

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

A Quality Council



Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th July 2010 at 7.45pm in the Parish Office

Present: Cllrs M Wood (Chairman) J Langley
 Mrs Y Burton A Pemberton
 D Bolwell D Powell
 Mrs A Chapman M Telling
 A Keeler J Thomson

In attendance: Mrs M Saunders, Clerk
 Mrs E Blyth, Assistant Clerk

In the absence of the Chairman the meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Wood.

45 Mr Philip Watts

Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Philip Watts who had died recently. Mr Watts had represented the Danbury Society on the Council's Planning Committee for many years and had attended a meeting only a week before his death.

46 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs S Berlyn, S Freeman, H Clacy and D Whiteing.

47 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must declare any personal or prejudicial 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 prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must similarly be declared at the appropriate time.

No interests were declared.

48 Public Question Time

Mrs S-J Court was present in connection with her application for co-option to the Council.

49 Minutes – Annual Parish Council, 5th May 2010, and Extraordinary Parish Council, 23rd June 2010

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 5th May 2010 and 23rd June 2010 be approved and signed.

50 Application for vacancy on Parish Council

Cllr Wood welcomed Mrs Court to the meeting and Councillors and staff introduced themselves. Mrs Court's application had been circulated. Mrs Court spoke briefly about her background and her reasons for wishing to be a Councillor, and then answered questions from members. The Chairman thanked her and explained that a vote would be taken later during the confidential part of the meeting. She was invited to remain until the point at which the meeting was closed to the public.

51 Parish Plan Review

Cllr Pemberton reported that the household response rate to the questionnaire was 17.2%, which was statistically adequate. All responses were now on the database and the information was being analysed. The Steering Group would produce an article for the Autumn 2010 edition of Danbury Times, and a report would be made to Parish Council at its September meeting. Cllr Pemberton confirmed that the views of residents expressed in the questionnaire were in line with the original Parish Plan consultation.

Cllr Pemberton was visiting two or three businesses in the village per week and had found the visits positive and illuminating. This aspect of the review was taking longer than originally planned.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted and the Cllr Pemberton and the Steering Group be thanked for their on-going work.

52 Reports from Village Organisations

52.1 Landisdale Charity: Cllr Keeler reported that there had been no meeting of the Trustees since May. The next meeting was scheduled for November 2010.

52.2 Twinning: In the absence of Cllr Whiteing no report was made.

RESOLVED: that the information in 52.1 and 52.2 above be noted.

53 Leases

53.1 British Legion Lease: The draft lease had been forwarded to the Royal British Legion for its response, which was expected to take 8 weeks. It was hoped that it would be returned in time for a decision to be made at the September 2010 meeting of the Council. The Clerk was instructed to contact the Council's solicitor to discover the legal position should the new lease not be signed by the time the current agreement expired in October.

RESOLVED: that the Council's solicitor be asked to explain the legal position in the circumstances described above.

53.2 Eves Corner Lease: A response was awaited from the National Trust regarding the trees on the site.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

54 Publicity

54.1 Danbury Times: A meeting to begin work on the Autumn edition had been arranged for Tuesday 31st August 2010 at 2pm in the Parish Office. The staff were already keeping a note of items for inclusion.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

54.2 Danbury Leaflet: The Publicity Group had agreed to defer revision of the tourism leaflet. Cllr Wood suggested that the new leaflet should be available by the end of 2011 in time for visitors coming to this country for the Olympic Games.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

55 Reports from Council Committees

55.1 Resources:

It was reported that work on revision of the Financial Regulations had begun and would continue in the Autumn. (See item 58.2 below).

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

55.2 Planning:

55.2.1 Planning Applications: The Chairman of the Planning Committee reported that two controversial applications for take-aways in the village had been refused.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

55.2.2 Danbury Planning Framework: The Working Group had met on 23rd June 2010 and further minor amendments had been forwarded to Chelmsford Borough Council for incorporation in the document. The Group were agreed that the work done by CBC had made the document more accessible and easier to follow. Once approved by Cabinet, CBC would arrange for public consultation to take place on the draft Framework. Changes to the document might arise from the consultation, and also from the findings of the Parish Plan Review when available.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

55.3 Facilities:

55.3.1 Sports & Social Centre: The Vice-Chairman of Facilities reported that the Committee was moving towards a 5-year (or longer) plan for the maintenance of the Centre, which was the Council's largest facility. The aim of the plan was to manage the significant sums of money required at a pace which was within the Council's means. Cllr Langley believed the plan was a positive step, and said that proposals would be brought to the appropriate committees as necessary.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

55.3.2 Mayes Lane car park: The Committee had considered ways of increasing parking space in the Mayes Lane car park. Chelmsford Borough Council had confirmed that it was prepared to remove the modular recycling banks and provide two recycling wheelie bins near the DCA refuse/recycling bins. The existing large banks now needed emptying only every three to four weeks due to kerbside recycling. The Facilities Committee requested Parish Council to decide whether to implement this change, which would create several additional parking spaces.

After discussion it was agreed to go ahead. Members also noted that the road sign into the car park would need to be amended, and it was suggested that the relocation of the recycling facilities be highlighted in Danbury Times.

RESOLVED: that the Borough Council be asked to removed the modular banks and supply recycling wheelie bins adjacent to the Sports & Social Centre, as agreed, and that the process for amending the road sign at the car park entrance be investigated.

55.4 Environment:

At its meeting on 2nd June 2010 the Committee received a report from the Parishes Transportation Group that Maldon District Council and Maldon Town Council had adopted a policy of supporting a by-pass from Heybridge to the A12. The Committee agreed to write to the local Borough Councillors asking for support for this policy and also to ask Parish Council to adopt a similar policy.

It had subsequently been discovered that the Maldon Town Council had agreed a Motion of Support rather than adopting a policy and the proposed letters had not been sent. The wording of the Maldon Town Council motion (minute 700, Planning & Licensing Committee, 4th March 2010) was as follows:

“That this Council establishes a position of support for the need for the existing B1019 route between Heybridge and Hatfield Peverel to be replaced by a new relief road to provide improved access to and from the District to the A12, and that every appropriate opportunity be taken to then promote this and communicate it to the Essex County Council.”

In considering the Parish Council’s response to the request from Environment Committee it was noted that the Council had already agreed a policy (minute 38 of 27th July 2005) of supporting a Maldon-Langford-Hatfield Peverel to A12 link. After discussion members unanimously agreed that the Council should endorse the Motion of Maldon District Council and that the local Borough Councillors and County Councillor should be lobbied for their support.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council supported the Motion agreed by Maldon District Council and that the Clerk write to the local Borough Councillors and County Councillor asking them to give their support.

56 Parish Council Charter

56.1 Charter Part 1: The Chairman and the Clerk had attended the Charter Signing Event held on 14th July 2010 and the Chairman had signed Part 1 of the Charter on behalf of the Council. The document, which was circulated to members, would be reviewed periodically.

56.2 Charter Part 2: Members considered a report from Chelmsford Borough Council on the potential devolution of services to Danbury Parish Council as a Pilot Scheme. After discussion it was agreed that the document be circulated to Parish Council committees for their comments on the sections relevant to them.

RESOLVED: that the Committees of Parish Council be asked to consider the appropriate sections of the Part 2 document and report back to Parish Council.

57 Danbury Park Forum

The date of Thursday 29th July 2010 for the next meeting had been cancelled by Essex County Council who had proposed a new date of Thursday 2nd September (2pm at the Parish Office). Confirmation was awaited, after which Cllr Keeler and Cllr Thomson would be informed of the arrangements.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

[ECC has subsequently proposed a further change of date to Thursday 16th September. This is still to be confirmed.]

58 Revision of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Terms of Reference

58.1 Standing Orders/Terms of Reference: The Working Group had reviewed about half of the new document and one or two further meetings would be required to complete the work.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

58.2 Financial Regulations: Resources Committee did not review the whole of the document at this stage as it felt that the Standing Orders Working Group needed to complete its work first.

The new standing orders document set the figure at which tenders were required at £60,000. Resources Committee (minute 16 of 26th May 2010) agreed to recommend to Parish Council that the minimum tender figure for the Council should be £40,000. Members agreed this proposal unanimously.

The item regarding European Tendering was deferred until the complete Financial Regulations were reviewed.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council's Financial Regulations set the figure at which tenders come into operation at £40,000 with immediate effect.

59 Public Conveniences

The Clerk had circulated details provided by Chelmsford Borough Council of the current costs of cleaning and maintaining the toilets along with other charges such as electricity, water, insurance and consumables. There would also be a rental charge if the Parish Council were to take over the toilets.

Rochford District Council had automatic time locks on their public conveniences and reported that they were expensive to fit and were best used on individual cubicles which were outside. Where the toilets were inside in a block it had been found that people would jam the outer lock open, breaking the automatic system. The Council used deadlocks on toilet blocks, but these had to be opened and closed daily.

The Clerk had looked into the suggestion of using people from the Community Payback Scheme to clean the toilets but had found that this was not possible as individuals would have to be covered by the COSHH regulations.

Members discussed further how to arrange for the toilets to be opened and closed daily. They could be closed at 5pm rather than late in the evening. The Co-op had been consulted but was opposed in principle to its staff undertaking these duties. The option of the Council's employing someone was discussed. Another suggestion was that the Manager of the Sports & Social Centre be asked whether Centre staff could undertake the opening and closing, and it was agreed that this be pursued.

RESOLVED: that the Manager of the Sports & Social Centre be asked whether the Centre would take responsibility for the opening and closing of the public conveniences.

60 Mid Essex Forum

Cllr Clacy was unable to attend the last meeting and there was nothing to report.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

61 Concessionary Travel Passes – Public Consultation

Responsibility for providing Bus Passes was moving from District and Borough Councils to County Councils from 1st April 2011. Essex County Council was carrying out a consultation exercise to assess the value people placed on their bus passes or other concessions. The consultation period ended on 30th September 2010 and questionnaires were provided in hard copy or online.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted and that details of the consultation be placed on the Parish Council's notice board and website.

