

# DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

*A Quality Council*



## ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

### **Minutes of the meeting of the held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, the Old School House, Main Road, Danbury**

Present: Cllrs: S Berlyn, D Carlin, Mrs A Gardiner, Mrs B Hallett, A Keeler, P Sutton

In attendance: Mrs H Mayes, Assistant Clerk  
Two members of the public

Cllr Berlyn opened the meeting as the Chairman and Vice Chairman were not present.

#### **1 Election of Chairman for 2016/17**

Cllr Berlyn confirmed that although Cllr Mrs Chapman was not present she had indicated that she would be prepared to continue as Chairman. Cllr Mrs Hallett proposed Cllr Mrs Chapman. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Gardiner. No other nominations were received and Cllr Mrs Chapman was elected unopposed.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Mrs Chapman be elected Chairman of the Environment Committee for the municipal year 2016/17.

#### **2 Election of Vice Chairman for 2016/17**

Cllr Mrs Gardiner proposed Cllr Mrs Hallett. This was seconded by Cllr Carlin. No other nominations were received and Cllr Mrs Hallett was elected unopposed.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Mrs Hallett be elected Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee for the municipal year 2016/17.

Cllr Mrs Hallett then continued to chair the meeting.

#### **3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mrs Chapman and Cllr Wakefield.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest**

All Members were reminded that they must disclose any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. They were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the meeting, if they had not previously notified her about it.

No interests were declared.

#### **5 Public Questions (Time limited to 15 minutes)**

There were two members of the public present.

The owner of Frettons Lodge had attended with concerns regarding the proposed footway in minute 11.2. This would affect his frontage and he believed that the boundary ECC had marked on the map was not correct and was in his ownership. He stated that the current Danbury Planning Framework was not in favour of urbanisation

and that any new footway would have to meet certain standards i.e. textured paving etc. He had not received any contact regarding the path from ECC. His land is registered and the boundary is unusual due to an old pond. He has copies of plans from the County Council but these do not correspond with the design drawings from the LHP. There is also a hawthorn hedge near to the tennis courts which would need to be removed. Although the resident agreed that a path would be useful he felt that an already well-trodden path on the south side (National Trust land) could be improved to create a year round path whilst retaining the rural character. He thought that the proposed width of the footway was very narrow and could be dangerous to pedestrians i.e. when buses pass.

Members confirmed that this issue had been on the request list for many years and the location did need a path as it was well used. The positioning of the proposed footway would also join up with other footways adjacent. A road safety audit should have been carried out at this location.

The second resident had attended to speak about the proposed speed reductions in Bicknacre/Woodhill Road. He and his immediate neighbours were opposed to this. He felt that the change from derestricted to 40mph was enough and slowed down the traffic without too much interruption to the traffic flow. If the speed was reduced to 30mph he was concerned that there would not be sufficient gaps in the traffic for people to pull out onto the main road. This situation would be made worse as the traffic increased over time due to new housing developments in other areas. He considered the sightlines clear and was not aware of any accidents on this stretch of road in the many years he had lived there. There were too many bends for people to drive too fast. He felt that the speed reduction was unjustified and unwelcome.

Members had been informed that that traffic counts would be carried out on both roads by ECC and they wished to receive the resulting information before any final decisions are made. If other residents were in opposition to a speed reduction they should write to the Parish Council to make their objections known.

*One member of the public left.*

## **6 Minutes of the Environment Committee**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **7 Footpaths**

### **7.1 Footpath Officer Reports**

The Footpath Officer had sent the comments below regarding footpaths around Riffhams. The Parish Council had not received any further information regarding the diversion of the path at present.

*'With reference to Para 90 in the minutes of the last Environment meeting, I have visited the 'unofficial footpath' referred to by the new owners of Riffhams. It is a well walked footpath, easy to follow and in my opinion has been used as a link to reach the official FP11 for many years. Referring to the Danbury Parish Footpath map it starts at the bend of Riffhams Lane where the green wooded area is shown and continues up into Hall Wood to join FP11 at Riffhams Farm. There are no indications at the Riffhams Lane entrance as to whether this route is an official footpath or private land. There is no*

*barrier, just an opening in the hedge. It would be advantageous if the owner would allow this route to become a Permissive Footpath.*

*I have also had a look at his proposed diverting of FP11. In my opinion there is no need to move the current route as it follows close by a clearly marked fence to reach Graces Lane. The path then passes along the field side of the hedge as green corridor, separated from the field by a fence. It exits onto Graces Lane to get to FP19 on the opposite side of the road. ‘*

The Assistant Clerk was asked to contact Essex Public Rights of Way to ask whether this was an official footpath (definite public right of way) or a permissive path.

Cllr Keeler noted that the footpath map sign that had been made recently was incorrect as it still showed telephone boxes and the toilets. Members asked if this could be removed in some way as the map might be referred to in case of emergency and there were no longer telephones in situ.

RESOLVED: that the Assistant Clerk investigates if the sign can be altered.

## **7.2 Footpath 17**

The Groundsman/Reparation had not yet been able to put down further woodchip due to the amount of work outstanding in other areas and unavailability of the Reparation Team. The Assistant Clerk had noted from the LHP minutes that work had been undertaken on footpaths in other parishes regarding surface and drainage issues. Members were concerned that in the past ECC had put road planings on the footpaths which was not something the Parish Council had wanted. The Assistant Clerk was requested to ask how surface and drainage improvements were made to see if this would be appropriate for footpath 17 as a longer term solution.

RESOLVED: that the Assistant Clerk requests further information regarding possible surface and drainage work to footpath 17.

## **7.3 Open Spaces Society**

An article was circulated regarding the closure of definitive maps in 2026.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

## **8 Bus Transportation – Transport Partnership Meeting**

Notification of forthcoming meetings had been forwarded to the Transport Representative. ECC had been asked to consult with the Parish on the location of bus stops/shelters. A response was still awaited.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

## **9 Highway Matters**

### **9.1 Parking Issues – Elm Green Lane**

The Spinney had been consulted on putting in posts along the verge at Elm Green (opposite the Memorial) and did not have any objections. ECC had confirmed that this was listed as a Village Green and was therefore part of the green on the opposite side of the road. Members felt that posts would be useful at this location as it had been noted that cars were regularly parking on the grassed area. It was agreed that the area from the junction with Main Road around the first grass verge should have posts installed initially. Oak posts would need to be purchased and the Groundsman consulted regarding number and position as he cut the grass in this area (removable posts may be required). The Environment Budget would need to be checked and if more money was required this may need to be requested from Resources. Cllr Berlyn

proposed that wooden posts were put in around the grass verge at the top of Elm Green Lane. This was seconded by Cllr Carlin and all were in favour.

RESOLVED: that wooden posts were put in around the grass verge at the top of Elm Green Lane.

### **9.2 Parkdale (junction with Elm Green Lane)**

No further information or support had been received for yellow lines at this location

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

### **9.3 Parking Issues Well Lane**

A resident had raised the issue of parking at Well Lane at the recent APM. This was looked at several years ago and again in December 2015 and does not meet the criteria of ECC or the SEPP. It is unlikely that they would look at this again unless the Parish Council was prepared to fund it (cost in the region of £2000). The Environment Committee did not have sufficient budget to request this work. It was suggested that the photographs provided could be sent to the SEPP to see if they could take any action against those drivers.

RESOLVED: that the photographs of the parking issues are sent to the SEPP.

### **9.4 Surface Dressing Programme 2016**

A list of roads due for surface dressing was circulated.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

### 9.5 Highways matters (reported items)

The Public Rights of Way Manager had confirmed that there is still no PRow Officer for Danbury. The Assistant Clerk was requested to write to County Cllr Spence to see if he can advise when a PRow Officer would be appointed.

Location	Issue	Reported to	Date first reported	Ref No	Outcome
St Cleres Way	Concrete posts are leaning over causing a hazard	ECC	23/05/2014	2330013/ 2429631	28/10/15 to be inspected. further photos sent - new ref 2429631. 14/09/15 The Assistant Clerk would take photographs and send again. Posts were leaning further over. 11/9/15 rang ECC have asked for Prow to contact with update. 25/8/15 more information req. 6/8/15 owner disputing ownership of posts. 15/5/15 no prow officer for Danbury yet. Still waiting for updates. 10/2/15 Owner has been contacted in regard to removal of posts. 26/06/14 ECC to contact owner to request removal. 23/05/14 to be visited and assessed.
St Cleres Way	area near footpath 17 is uneven (near to steps)	ECC	26/05/2015	2403638	12/11/15 rang highways still awaiting inspection - email sent to highways. 11/9/15 still to be inspected - chased with ECC. 26/5/15 to be inspected. reported by resident.
Junc footpath 16/17	Oak Tree - deadwood branch hanging down	ECC	22-Jul	2414074	12/11/15 still awaiting inspection - email sent to highways 11/9/15 still to be inspected - chased up. 22/7/15 to be inspected. reported by AC
Penny Royal Road	Tree obstruction footpath 52	ECC	24/09/2015	2424596	12/11/15 still awaiting inspection - email sent to highways. 24/9/15 to be inspected. reported by resident.
Cherry Garden Lane	2 potholes	ECC	12/11/2015	2431767 2431768	16/5/16 BH reported many potholes had now been marked with orange paint. 25/1/16 ECC had looked at flooding but no action yet 30/11/15 BH advised ECC had inspected a pothole not reported. She would report other potholes and flooding at Cherry Garden Lane/Maldon Rd. 16/11/15 2431768 & 2431767 do not meet criteria for repair. reported by BH
Eves Corner	Lt Baddow Rd sign damaged	ECC	20/11/2015	2433102	2/3/16 no update. reported by resident
Mill Lane	Pothole	ECC	15/04/2016	2458895	9/5/16 no update
Footpath 11	As FP leaves Hall Wood towards Graces Lane - finger post down	ECC	11/03/2016	2452638	reported by Footpath Officer
Hyde Lane	Verge damage	ECC	26/02/2016	2449889	9/5/16 no update

RESOLVED: that County Cllr Spence is contacted regarding the lack of PRow Officer and that the other issues be noted.

## **10 Chelmsford Local Highways Panel (LHP)**

The minutes from the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016 were circulated.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

## **11 Local Highways Panel Requests**

The current position of the scheme requests were listed below.

### **11.1 Schemes currently submitted to the LHP**

#### **11.1.1 Footway between Overshot Bridge and Poplar Farm, Bicknacre Road**

The scheme validation was not completed in time for the March meeting but would be available for the next meeting in June.

#### **11.1.2 One Way System to exit The Heights**

At the March 2016 meeting the Local Highways Panel recommended funding of £2000 towards the feasibility and design of the scheme. This recommendation was signed off by the Cabinet Member for Highway & Transport Delivery and it would now enter the Approved Works Programme.

#### **11.1.3 Parking Issues in Belvedere Close**

City Cllr Ambor continued to try to help to resolve this issue.

#### **11.1.4 Woodhill Road & Bicknacre Road Speed Limit Reduction to 30mph**

The LHP were now in the process of arranging the automatic traffic counts needed to review the speed limits. There had been a slight delay in arranging the speed surveys as the Panel needed to make a funding recommendation towards a pot of monies for Survey Works in 2016/17. Members felt that the information gained from the surveys would be useful whether the speed limit was reduced or not.

RESOLVED: that the information in 11.1.1 to 11.1.4 be noted.

## **11.2 LHP Agreed Schemes**

### **New Footway Mayes Lane, Penny Royal Road, Woodhill Road**

The LHP budget had been halved for 2016-17 and therefore this request now only had approval for funding for the design stage. The implementation of the scheme had now been put back onto the potential schemes list for consideration in 2017-18. Members were asked to comment on the design and after some discussion agreed a response. RESOLVED: that the following comments were sent to the LHP from the Parish Council.

*The Parish Council remains supportive of this scheme and has no comments on the design. However, the resident of Frettons Lodge, Mayes Lane has contacted the Parish Council as he understands that the area marked as highways land on the design is actually under his ownership. This issue would need to be resolved with the resident prior to any work taking place.*

## **12 Quarries**

**12.1 St Clare's Hall:** Nothing to report

**12.2 Royal Oak Quarry:** Cllr Berlyn had reported debris on the road recently and within a few hours it had been swept. It was noted that the work on the site appears to have increased recently.

**12.3 Sandon Quarry:** Nothing to report.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

## **13 Living Landscapes**

The minutes of the recent meeting were circulated. The landowner had contacted the Parish Office regarding the land adjacent to Dial Common. She would not be available for some time but would then need to check her paperwork to check the

boundary of her land. Once she had done this, a meeting could be arranged on site. Cllr Mrs Hallett confirmed that a slight change was to be made to the minutes regarding the bat box opposite the Cricketers pub. This was not Parish Council land as the minutes originally stated.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

#### **14 Danbury Common**

Members were advised that the Head Ranger, Stuart Banks was no longer working for the National Trust in Danbury.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

#### **15 Project Danbury**

Planting had now taken place. The ongoing maintenance of the bed would now needed to be put in place. Several local companies had offered sponsorship and quotes would need to be obtained for the cost of ongoing maintenance. ECC had now confirmed that the verge adjacent to Tesco Garage was highways land and therefore a licence to plant would need to be obtained. There was not much space to plant so a tidy up and bulb planting day may be suitable for this area. A further meeting of the group was to be arranged shortly. Members wished to thank the Project Danbury Group for all the hard work on the flowerbed, particularly Cllr Mrs Chapman, Mr Graham Chapman and Cllr Mrs Hallett.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

#### **16 Litter**

The Groundsman had confirmed that he does have suitable equipment to fish litter out of the pond when required. The five new liners (one spare) for the bins at Eves Corner had been fitted. It was reported that the additional bin put in at Copt Hill had reduced the litter issue in this area.

The volunteer litter pickers had been contacted and most had responded to say they would continue to help although a couple of people had returned their pickers. The Clerk had purchased some more litter pickers and advertisements for litter picking volunteers would now go out in The Journal and on the website etc. Members were advised that the annual litter picking day was no longer held as volunteers monitored their own areas and the attendance on the day had been poor.

Danbury shops and businesses had been contacted and several had responded to say they already looked after their area and would continue to do so.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

#### **17 Parish Cleansing Day 18<sup>th</sup> August 2016**

The additional work had been requested and agreed by CCC. CCC had advised that they could not guarantee all the jobs would be completed but they would do as much as possible in the time allotted.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

#### **18 RCCE Essex Village of the Year Competition 2016**

This had been emailed to all Members as there was no meeting prior to the closing date. Two Councillors had responded and both were not in favour of entering so an entry has not been sent.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

**19 Matters for Report (for information only)**

It was reported that the Essex Bridleways Association had put together a petition to send to ECC to increase the number of bridleways around Essex due to the 2026 deadline for the creation of new rights of way. The petition had now closed.

**20 Dates of Meetings for 2016**

18<sup>th</sup> July, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> November.

There being no further business the Vice Chairman closed the meeting at 8.41pm.

Cllr Mrs April Chapman  
Chairman

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Signed

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Date