



ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the held on 9th January 2008 at the Parish Office

Present: Councillors A Keeler (Chairman), Mrs J Wells (Vice Chairman),
 S Berlyn (ex officio), D Bolwell, J Thomson,
 A Wells, D Whiteing, M Wood (ex officio)

In attendance: Assistant Clerk to the Council and Mr J Bowen

The meeting was initially chaired by the Vice-Chairman.

Public Question time

One member of the public was present in connection with Highways matters. He reported that he had received accident figures from ECC indicating that there had been 8 accidents in 10 years in Danbury, of which one was classed as serious.

Regarding the Agenda item on possible traffic improvement schemes, he asked whether the Parish Council would consult with the village on this matter. In response it was pointed out that the Council always welcomed comments from residents and would decide how to proceed when it considered the item later in the meeting.

81 Election of Chairman

Cllr Whiteing had stepped down as Chairman having agreed to resume the Chair of Resources Committee following the death of Cllr Brooks. Cllr Berlyn proposed that Cllr A Keeler be elected Chairman of Environment Committee, and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs Wells and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Keeler be elected to serve as Chairman of Environment Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

82 Election of Vice Chairman

As there was now a vacancy for Vice-Chairman, Cllr Berlyn proposed that Cllr Mrs J Wells be appointed. This was seconded by Cllr Wood and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Mrs Wells be elected to serve as Vice-Chairman of Environment Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

83 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr J Langley.

84 Declarations of Interest

Members are required to declare any personal or prejudicial interest they know they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda. They are reminded that they will need to repeat their declaration at the appropriate point in the meeting and to leave the room if the interest is a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must be cleared similarly at the appropriate time. No declarations were made.

85 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of Environment Committee held on 28th November 2007 be approved and signed as a correct record.

86 Footpaths

86.1 Parish Paths Partnership

The P3 Christmas Update 2007 was received. Members commented on the amount of work achieved by the group and Cllr Bolwell was thanked for his work as the Council's Footpaths Officer.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

86.2 Footpath 18 – The Heights to Beaumont Park

A response had been received from ECC to the Parish Council's concerns about the condition of part of this footpath. ECC confirmed that this would be considered for funding in 2008/09 but that funds were limited and carriageway repairs took precedence. ECC would review the safety of the steps and close the path if necessary. In discussion members agreed that the dangerous part of the path should be correctly identified to ensure that only that section was closed.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Bolwell, as Footpaths Officer, identify the dangerous section of the path using the definitive map so that the staff could inform ECC.

87 Highways Matters

87.1 Community Speed Watch

Only two volunteers had come forward to participate in a Speed Watch in Danbury, with one other person offering to help administer the scheme. This was well short of the minimum 6 people required to operate the system on a rota basis and it would therefore not be possible to go ahead. After discussion the Chairman proposed that the police be asked to use their own monitoring system in Danbury, using wires across the road to check the speed of traffic. Cllr Mrs Wells seconded the proposal. The checks would need to be carried out in more than one location.

RESOLVED:

a) that the Community Speed Watch proposal be not implemented as volunteers had not been forthcoming;

b) that the police be approached to use their own speed monitoring system in Danbury on condition that the results be notified to the Parish Council; the Parish Council to suggest sections of road where monitoring would be helpful.

87.2 List of Roads for Repair

As a result of further letters from the Council, additional information had been received from ECC Highways.

i) Junction of Southview Road and Woodhill Road: ECC would include this in the list of works to be considered for funding in 2008/09;

ii) Woodhill Road: Works to the safety barrier and signage would be carried out early in the new financial year along with work to a small length of ditch piping. The road would need to be closed for these works;

iii) Little Baddow Road including Eves Corner: Work to The Ridge, Little Baddow, was being completed from the 2007/08 budget.

iv) Gay Bowers Lane/Mill Lane: ECC was pressing the contractor to complete the amendment to the yellow lines and would, if necessary, arrange for the work to be carried out by its own maintenance contractor.

