

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

A Quality Council



Minutes of Meeting held on 30 September 2009 at 7.45pm in the Parish Office

Present: Cllrs S Berlyn (Chairman) A Keeler
 M Wood (Vice Chairman) J Langley
 A Allen A Pemberton
 D Bolwell D Powell
 H Clacy J Thomson
 D Hawkins D Whiteing

In attendance: Mrs M Saunders, Clerk
 Mrs E Blyth, Assistant Clerk

69 Opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular three members of the Danbury St Cleres Scout Troop who were present to observe the meeting in connection with the Chief Scout's Gold Award.

The Chairman also reported the news that the Village Website had won third place in the 2009 website competition run by the Essex Association of Local Councils. Thanks were expressed to the Assistant Clerk who was responsible for the site.

70 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs S Freeman and M Telling.

71 Declarations of Interest

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

72 Public Question Time

The Scouts did not wish to ask any questions. No other members of the public were present.

73 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record.

74 Cllr Jacki Wells

Cllr Wells had resigned from the Parish Council due to pressure of work and other commitments. The Clerk had sent her a formal letter of thanks for her contribution to the work of the Council. Members agreed to take the appropriate steps to appoint a new councillor.

RESOLVED: that the statutory procedures be followed to fill the vacancy.

75 Parish Plan Review

Cllr Pemberton and Cllr Allen had met to discuss the way forward. Earlier attempts to involve residents in the Review had not been successful, and funding was also an

issue as RCCE was no longer able to offer financial support. A small grant might be available from ECC. RCCE had suggested a much smaller process for the review than for the original Parish Plan, concentrating on particular aspects. A budget of £1500 had already be set aside but more might need to be added in the November budget. After discussion Cllr Pemberton agreed to bring suggested options and cost appraisals to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Pemberton provide the agreed information at the November meeting of the Council.

76 Reports from Village Organisations

76.1 Village Hall Management Committee: The report of the meeting of the committee held in July 2009 was received.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

76.2 Landisdale Charity: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2009 were received. Cllr Keeler reported that the developer's option on land at Sandpit Field (near Little Fields) expired in February 2010. The Trust was still interested in the possibility of providing additional low-cost housing in the village.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

77 Tennis Club Lease

The draft lease had now been forwarded to the Tennis Club which would be meeting on the 8th October 2009 to discuss it. The Club was expected to request a meeting with the Leases Working Group.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

78 Publicity

78.1 Danbury Times: Cllr Wood reported that work on the Autumn 2009 issue was progressing though a number of items were outstanding. He issued a further request to members for suggestions of articles they might like to see in the newsletter.

78.2 Danbury tourist leaflet: The leaflet was in need of updating before it was reprinted.

RESOLVED: that the information in 78.1 and 78.2 above be noted.

79 Timetable of meetings for 2010

RESOLVED: that the timetable of meetings be approved.

80 Drainage/ Car Parking Project

Parish Council had now received from CBC the Certificate of Lawful Proposed Use or Development for phase 3 (car parks, lighting and footpaths).

The Clerk had requested the Consultant to send out tenders for the works, as already agreed by Parish Council. She understood that six companies had been invited to tender, the closing date being Friday 9th October 2009 at 12 noon. The opening of the tenders would take place at 7.30pm on Monday 12th October, followed immediately by a meeting of the Project Group to discuss the tenders and make a recommendation to Parish Council.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted, and that the Chairman of Council and Cllrs Clacy and Powell be authorised to open the tenders.

81 Emergency and Pandemic Flu Planning

Cllr Pemberton had attended a Major Incident Planning meeting at the CBC Emergency Bunker on 21st September 2009 at which a new Rest Centre Box had been supplied to be kept in the Parish Office. The main subject of the meeting had been Swine Flu. The number of cases was expected to peak around the end of October, but the projected number of cases had been downgraded. Apparently the Bunker could take over from the national flu phone line if it was overwhelmed by calls.

Cllr Pemberton reported that the local doctors' surgeries were less concerned now about the potential impact on their services and it was no longer felt necessary to consider a special phone line. A request through Neighbourhood Watch for volunteer 'flu friends' had had very little response, but as the threat had been downgraded the scheme was no longer necessary. Cllr Pemberton agreed to write to the 7 volunteers to inform them of this.

Cllr Freeman had also received a minimal response from volunteers in relation to the general Emergency Plan. Members felt that a core number of volunteers was required for the Plan and it was suggested that a future appeal should be specific about the kind of help which would be needed, eg at an emergency rest centre.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted and that Cllr Pemberton be thanked for his work in relation to the Flu emergency plan.

82 Reports from Council Committees

In addition to the Minutes received, the following reports were made:

82.1 Resources Committee: The Chairman of Resources reported that the Committee had recently discussed backup provision for the office computers and had made revisions to the Three Year Plan. A Bad Debt policy had been considered, although the Committee had decided not to pursue a recent bad debt.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

82.2 Planning Committee: The Chairman of Planning reported as follows:

82.2.1 Danbury Planning Framework: On 12th October the Chairman of Council, the Chairman of Planning, and the Clerk would be meeting with Jenny Robinson of the CBC Planning Design Team to discuss a way forward.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

82.2.2 Land at Pedlar's Path/Capons Lane: (Planning minute 23 of 22nd June 2009 and Parish Council minute 51.1.2 of 29th July 2009 refer.)

Planning had referred the resolution below to Council in July 2009 following a request for support from a resident:

"That Parish Council be asked to determine whether to act in support of the application to have land between Capons Lane and Gay Bowers Lane designated as a village green."

At the July 2009 meeting, Council had deferred a decision while further information was sought. The Clerk had now confirmed with Essex County Council that no costs would be incurred by the Council if it supported the application (nor were there costs to the applicant). However, if the land became a Village Green its maintenance would then become the

responsibility of the Council. In the light of this information members considered whether to write to ECC to support the resident's application.

While some members were in favour of offering support, others felt that Danbury already had sufficient village greens and that the the land in question was not a good location for a green. Concerns were also raised about the potential increase in the Groundsman's workload as well as the cost. After discussion Cllr Clacy proposed that the Council should not support the application, and this was seconded by Cllr Wood. The motion was carried by 5 votes to 2, with 5 abstentions.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council did not support the application to have land at Capons Lane designated as a village green.

A letter would be sent to inform the resident of the Council's decision.

82.3 Facilities Committee: The Chairman of Facilities reported as follows:

82.3.1 Electrical works at the Sports & Social Centre: The Clerk had obtained a specification for the electrical works at the Sports & Social Centre. The cost was likely to be over £10,000, meaning that tenders would be required and a JCT minor works contract setting out the conditions of tender. This process would add to the cost. In view of this Facilities Committee had suggested that the work be carried out in three stages. The earthing improvements were the most urgent, followed by the updating of the distribution boards and then the remaining items. Most of the work identified was the Landlord's responsibility. Cllr Allen confirmed that he had looked over the specification and he considered it was basically sound.

RESOLVED: that the electrical work be carried out in stages and that the matter be referred back for consideration by Facilities as required.

82.3.2 Charges for car parking: At its meeting on 2nd September 2009 (minute 66) Facilities had agreed unanimously to recommend that the Parish Council did not charge for car parking but should look at long-stay parking by non-users of the site. Council discussed the recommendation and considered, in particular, the likely cost of administering a payment scheme for long-stay users.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council does not charge for car parking at this time but looks further at the issue of long-stay parking by non-users of the site.

82.4 Environment Committee: The Chairman of Environment reported that a number of visiting speakers had attended the last meeting of the Committee. Discussions had covered footpath surfaces, signage, the use of footpaths by cyclists, and the issue of perceived speeding on Little Baddow Road. The Clerk informed members that ECC would be resurfacing the area outside the shops at Eves Corner.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

83 Charters

A letter had been received from Chelmsford Borough Council suggesting a meeting with the Parish Council to discuss Parish Council Charters. The Chairman reminded members that work on this issue had started some time ago but had been held up by changes of personnel at CBC. The Clerk pointed out that work on Part 1 had nearly been completed but then abandoned. Cllr Powell proposed that a meeting should be arranged. This was seconded by Cllr Pemberton and agreed by 11 votes to 0, with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council meet with CBC to discuss a Parish Charter.

84 Country Park Forum

The meeting had been arranged for 27th October 2009 from 1pm – 3pm. Following the last meeting the Clerk had consulted ECC and had confirmed that only two PC representatives were permitted. In view of this Cllr Thomson indicated that he wished to resign as a representative allowing Cllr Allen to take his place.

RESOLVED: that Cllrs Allen and Keeler attend the Country Park Forum as the Council's representatives.

85 The Power of Well-Being

As 80% of Councillors had attended the training session held the previous night, 29th September 2009, the Council had met the necessary criteria to exercise this power. (The Clerk had already successfully completed her training.) Members therefore considered whether to adopt the power.

After a brief discussion Cllr Hawkins proposed that the power be adopted. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Wood. However several members felt that there had been insufficient time for them to digest the training received and to consider the papers provided, and it was suggested that a vote should not take place until members had had time to consider the implications. Cllr Hawkins therefore withdrew his proposal and it was agreed that the item be deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: that a decision on whether or not to adopt the Power of Well-Being be deferred to the November meeting of Council.

86 Larger Local Councils Forum

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 16th October 2009 at 9.30am at Springfield Parish Council. Cllr Max Telling would be attending as the Council's representative.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

87 Public Conveniences – Danbury

Chelmsford Borough Council's response to earlier correspondence was received and its more positive approach was welcomed by the Council. Cllr Powell reported that the condition of the ladies toilet had been good when checked recently, but the gents was still poor. The Clerk reported that CBC was increasing its monitoring of the sub-contractor responsible for cleaning the toilets.

After discussion it was agreed that further questions be put to CBC regarding the evidence for CBC's statement that vandalism was taking place during the day, the costs of arranging for the toilets to be locked overnight, and whether any progress had been made with ECC to achieve the same quality of public conveniences as in the Country Park.

RESOLVED: that the above questions be put to CBC.

88 Revision of Standing Orders (Minute 155 of 28th January 2009 refers.)

The Clerk had again considered the wording of Paragraph 63 of Standing Orders (Unauthorised Activities) in consultation with the EALC. A new version of the paragraph was considered. In discussion members were still not convinced that the wording properly conveyed what was intended, and it was agreed that the matter be considered further.

RESOLVED: that the matter considered again and brought to the next meeting.

89 Training

The Chairman of the Council was currently undergoing EALC's three Chairman's Day training modules, the dates being 9th September, 7th October and 25th November 2009.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

90 Dispensation for membership of Sports & Social Centre

Further correspondence had been forwarded to Chelmsford Borough Council and the dispensation for Cllrs Bolwell and Freeman had now been approved by the Standards Board.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

91 Parish Office/Meeting Room

Further to Minute 31.2.4 of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 11th May 2009, the first meeting of the working group to consider development of the Parish Office had now been held. The group was investigating ideas and the Clerk would be contacting the Planning Department at Chelmsford Borough Council to see what might be acceptable in the Conservation Area.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

92 NALC Chief Executives Report June 2009

The report of the Chief Executive of the NALC was received.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

93 Chelmer Housing Partnership 'Wednesday Walkabout'

Cllr Pemberton had attended the Walkabout in Danbury on 16th September 2009 arranged by CHP and his report had been circulated.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

94 Pedestrian access route between Mill Lane and Pedlars Close

A member of the public had written to the Council concerning Chelmer Housing Partnership's proposal to close this narrow access route between two properties. ECC Highways had confirmed that the access was on land belonging to Chelmer Housing Partnership.

RESOLVED: that the matter be referred to Environment Committee for consideration.

95 Matters for Report (for information only)

95.1 A congratulatory letter had been received from the EALC for obtaining a Merit in the Best Kept Village Competition

95.2 The Essex Tourism Association Ltd was to hold its Tourism & Leisure Show 2010 at the Five Lakes Resort, Tolleshunt Knights, Maldon, on Thursday 25th February 2010, from 10am to 3pm.

95.3 The Chairman asked for an item to discuss the name and title of the Council to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

RESOLVED: that the information in 95.1 to 95.3 above be noted.

96 Dates of Meetings in 2009

The next meeting was scheduled for 25th November 2009.

97 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: that, in accordance with S1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the nature of the business to be discussed it was in the opinion of the Council advisable that the Press and the Public be instructed to withdraw.

98 Three-Year Strategic Plan

This item had been raised with all Committees at the request of Resources Committee. A draft document prepared prior to the Resources Committee meeting on 22nd September 2009 was received.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

99 Royal British Legion

99.1 The Five Year Electrical check of the hut had now been completed and a copy of the Certificate provided to the Council;

99.2 Council considered a letter received from the British Legion and agreed that the best way forward was to meet with the British Legion to discuss the points raised.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk arrange a meeting between the Parish Council and representatives of the RBL.

Business having been concluded, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.15pm.

Signed: Cllr S Berlyn, Chairman

Date: