

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

A Quality Council



ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the held on Wednesday 27th June, 2012 at the Committee Room, the Old School House, Main Road, Danbury

Present: Cllrs A Keeler (Chairman), A. Allen, S. Berlyn, D. Bolwell,, Mrs A Chapman, W Scaife, J Thomson, M Wood

Outside Representative: Mr J Bowen (Danbury Society)

In attendance: Cllr C Jacobs
Mrs H Mayes, Assistant Clerk
Mrs M Saunders, Clerk

1 Election of Chairman for 2012/13

Cllr Wood nominated Cllr Keeler. This was seconded by Cllr Berlyn. No other nominations were received and Cllr Keeler was elected unopposed.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Keeler be elected Chairman of the Environment Committee for the municipal year 2012.

2 Election of Vice-Chairman for 2012/3

Cllr Wood nominated Cllr Mrs Chapman. This was seconded by Cllr Bolwell. No other nominations were received and Cllr Mrs Chapman was elected unopposed.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Mrs Chapman be elected Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee for the municipal year 2012.

3 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

4 Declarations of Interest

Members were required to declare any personal or prejudicial interest they knew they might have 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 cleared similarly at the appropriate time.

Cllr Berlyn declared a personal interest in item 26 as he may be attending the event.

5 Public Questions (Time limited to 15 minutes)

There were five members of the public present at the meeting. Two scouts had attended to observe the meeting. Three members of the public attended following a road traffic accident at the pedestrian crossing on the A414 outside Danbury Park School. They felt that the pedestrian crossing was unsafe and handed out photographs and a letter detailing the main issues.

They outlined their main concerns in relation to the safety of the crossing which were:

- The belisha beacons on the pedestrian crossing were obscured by overgrown trees and the paint markings on the road had faded
- Drivers regularly failed to stop to allow pedestrians to cross
- Abuse from drivers had been experienced by pedestrians attempting to use the crossing

They suggested possible solutions which were

- Installation of a pelican crossing in place of the pedestrian crossing.
- Move the crossing closer to the mini roundabout to further slow down traffic

They had written a letter outlining all the issues and would be sending a copy of this to Essex County Council Highways, local Councillors, Police and local road safety groups.

Members discussed the issues raised. Some members felt that the accident was likely to have been caused by driver error rather than the pedestrian crossing although it was agreed that the trees were obscuring the belisha beacon. It was felt that the crossing was reasonably visible with adequate signage in both directions and that it seemed in this case that three cars had already stopped for the crossing with a fourth failing to stop in time. It was also commented that as the belisha beacons were quite high there may be some benefit in having them lowered. There was also a responsibility on pedestrians to use the crossing in a safe manner and ensure that traffic has stopped before crossing.

The responsibility for the cutting back of trees is Essex County Council Highways. The trees had been cut back in previous years following complaints from residents.

Not all of the issues raised were the responsibility of the Parish Council. However, the Council will always investigate and report any problems to the relevant authority where it does not have the duty to deal with it.

The mini roundabout and crossing were funded by the Safer Journey to Schools and were put in on the basis of a child crocodile crossing. The crossing was situated in the safest place available at the time. The residents did not feel that a walking bus was appropriate as the road was dangerous and parents did not want the responsibility for other people's children.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would action the following:

- Request further information from the police on the incident
- Request that the foliage be cut back around the belisha beacon
- Request that the road markings on the crossing be painted to make them clearer
- Put the item onto the next agenda

Public questions ended at 8.35pm

Cllr Berlyn left the meeting

6 Minutes of the Environment Committee

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2012 be approved and signed as a correct record.

7 Annual Litter Pick – 21st April, 2012

The litter pick was held on Saturday 21st April, 2012. It was not well attended although the people who did attend were very enthusiastic. The two scouts who cleared different areas of the village were attending the meeting. Members wished to thank the scouts for their hard work which will form part of their Community Badge. The Parish Council would provide them with certificates.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

8 Danbury Leaflet

The final version of the Danbury Leaflet had now been produced and 3000 copies received for distribution. The leaflets had cost approximately £500 to print. Leaflets had been delivered to Maldon, South Woodham Ferrers and Witham Tourist Information Centres and have also been sent out to TIC's and libraries across Essex and Central London. Cllr Allen felt that the distances on the leaflet should have stated miles then kilometres. Cllr Keeler noted that the direction to Boreham was also incorrect. These items could be altered when a further print run is requested. Overall members were very pleased with the leaflet and wished thanks to be given to Cllr Bolwell and Elisabeth Blyth who had carried out the majority of the work.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

9 Well Lane Recycling Banks

The recycling banks were currently being phased out in Chelmsford and should now have been removed.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

10 Country Park

Cllr Keeler and the Clerk went to Danbury Country Park on 24th May as part of the judging for Green Flag status. Green Flag status is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK. Cllr Keeler advised the meeting that no further updates on the outcome of the judging had been received. Cllr Keeler also advised that he had received an email from Andrea Gabriel advising that the owners of Danbury Palace had removed the leylandii that had been pushing the wall over. However, the wall would remain sectioned off due to health and safety concerns.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

Cllr Berlyn returned to the meeting

11 Footpaths

11.1 Cycling on Footpaths- papers attached

Matthew Hodgkinson, Public Rights of Way Officer, Essex Highways had offered to attend the next Environment Committee to clarify Essex Highways position on footpaths and cycling and answer any questions from members. The Waymark Survey had been completed and the results collated. Following the survey Footpath 42 was noted to have been ploughed over and needed to be reinstated. The Assistant Clerk was to report this to Matthew Hodgkinson. Several members thought that it would be useful to have Matthew attend the next Environment Committee as signs could not be put up without the landowners consent. Cllr Allen felt that Essex County Council encouraged

people to cycle on the footpaths and that following the survey he expected the no cycling discs to be fixed to the waymarks. He was concerned that too much time had passed and that the survey had been completed to see where the signs were needed. The signs would be small discs and would not be detrimental to the surroundings. Cllr Mrs Chapman noted that this was approximately 61 signs and that she would prefer Danbury to remain as it is without being spoilt by excessive signs.

Cllr Thomson proposed that the committee puts any questions to Matthew Hodgkinson at the next meeting and that he be sent the minutes and the survey as background information. Once the committee had heard the views of ECC, members could then make a decision on the signs. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Wood.

Members voted 7 in favour, 1 against.

RESOLVED: that Matthew Hodgkinson be requested to attend the next Environment Committee to answer questions from members and that footpath 42 be reported to Matthew Hodgkinson by the Assistant Clerk

11.2 Danbury Youth Camp and Park - footpath opposite Riffhams Lane/ Works to Footpaths P3

The hedge had now been planted along part of the boundary of Danbury Park School and appeared to be doing well. The Clerk met Matthew Hodgkinson on 7th June to discuss further hedging around the school. It was agreed that the current hedging was sufficient. However, there was a need for a railing to be placed where footpath 8 meets the road. The current gate could remain. Matthew would look into this work further and report back. There was no update on the railing.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

11.3 Report by Footpaths Officer Cllr Bolwell

Cllr Bolwell reported that footpath 59 needed a new footpath sign to be put up.

RESOLVED: that the Assistant Clerk report to ECC that footpath 59 requires a new sign.

12 Highway Matters

12.1 Vehicles parking on grass verges at Hoynors & Gay Bowers

Ken Barrett from ECC Trading Standards had emailed regarding this issue, which was causing obstruction to traffic sight lines. He had proposed inserting a few strategically placed posts or large stones on the verge to prevent this occurring and would like members to consider if they would agree to this. Members agreed that posts would be preferable and that an email should be sent to Ken Barrett advising him of this. It was not clear if ECC would be funding this. It was also reported that two other locations would benefit from posts to prevent parking; these were Rectory Farm House, Main Road (area between far right hand post and entrance to drive) and 87 Main Road.

RESOLVED: that the Assistant Clerk email Ken Barrett to request posts be inserted on grass verges at Hoynors and Gay Bowers and find out if they would fund the work. The Assistant Clerk to also report the two further locations where posts were required.

12.2 Public Notice - The Essex County Council – (Various Roads Chelmsford) (Temporary 10mph & 30mph speed limit) Order 2012 – papers attached

A copy of the public notice relating to the above was circulated to members.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

12.3 Highways matters (reported items)

The following items had been reported. As ECC do not always update when work has been completed, please could members inform the Assistant Clerk if they notice that any of these jobs have been completed.

Items for Report	Authority Sent to	Actions Taken
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 letter has been sent to the owner to cut back the tree.
Elm Green Lane	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	Have requested ECC Highways if they can help again. JT reported pillar box had been replaced although the road was still in bad condition.
Hopping Jacks Lane – Uneven footpath causing issues for residents with mobility problems	Essex County Council	Logged as reference E69942-1R-LF. ECC requested more specific location and then will inspect. 26/04/12 Further detail given to ECC re location.
Hopping Jacks Lane – outside 2A/4A the centre kerbstone at the dropped kerb has lifted and is dangerous.	Essex County Council	Logged as reference E-1848019-1R-SB. Email received 25 May from ECC – will arrange inspection.
Hopping Jacks Lane/Butts Lane Junction – White ‘Give Way’ road signs need replacing	Essex County Council	Logged as reference 1848021 on 25 May. ECC already have this on list for investigation.
Homestead, South View Road – large dip in pavement caused by vehicle driving on footway. May have collapsed the drain.	Essex County Council	Logged as reference 1848031 on 24 May.
Penny Royal Road – Large pothole outside the Cricketers Pub	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – chased ECC 1/6/12. Email received from ECC – pothole was made safe on 13 th April 2012. Ref E-1639793-1R-SB