ECC had requested clarification of the Council's reference in its letter to cross-hatching. The Committee agreed that what was referred to was a proposed change

of priority in favour of traffic travelling from Mill Lane into Gay Bowers Road, which was the most used route. Photographs of the junction were supplied.

RESOLVED: that ECC be asked to consider changing the priority of the junction of Mill Lane/Gay Bowers Road.

v) Elm Green Lane: ECC was aware of the condition of this road but it was unlikely to be included in the list of schemes for consideration in 2008/09. Cllr Bolwell felt the work should have a higher priority because of the amount of traffic using the lane. He agreed to bring specific information about the worst potholes to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: that the Committee decide at the next meeting whether to press ECC for earlier completion of the repairs to Elm Green Lane in the light of information to be provided by Cllr Bolwell.

vi) Riffhams Lane: This had been surface dressed in 2007 but the area with the hole was left because of a water spring problem which is being investigated. Remedial work would be funded and undertaken in the next financial year.

vii) New item: Kerb in Mill Lane: It was reported that damage was being caused to the kerb in Mill Lane during the building works to several properties owned by the Chelmer Housing Partnership. The Committee believed that the contractor would be required to make good the damage when the work was completed but wished this to be confirmed.

RESOLVED: that CBC be made aware of the damage to the highway and asked to confirm that it would be made good.

viii) Hyde Lane/Maldon Road – levels and wet-weather slime by pillar box: At the request of Cllr Thomson it was agreed that this item be returned to the agenda as the problems remained.

Other road repair matters:

Millfields and Mill Lane - potholes: This item was removed from the list as agreed at the last meeting, the repairs having been completed.

Large pothole on western access to Church Green (Main Road): ECC had suggested that this area was the responsibility of the Parish Church. It was understood that the Parochial Church Council had the matter in hand.

Members were reminded that Mr Samir Pandya, Acting Area Highways Manager at ECC, had agreed to attend the Parish Council Meeting on 30th January 2008 to speak about Highways issues.

88 Quarries

88.1 St Clare's Hall Quarry

Correspondence with Essex County Council was received. The Committee was concerned that ECC appeared to be passing all responsibility for action to the operator. Mr Bowen volunteered to try to monitor the current movements of lorries to and from the site.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted and that Mr Bowen be thanked for his offer to monitor lorry movements.

88.2 Royal Oak Quarry and Sandon Quarry

There was nothing further to report.

89 Parishes Transportation Group

Cllr Mrs Wells reported on the meeting of the Group held in Danbury on 8th January 2008 and attended by herself and Cllr Berlyn. County Cllr Norman Hume and Mr Tony Ciabarro of ECC Highways had been present and had discussed the County Council's 10 year highways plan. The plan did not include a bypass for Maldon, as the town was not seen as a growth area and money was not available. Specific proposals which were mentioned included a new mini roundabout at Hatfield Peverel and minor improvements at the Army & Navy roundabout.

Cllr Hume and Mr Ciabarro stated that the County Council's aim was to keep traffic flowing as smoothly as possible through all the villages. They asked the Parishes' Transportation Group to put forward suggestions for small schemes, up to a maximum cost of £5 million each, to improve the traffic situation in the villages. Suggestions could include improvements to public transport. For its next meeting, on 11th March 2008, the Transportation Group wished the Parish Councils to put forward suggestions for such schemes.

In discussion, the Committee agreed that this matter should be referred to Parish Council and that all members of the Council should have the opportunity to bring suggestions to the meeting.

RESOLVED: that consideration of small road/transport improvement schemes be placed as an item on the agenda for Parish Council on 30th January 2008, and that all Councillors be asked in advance to bring suggestions to the meeting.

