true record and they were signed accordingly.

5. District and County Items

5.1 BDC Issues

Cllr Spray confirmed that the Local Plan will be going to BDC Full Council in February 2017. Currently BDC are going through the consultations and reviewing the sites around the district, with the Local Plan Committee holding their meetings to determine those sites which will be going forward – Pebmarsh will be discussed on 31 October. A number of applications are now coming forward for larger developments around the district which will be determined in the usual way.

The Parish Council was reminded about the new Councillor Community Grant scheme which is now up and running. This is for smaller amounts of money are given to help a project, which can make a big difference. An example of this is where a grant of £200 was made to a lunch club for a freezer, so they can store food for longer. This has made a tremendous difference to how they can operate.

The broadband rollout is grinding on very slowly and BDC continue to lobby for faster provision. BDC are now starting to ask developers to make provision for broadband on new planning applications to try and future proof for demand.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Spray for attending and for her report.

5.2 ECC Issues

The Chairman thanked Cllr Finch for attending the meeting, to which he gave an update on current activity at ECC, which is summarised as follows:

ECC is in a period of consultation with the Government over various issues. It is the time of year where grant funding is being calculated and is generally allocated in November/December, with smaller grants being finalised in January. These announcements are being awaited at present. ECC have launched a four year efficiency programme, as the revenue support grant is going down over the next four years to nothing. Business rates are to be taken account of, as these are gradually being phased into ECC income but there will likely be some extra services which ECC will be expected to provide as well.

ECC will lose around £250m over next four years, therefore they are looking to find a reduction next year (excluding education) of around £100m. Currently there is a gap of about £8m, with time not on side. The gap needs to be closed during 17/18 but they are resisting an increase in Council Tax, if possible. There will be the 2% increase for Social Care, however, due to the increase in the national living wage, this has caused pressure of around £16-18m on budgets in this sector, which impacts on the delivery of services.

School performance for the majority of schools within Essex is in the good and outstanding categories and ECC is driving to make 100% of schools outstanding over the next couple of years, to deliver the best possible education to all children.

Within the NHS, there will be a public consultation in the new year to look at radical moves to restructure services, with the intent of saving money, as a result of significant debts within the organisation. Cllr Finch encouraged everyone to respond to this when it is launched.

The Community Initiatives Fund has been successful across the County. There are also ideas being put forward for a new scheme to help communities to 'do what they want to do' e.g. receive a grant to use in any way they wish to improve the quality of life/amenities within the parish, to help sustain themselves. This will probably be launched in February 2017.

With regard to current capital spending, this is split between Highways and Education, especially with additional spending of around £70m on SEN schools in Essex and a record amount of money currently being spent on highways maintenance.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Finch for attending the meeting and giving his report.

6. **Public Forum**

A query was made regarding any progress on the installation of a telephone mast in the village. The Chairman explained that the government scheme which was put forward recently expired in March and was not renewed. Therefore there are currently no plans for such a project to happen.

7. **Football Field**

Mr J Nott attended the meeting to put his ideas forward regarding the future of the 'football field' in the village. The background to the public use of this land goes back to Mr Nott allowing the village to use this field as a football pitch for many years. However, having started in 1975, the football club is no longer operating and despite many attempts, there have not been any other groups who wish to use it for this purpose and the pavilion building has fallen into disrepair.

As a great supporter of affordable housing within the village, Mr Nott now wishes to give that field to the village, coupled with a scheme for self-build houses on just under half of the field, leaving the rest for recreation use.

Mr Nott explained that he does not want any financial gain from the self-build houses or from anything from the site and wants to offer approximately six self-build units on the Clay Hills side of the pitch. If this scheme is forthcoming, he wants to hand the land over to the John Nott charity. There would be a small ground rent levied so that the field can be maintained. This would provide affordable housing for people with strong connection to the village and there has already been some strong interest in the scheme.

Cllr Anderson said that the Parish Council agreed that this would be a wonderful gesture to the village. The detail of the scheme could be a bit difficult to iron out and administer, as the affordable housing (S106) criteria such as that at Hamsters close, can be challenging. The proposed scheme under this land would be different and would not be open to the general housing list, however, there are issues around what would happen when the original owner sells the house – how much would it be sold for and how would a suitable new owner be found. The Parish Council are very interested in the scheme but will need to discuss the detail.

It is envisaged that the houses would be 2-3 bedroom chalet type houses, which would not impinge on the properties at Clay Hills, with the access being where it is now, with the football field on the left and the houses on the right hand side, with the recycling being moved, probably to where the pavilion is now. The ground rents would be charged per house, to go towards the maintenance of the field with the trustees of the charity managing this.