62 NALC Report follow-up (Parish Council minute 25, May 2010)

The Clerk reported that the document on the work of Quality Councils booklet had still not been published. The Guide to Using Social Media had been obtained and circulated with the agenda. She reminded members that the Clerk was the only individual able to write on behalf of the Parish Council. Members expressed interest in arranging RSS feeds from the village website and agreed that this be investigated with the Council's IT consultants.

RESOLVED: that the use of RSS feeds on the village website be investigated.

63 Name of Parish Council

It was reported that only one Council in Essex was called a Village Council – this was Burstead & South Green Village Council. According to the EALC, the procedure to change the name required a debate at Council followed by a public meeting or consultation to obtain the views of residents. Members discussed whether to pursue the matter further in relation to Danbury. Cllr Wood proposed, seconded by Cllr Telling, that no action be taken, and this was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that no action be taken to change the name of the Parish Council.

64 Survey: High-Speed Broadband

Essex County Council was supporting an initiative by the Rural Broadband Partnership to investigate Broadband provision across the County. Parish Councils were invited to carry out a survey of the satisfaction level with Broadband in their areas. In discussion there was no support for conducting a survey but members agreed to request further information.

RESOLVED: that further information be requested from the Rural Broadband Partnership.

65 'Pride in a Cleaner Chelmsford' Committee

Members considered whether to put forward names for this annual award, which looked for 'unsung heroes' who completed clean-up tasks in their communities. Two names were agreed to be put forward in recognition of their work in the village.

RESOLVED: that the two agreed names be put forward to the Committee.

66 EALC Buckingham Palace Garden Party Award 2010

Members noted that this award was open only to Chairmen of Councils.

RESOLVED: that the Chairman of the Parish Council be put forward for this award.

67 Disposal of vacant social housing dwellings in Danbury

67.1 37 West Belvedere: Chelmsford Borough Council had written to inform the Parish Council that the Tenant Services Authority (the new regulatory body for social housing providers) was considering an application from Chelmer Housing Partnership to dispose of this property which was currently a social housing property. CBC did not intend to object to the disposal, which was sought because the property was beyond economic repair. CBC wished to know the view of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: that no objection be raised to the disposal of 37 West Belvedere.

67.2 96 Maldon Road: Prior to the change in legislation CBC had given consent to Chelmer Housing Partnership to dispose of this social housing property as it was beyond economic repair.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

67.3 Future notifications: CBC asked whether the Parish Council wished to be kept informed of future proposals to dispose of social properties, and members agreed that they did wish to be notified.

RESOLVED: that CBC be asked to continue to inform the Parish Council of future proposals to dispose of social housing in Danbury.

68 Essex County Council: Highways Development Management Policies

ECC had carried out a review of its Highways Development Management policies and was consulting on its proposals. Details had been circulated to members and it was noted that the consultation closed on 30th August 2010.

RESOLVED: that no comments be made on the policies.

69 Mobile Library Campaign

The Corporate Communications Team at Essex County Council had written to Parish Councils inviting them to become involved in a campaign to promote mobile libraries. Danbury currently benefits from visits from a mobile library as well as having a 'static' library within the village. Members agreed that the Council should express an interest in the campaign and obtain further information.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council register its interest in supporting the mobile library campaign.

70 Matters for information (report only)

70.1 Letters of thanks had been received from Danbury Community Transport Ltd and the Parochial Church Council of Danbury Parish Church for the grants received.

70.2 Heathcote School and Danbury Park School had indicated that they would be taking part in the Christmas Card competition. The prize for the winning entry would be £10 for the student and £50 to the school.

71 Dates of Meetings in 2010

Scheduled meetings would take place on 29th September and 24th November 2010.

72 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: that, in accordance with S1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the nature of the business to be discussed it was in the opinion of the Council advisable that the Public and Press be excluded, and that they be instructed to withdraw.

Mrs S-J Court left the meeting at this point.

73 Co-option of Parish Councillor

Members discussed the application of Mrs S-J Court for co-option to the Parish Council. In a secret ballot it was unanimously agreed that Mrs Court be co-opted as a member of the Council.

RESOLVED: that Mrs Sarah-Jane Court be co-opted as a member of Danbury Parish Council.

74 Car Park and Drainage Project

As resolved at the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on 26th July 2010, the firms who had tendered for Phase 3 of the project would be invited to an interview with the Working Group to answer questions. The Working Party would then make a recommendation to Parish Council on how to proceed.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

75 Parish Office/Meeting Room

The Clerk updated members on negotiations. An extraordinary meeting of Parish Council would be held on Wednesday 1st September 2010 and a decision must be made at that meeting. Members were asked to notify the Clerk of any questions they had regarding the documentation and she would endeavour to provide answers for the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

Business having been concluded, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.07pm.

Signed: Cllr Stuart Berlyn, Chairman

Date: