

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

A Quality Council



ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2010 at the Parish Office

Present: Councillors A Keeler (Chairman), S. Berlyn, (ex officio)
D. Bolwell, A. Pemberton, J Thomson, D Whiteing

In attendance: The Clerk, Cllr Allen and Mr John Bowen
Mr M Hodgkinson Essex County Council P3 Officer

70 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr J Langley, Cllr Freeman and Cllr Wood.

71 Declarations of Interest

Members are required to declare any personal or prejudicial interest they know they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda. They were reminded that they will need to repeat their declaration at the appropriate point in the meeting and to leave the room if the interest is a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time.
None were declared.

72 Public Question Time Limited to 15 Minutes

No Members of the Public were present.

73 Minutes of Environment Committee held on 2nd December, 2009

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of Environment Committee held on 2nd December, 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record.

74 Footpaths

74.1 Matthew Hodgkinson Community Action Team P3

Mr Hodgkinson the Parish Paths Officer came to the meeting to introduce himself as the new Parish Paths Officer.

The P3 Officer realised that the Parish Council had some issues with definitive footpaths and wondered if he could help in any way.

The Chairman of the Meeting explained that the Parish Council had found the surfacing of the footpaths difficult to resolve. The Parish Council did not want road planings used and that definitive footpaths were by nature muddy or dry dependant on the weather.

Cllr Bolwell was concerned regarding the condition of Footpath 17 which also crossed the churchyard to the water tower. He felt that there was heavy foot-power along this footpath as it was used by parents as a route to the local school. It was also felt that residents should be consulted as users of the paths. Also that the Parish Council should ascertain how road planings worked.

Cllr Allen felt that the top of Footpath 17 was used by some people, but that from Beaumont Park to Well Lane there was the odd access gate to the footpath which

ran to the Church. He felt that it was not that well used. He felt that the definitive footpaths should remain as a field footpaths retaining their rural character and natural feel. Cllr Allen referred to the Parish Plan stating that residents value the rural nature of Danbury “the Council to use all its powers to maintain and preserve the green character and open appearance of the village” quoted from Parish Plan. Parish Council does not want road planings used.

The P3 officer went on to explain that under the Highways Act 1980 definitive footpaths are the responsibility of the Essex County Highways. It was essential that Health and Safety was maintained for all users.

At this point in the meeting a heated discussion ensued regarding Health and Safety. The Chairman of the Committee intervened and the P3 Officer continued to speak and explain that the Essex County Council Highway Authority used road planings as a material which was economically acceptable for the paths and was also recyclable. He suggested that a trial and survey could be completed using road planings. He also stated that road planings lend themselves quite well to these type of footpaths. It was also raised that the residents at Colemans Lane could no longer cope with repairing the bridleway and now needed help to repair the Lane as it was breaking up badly. Requests had been made to the District Officer. Discussion took place again about laying pea shingle at the church. The P3 Officer was prepared to help with this through the P3 partnership again but the Council should be aware that laying pea shingle continually could make a pea shingle bank. It was also explained that there was £250 in the P3 grant which had been allocated for repairing footpath 17. The pea shingle would be able to be charged from this budget although the grant was specified for using road planings to repair footpath 17. It was also explained if this was not completed by the P3 Partnership it could be referred to the District Officer for repair.

The Chairman of the Council had mixed feelings on the subject he could understand wanting to keep a rural environment for the village but the footpaths should be kept safe and of a standard so as not be allowed to deteriorate. Road planings were not suitable in every location.

Cllr Whiteing left the meeting during this item.

The Chairman of the Council stated that he understood this was a passionate subject and he understood that feelings ran high regarding the surfacing of the footpaths. Members should listen to everyone’s point of view.

The Chairman of the Council left the meeting to check on Cllr Whiteing’s physical condition.

Further discussion took place regarding surfacing of the footpaths.

The P3 Officer suggested that the Parish Council inform him of their decisions.
The Chairman of the Council returned to the meeting.

The Clerk reminded the Council of the Minute 77.1 i) Minutes of Environment 14th January refers “that as a principle road planings in repair of definitive footpaths in Danbury should not be used”. This could now be re-addressed.

The P3 Officer reiterated that a trial could be completed using road planings. On the slope towards Well Lane. Also that road planings were accepted practice and would only be used on problem areas.

The Chairman of the Committee and the Clerk thanked the P3 Officer for attending and he left the meeting.

The Chairman of the Council left the meeting temporarily.

The Clerk requested that the meeting make a decision regarding the surfacing.

The Chairman of the Council returned to the meeting.

The following resolutions were made:

RESOLVED THAT:

Proposed by Cllr Thomson seconded by Cllr Berlyn. Unanimously agreed that:

- a) Colemans Lane should be resurfaced with road planings throughout the residential area (members thought that this was the whole length of the Lane)

Proposed by Cllr Berlyn seconded by Cllr Pemberton. Unanimously agreed that:

- b) When maintenance is required to a definitive footpath each footpath should be considered and discussed on its merits
- c) Footpath 17
Cllr Bolwell proposed that a limited amount of road planings be used to repair the surface of Footpath 17. This was not seconded.

Members unanimously agreed that they would walk Footpath 17 in question and the item be brought back to the next meeting.

74.2 Footpath Map to be placed on Web-Site

Assistant Clerk would be in consultation with Little Baddow Parish Council.

RESOLVED: that this information be noted.

74.3 Churchyard

This work can be done under the P3 partnership.

RESOLVED: that this information be noted.

