

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL
A Quality Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held on Monday 18th April 2016 at 8pm
at the Sports & Social Centre, Danbury

Present: Parish Cllrs: S Berlyn (Chairman), Mrs A Chapman (Vice Chairman), G Gardiner, Mrs A Gardiner, Mrs B Hallett, A Keeler, B Kennewell, P Sutton, M Telling

City Cllrs: Richard Ambor, Bob Shepherd and Ian Wright
Essex County Cllr John Spence

Approximately 76 members of the public including representatives of Little Baddow, Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre and East Hanningfield Parish Councils, local clubs and organisations.

In attendance: Mrs M Saunders (Parish Clerk), Mrs M Dyer (Assistant Clerk), Mrs H Mayes (Assistant Clerk)

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Cllrs D Carlin and R Wakefield, Cllr Norman Hume, Lingwood Bridge Club, Woodham Walter Parish Council, Purleigh Parish Council, Over 60's Club and Revd Ashley.

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Stuart Berlyn, welcomed all present to the meeting. The Chairman explained that information sheets had been placed on each chair for residents to read about the work of the Parish Council in the last year and the financial report together with comment forms.

2. Michelle Gardiner Rural Community Council of Essex regarding Neighbourhood Planning.

It was explained that the Rural Community Council for Essex gives support to Community Plans.

It was pleasing to see such a good turn out from the village. This was an opportunity for the local people of the village to create a plan for the benefit of local people regarding development and land use. It would set out a policy for Danbury. The Neighbourhood Plan would be community led and the community must be involved. The Neighbourhood Plan was from the 2011 Localism Act. The Community has a right to a Neighbourhood Plan and it is an opportunity for the village to say where they wish development to be and to say what character they would like the village to have.

A Neighbourhood Plan sets up Planning Objectives and Local Planning Priorities and Options. The speaker made the following points:

- Rules must be followed and could be complex but guidance was available.
- The Business Community must be involved.
- Policies had to be based on evidence, consultation, using research statistics and old documents.
- Policies must conform to National Planning Policy and local plans. Must work with Chelmsford City Council to ensure this happens. The City Council has a duty to help.
- Policies would be used in determination of Planning Applications and the Neighbourhood Plan would give specific detail to the village of Danbury.
- The Plan would benefit the village by making local decisions.
- Planning Applications would be judged against the Plan.
- Site Specific Areas could be protected, based on local knowledge
- The Plan could acknowledge special areas owned by the Wildlife Trust and the National Trust to protect these areas for the future.
- This was a new process but now lots of the issues had been ironed out.
- The disadvantage was that it was a complicated subject and expectations could be controversial. This is now getting sorted out.
- The Plan would be a lot of hard work. It could not just be a Parish Council group, it needed to be a group of residents.
- It is a very long process - presently the Parish Council has out for consultation the Designation of the Neighbourhood Area for the Plan which is the current the area of the Parish Council
- A group would need to be set up and a budget worked out and how to develop the plan
- There must be consultation, questionnaires, activities, and views of the villagers, use of existing plans, fact finding and justification and an infrastructure audit. The document should be drafted with a vision. There should be objectives for the area. There are 5 stages of preparing the plan. The proposal then goes out to the Community.
- The documents are then validated and looked at by an Independent Planner.
- There is a referendum where the village vote "Yes or No" to the document.
- The Plan is then made.
- There is support available and currently there is a grant for up to £9,000 but is awarded in stages. The National Average cost for a Plan is £15,000. Some examples are higher or lower than this amount. Chelmsford City Council and the Rural Community Council of Essex could assist with accessing the grant.
- There are some areas that have completed a Plan but none in Essex yet. There are 100 completed nationally. The pilots took a long time to complete as the process was new. The timescale for the Plan could be 2- 3 years depending on how many volunteers come forward.
- The Policies are wide ranging and quite lengthy.
- In Danbury it would be important to recognise the landscape and character of the village. The Chelmsford City Local Plan would not go into this much detail.
- Open Spaces and Green Spaces would also be important to Danbury. Should make sure that the proposal recognises the wildlife corridor and the footways and bridleways. The plan should recognise the important qualities of Danbury.

- The Neighbourhood Plan must be Community Led. There are all sorts of ways to take it forward regarding Environment, Health, Education and/or other topics of interest to Danbury residents.
- The Neighbourhood Plan should be looked at as a new opportunity for communities to have a real say
- This process comes from central government.
- The village already has a Parish Plan and a Danbury Planning Framework which can be a basis for the new document.
- It is a long process and will eventually be agreed as supplementary planning guidance.
- The Neighbourhood Plan cannot be a Parish Council Project.

3. Question Time for Michelle Gardiner from Rural Community Council of Essex

Residents made the following comments and questions:

John Ferguson Butts Lane – Danbury Medical Centre land - developers proposed flat development, the City Council would approve this. If a Neighbourhood Plan was in place this might not occur. Hopefully this would be better and he was interested to see what happens.

David Bolwell – There are problems in Danbury with rural ambience and keeping a rural environment but also keeping the convenience of shops and transport. This would be an item for debate in the Plan.

John Alexander – Cherry Garden Lane. The status of the document will be interesting. Currently the Parish Council is subservient to the City Council and they have the final decision. The Parish Council is the second level and policy wording must be carefully written whether the word 'should' or 'recommended' be used. Negotiation would have to take place with Planning Officers. There is more chance in a Neighbourhood Plan to make a stronger policy than before.

Cllr Ian Wright Chairman of the Planning Committee at Chelmsford City Council stated how important it is that a Neighbourhood Plan is done as this would carry far more weight than a 'Village Design Statement' or 'Planning Framework'. Cllr Wright congratulated the Parish Council for proposing to do a Neighbourhood Plan. The document would work very closely with the Danbury Development Framework. Cllr Wright stressed the need for residents to volunteer and advised that CCC will provide support for volunteers.

Cllr April Chapman, Vice Chairman of Danbury Parish Council advised that if Danbury start the process in 2017 and move towards adoption in 2020 to 2021 – this would be in line with the Local Authority's Plan which will be issued in 2021. However timings are tight. CCC will work with the Parish Council in terms of the most up to date policies.

John Ferguson stated that residents may not be happy with the Chelmsford City Council Plan and was advised that whilst a Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan would go to a referendum, the CCC plans only go through a consultation process.

Les Draper East Hanningfield Parish Council advised that they are producing a Village Design Statement. Should they still continue? He was advised that there are all types of Community Plans and that this question would be answered more fully outside of the meeting.

The Chelmsford City Plan will run for 15 years from 2021 to 2036, therefore the Danbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan would need to mirror this.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman explained that Danbury Medical Centre had not opened due to problems with BT Open Reach and their IT and phone system not working. They remained in the old building. After the Parish Council pursuing the zebra crossing outside the Medical Centre this would now go ahead. There had also been problems with BT Open Reach and putting the traffic lights at Eves Corner into operation so that the CCTV could monitor them from County Hall.

The Chairman also appealed for volunteers to join the Speed Watch Group, to help deliver Danbury Times and to join the team of litter pickers.

4. Presentation for First Responders

Gordon Wren from the Danbury, Little Baddow and Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre First Responders was requested to come up. The Chairman of the Council thanked the First Responders for all their hard work since they first started 15 years ago.

Gordon thanked the Danbury Businessman Lunch Club for their financial support as well as the Parish Council which helped to purchase training equipment. The team consisted of 11 volunteers and 8 were present at the meeting. The team were imputing in the range of 600 hours per month and were available 24 hours a day in addition to ambulance cover and were often first on the scene. For the last 4 – 5 years they had even covered Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

In 2002 - they had 26 calls in the year (these days they receive 26 calls in 10 days)
In 2014 - they received 480 calls.
In 2015 - they received 580 calls.
In 2016 - there had been 200 calls so far and it is only April. (At this time last year there had only been 70 calls received)

David one of the First Responders who had volunteered from the beginning had attended 1300 calls.

Additionally the team delivered heart start courses free of charge to a group of 10 - 12 people. It was a challenge to go to Sandon School and train 250 school children at a time. They also helped with the Patient Involvement Group and helped other groups as far away as Thurrock.

All of the team that were present were invited up and were presented with a cheque for £250.00 for the First Responders. Photographs were taken.

5. Approval of Annual Parish Meeting Minutes of 30th March, 2015 circulated.

City Cllr Gary Gardiner proposed that the minutes be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Max Telling and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 30th March 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

6. Question Time and Chairman’s Concluding Remarks

The Chairman asked if anyone present wished to ask any questions. The following comments and questions were raised:

Malcolm Read - asked about parking in Well Lane especially on the blind bend. Photographs were provided. He felt that there should be double yellow lines. He was also requested to send the photographs electronically so that they could be forwarded to Essex County Council Highways. The Parish Council had been lobbying for a number of years for something to be done in this area with no success. Currently consideration is being given to a one-way system at The Heights.

Pam Stubbs - asked about the reduction in speed limit in Bicknacre Road. Residents were horrified at the speed cars were travelling at. She wondered whether there could be flashing speed notices and for Highways to measure the speed.

The Chairman of the Council did say that the Parish Council had been told that there was not a major speed problem within the village.

The Chairman of the Council thanked all the staff and the Parish Council for their help. Thanks were also given to all the organisations and residents who had supported the annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.07 p.m.

Signed.....

Chairman of the Parish Council