90 Bus Shelters

90.1 Bus Shelter by Eves Corner pond

The Committee was informed that this had now been repaired.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

90.2 Bus shelter opposite The Avenue (Maldon side)

ECC had apologised for the delay in resolving this issue and would be writing to the affected residents shortly to explain the reasons for the placing of the shelter. The Parish Council would be informed when the shelter would be erected.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

90.3 Power to bus shelter near The Avenue (Chelmsford side)

ECC Highways had confirmed that this work was being put in hand.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

91 Neighbourhood Action Panel and policing

Cllr Whiteing had been present at the last meeting of the NAP. He explained that it was attended by police and residents, including young people, and that meetings were informal and were not minuted. He had informed the Panel that the Parish Council had agreed in principle to provide a teen shelter, but that it would take time to find the necessary finance. It had been reported at the meeting that friends of a 13 year old Danbury resident who had died recently would like to have a bench installed in her memory, possibly at Eves Corner where she liked to sit.

Cllr Whiteing was thanked for his report, and agreed to a request from Cllr Wood to write a paragraph on the NAP for the next Danbury Times.

In the discussion which followed a question arose as to whether the police still gave out incident numbers to members of the public when a crime was reported. If true, it

was felt that this would have serious implications for insurance companies and for the insured. It was agreed that the matter should be raised with the police.

RESOLVED: that Essex Police be asked to confirm whether or not incident numbers were given to members of the public who reported a crime.

92 DEFRA Booklet: Ways to tackle Climate Change

As agreed at the last meeting (minute 74 refers), the booklet had now been circulated to all Councillors. The Chairman proposed that a Working Group be set up to consider the proposals in detail. This was agreed. Cllrs Keeler, Bolwell, Thomson, Wells, Whiteing and Mr Bowen volunteered to serve on the Group. It was suggested that other Council Committees, especially Facilities, should be represented on the Group. Mr Bowen suggested that membership be further widened by inviting other village organisations, such as the Danbury Society, to send a representative.

RESOLVED:

a) that a Working Group be established to study the Defra Climate Change booklet and consider ways of implementing its recommendations;

b) that, at the next meeting of Parish Council, members of other Council Committees be invited to join the Group

c) that consideration be given to inviting other village organisations to participate.

93 Traffic Calming Measures Little Baddow Road

Further to Minute 77.3 of the meeting of Environment Committee held on 28th November 2007, correspondence had been received from two residents who were opposed to the proposal made by another resident for traffic calming measures in Little Baddow Road.

RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted and that acknowledgements be sent to the writers if not already sent.

94 Signage – Butts Lane

Further to Minute 77.1 of the Environment Committee (28th November 2007) it was reported that ECC had placed an order for the erection of a sign with the legend “Unsuitable for HGVs” (white lettering on a blue background with a white border). The sign would be erected on the existing post below the sign indicating two-way traffic in Butts Lane.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

95 Proposed Traffic Schemes

ECC Highways Department had written to all Parish Councils requesting suggestions for small improvement schemes (as opposed to maintenance or repair work) to be incorporated into a three-year rolling programme for each parish. The Area Highways Manager would assess the proposals against a standard set of criteria, and Parish Councils would have to choose between schemes if, as expected, the suggestions exceeded the available budget.

The Committee welcomed this initiative and agreed that the matter be deferred for full discussion at the next meeting. Members also felt that this item should be considered in conjunction with the work of the Transportation Group discussed earlier.

RESOLVED: that the request from ECC Highways be considered at the next meeting.

96 DIY Graffiti Removal Kits

It was reported that Chelmsford Borough Council was introducing DIY Graffiti Removal Kits. The kits would be available on loan free of charge to local organisations and residents.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

97 Annual General Meeting of the Essex Tourism Association

The minutes of the AGM held on 30th October 2007 had been circulated.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

98 Danbury Times

Cllr Wood reminded the Chairman that a report would be required for the next edition of Danbury Times. The first meeting of the Publicity Group would be taking place shortly.

99 Matters for Report

Although not an Environment matter, Cllr Berlyn drew members attention to the likely change of date of the Annual Parish Meeting to a date later in April. This was because the previously agreed date of 2nd April clashed with the school holiday period.

200 Dates of Meetings in 2008

5th March, 16th April, 11th June, 3rd September, 15th October, 3rd December

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10pm.

Cllr A Keeler, Chairman

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Signed

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Date