74.4. Dawson Memorial Field

The Clerk had contacted Strutt and Parker as agents for the Diocesan land and a meeting was planned for next week so that the Clerk and Groundsman could explain the proposal.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

75 Highways Matters

75.1 List of Roads for Repair

75.2 Runsell Green Outside Anchor Public House

Essex County Highways were still investigating the problem with the water running from the pond and causing icy patches on the road outside the Anchor Public House. It is believed that there was an accident at this location over the Christmas holidays. The Publican had also been in touch with Essex County Highways for some salt.

The Clerk updated the meeting that the Groundsman had attended and dug out the ditch in Runsell Lane this had reduced the level in the pond. A water main had also been repaired which had relieved the problem. The Essex County Highways still needed to repair the drain cover and the pipe. Orders had been placed for this work.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

75.3 Well Lane

Further correspondence had been received regarding the parking problems in Well Lane. The Community Police had been requested and had been attending. Chelmsford Borough Council had been contacted regarding the problem. Members wished the clerk to contact them again as the road was not only bad at school times but at other times during the day. New businesses had opened and therefore more cars were parking in the location. Concerns were raised regarding having to go round parked vehicles and being on the wrong side of the road close to a bend where you could not be seen.

Further correspondence had been received from a resident together with photographs at school times where it was impossible to cross the road. Members of the Council explained that the Parish Council had tried to request a pedestrian crossing previously when the mini-roundabout was installed but it was not permitted as the sight lines were not correct with no path on one side to cross to.

Members were in support of requesting the Essex County Highways for a pedestrian crossing. The clerk was unsure whether this would have to be one of the small schemes as the Parish Council had already put forward in September 2009 for consideration in March 2010 for the next financial year. The Clerk would write to Essex County Highways in support of the pedestrian crossing in Well Lane.

RESOLVED: that a) the clerk writes again to Chelmsford Borough Council regarding parking restrictions
b) the clerk writes to Essex County Highways in support of a pedestrian crossing in Well Lane.

Cllr Allen left the meeting.

75.4 Mayes Lane

Essex County Highways were investigating the area which floods. Engineers had made a preliminary visit.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

75.5 Eves Corner

Essex County Highways were trying to repair the area outside the Chemist shop.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

75.6 Pillar Box

The Clerk had shown an Engineer from Essex County Highways the problem.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

75.7 Runsell Green

Further complaints had been received regarding parking on Runsell Green. Bollards had been installed. The road in front of the houses adjacent to the green was highway land where the cars were now parking. The Clerk had contacted both the Police and also Chelmsford Borough Council regarding parking restrictions. The Borough Council had replied that they would be speaking with the residents directly. Further correspondence stated it would be a very long process to achieve a parking order especially in this location.

Members unanimously agreed to purchase more posts and employ Jonathan Sewell to help the groundsman.

Members also discussed the centenary seat. It was thought that the Danbury Society might have installed it. The Clerk to write to the Danbury Society.

RESOLVED: that a) the Parish Council purchase additional posts and employ Jonathan Sewell to help the groundsman up to the sum of £500.
b) the Clerk to write to the Danbury Society

75.8 Runsell Green Reduction in Speed Limit

The Clerk had contacted Essex County Highways and the decisions regarding the small schemes would not occur until March, 2010 for the next financial year. The residents had been notified.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

76 Quarries

76.1 St Cleres Hall

No further correspondence received.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

76.2 Royal Oak Quarry

Essex County Council still had not arranged the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

76.3 Sandon Quarry

Nothing further to report

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

76.4 Proposed site at Tyndales Farm

The next consultation should be in early 2010.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

77 Parishes Transportation Group

77.1 The Chairman had not attended the meeting on the 12th January, 2010. The wrong Agenda had been circulated. The next meeting was to be held on 23rd February, 2010 with a speaker.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

77.2 A meeting was planned by Hatfield Peverel Parish Council with Cllr Hume to which the Parish Council was invited.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

78 Bus Shelters

78.1 Bus shelter opposite The Avenue (Maldon side)

The Clerk had shown the Essex County Highways the location.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

78.2 Bus Shelter near the Avenue (Chelmsford Side)

The light still needs to be fitted. Essex County Highways were aware.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

79 Bus Passenger Transport

No information had been received. The Park and Ride now had a further 1000 spaces and some of which would only be available from 10.00 a.m.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

80 Danbury Common/Cyclists

80.1 The National Trust had forwarded the reports and letters sent to residents for the Council's information.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

80.2 The Chairman of the Council's name had been put forward to chair twice yearly meetings between the cyclists, the National Trust, the Essex County Council and the Police.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

80.3 Cllr Keeler had attended a meeting with Chelmsford Borough Council and the National Trust. Recommendations had not yet been implemented but it was thought that the residents would help to put out bollards.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

81 Olletts

Correspondence had been received from Chelmer Housing Partnership stating that they had not yet finalised their review of Olletts site and were not ready to restart the consultation process with the residents yet.

Members wished the Clerk to ascertain had they replaced the on-site warden and what they were doing for the on-site residents.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk writes back to Chelmer Housing Partnership and ascertains the situation after the retirement of the warden for residents.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

82 Gritting Bins

Two requests had been received for gritting bins. These had both been circulated to Essex County Highways to see if the site locations would be approved. Members agreed that the Elm Green location was the most imperative. The Groundsman had been to the location to help with grit in the recent bad weather. If the Essex County Highways agreed this location the Clerk would investigate prices of grit bins and process for the bases to install the bin. This was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council investigate the location at Elm Green if the Essex County Highways accept this as a location for a new grit bin.

83 Matters for Report only

No matters for report.

84 Dates of Meetings for 2010

Wednesday 3rd March, 2nd June, 8th September, 13th October and 1st December

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.

Cllr A Keeler, Chairman

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Signed

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Date