



DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL
A Quality Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th January 2016 at 7pm at
The Old School House, Main Road, Danbury**

Present: Cllrs S Berlyn (Chairman) Mrs A Gardiner
 Mrs A Chapman (Vice Chairman) G Gardiner
 A Allen A Keeler
 D Carlin P Sutton
 Mrs B Hallett M Telling

In Attendance: Mrs M Saunders, Clerk
 Mrs H Mayes, Assistant Clerk
 4 Members of the public

121 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Kennewell, Wakefield and Wood.

122 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary 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 pecuniary one. Unforeseen interests must similarly be declared at the appropriate time. Councillors had a dispensation to speak on any items regarding the Danbury Community Association Trust Limited – Danbury Sports and Social Centre and the precept.

None were declared.

123 Public Question Time

There were 4 Members of the Public present. Two of those present made the following comments:

There were concerns regarding road monitoring and the surveying of a field behind Barley Mead. It appeared to have been a private company carrying out this work and the resident was unsure if they had permission to do this. It appeared that there were a number of developers looking at land in Mill Lane but the Parish Council had not been notified of any specific sites.

Questions were asked about how the new Local Plan would progress. He was advised that following the current consultation there will then be a site specific consultation carried out. The Chairman advised that Chelmsford City Council was the Planning Authority and that the Parish and Town Councils were statutory consultees to put the views of the village across. Residents were encouraged to express their own views as individuals.

Cllr Telling arrived at 7.10pm.

No individual sites had been identified as yet. Chelmsford Council had advised that they might select one of options or a mixture of all three.

The residents were concerned that the impact of Maldon development and the new Medical Centre will be considerable and would increase the traffic on A414 and new surgery. This would be discussed further during the meeting.

124 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday November 25th 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

125 Chelmsford City Council New Local Plan Consultation

Comments that had been received from Parish Councillors, The Danbury Society and residents were circulated. Members discussed the implications of Option 3 (which included 100 houses to the east of Danbury). No specific sites had been identified although there were several areas which were known to have been surveyed in the past.

The village had not supported development in the areas to the east of Danbury when consultation was carried out for both the Danbury Planning Framework and the 20/20 Vision in 2012.

The main concern of both residents and the Parish Council was the increase in traffic that would be generated by any development in Danbury as well as the ongoing development in the Maldon District which was already having a significant impact. It was felt that the A414 was almost at capacity and that just one broken down vehicle can bring the road to a standstill. Essex County Council had already stated that Eves Corner would already be at capacity by 2026 without the Maldon District developments.

There were concerns about pollution and the effect on the air quality for residents. There were environmental concerns that the Essex Wildlife Trust and Danbury Ridge would be damaged by pollution as well as the health of residents. There would be an adverse effect on protected lanes in and around the village due to an increase in rat running as people found alternative routes.

Members did not feel that Chelmsford City Council had taken into account the current and potential large developments in the Maldon District. There was concern that Danbury would eventually be joined to Sandon and Great Baddow as part of a greater Chelmsford. The Parish Council felt a strong need to keep Danbury as a separate village and to put something in place to protect identity of villages from encroachment by Chelmsford. It was imperative that the green spaces around Danbury were preserved.

Members did not want to see ribbon development spreading along A414. This would lead to degradation of the wider village. It was felt that this would be worse than having a one off development on a specific site which would keep development contained. Villagers valued Danbury for its unique identity, landscape and sites of natural beauty around the village and the Parish Council did not wish to see this lost.

Members still wished to see the A414 downgraded and a new link road created from Heybridge to a dedicated A12 Junction. This would take a large amount of traffic away from Danbury and Hatfield Peverel as well as the other villages that were subjected to rat running. A Danbury bypass was not a viable option due to the Country Park and the surrounding National Trust land.

Some Members had concerns about commercial developments which they felt were more dangerous than housing developments. Other Members felt that some small commercial development was positive and could bring economic development to the village. It was agreed that any commercial development should only be located on brownfield sites.

There were some queries on the housing target figures that had been given by CCC and it appeared that further testing was needed before targets could be agreed. Any greenfield development would be on grade 3 and 4 agricultural land which was not acceptable. Road safety would also be a key issue if the number of vehicles using the road were to increase. It was important that the Council were firm and positive in its response

In summary, the key points that Members wished to put forward were:

- To strongly oppose the development of 100 houses to the east of Danbury
- The impact of congestion caused by an increase in traffic along the A414
- The effect on Danbury of development in the Maldon District
- Resistance to ribbon development
- Environmental aspects e.g. air pollution.
- Protection of green space between Danbury and neighbouring villages
- Green spaces within the village should be preserved.
- Small amount of commercial development on brownfield sites only
- Road safety issues
- Protection of green lanes and prevention of rat running-
- The provision of a road which linked Heybridge directly to the A12.

Members unanimously agreed that the Clerk should collate the comments above into a document to send to Chelmsford City Council. The comments would be checked by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council prior to submission.

RESOLVED: that the comments in Appendix A be submitted to Chelmsford City Council for the New Local Plan Consultation.

126 Matters for Report (for information only)

There were no matters for report.

127 Dates of Meetings in 2016

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 18th April 2016 commencing at 8 p.m.

Wednesday 27th January, 16th March, 11th May (Annual Parish Council), 27th July,
28th September, 30th November

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7.53pm

Signed:

Cllr S Berlyn, Chairman

Date:

Danbury Parish Council

Local Plan Issues & Options Consultation Response

Danbury Parish Council strongly opposes Option 3 of the consultation which includes the provision of 100 houses to the East of Danbury. The Parish Plan and Danbury Planning Framework were produced following consultation with the village and it was clear that the majority of the village was against development in this area.

The reasons for this are as follows:

Danbury is already very congested, particularly along the A414. The approach to Eves Corner is already at capacity and extensive queuing occurs in both directions during peak times or if the road is obstructed by roadworks, delivery vehicle or an accident. Additional development in Danbury, alongside that in neighbouring areas, will lead to the queues becoming more extensive, leading to vehicles using less suitable local roads as a rat run around the A414. This reduces considerably the sustainability of the proposal to build 100 houses in the East of the village.

The Parish Council has already raised many concerns in the last two years about the increase of traffic through Danbury during the examination of the Maldon Local Development Plan (in relation to large scale developments proposed in Maldon, Heybridge and the Dengie). This is already having a negative effect on the A414 and surrounding roads and will only get worse over time as more properties are built. It is also likely that the further development at Bradwell Power Station will lead to an increase in vehicles (including more HGV's) through Danbury. The Parish Council does not see that this has been taken into account by Chelmsford Council when looking at the options for the local plan consultation. It is imperative that the effect of development in the Maldon District is fully considered in relation to the impact on the residents of Danbury and the already congested A414.

Any further developments within the village are going to put a considerable strain on the access routes to the town and, in Danbury, this would make the traffic unbearable. Rat runs around the village would, in turn, be used more which would significantly affect local residents. Rat running is a major concern to Danbury residents as this is already an issue on local roads that are not suitable for this volume of traffic. Many of the smaller roads in Danbury and neighbouring villages are protected and should not be subjected to this level of traffic. The Parish Council is concerned that the increased traffic as a result of the additional dwellings proposed in Danbury and the surrounding areas to the East will add to the current problem.

There are already significant problems in Little Baddow Road. There is a high volume of traffic due to Eves Corner shops, the bank, St Johns School and the current Medical Centre. If a car is parked in the wrong place in this location it can significantly block the traffic and completely block the road. This occurs particularly at school times and during the rush hour. A new Medical Centre is to open shortly on the main A414 adjacent to Danbury Mission and this will also add to the amount of traffic. Unless solutions to these problems can be found, significant hold ups will continue to occur.

Essex County Council is trialling the installation of the pre signals at Eves Corner and Little Baddow Road. These have been installed now due to the high volumes of traffic to prepare for the new houses planned in the Maldon District Council area; Essex County Council stated that traffic would be at capacity at Eves Corner by 2026 without any of the Maldon area development. If more houses are built in Danbury this junction will totally be gridlocked.

The increase in traffic would also have implications on road safety for both pedestrians and drivers and the Council does not wish to see a rise in road traffic accidents due to an increase in vehicles on the highway.

The Council also has concerns about the environmental impact that development in Danbury would have. There are a number of green areas within and surrounding the village itself that should be preserved. There will be a resulting increase in air pollution with an escalation in the amount of traffic travelling through the village. The A414 is in close vicinity to shops, library, two primary schools, a playing field and children's play area and additional pollution would be detrimental to residents' quality of life and health. Danbury prides itself as a location for walkers and has pretty countryside. Some of the land proposed to be built on is grade 3 and 4 agricultural land. Danbury Ridge is part of the Essex Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes. There is already constant traffic including HGV's through the village all day. There should be restrictions on sizeable development of the type suggested to protect the village and current residents.

The Parish Council does not want ribbon development along the A414 as this would lead to degradation of a wide area and extend the village further. The Council wishes to protect the identity of the village and ensure that it remains separate from its neighbouring villages through the protection of the green space that surrounds it.

The Parish Council would support some small commercial development on brownfield sites if this can bring economic benefits to the village.

The Parish Council has recently been approached by a developer who has given a brief outline of a proposal for 5000 houses and associated infrastructure/facilities at Hammonds Farm, Sandon. The Council would like to register its **strong objection** to this proposal. The site is on the border of Danbury and is inappropriate for this development. It would be detrimental to Danbury and the surrounding villages which cannot take a development of this size, equivalent to a small town. It is located on a flood plain and would destroy a large amount of green space which currently serves as a buffer between Danbury, Sandon and the A12. It would be unfair and unsustainable to expect one small rural section of the district to be able to take this number of properties and be able to cope with the effects this would have on all of the surrounding communities.

In order to address the traffic issues and reduce the environmental impact, the Parish Council requires that a link to the A12 be constructed to enable vehicles to join the A12 without going through Danbury and Hatfield Peverel. For many years there was a Parishes Transport Group which met and supported this course of action. These included Heybridge Parish Council, Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, Little Baddow Parish Councils and Maldon Town Council.

On 26th July 2005 the Parish Council made the following policy.

“A local Danbury By-Pass is not achievable due to the environment in which we live. The Parish Council supports a Maldon-Langford-Hatfield Peverel to A12 link, with a view to the current A414 being downgraded to B Status as recommended by the Ministry of Transport Inquiry at Danbury Palace in 1995.”

The Parish Council strongly feels that any developments that have an effect on the village should include S106 or CIL monies to provide a new bypass from Heybridge to join the A12 at Witham. Thereby relieving the current vehicle pressure not only on Danbury but also the surrounding villages as well. Such a development would also be beneficial in terms of removing the current delays experienced by existing traffic through the village and improve the air quality and health of residents.

In summary, Danbury Parish Council does not support Option 3 of the New Local Plan Consultation and has strong objections to any development at Hammonds Farm. The village has indicated to the Parish Council in the responses in preparation for the Danbury Planning Framework and also in the up-date to this 20/20 Vision of 2012, that it does not want development within the village or in the surrounding areas which will increase the amount of traffic using the A414 and adjacent roads. The Council considers that there has been no concern given to the residents of Danbury when looking at the impact of additional development both within the village and in adjoining areas, particularly to the East, along with the associated increase in traffic levels on the village as a whole.