

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

A Quality Council



ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the held on Wednesday 7th September 2011 at the Committee Room, the Old School House, Main Road, Danbury

Present: Cllrs A Keeler (Chairman), S. Berlyn (to 9.47pm), D. Bolwell, Mrs A Chapman, A Pemberton, J Thomson

In attendance: Mr J Bowen (Danbury Society), Mrs E Blyth, Assistant Clerk

27 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs S-J Court and M Wood.

28 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they were required to declare any personal or prejudicial interest they knew they had in 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 to leave the room if the interest was a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time.

No interests were declared.

29 Public Question Time

Two residents attended on behalf of themselves and neighbours. They were concerned about vehicles, including commercial vans, parking on the grass verges at the junction of Rectory Farmhouse Lane and Main Road and severely restricting visibility for residents trying to turn from the Lane into Main Road. The residents had previously informed the Parish Council and enquiries had been referred to the County Council but no action had been taken. The residents favoured the installation of wooden posts on the verge to prevent parking. After discussion the Committee agreed that the Parish Council should follow up the matter to obtain more information and seek a solution. The residents then left the meeting.

Laura Pyman, a resident of Danbury currently writing a dissertation for her university degree, was also present and members agreed to answer questions as part of a survey she was conducting. The survey related to public perceptions around the issue of local quarries and particularly consultations on proposed new quarry sites. Ms Pyman's questions focused on the extent to which residents could influence outcomes and the Parish Council's role in this. Members drew attention to the Council's use of public meetings, its website, notice boards and regular articles in local publications to ensure that residents were kept up to date and able to give their views, which would be reflected in the Council's response to consultations. Ms Pyman subsequently reported that questionnaires completed by residents showed that the Parish Council was the second highest source of information after the Journal. Members noted that the Council had a regular column in The Journal.

With the agreement of the Committee, Ms Pyman left copies of her questionnaire so that individual councillors could complete them if they wished. She thanked the Committee and then left the meeting.

30 Minutes of Environment Committee held on 8th June 2011

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2011 be approved and signed as a correct record.

31 Strategic Plan for Environment

The first working group meeting had been held but the first draft plan had not yet been put together. Further meetings of working group would be held.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

32 EIA Screening Meeting – Proposed deforestation at Lingwood Common

Cllr Keeler reported on the public meeting held on 12th August 2011 in Little Baddow which he had attended on behalf of the Council. Cllr Bolwell had also attended. The meeting was required as part of the process to determine whether an environmental impact assessment should take place before the National Trust implemented its plans to remove trees and re-establish heathland in part of Lingwood Common. The NT's plans were the result of finding heather growing in the area.

It was explained that lowland heath was a disappearing habitat which had in many areas been overtaken by tree growth due to the loss of animal grazing. By removing most trees (leaving specimen trees) the aim was to encourage heathland plants and wildlife to re-establish in the area. Most organisations represented at the meeting were in favour of the proposal and the local residents present were mostly concerned about any impact on their own properties. It was reported that the decision as to whether an EIA was required was due on 9th September.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

33 Footpaths

33.1 Revised Footpaths Map

The village website had now been updated to show the revised version of the Footpaths Map.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

33.2 Danbury Youth Camp and park - footpath opposite Riffhams Lane

The Clerk had written to Danbury's elected members to request help with progressing this item. No response had yet been received.

Resolved: that the Clerk continue to pursue the matter.

33.3 Work Proposal for Parish Paths Partnership (P3)

The updated Footpaths Map had now been printed, with a grant from P3, and was available for circulation.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

33.4 Report by Footpaths Officer Cllr Bolwell

33.4.1 Cllr Bolwell reported that a way mark sign was missing at the junction of Penny Royal Road and Mayes Lane opposite the balancing pond. It was agreed that steps be taken to put this right.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk be asked to contact ECC regarding replacement of the sign.

33.4.2 There was discussion of a strip of land used as a footpath adjacent to the Parish Council's allotments at St Cleres Way. This was not a recognised footpath but was used by local residents as a cut-through. Cllr Bolwell reported that concrete posts adjacent to the land were leaning over and represented a hazard. Cllr Bolwell had been trying to discover who owned the land, and Cllr Thomson offered to assist.

RESOLVED: that Cllrs Bolwell and Thomson look at the available documentation regarding ownership of the strip of land.

34 Highway Matters

| Items for Report | Authority Sent to | Work Completed |
|---|---|--|
| Outside the Pharmacy Hopping Jacks Lane the tarmac had formed a pothole making it like a sleeping policeman and was dangerous | Essex County Highways 15.9.2010 | This has been logged as system reference 1845815 and has been allocated to New Roads and Street Works Inspector for assessment. |
| Tree outside the pharmacy was covering a street light screwed to a telegraph pole | Passed to Essex County Highways Lighting Section 15.9.2010 | This has been logged on the system as reference 1845840 a site inspection has been complete and the vegetation was found to be overgrown however it is believed not to be highway land a boundary check has been requested to establish ownership to request the owner to cut back vegetation. |
| Elm Green Lane – parking resulting in break up of verge edge. | Passed to Essex County Council several times | This has been logged as 1845819 a site inspection has been carried out, however regrettably this does not meet the investigatory level as determined by the ECC Maintenance Strategy However the area will continue to be monitored. |
| Pillar box | Groundsman Monitoring | |
| Butts Lane/Hopping Jacks Lane at junction – holes in road. One dealt with, the other outstanding. | | This has been logged as reference 1845816 a site inspection has been carried out however, regrettably this does not meet ECC investigatory level as determined by their Maintenance Strategy. |

| Items for Report | Authority Sent to | Work Completed |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Eves Corner Parking Bays road surface | | This has been logged as 1845817 a site inspection has been carried out however, regrettably this does not meet ECC investigatory level as determined by the Maintenance Strategy. ECC appreciate that the area does not look aesthetically pleasing but they are only able to take action on defect which meet the guidelines in the Strategy. |

35 Signage Items on Highways as follows:

35.1 Well Lane

Signage was on Essex County Council's list.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

35.2 Sightlines at Cherry Garden Lane

It had been confirmed that the Parish Council's request to improve the signage (left hand turn – side road ahead) at the western junction of Cherry Garden Lane and Maldon Road had been added to ECC list. All signs had to adhere to the Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions 2002, which is a statutory document.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

36 Localism small scheme list when opened is as follows:

a) Runsell Green Reduction in Speed Limit

This item had been confirmed as being on the list for consideration but with no timescale.

b) Well Lane – Zebra Crossing

c) Gating Signs

d) Footpath – Mayes Lane, Penny Royal Road, Woodhill Road

e) Installation of Bollards

A request had been received from a member of the public to install bollards on the grass verge on the Main Road outside her house to prevent parking (see also minute 29 above). This had been taken to Essex County Highways who had advised her to approach the Parish Council to put this item on the Localism small scheme list. The Localism list at present had not re-opened.

Members discussed what action to take and it was felt that the matter needed action sooner than would be provided under the Localism list. Actions were agreed, and the Clerk was asked to pursue these and to inform the resident.

RESOLVED:

a) that a letter be written to the owners of 87 Main Road who were responsible for the parking on the verges;

- b) that ECC Highways be contacted again regarding the installation of bollards;
- c) that parking enforcement issues be followed up with the appropriate authorities.

37 Quarries

37.1 St Clere's Hall There was nothing further to report.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

37.2 Royal Oak Quarry

Essex County Council Minerals & Waste had put in a planning application to continue working the quarry until February 2014. The Planning Committee had made comments asking for wheel washing facilities to prevent mud on the road and also expressed concern regarding night pumping of water. In reply ECC had pointed out that wheel washing facilities were already installed and that the pump which would be used at night was designed for silent running.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

37.3 Sandon Quarry There was nothing further to report.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

37.4 Proposed site at Tyndales Farm

The land was currently for sale. Bids were currently being accepted, some of which were for agricultural use and some are for the mineral, but no firm sale had yet been made.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

37.5 New proposed site at Whitehouse Farm, Woodham Walter

This consultation was considered by the Planning Committee on the 5th September 2011 and the Committee agreed a response objecting to the proposal on grounds of the resulting increase in heavy traffic on the A414 through Danbury. The closing date for the consultation was 20th October 2011.

In discussion, members of Environment Committee raised a number of concerns about the Whitehouse Farm proposal. Where Danbury was concerned the objections related particularly to the adverse traffic effects. It was agreed that the traffic objections already notified to ECC in relation to Tyndales Farm be used as a basis for a response objecting to extraction at Whitehouse Farm.

RESOLVED: that the objections of the Environment and Planning Committees be combined in a response to ECC objecting to the proposal for mineral extraction at Whitehouse Farm.

38 Bus Shelters

38.1 Runsell Green Bus Shelter The Groundsman had removed the graffiti.

38.2 Bus Shelter at The Avenue (Maldon Side) The light had not yet been connected.

38.3 Bus Shelter outside nr Service Station (Chelmsford Side): The light had not yet been connected.

RESOLVED: that the information in items 38.1 to 38.3 above be noted.

39 Neighbourhood Action Panel and Police

Mr David Whiteing had submitted a report on the most recent Neighbourhood Action Panel meeting, and his report was received. He had offered to raise issues at the Panel meetings on behalf of the Council.

A document outlining new proposals on policing had been circulated to all members of the Council. No other matters were raised.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

40 Climate Change/Green Group

40.1 Green Group: No further meetings of the group had been held.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

40.2 Climate Change: Cllr Pemberton reported on a proposal by the DCA to install solar panels on the roof of the Sports Centre. A presentation about this would be made to Parish Council at its meeting on 28th September. Cllr Pemberton would be meeting with the DCA shortly and he was interested in the informal views of the Committee. In discussion members were broadly supportive in principal on environmental and sustainability grounds, though some concerns were expressed about the visual impact of the panels in the Conservation Area.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

Cllr Berlyn left the meeting at this point.

41 Danbury Times

Cllr Mrs Chapman, editor of the Danbury Times, reported that the Working Group had held its first meeting and had decided to go to three editions from 2012. The additional issue would be published in the Summer. The Group had set a timetable and outlined content for the Autumn 2011 edition and the deadline for submission of articles was Monday 26th September. It was proposed to move away from the traditional committee-based articles except for the Spring, Annual Report, edition.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

42 Bus Passenger Transport

As Cllr Bill Scaife, the Council's Bus Transport representative, was not a member of Environment Committee this item would be transferred to Parish Council Agenda.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

43 Danbury Common/Cyclists

Updates to the end of August 2011 had been received from the National Trust who were monitoring the effects of cycling on The Common.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

44 Ollets, Belvedere Road

No further information about the future of the building was available.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

45 'Keep Danbury Tidy' Posters

Cllr Mrs Court had produced a revised version of the proposed posters using a different photograph and with the addition of the Parish Council logo. Members thanked Mrs Court for her work and approved the A4 size. They felt that the text stood out more in the original yellow version, and also that a more up-to-date photo would be an improvement. It was explained that the posters would be laminated before distribution. Cllr Pemberton offered to take a new photo of the pond.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Pemberton supply a more up-to-date photo of the pond and that the main text colour in the poster revert to yellow. With these changes the Committee was happy for the posters to be printed and distributed.

46 Overgrown hedges

Correspondence with the Danbury Society regarding hedges growing over footpaths was noted. Mr Bowen had not heard the outcome of the recent Danbury Society Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

47 Hedge Survey Course

Rebecca Banks of the Essex Biodiversity Project would be presenting the course at the Parish Office on Wednesday 14th September between 10am and 12.30pm. Anyone wishing to attend the course was asked to let the Clerk know so that she could ensure the course was viable.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

48 Details received from Highways re overhanging hedging

The following comments had been received from ECC Highways:

- a) Beech hedge 100 metres from Eves Corner on the bus stop side: The Inspector was unable to find any obstruction or vegetation encroachment at this location;
- b) Main Road beyond the Bell Public House: The Inspector was unable to find any obstruction;
- c) From Tesco to The Avenue: The Inspector had this trimmed back;
- d) Outside 56 Main Road: The vegetation was found to be cut back by the time of the Inspection;
- e) Hedge in Mayes Lane: This had been cut back by the owners.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

49 Weed Spraying

The next round of weed spraying on the highway would commence on Tuesday 30th August 2011. All parishes should be sprayed within 2 weeks of that date.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

50 NEAT – Summer 2011 (Chelmsford Borough Council)

The NEAT Summer newsletter had been circulated.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

51 Essex and Suffolk Water

Correspondence was received from Savills, Agents for Essex & Suffolk Water, and from Whirledge & Nott Surveyors. This related to planned ecological surveys being carried out on land belonging to the Parish Council at Bell Hill Wood in connection with a proposed new water main.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

52 Correspondence from Royal Horticultural Society: Britain in Bloom

After discussion, members agreed that they did not wish to involve Danbury in the Britain in Bloom programme. It would create a great deal of work for the staff and they felt there were better ways to improve the appearance of the village.

RESOLVED: that Danbury should not take part in the Britain in Bloom programme.

53 Living Landscapes project

There were no developments to report.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

54 Matters for Report

No reports were made.

55 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 2nd November 2011

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.10pm.

Cllr Alan Keeler
Chairman

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Signed

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Date