

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

A Quality Council



ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the held on Monday 21st November 2016 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, the Old School House, Main Road, Danbury

Present: Cllrs: Mrs A Chapman (Chairman, ex-officio), Mrs B Hallett (Vice Chairman), S Berlyn (ex officio), D Carlin, A Keeler, P Sutton.

In attendance: Mrs H Mayes, Assistant Clerk
Mrs I Guidotti, Tree Warden

55 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Wakefield.

56 Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded that they must disclose any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests they know they might have 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 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 pecuniary one. 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. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time.

There were no interests declared.

57 Public Questions (Time limited to 15 minutes)

There were no members of the public present.

58 Minutes of the Environment Committee

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

59 Tree Warden – Ash Dieback

Mrs Guidotti, one of the volunteer Danbury Tree Wardens, had attended to speak to the Committee about Ash Dieback and general monitoring of trees in the village. She had attended a number of forums and courses as Tree Warden and ash dieback was a significant concern. She had provided information and some photographs that were circulated. There were a lot of ash trees in the local area, although there were also mixed woodland. It was estimated that 2.2 billion ash trees would die in next 10 years and the disease was very evident in Suffolk and the East.

The Tree Warden had also met with the Groundsman to inspect four diseased ash trees on Dawson Memorial Field. It was considered that these would need to be removed after obtaining the appropriate permissions. The Tree Council did not advocate automatic removal of trees with die back as between 3 and 10 percent have resilience. The Tree Warden went on to explain the causes of die back which was a fungal infection

The Tree Warden would like the Committee to consider some publicity around the protection of trees. Residents could 'adopt' a local tree and ensure it received enough water (a bucket a day). Hedgerow trees could be encouraged i.e. allowing stronger specimens in a hedgerow to grow through. New developments should be encouraged to use natural hedgerows between boundaries rather than fences.

There was also a Living Ash Project which encouraged people to monitor trees and carry out a survey using an Ashtag app. There were several signs to look for which could be publicised. Research into the disease was ongoing and included DNA testing of trees. Residents and developers should be discouraged from planting ash trees but to use mixed planting of different trees native to the area.

Members agreed that this would be a good topic for a future Danbury Times and could also be publicised in The Journal, noticeboards, website etc. This would be more effective in the spring. It was also something that the Project Danbury Group could pursue in the New Year. The Chairman thanked the Tree Warden for attending the meeting.

60 Footpaths

60.1 Footpath Officer Reports

The Footpath Officers had no issues to report.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

60.2 ECC Public Rights of Way Officer

Danbury now had a part time PRow Officer in place. The current issues had been forwarded to him for an update.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

60.3 Footpath 17

The Highways Liaison Officer had passed the issue with the surface to the PRow Officer to inspect which should be carried out by the end of the month.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

60.4 Improvement of route from Danbury Common to Danbury Lakes/Footpath maps

As part of review of the Strategic Plan, Cllr Steele had proposed that improvements could be made to link the two areas above together.

Members discussed the various options and available paths. There was a gate in Well Lane which provided access to the park and in Woodhill Road there were a number of access points. The most hazardous section was crossing from Fitzwalter Lane across to Well Lane where it was difficult to see oncoming vehicles. One option would be to guide walkers up Well Lane to access the park. There was an unofficial footpath which could be suitable and would keep people away from the vehicles. This was a permissive path and was on National Trust land. The surface would need to be improved and additional signage put in. The Assistant Clerk was asked to make enquiries with the National Trust and ECC to investigate making this path a formal public right of way.

The second matter raised was to obtain leaflet dispensers for the footpath maps which could be located at appropriate areas around the village such as the car parks in the village including Danbury Lakes and Danbury Common. Costs would need to be obtained and a volunteer required to top them up. It was thought that there was already a leaflet dispenser in the Country Park. The Assistant Clerk would contact the Park Ranger, National Trust and the Groundsman to see if they had any comments to make on this idea and would also research the cost of purchasing leaflet dispensers. RESOLVED: that the Assistant Clerk would contact the Park Ranger, National Trust and the Groundsman to see if they had any comments to make on installing leaflet dispensers and would also research the cost of purchasing leaflet dispensers

61 Bus Transportation

61.1 Transport Partnership Meeting

The Transport Representative had sent a report from the Maldon meeting held on the 17th October.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

61.2 Maldon District Bus Network Review

Notification of the consultation had been received and publicised on the website and noticeboards. The Transport Representative had also received some questionnaires which she would give out on the bus.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

61.3 Park & Ride Timetable Changes

A response had been received from Cllr Johnson regarding the timetable changes. Unfortunately, it did not address the change of route which meant that the stops were too far from the city centre for residents with reduced mobility. Members agreed to send back individual responses and the Assistant Clerk would complete the survey on behalf of the Parish Council with comments already made to ECC.

RESOLVED: that Members agreed to send back individual responses and the Assistant Clerk would complete the survey on behalf of the Parish Council with comments already made to ECC.

62 Highway Matters

62.1 Entrance/Exit from the Library onto Main Road

A letter along with photographs and previous letters/emails had been sent to the Estates Manager at the Co-op asking for assistance with making this junction safer. No response had been received. The Assistant Clerk would continue to chase and would send the same to the Chief Executive of the Co-op.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

62.2 Bollards/Yellow Lines at the junction of The Avenue & Maldon Road

The SEPP had completed the TRO assessment form and it was currently with the Lead Councillor and Lead Officer for a decision.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

62.3 Well Lane

A resident had written to Cllr Spence (copied to the Parish Council). The Assistant Clerk had spoken with the resident to advise that the Parish Council had tried to resolve this issue on many occasions in previous years and that they were aware of the concerns.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

62.4 New online ECC Highways Tracking & Reporting Tool

A new online system had now been implemented at www.essex.gov.uk/highways for residents to report any highways issues. Routine maintenance would be inspected but any larger, more costly projects, would be referred to the Local Highways Panel to be agreed.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

62.5 CCC Highway Rangers Work Summary

A summary of work carried out up to July 2016 was circulated.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

62.6 Temporary Closure of Flooded Roads

A letter was circulated regarding this new initiative from ECC Highways. The Committee did not have any roads in Danbury that could be sent to ECC. Sandon Brook had flooded in the past but some improvement work been done.

An email had also been received from ECC regarding the Parish Council applying for grant funding to relieve flooding in Riffhams Lane and Mildmays. The grant would need to be applied for by the Parish Council on behalf of the residents. The Parish Council would be responsible for arranging the work. Members felt more information would be needed on this before a decision could be made and therefore a meeting would be arranged in December. Cllrs Berlyn and Steele offered to attend along with the Clerk. RESOLVED: that ECC were contacted to arrange a meeting to discuss the proposed grant.

62.7 Speed Limit Reduction Mill Lane/Hyde Lane

Emails had been received from a resident regarding a request for a 20mph limit on Mill Lane (and adjoining roads) as well as a section of Hyde Lane (and adjoining roads). This would have to go to the Local Highways Panel for consideration. Some Members did not support a 20mph limit unless it was in a specific location such as a school. There was a lack of enforcement of speed limits generally although a reduction could bring down the overall speed of motorists. It was not thought that there had been any recent reported accidents in this area. Previous LHP applications for speed limit reductions in other areas had not been successful. The more dangerous areas were the junctions with the A414 and Hyde Lane/Mill Lane. Speed perception was also an issue. Members agreed that this speed reduction should not be submitted to the LHP. RESOLVED: that the speed limit reduction request in Mill Lane / Hyde Lane should not be referred to the LHP.

