



Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th November 2011 at 7.45pm at The Old School House, Main Road, Danbury

Present: Cllrs S Berlyn (Chairman)
 M Wood (Vice Chairman) B Kennewell
 A Allen A Pemberton
 D Bolwell W Scaife
 Mrs A Chapman M Telling
 A Keeler J Thomson

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

111 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mrs S-J Court and Cllr J Scott.

112 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 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.

Cllr Kennewell declared a personal interest in the Landisdale Charity item (minute 129 below) by virtue of living opposite the Charity's land at Sandpit Field.

113 Public Question Time

One member of the public was present but did not wish to speak.

114 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2011 be approved and signed as a correct record.

115 Co-option of Parish Councillor

Cllr Clacy had resigned in September creating a second vacancy. Chelmsford Borough Council had confirmed that an election had not been requested and the Parish Council was therefore able to co-opt. Several enquires had been received, and one resident had put forward a CV but subsequently withdrew.

Cllr Kennewell, seconded by Cllr Pemberton, proposed that the second vacancy be filled by co-option, and this was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that the Council seek to fill the second vacancy by co-option.

116 Councillor – Assignment to committees

Cllr Mrs Chapman wished to resign from the Facilities Committee and this was accepted. Cllr Chapman was thanked for her contribution to Facilities, and members noted that still she served on the Planning and Environment Committees as well as being Editor of Danbury Times.

Cllr John Scott had been assigned to Resources Committee but had not made clear which other committee he wished to join. As he was not present it was agreed to defer this matter to the next meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Scott's assignment to a further committee be deferred.

117 Public Conveniences - Danbury

A meeting had taken place between representatives of Chelmsford Borough Council and Danbury Parish Council. CBC had confirmed that if the Parish Council did not take over the toilets they would be closed on 31st March 2012 and subsequently demolished.

In response to a request for views from residents, about 20 members of the public had written to the Parish Council. This was a small response out of the total population of the village. Most of those writing were in favour of the toilets remaining open, though three were opposed.

New information was reported regarding possible options for cleaning and for opening and closing the toilets, but there were unresolved issues with all these options. Members noted that there would also be a commitment of staff time to manage the facilities. The present condition of the toilets was not felt to be good, and the costs of refurbishment and repairs (on top of cleaning and maintenance) would require a considerable amount of money. There was also the likelihood of vandalism. The current economic climate and the financial pressures on residents were also factors to take into account.

Taking over the toilets for a trial period of two years was suggested. However, it was noted that if the Council decided at the end of the trial to close the toilets then demolition of the building would be at the Council's expense.

After discussion the Chairman asked each member in turn to give their views. The majority felt that ideally the toilets should be retained as an amenity for the village but that the costs were likely to be large and the required increase in the Precept could not be justified. Cllr Telling put forward the proposal that CBC be informed that the Parish Council did not feel financially able to take on the toilets but that it encouraged CBC to keep them open. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Wood and passed by 10 votes to 0 with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: that Chelmsford Borough Council be informed that in the current economic climate the Parish Council did not feel financially able to take over responsibility for the toilets and that it encouraged the Borough Council reverse its decision and to keep the toilets open.

118 Precept 2012–2013

118.1 Small Grants Scheme

The Grants Working Group had considered four applications and recommended to Resources Committee that two payments be made. These were to the Parish Church (less than had been requested) and to the 1st Danbury Brownies, which was a new group. The application from the Village Hall was not supported as the Group felt that other sources of funding were available. The application from the Pre-School was rejected as it was for a maintenance item which was not permitted under the rules of the scheme. The Resources Committee recommended that the recommendations of the Grants Working Group be approved.

Cllr Pemberton proposed that Council approve the recommendation of the Resources Committee regarding the payment of grants. Cllr Wood seconded the proposal and it was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that grants be awarded in the year 2012-13 as follows:

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 19 and Local Government Act 1972 Section 214(6)

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|--------|
| i) | Parish Church of St John Baptist, Danbury | For maintenance of Church Green and the churchyard. | £1,000 |
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Local Government Act 1972 Section 137

The Council was of the opinion that the expenditure in items vii to x below satisfied the terms of Section 137 of the LGA 1972 (as amended by LG & HA 1989 s36):

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|------|
| ii) | 1 st Danbury Brownies | For 6 items of equipment for use by the group | £450 |
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Total £1,450

118.2 Approval of Precept for 2012-13

The recommendation of the Resources Committee was received. Resources had accepted the budgets set by other committees for the next financial year and had proposed two alternative figures for the Precept depending on the Parish Council's decision regarding the public toilets. Cllr Kennewell proposed that the Council's Precept be set at £183,000, which was the same as the previous two years. Cllr Scaife seconded the proposal and it was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that the Precept for the financial year 2012-13 be set at £183,000 which represented a 0% increase for the second year running.

119 Reports from Village Organisations

119.1 Neighbourhood Watch

Mr D Whiteing continued to send regular bulletins to the email membership list, including the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

119.2 Town Twinning

The Danbury & Little Baddow Twinning Association would celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2012 and visitors from Altenglan were expected to be in Danbury on 26th or 27th May. The Association hoped to re-enact the original Twinning Agreement signing ceremony at Eves Corner. The national initiative to 'twin' schools in the UK with schools from countries participating in the 2012 Olympics was mentioned, and it was agreed that Mr Whiteing be notified of this in case the Twinning Association wished to pursue it.

RESOLVED: that the Council supported the proposal to re-enact the Twinning document signing and that Mr Whiteing be informed of the 2012 schools' twinning initiative.

119.3 Essex Association of Local Councils

Cllr Berlyn reported that he had recently been appointed as the Chelmsford Area representative on the EALC.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

120 Strategic Plan

A meeting of the Group was held on 13th October 2011. The plan and the Committees' terms of reference were nearly completed, but a meeting to finalise the recommendations to Parish Council would be held on 13th December. The Plan would be brought for consideration to the Parish Council meeting at the end of January 2012.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

121 Revision of Standing Order 32b (minute 93 of 28th September 2011 refers)

The Clerk had contacted other Parish Councils and found that they had resolved not to change the Standing Order. She had also spoken to the Internal Auditor who agreed that the Standing Order should remain the same as it gave more flexibility than the proposed revision. Cllr Kennewell proposed that the Standing Order should not be changed, and this was seconded by Cllr Chapman and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that Standing Order 32b be left unchanged.

122 Reports from Committees

In addition to the minutes already circulated the following reports were made:

122.1 Resources Committee

Cllr Kennewell had been appointed the new Chairman of Resources with Cllr Scaife as Vice Chairman. In recent weeks most of the work of the Committee had been connected with preparing the Precept.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

122.2 Planning Committee

The Committee had spent a considerable amount of time completing consultations from Government and from the County and Borough Councils, as follows:

Government consultations: Draft National Planning Policy Framework, Draft Local Planning Regulations and Draft Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. Cllr Telling expressed thanks to the small group who had met separately to finalise the Council's responses.

CBC consultation: Site Allocations Development Plan Document

ECC consultation: Waste Development Document – Preferred Approach (on-going)

A planning application in St Clere's Way was considered at two CBC Planning Committee meetings and at a site visit because of the objections of the Parish Council and neighbouring residents. Although the application was ultimately approved, the Committee was pleased that the issues raised and the policies in the Danbury Planning Framework had been taken seriously by the Borough Councillors on the CBC Planning Committee.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

122.3 Environment Committee

Several Councillors had walked Lingwood Common in relation to the National Trust's proposal for deforestation.

The Committee had resolved that no snow clearance should be done in the village by the Parish Council.

A request for 'No cycling' signs to be installed on the way-mark posts on definitive footpaths had been submitted to Essex County Council.

The Committee maintained a list of required Highways works, but it was understood that there was no funding available at the current time. Each request had to be determined according to the Essex County Council Maintenance Strategy.

A request had been made to Bardwell Aggregates to improve the cleanliness of the main road outside Royal Oak Quarry.

The Chelmer Housing Partnership had submitted a draft proposal for the redevelopment of Olletts to provide eight new affordable houses. This had also been considered by the Planning Committee.

Cycling on Danbury Common continued to be monitored by the National Trust.

The Danbury Society had agreed to help monitor overgrown hedges on footpaths in the village.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

122.4 Facilities Committee

Representatives of the Cricket Club had met with the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Facilities Committee immediately prior to the Parish Council meeting. The Club understood that the price of maintaining the cricket wicket would increase and they had offered to consult their contacts regarding alternative options to help the Facilities Committee make a decision regarding the maintenance contract.

The Facilities Committee had been working through points raised in the survey of the Sports & Social Centre.

Cllr Pemberton, Chairman of Facilities Committee, had been working on agreeing places to distribute bags of salt for use on village footways during the winter.

The Committee had agreed that the village greens would continue to be cut by a contractor for the coming year.

The ponds at Eves Corner and Runsell Green had been cleared by working parties of volunteers led by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

A further meeting with representatives of the Bowling Club had taken place.

The Parish Council was through to the second round in its application for a 'Big Society' grant for the children's play area.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

123 Bus Passenger Transport

123.1 Bus Transport Meeting

Cllr Scaife reported that the Sandon Park & Ride would operate on Sundays during December. The ECC Transport Plan did not go beyond 2011.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

123.2 Local Bus Tender 2012

The plans put out to tender did not include changes to the 31 and 36 buses operating in Danbury. Most of the impacts were in the Dengie peninsula.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

123.3 ECC road closure and temporary diversion of bus no. 36

ECC Department of Passenger Transport had approached the Council regarding temporary arrangements for the diversion of the no. 36 bus during a 6 week road closure between Bicknacre and South Woodham Ferrers in January and February 2012. ECC required a turning and waiting area for a minibus, and proposed the area of the Main Road car park adjacent to the public toilets. In discussion members were not convinced that this proposal was the best way to proceed and felt it would not be practicable to reserve a space for the minibus. They also questioned whether a minibus would be adequate in view of the numbers of travellers. They had no objection to a minibus parking in the area proposed but it would not be possible to reserve space.

RESOLVED: that ECC Passenger Transport Department be informed that the Council had no objection to a minibus turning and waiting in the area of the Main Road car park adjacent to the public toilets but that it could not guarantee that a space would be available.

124 Queens Diamond Jubilee 2012

124.1 Nesting box at Danbury Country Park

The Clerk had contacted the Rangers at the Country Park and they had suggested that the Parish Council sponsor a nesting box for a Tawny Owl at a cost of £25. The Rangers had investigated the cost of installing a camera to allow visitors to watch the birds in the nest, and these were noted. The Rangers proposed to include a plaque to commemorate the Parish Council's involvement. After discussion Cllr Wood proposed that a donation of £100 be made towards the cost of a nesting box, camera and plaque. This was seconded by Cllr Telling and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that a donation of £100 be made to the Danbury Lakes Country Park towards the cost of installing a nesting box, camera and plaque as part of the Council's activities to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

124.2 Lighting the Beacon

The Clerk had obtained a price of £500 from D F Clark for filling the beacon ready for lighting, which would require the use of a 'cherry picker' machine. Caroline Lambert had also been contacted, and she was prepared to be involved in the arrangements but did not wish to take the lead. She had suggested a 'bring and share' meal prior to the lighting of the beacon. After discussion Cllrs Chapman and Bolwell agreed to liaise with Mrs Lambert and to put their recommendations to the Parish Council at its January meeting for a decision, so that details could be included in the next edition of the Danbury Times.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Mrs Chapman and Cllr Bolwell meet with Mrs Lambert to agree a way forward and report to Parish Council in January.

125 Danbury Times

Members congratulated Cllr April Chapman, as Editor, and the editorial team on the Autumn edition, which was the first one using a new printing company. The Parish Council had carried out a Best Value check for the printing service. The cost of the Autumn 2010 issue was £1,963 as opposed to £698 this year. Although the latest edition was 8 pages (as opposed to 16 last year) it was produced in full colour and therefore there was still a saving. Cllr Chapman said that she would welcome feedback on the new issue and also on any problems with the delivery rounds.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted, and that the Editor and her team be thanked for their hard work and the quality of the new edition.

