



Pebmarsh Parish Council

Annual Report 2019



Chairman's Report

The Kings Head

The Parish Council (PC) has been as supportive as possible in the process leading to the re-opening of the pub, in October 2017. The Steering Group of the Pebmarsh Community Pub Ltd (PCPL) are to be congratulated for all the hard work they have put into this, which includes the share capital they have raised (which now stands at £308,000), the overseeing of the works to the pub, and the obtaining of various planning permissions which the PC supported. The pub has had a very successful first 6 months, which is really good news for the village as a whole.

To reduce the cost of a £50,000 loan taken out with Co-op Finance by PCPL to help finance their purchase of the pub, the PC have entered into an Agreement with PCPL to lend them £50,000 so that they can make early repayment of this loan. The PC are obtaining this £50,000 from the Public Works Loan Board and it will be repaid by the PC over a 15 year period, at a significantly better interest rate than is payable under the Co-op loan. Each biannual repayment to the Public Works Loan Board will be paid by PCPL to the PC, so this is all being done at no cost to the PC (and therefore to the Council Tax payers of Pebmarsh). The loan from the PC to the PCPL will be secured by a first and fixed charge over the Kings Head.

Planning

We are asked to comment on about 2 or 3 planning applications per month. If comments are required between meetings these are dealt with by a Committee, consisting of myself, Cllr Jackie Tufnell and Cllr Jim Holder. These range from applications to coppice or cut down trees in the Conservation Area, to building extensions to existing buildings or – occasionally - erecting new ones. Where necessary we consult with those most closely affected by any such applications.

On a recent application, there were a number of somewhat formulaic objections from persons outside the village, to an application for a 'glamping' site near Hunts Hall, but having given it careful thought we gave it our full support and the application was approved.

It remains the position that there is nothing in the latest draft of the Braintree District Local Plan which directly affects Pebmarsh, and so no consultation with the village has been deemed necessary.

Footpaths and Verges

Cllr Michael Sharp has been working hard to co-ordinate work to bring the footpaths and verges back under control and maintained. Although the prime responsibility for cutting and maintaining footpaths lies with Essex Highways, they will only finance one cut a year, which is not enough to keep some paths passable.



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We have therefore undertaken to do two cuts a year, one financed by Highways and one by ourselves. We are also responsible for cutting various verges around the village, such as around the War Memorial, the area opposite the pub, and so on. Michael also organises this work, which is undertaken around 7 times a year by our contractor.

Children's Playground

The playground is a costly asset to maintain and unfortunately, some of the equipment became unusable a few months ago. This item is being replaced, which will hopefully be completed in the next couple of months. To finance this new equipment, the Parish Council are using some monies which have been set aside by Braintree District Council, from a contribution made under a 'Section 106' agreement from a recent successful planning application, which is to be put towards providing enhancement of the playground. We have also received a small grant from District Councillor Spray to go towards this project, for which we thank her.

The Parish Clerk is now a qualified Routine Playground Inspector and other periodic inspections are also undertaken.

Mobile Signal and Broadband

There is, unfortunately, nothing more that can be done about the lack of mobile signal in many parts of the village, because the government scheme under which small scale projects such as ours

were financed has expired and has not been renewed.

As far as Broadband is concerned, Superfast Essex keeps promising that there will be progress shortly, but there is little sign of this at the moment – except perhaps the appearance of a new junction box at the top of the hill near Clay Hill. County Broadband have, however, made a presentation to the village to install fibre- optic cable throughout the village, which will give consistently high speeds. This work is now certain to go ahead and should commence within a year. For those who take up this option, this will also ease their problem with the lack of a mobile signal, because they should be able to use their wi-fi to make and receive calls.

Roads and Signposts

Problems with highway issues are discussed at our meetings quite regularly. We, along with many other Parish Councils, have put numerous reports into Essex Highways about dangerous pot-holes, broken, missing – or in the case of the sign to Pebmarsh off the A131, flattened – signposts, worn road markings etc. It is virtually impossible to speak to anyone at Highways and the only response is a mechanical one that records that our points have been noted. The works are scheduled according to priority but we are unable to push something up the list, unless something such as a pot-hole becomes very dangerous.



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This is a very frustrating situation, especially where there seem to be anomalies. By way of example, Highways spent about 5 days in Mill Lane mending relatively minor potholes on a road which is a dead end and on which no-one does more than about 10 mph. The road has already started to deteriorate again. This work had presumably got to the top of the queue, but should not in my view have been a priority over some other issues waiting to be done in the village – think what else they could have done for us in a five day period.... We battle on.

The School and Road Safety

I and the Parish Clerk have had a preliminary meeting with the Headteacher of the Primary School and with the Revd Gay Ellis; we discussed a number of issues including problems with the current parking arrangements and problems with speeding cars particularly when children are arriving at, or leaving the school. There are two 'school' signs, either side of the school on The Street, but none on the approach road from Earls Colne. The blind corner on the road from Cross End, where there is no pavement on either side, is of particular concern. The PC have in the past tried to at least get '20's Plenty' signs put up, but this was rejected by Highways on the – somewhat ludicrous in my view – basis that this would mean an excess of what they are pleased to call street furniture. What we currently have in mind is to apply for a new 'School' on the approach from Earls Colne, possibly with

'20's plenty' on them, but also with yellow flashing lights that would operate for 15 or so minutes at both ends of the day, when the children are arriving at and leaving school. We will also apply for yellow zig-zag lines outside the school entrance. **We are inviting views on these and any other points people wish to raise on this subject, at the Annual Parish Assembly on 30 May 2018.**

Street Lighting

The PC are considering two main options on which we would like to consult with the village and we will start by canvassing views at this meeting:

A: The first is whether or not to replace the rather unpleasant yellow lights, with more energy efficient white LED Lights (such as those being put in across the County).

B: The second, is whether – partly in order to further reduce electricity costs – to turn the lights off between, say, midnight and 5am. (Currently the lights come on automatically at dusk and go off at dawn).

There is of course a cost involved in implementing these proposals which could have a marginal effect on Council Tax.

A survey is being launched at the Annual Parish Assembly on 30 May, so that you can let the PC know your views. This will be available on our website or at the King's Head pub. Please take part!

CLLR HARRY ANDERSON



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Finance Report

Audited Accounts as at 31 March 2018

Bank Balances:

Current Account	2461
Deposit Account	99
National Savings Account	1509
TOTAL	4069

Accounts:

Total Income:	10389
Total Expenditure:	10050

Some highlighted costs:

Playground maintenance:	597
Street Lighting:	998
Footpath and Grass Cutting	1780

Parish Council Website

www.parishcouncil.pebmarsh.com

All of the Parish Council's meeting agendas, minutes and other bits of news are posted on our website, along with contact information, financial documents and our policies.



Your Parish Council

Your Parish Councillors are:

CLlr Harry Anderson (Chairman)
CLlr Jim Holder (Vice-Chairman)
CLlr Jackie Tufnell
CLlr Perry Crimmins
CLlr Michael Sharp

Parish Clerk: Philippa Potter

Contact Information:

The Parish Council can be contacted

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