Mr Nott will update the Parish Council as to progress on the scheme. The Chairman thanked him for attending and presenting the idea.

8. Village Hall Hirings

This issue is being resolved outside of the Parish Council and was therefore not required to be discussed at this meeting.

9. General Power of Competence

The Parish Council confirmed their eligibility under the criteria set out in the Statutory Instrument, Parish Councils (General Power of Competence)(Prescribed Conditions) Order 2014, in that:

- at the time the resolution is passed, at least two thirds of the members of the Parish Council hold office as a result of being declared elected (it being 4 out of 5 seats elected) and
- at the time the resolution is passed, the Clerk, Philippa Potter, holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration, together with the General Power of Competence Module.

Therefore, it was Proposed Cllr Anderson, Seconded Cllr Tufnell and unanimously Resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence. This will run until the next relevant Annual Parish Council meeting (following the next elections).

10. BDC Planning

10.1 Planning Applications:

- 16/01601/FUL: Le Mote Cottages, Cross End – Proposed Boarding Cattery with reception and storage area. *The Parish Council had no comments or objections on this application.*

- 16/01707/FUL: Oakapples, Byndes Corner – Proposed 25m x 45m domestic equestrian arena, muck clamp, track and hard standing arena. *The Parish Council had no comments or objections to this application.*

10.2: Planning Committee – *these were noted:*

- 16/01356/FUL: Oakdene Oak Road – Demolition of single storey rear extensions to existing dwelling. Internal and external alterations to existing dwelling. Demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of 3 bay cart lodge with ground and first floor store. *The Parish Council had no objections to this application.*
- Response to BDC Local Plan Committee – Development Boundary
The response to BDC, as agreed by the Planning Committee, to a request to consider a change to the development boundary was received. This response was made in line with the delegated powers vested in the Planning Committee and the Clerk, via the Parish Council's Standing Orders.

The BDC Local Plan Committee had asked the Parish Council for their views regarding a change to be made to the development boundary, which would encompass site PEB348, which had been put forward to BDC for consideration for development. Throughout the public consultation process regarding the BDC Local Plan, the Parish Council has not agreed to the extension of the development boundary at any point in the parish, including the suggestion to move it to encompass all (or part) of PEB 348. The reason for this is that it would in the Council's view set an unacceptable precedent for 'backland' development, which others may want to make use of in the future (and if this occurred, the Parish Council would have difficulty in raising objections).

These views were put forward in the Parish Council's response to BDC in December 2015 and within the current response dated May 2016. These views were consistent with those expressed by the BDC Planning Officer.

The response was noted by the full Parish Council.

10.3 Planning Result – *this was noted:*

The following application was Granted:

- 16/01111/FUL: Land N/W of Ivy Cottage, The Street: four bedroomed detached two storey chalet style dwelling.

11. **Footpaths**

The second cut of the season took place on 20 October 2016, paid for by the Parish Council. ECC are only funding one cut every year and this year undertook this very late in the season. This has caused problems with passability on the footpaths for pedestrians.

It was agreed to begin negotiations with ECC to re-join the Parish Paths Partnership (P3) scheme, with a view to the Parish Council taking over both cuts for next season. Cllr Sharp will contact the P3 team at ECC to gather the necessary information and bring this back to Council to agree the way forward.

It was queried whose responsibility it is for the maintenance of bridges on the footpaths. The Clerk advised that this would be for ECC to undertake. Cllr Sharp agreed to report this to ECC on behalf of the Council.

A discussion then took place regarding which footpaths were well used and which are generally not used regularly, with a view to deciding which paths the Parish Council should direct their resources at most with regard to cutting.

It was agreed to put out an email to ask parishioners to let the Parish Council know which paths they use most to see if a general consensus could be reached.

12. Kings Head Pub

Cllr Anderson explained to the meeting the reason why the Parish Council is not currently applying to list the King's Head Pub as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). Currently, the pub is on the market being sold as a pub and a going concern. Therefore, the future of the building as a pub is not currently under threat. The Lion Pub in Lamarsh was recently listed as an ACV by Alphamstone & Lamarsh Parish Council, however, this was because the owners had put the building up for sale and put in a change of use application to BDC to change it to a residential dwelling. The listing gives a community group six months to put a bid together and present it to the owners. There is no obligation on the owner to sell to the community group, it is just a right to be able to bid.

A community group in Pebmarsh is currently putting a bid together, which is entirely separate from the Parish Council. If it is felt that there is any indication that the future of the pub is under threat, then the situation will be looked at again.

13. Cheque Signatories

To ensure that there are enough signatories available to sign cheques, it was agreed to add a further signatory to the bank mandate and to remove signing authority for an ex-Councillor. It was proposed Cllr Anderson, Seconded Cllr Sharp and unanimously agreed to add Cllr Crimmins and therefore change the signing rules in the current mandate for the accounts detailed in section 2, be replaced in accordance with section 4, and the authorised signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 2, be changed in accordance with sections 5 and 6 and the current mandate will continue as amended.

14. Finance

14.1 Finance Report

The latest reports were received and noted.

14.2 It was Proposed Cllr Tufnell, Seconded Cllr Crimmins and unanimously Resolved that the following cheques be approved for payment:

14.2.1	£ 627.24	Salary (August to October 2016)
14.2.2	£ 57.66	Clerk Expenses (August to September 2016)
14.2.3	£ 151.20	Grass Cutting and Playground Inspection (August 2016)
14.2.4	£ 151.20	Grass Cutting and Playground Inspection (Sept 2016)
14.2.5	£ 70.00	EALC – Councillor Training

14.3 Payments made between meetings – these were approved and noted:

14.3.1	£ 26.40	A & J Lighting Maintenance (July 2016)
14.3.2	£ 26.40	A & J Lighting Maintenance (Aug 2016)
14.3.3	£ 26.40	A & J Lighting Maintenance (Sept 2016)
14.3.4	£ 26.40	A & J Lighting Maintenance (Oct 2016)
14.3.5	£ 991.20	Playground Maintenance/Grass Cut
14.3.6	£ 151.20	Playground Inspection/Grass Cut
14.3.6	£ 200.00	Strutt & Parker – Diocese Rent (arrears)
14.3.7	£ 5.00	Colne Stour Association
14.3.8	£ 700.00	Strutt & Parker – Diocese Rent (annual payment)
14.3.9	£ 130.00	Repaint street light
14.3.10	£ 50.00	EALC – Clerk Training
14.3.11	£ 39.22	Repair Work – Noticeboard
14.3.12	£ 1433.33	PWLB Loan Payment

14.4 Monies received since the last meeting – these were noted:

14.4.1	£3912.00	Precept (second half)
14.4.2	£ 107.13	Pebmarsh School – donation towards car park use

3215. Conclusion of Audit 2015/16

The Clerk confirmed that the external audit for the financial year 2015/16 had been concluded. PKF Littlejohn’s conclusion was that on the basis of the review of the annual return, in their opinion, the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirement have not been met. Other matters, not affecting their opinion which were drawn to the Parish Council’s attention were as follows:

- Any amendments made in Section 2 of the Annual Return must be initialled and dated by the RFO/Chairman.
- In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to the accounting for VAT. The Parish Council must ensure that action is taken to address this area of weakness in a timely manner.

The Clerk has made the appropriate amendments to the accounts regarding VAT and the Parish Council will ensure that amendments to the Annual Return will be initialled and dated correctly, in the future.

16. Referendum Principles for English Parishes – DCLG Consultation

The Parish Council agreed to strongly object to the proposals regarding a 2% cap being placed on the precept demand for all Parish Councils, over which amount a referendum would be triggered for agreement from parishioners. It was acknowledged that this would effectively stop the Parish Council from raising monies above £130 per annum, as the cost of a referendum would be prohibitive.

It was proposed Cllr Anderson, Seconded Cllr Tufnell and unanimously agreed to respond to the consultation objecting to this. Clerk to send letter.

17. Budget and Precept 2017/18

The Clerk circulated a draft budget for 2017/18 for Councillors to start looking at. This will be brought back to the next Council meeting for agreement.

18. Standing Orders

Further to legislative change under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, the Standing Orders were agreed to be updated to reflect the public’s right to ‘film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting, or use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings as it takes place or later, or to report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting, or orally report or comment after the meeting’.

It was Proposed Cllr Crimmins, Seconded Cllr Sharp and unanimously agreed to adopt the changes as outlined above.

19. Clerk’s Report

The Clerk reported that Eon had written to outline an increased to the deemed contract rates. The Clerk had enquired as to options for better rates but as the Council’s consumption is extremely low, the current contract is the cheapest.

20. Date of Next Meeting

It was provisionally agreed to hold the next meeting on 1 Dec at 7.30pm, subject to venue availability. The meeting will be finalised and advertised on the website and the noticeboard.

21. Closure

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed
Chairman

Dated