126 Christmas Card Competition

All three Primary Schools in the Village took part in the competition this year. The winner was Tom Stevens, aged 9, from St John's Primary School. The Chairman of the Council together with Assistant Clerk Mrs Dyer attended an assembly at the school and presented the winner with a £10 book token and a certificate. The school received a cheque for £50. The winning card was featured on the cover of the new Danbury Times.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

127 Car Park Drainage Project

The lighting bollards in the top car park were still proving to be a problem. The underground cable had broken and had to be repaired so that the lights worked again. Recently four bollards had been stolen and the cost of full replacement would be around £1,000. Members expressed concern about the quality and the fixings of the bollards and agreed that the manufacturer should be approached for advice on these issues and how to help prevent further thefts. The Clerk reported on other examples of vandalism in the village which had occurred recently, including the burning of litter bins and cutting of cables. Members discussed the possibility of installing CCTV but this was not pursued at present.

RESOLVED: that the manufacturer be approached regarding the quality and fixing methods of the bollards and that in the meantime the missing bollards be not replaced.

128 Councillors' Surgeries

Cllr Allen was no longer able to assist at the December Farmers' Market. After discussion the arrangements were agreed as follows:

3rd December 2011: Cllrs Bolwell and Wood

January 2012: no market

4th February: Cllrs Scaife and Scott

3rd March: Cllr Mrs Chapman (second member to be allocated at January meeting)

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

129 Landisdale Trust

The Parish Council had accepted an invitation from the Landisdale Trust to attend a meeting on 2nd November 2011. This had looked at models of land ownership and management, in particular Community Land Trusts. This was not a Public Meeting. Notes prepared by the Charity after the meeting had been circulated.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

130 Office Tables

There were tables left from the move to the present council offices which were surplus to requirements and difficult to store. The Clerk sought permission to dispose of the tables. Cllr Pemberton proposed that the tables be disposed of and initially be offered for sale. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Keeler and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that the tables be offered for sale in the first instance and if not sold otherwise disposed of.

131 Essex Legacy 2012 Celebrations – Celebrate your Fete

After discussion it was agreed that the Council did not wish to participate in this scheme as it did not run an appropriate event. Members noted that the Parish Church and the schools in the village all had summer fetes and might be interested in the scheme.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council would not participate and that details be forwarded to the Parish Church and the village schools.

132 ECC Corporate Vision: ‘Have your say on our commitment to Essex’

Members had read the document and agreed that they supported the County Council’s statement.

RESOLVED: that ECC be informed that the Parish Council supported the terms of its Corporate Vision statement.

133 Matters for Report (for information only)

The annual Carols at Eves Corner would take place at 8pm on Wednesday 14th December 2011;

It was understood that Danbury Palace was again up for sale but no details were available;

A decision on the 100 hour retail pharmacy licence application at Danbury Medical Centre had been deferred until May 2012;

Danbury Outdoors, Well Lane, currently had a temporary manager with a new manager commencing in January;

CBC had agreed to give the Parish Council £1,000 towards the cost of printing the Danbury Planning Framework;

South Woodham Ferrers police station opening hours were now 12pm-6pm, Monday to Saturday.

134 Dates of Meetings: January to May 2012

Tuesday 31 st January	Parish Council
Monday 26 th March	Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 28 th March	Parish Council
Wednesday 2 nd May	Annual Parish Council (start of new Council year)

135 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 that they be instructed to withdraw.

The member of the public left the meeting at this point, having been thanked by the Chairman for attending.

136 Royal British Legion

The building had been redecorated by Reparation Workers and thanks had been sent. The Council's solicitor had conducted the necessary legal searches regarding the Covenant on Dawson Memorial Field as it affected the use of the building and had submitted his advice, which was discussed. The Council noted that commercial use of the site did not appear to be permitted.

RESOLVED: that those who had expressed an interest in using the RBL building for commercial purposes be informed of the situation and that the question of the future use of the building be referred back to the Facilities Committee.

Business having been concluded, the Chairman wished all members and staff a very Happy Christmas and closed the meeting at 9.50pm.

Signed: Cllr S Berlyn, Chairman

Date: