

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

A Quality Council



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 26 March 2007

at 8.00pm in the Village Hall, Danbury

Present: Parish Councillors: S Berlyn (Chairman), M Wood (Vice-Chairman), A Allen, D Bolwell, J Brooks, D Hawkins, A Keeler, D Powell, M Telling, J Thomson, A Wells, Mrs J Wells, D Whiteing. Borough Cllrs C Kingsley, R Shepherd and I Wright.

Approximately 100 members of the public, including representatives of many local clubs and organisations

In attendance: Mrs M Saunders (Parish Clerk), Mrs M Moss (Assistant Clerk), Mrs E Blyth (Assistant Clerk); Ms Carolyn Mallot, Chelmsford Borough Council, Inspector Chris Kilgallen, Essex Police, PC Bill Evans, PCSO Sarah Martin.

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Mr R Dickens, Mrs J Gilligan, Cllr J Langley

1 Introduction

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, and introduced this year's guest speakers, Carolyn Mallot of the Chelmsford Borough Council Recycling Team and Inspector Chris Kilgallen of the Essex Police Community Policing Team. Cllr Berlyn drew attention to a document circulated by a member of the public with Cllr Berlyn's permission. He explained that there would be an opportunity for the member of the public to ask questions of the Council later in the meeting.

2 Recycling – Carolyn Mallot

Ms Mallot began her talk by explaining that she was part of CBC's Environmental Services department, which was separate from Operational Services which carried out the kerbside collections. She went on to explain how the material for recycling was sorted and processed and described the ways in which it could subsequently be used, some of which helped to pay for the recycling process. Around 27% of household waste was currently recycled, not including cardboard.

Among other points made, some in answer to questions from the floor, were the following:

- Not all plastics could be recycled – bottles with a number 1, 2 or 3 in the triangular recycling symbol could be recycled, higher numbers could not;
- Textiles which were in good condition were sent to charities for re-use, other textiles could be used for purposes such as making sleeping bags;
- Phone book 'Yellow Pages' could be recycled with cardboard but should not be put with paper recycling as the yellow dye contaminated the rest.
- The 'windows' in window envelopes could not be recycled;
- Recycling added about 40 pence per week to Council Tax bills.

At the conclusion of her talk the Chairman thanked Ms Mallot for her informative address and for the interesting literature about recycling which she had displayed before the meeting.

3 Community Policing – Insp Chris Kilgallen

Inspector Kilgallen explained that she was based with South Woodham Ferrers police. She introduced PC Bill Evans and new PCSO Sarah Martin, who would work with PCSO Linda Samways. Insp Kilgallen gave a breakdown of crime figures and trends in Danbury over the past year and stressed that Danbury was still a safe place to live compared with other areas. She reported on how the police had performed in relation to their targets for preventing and detecting crime, with motor vehicle offences being most over target. These would be the subject of special efforts by the police in the next three months.

Insp Kilgallen then spoke about the Neighbourhood Policing initiative. This had been running for about a year and involved the setting up of Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAPs), which were community-led. An NAP was shortly to be established for Danbury, Sandon and Little Baddow, with the initial meeting taking place at Sandon School in April.

The following were among the points made by Insp Kilgallen in answer to questions:

- Vandalism in Danbury was lower than average. Within their resources the police were targeting known troublemakers. Members of the public were urged to report all incidents to the police;
- Reprisals against individuals who reported crime were rare. The police would not reveal names unless the matter came to Court. Intimidation should always be reported to the police;
- PCSOs had been introduced to raise the police presence in the community. They were trained to be a friendly presence and to avoid confrontation. There were regular patrols in Danbury, including in the evenings and at night.

Other items discussed included the speed of traffic on the A414; the parking of cars for sale in public areas, and cars being parked on footpaths. The Chairman mentioned that there was a scheme which allowed a parish to part-fund a PCSO, and this was something the Parish Council would be discussing. He then thanked Inspector Kilgallen and her colleagues for attending.

Cllr David Whiteing spoke briefly to encourage residents to subscribe to the email bulletins for Neighbourhood Watch, of which he was the local co-ordinator.

4 Minutes of the 2006 Annual Parish Meeting

Copies of the minutes of the meeting held on 10th May 2006 had been circulated at the meeting. The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

5 Chairman's Report

Cllr Berlyn began by thanking his colleagues on the Parish Council and the Council's staff for their hard work over the past year. He paid tribute to two councillors who had left and welcomed three others who had been co-opted. There was one vacancy, and he urged residents to use their vote in the forthcoming elections. Among the staff, Mary Moss, Assistant Clerk Facilities, would be leaving shortly and he thanked her for her contribution to the work of the Council.

Reviewing the main areas of work carried out in the past twelve months, the Chairman mentioned the circulation of the Parish Action Plan to implement the recommendations in the Parish Plan; the new Footpaths leaflet, which had been

delivered to all households in the village; the work of the Groundsman, Robin Dickens, in maintaining the playing fields; and the public meeting to gauge opinion about proposals for the location of a new medical centre. Two new sets of goal posts had been purchased with funding from the Football Association. A tree survey had been carried out in all the areas owned by the Parish Council and the most urgent work had already been carried out.

In the last year the Council had won awards from the Essex Association of Local Councils for its Newsletter and Annual Report; certificates from the Essex Playing Fields Association for the football fields, and the Shield for Best Kept Playing Field. In addition, Danbury had come runner-up to Great Dunmow in Class 1 of the Village of the Year Competition in Essex.

Projects on-going in the future included the major scheme to improve the drainage of the car parks and football pitches and to resurface the car parks, and the completion of the Danbury Planning Framework, which it was hoped would be adopted by the Borough Council as supplementary planning guidance.

Cllr Berlyn concluded his remarks with thanks to those who had helped with the organisation of the evening, including two former councillors who had served the refreshments.

6 Report by the Chairman of the Resources Committee

Cllr Whiteing presented the audited accounts for the financial year 2005/06. He drew attention to the summary in the recent edition of Danbury Times, which showed by means of a pie chart how the Council had used its funds. No objections were made to the accounts. Regarding the Precept for the new financial year, Cllr Whiteing stated that the Council had reduced the proposed budget for the drainage and car parks project in order to keep the increase over the previous year to less than 5%.

7 Public question time

The Chairman invited questions from members of the public. Issues raised and discussed included the following:

- *Volume of traffic on the A414 and the impact of the possible new medical centre.* Several Parish Councils in the area had set up a group to press for the upgrading of other main roads to relieve pressure on the A414. This was a long-term project. There were traffic and parking problems around the existing medical centre and the re-location of the centre should ease this.
- *Proposed site of new medical centre: concern at potential road works and increase in traffic on Maldon Road.* There were no formal plans as yet for the new centre and it was not certain that the development would go ahead. Enquirers should approach the Eves Corner practice for information on the current situation. Those present at the public meeting in December 2006 had been overwhelmingly in favour of using part of the Hitchcock's Field site for an enlarged medical facility which would provide additional services for the village.
- *More homes are needed in Danbury – what will the Parish Council do about this?* The Borough's evolving Local Development Plan did not propose significant development in Danbury. The Borough Council was the statutory planning authority and decided planning applications. The Parish Council was a consultee and considered each application referred to it on its merits.

- *Lack of provision for young people in the village.* A number of organisations in the village did provide activities for young people. The Parish Council was considering providing some kind of facility for older youngsters, but there were issues of cost and location to resolve. The existing Youth Centre belonged to Essex County Council and its future was uncertain.
- *St John's School travel plan proposed opening a new entrance to the school and neighbours were opposed to this.* The Parish Council had registered its opposition to this proposal, and other aspects of the travel plan, on safety grounds.
- *Issues regarding the Sports & Social Centre: A member of the public spoke in support of his written statement circulated at the beginning of the meeting. He questioned actions taken by the Parish Council in the past and queried the rent paid by the Centre. He believed that the level of use of the Centre by residents of Danbury did not justify the cost to the village, and suggested that the Centre should be sold to a private company releasing funds to reduce the precept.*

The Chairman and Cllr Whiteing responded, making the following points:

The Parish Council had been instructed to build the Centre 20 years ago by the decision of a public meeting of residents;

The Council was obliged to use the Public Loans Board when borrowing money for the construction. The fixed interest rate was favourable when the loan was first taken out.

The basis for the payment of rent by the Danbury Community Association (which managed the Centre) to the Parish Council was set out in the lease and was a proportion of the income received from the gym. In recent years the rent paid had amounted to around £12,000 per annum.

The monetary value for the building as an 'asset' of the Council was the figure used for insurance purposes, as required by the rules governing Parish Councils.

The Council believed the Centre was well use by residents, not only in terms of the gym but also for the bar, snooker room and for social activities.

The Centre stood on part of the Dawson Memorial Field which had been given by deed of gift to be used for the benefit of the village. It was not clear whether the Council could legally sell the Sports & Social Centre even if it wished to do so.

At the end of the discussion, several residents spoke in support of the Sports & Social Centre and the facilities it provided for the enjoyment of residents.

8 Conclusion

At the conclusion of questions and discussion, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and drew the meeting to a close at around 10.30pm.