62.8 Speeding in Cherry Garden Lane

An email had been received from a resident regarding issues with speeding in Cherry Garden Lane. A request would need to go via the LHP. No further emails or evidence had been received from other residents in support. Members felt that the issues were similar to the request discussed in 62.7 and that this request would not be suitable for the LHP. Cllr Berlyn noted that he had been advised that a Vehicle Activated Sign would be a cost of £8000 with a five year warranty.

RESOLVED: that the request for a solution to speeding in Cherry Garden Lane should not be referred to the LHP.

62.9 Highways matters (reported items)

The items below had been reported and updates requested.

Location	Issue	Reported to	Date first reported	Reference No	Outcome
Footpath Reports:					
St Cleres Way	Concrete posts are leaning over causing a hazard	ECC	23/05/2014	2330013 / 2429631	21/6/16 still being investigated. 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	21/6/16 still being investigated. 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.
Footpath 11	As the footpath leaves Hall Wood to make its way towards Graces Lane - finger post down	ECC	11/03/2016	2452638	11/3/16 to be inspected. reported by Footpath Officer
Footpath 52	Overgrown vegetation	ECC	26/08/2016	2478588	reported by resident
Other Highway Issues:					
Hyde Lane	Verge damage	ECC	26/02/2016	2449889	reported by resident
Mill Lane	Pothole	ECC	15/04/2016	2458895	reported by resident
Little Baddow Road	Drainage issue	ECC	23/05/2016	2465297	Oct still no change 19/9/16 no change SB drains are blocked.
Main Road	Drainage issue	ECC	23/05/2016	2465295	Oct no change 19/9/16 no change SB drains are blocked.
Bicknacre Road	SLOW markings have faded	ECC	01/08/2016	2479498	reported by resident
Copt Hill	Overgrown vegetation	ECC	18/07/2016	2477006	reported by resident

Maldon Road	Overgrown vegetation	ECC	03/08/2016	2480061	04/08/16 being inspected. reported by resident
Main Road	overgrown hedge - bend towards Church & Hawes	ECC	11/08/2016	2481339	12/8/16 being investigated. reported by resident
Woodhill Common Road	Overhanging branches in road	ECC	12/08/2016	2481514	12/8/16 being investigated. reported by resident
Maldon Road	Overhanging Tree junc with The Avenue	ECC	08/08/2016	2480671	24/8/16 being investigated. Reported by resident
Ludgores Lane/Sporhams Lane	Drainage issue	ECC	13/06/2016	2468999	Being monitored – next check due December 16. Resident has been dealing with ECC regarding the road which has sunk. ECC have confirmed that work will be carried out but no date as yet. Resident will chase.
Footpath 25	Blocked ditch Southern end of Ludgores Lane/junc with Pump Lane	ECC	08/07/2016	2475675	17/11/16 inspection completed. 21/10/16 to be inspected. reported by resident.
Hollyoaks	Capons Lane	ECC		2487280	23/09/16 resident reported storm drain constantly running with water. ECC to repair but unable to give timescale.
Penny Royal Road/Bicknacre Road	No drainage	ECC	08/07/2016	2475569	John still dealing with – will chase if no response. 23/8/16 ECC shows enquiry as concluded. reported by JS and requested for a cut off drain to be installed.
Woodhill Road	Faded road markings	ECC	16-Sep	2486593	17/11/16 to be monitored. reported by JS
Eves Corner Parking Bays	Faded markings / none on far side	ECC	04/11/2016	2493571	Cllr Berlyn advised that no action should be taken. The original lining was done free of charge when A414 was resurfaced some years ago. Land is owned by National Trust. Reported by resident.
Junc Penny Royal Rd/Sporhams Lane	Stop/Give Way markings faded	ECC	17/11/16	2495050	Reported by JS

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

63 Chelmsford Local Highways Panel (LHP)

The minutes from the last meeting held in September were circulated. The next meeting was due to be held on the 14th December.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

64 Local Highways Panel Requests - Schemes currently submitted

64.1 Footway between Overshot Bridge and Poplar Farm, Bicknacre Road

This was on the potential schemes list - still awaiting validation.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

64.2 One Way System to exit The Heights

A feasibility study had been approved.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

64.3 Woodhill Road & Bicknacre Road Speed Limit Reduction to 30mph

The results of the automatic traffic count were in the validation process but the Highways Liaison Officer had advised that, based on the results, the LHP would not recommend a speed limit reduction in Woodhill Road or Bicknacre Road. The roads would also not be eligible for a VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign). The residents who raised the issue originally had been contacted and they intended to see if they could submit any additional information/evidence prior to the next LHP in December. Three further emails had been received (one from National Trust) in support. The Assistant Clerk would forward any further emails received. A discussion was held regarding the value of carrying out a pedestrian/cyclist count in this location. Members remained supportive of a speed reduction in this location but did not think that some drivers would adhere to it.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

64.4 Parking Issues in Belvedere Close

Cllr Ambor was still dealing with this issue. He hoped to make a resubmission to the LHP to improve the parking situation and the Assistant Clerk had sent confirmation that this was originally supported by the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

64.5 New Footway Mayes Lane, Penny Royal Road, Woodhill Road

This remained on the potential schemes list. The Assistant Clerk would check when this would be brought forward.

RESOLVED: that the Assistant Clerk would request an update on this request.

65 Bus Shelter Cleaning Contract

Three quotes were requested but only one was received which was from the current company. This was slightly more than budgeted for but the Clerk was aware. Cllr Berlyn proposed that Members appoint Ecocleen to clean the bus shelters from 2017 - 2019. This was seconded by Cllr Carlin. All were in favour.

RESOLVED: that Ecocleen were appointed to clean the bus shelter from 2017 to 2019.

66 Quarries

66.1 St Clere's Hall: Nothing to report.

66.2 Royal Oak Quarry: Members were concerned at the amount of water in the quarry which had formed deep lake. There were concerns regarding overflowing onto the road. The Assistant Clerk was requested to email the Liaison Officer to get an update on this.

66.3 Sandon Quarry: Nothing to report.

RESOLVED: that the Quarry Liaison Officer was contacted regarding the lake.

67 Living Landscapes

Several attempts had been made to contact the landowner for access regarding the owl box without success. Cllr Mrs Hallett was not able to attend the last meeting as it had been moved to a Tuesday. If future meetings were to be held on a Tuesday Cllr Mrs Hallett would not be able to continue as the representative. Any people who had undertaken the hedgerow training were asked to email Emma Brogden. Surveying would not be continued until the summer. No minutes had been received as yet but they would be forwarded by email.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

68 Danbury Common/National Trust

An email was circulated from a resident regarding Lingwood Common and the response from the National Trust. Members felt that the NT had responded appropriately to the queries raised. The Tree Warden advised that she understood the reasons for the work being carried out and that although the work did look brutal it was necessary and important. It might be beneficial if the NT did some publicity prior to carrying out the work and give reasons for the work. The NT could be requested to write an article for a future Danbury Times and have before and after photographs. The Essex Wildlife Trust managed the Backwarden Nature Reserve and there were some concerns regarding nightingales in the woods. It was felt that more information would be useful about why the work was needed. This could also be a possible topic for the Annual Parish Meeting.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

69 Project Danbury

Danbury Garden Services had been engaged to maintain the bed from 1st October 2016 for one year. The Group would be arranging a meeting in the new year to discuss future projects. The cost for planters outside the Parish Office was in the region of £80. Esso had agreed to put in some planters following the refurbish of the garage and the Tesco shop. The group could also look at Ash Die back. CCC had offered a tree grant which would be discussed at the Planning Committee on 5th December. Any new planting would require a commitment to water the tree for a long time afterwards.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

70 Matters for Report (for information only)

There were no matters for report.

71 Dates of Meetings for 2017

23rd January, 13th March, 15th May, 10th July, 2nd October, 4th December.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25 pm.

Cllr Mrs April Chapman
Chairman

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Signed

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Date