Items for Report	Authority Sent to	Actions Taken
Mayes Lane – tarmac footpath from Mayes Lane car park towards Penny Royal Lane has subsided and is now raised & uneven.	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – chased ECC 1/6/12, 11/6/12
Well Lane – Parking restrictions	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – chased ECC 1/6/12, 11/6/12
Copt Hill – damage to grass verge	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – chased ECC 1/6/12, 11/6/12
Mayes Lane – flooding to road	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – chased ECC 1/6/12, 11/6/12
Alleyway between 41, 43 & 45 Hoynors – overhanging tree branches blocking streetlights	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – chased ECC 1/6/12, 11/6/12
Junction of Hopping Jacks Lane & Butts Lane – 3 large potholes	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – chased ECC 1/6/12, 11/6/12. SB reported that this had been completed.
Elm Green Lane – large pothole by wooden struts on the green & pothole at entrance to Parkdale	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – chased ECC 1/6/12. Reported again on 14/6/12 as 2 nd resident rang regarding potholes. Resident will also report pothole to ECC.
The Avenue – overgrown trees blocking pavement (reported by 2a)	Essex County Council	Awaiting reference/update – reported 6/6/12

Members reported the following new highway issues for ECC Highways to attend to:

- Cherry Garden Lane (eastern end, Hyde Lane to Maldon Road) – number of potholes
- Footway at Southview Road (Woodhill Road & Footpath 19 – the footway is cracking and uneven with weeds growing through
- 8 Southview Road – Road/gutter has subsided due to large vehicle

RESOLVED: that the information be noted and the new items be reported to ECC Highways by the Assistant Clerk.

13 Traffic Volumes on A414

Information from Essex County Council was provided as requested at the Annual Parish Meeting. The information given was very detailed and this made it difficult summarise. It appeared that there were approximately 24,000 vehicles travelling through Danbury each day which was a similar amount to the last report. It was felt that the type of vehicle may have changed.

RESOLVED: that the information was forwarded to the resident who made the original request and that ECC be asked for a summary of the information suitable for publication on the website and in the next Danbury Times.

14 Signage Items on Highways as follows: (Items to note no change)

14.1 Well Lane

Signage was on Essex County Council list.

14.2 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 have to adhere to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 which is a statutory document. A Highways reference of 69757 had now been received.

RESOLVED: that the information in 14.1 and 14.2 be noted.

15 Localism small scheme list when opened is as follows: (Items to note no change)

15.1 Runsell Green Reduction in Speed Limit

Essex County Council had proposed to change the speed limit to 40mph from derestricted. This would be advertised in the next few months and if no objections were received it would be implemented. The Clerk had contacted the concerned resident and they had stated they would prefer a 30mph limit. There was some discussion about whether the limit should be 30mph and if ECC should be contacted to request this. Following the discussion, it was agreed that the original proposal of 40mph was adequate and there would be no objection from the committee.

RESOLVED: that the speed limit request be kept to 40mph.

15.2 Well Lane – Zebra Crossing

15.3 Gating Signs

15.4 Footpath Mayes Lane, Penny Royal Road, Woodhill Road

15.5 Installation of Bollards – Parking on Verge in the Main Road

15.6 Speed Reduction in Woodhill Road (to be added when scheme opens)

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

16 Quarries

16.1 St Clere's Hall

There was nothing further to report

16.2 Royal Oak Quarry

A response had been received from Essex County Council asking for more details regarding where the accident happened and what was the cause of it. ECC confirmed that wheel cleaning facilities have been installed at Royal Oak Quarry and a wheel washing facility was to be installed and operational by 19th March 2012. They also confirmed that the Haul Road at St Cleres Hall is regularly swept to make sure no debris is carried from the pit to the public highway.

A copy of an email sent to ECC had been received from a resident concerned about the large amount of lorries travelling along the A414 in Danbury and the dirt that is deposited on the carriageway.

Members felt that there was still an issue with debris on the road and silt had been seen pouring from the back of lorries and gravel falling into the road. This was a management issue that the quarries should be dealing with. They should ensure that the wheel washing facilities were being correctly used and that further mud was not picked up after the wheels had been washed. There was also an issue with motorbike trials taking place which could increase the mud on the roads to the quarry which is then picked up by the lorries.

16.3 Sandon Quarry

There was nothing further to report.

16.4 Proposed site at Tyndales Farm

The Minerals Development Document had now been given full priority so to achieve Full Council sign-off to the submission document in December 2012.

16.5 Whitehouse Farm Woodham Walter

Nothing further to report

RESOLVED: that the information in 16.1 to 16.5 be noted and that a letter be written to ECC (and copied to Bardens) to state that there was still an issue with debris on the road and that the wheel wash is either not working, not being used or mud is picked up after the wheels have been washed.

17 Bus Shelters

17.1 The Bus Shelter at The Avenue (Maldon Side)

The bus shelter had now been repaired, mainly due to the efforts of the Assistant Clerk, Facilities. Members wished to thank Maria for her assistance.

RESOLVED: that the Assistant Clerk, Facilities be formally thanked.

17.2 Power to Bus Shelter outside nr Service Station (Chelmsford Side)

There was no further update

RESOLVED: that the information be noted

18 Oil Buying Scheme

A paper was circulated to members from the RCCE Oil Buying Scheme. It was felt that this did not necessarily offer people value for money. The Citizens Advice Bureau advises people to club together to buy oil and save the annual fee.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted

19 Neighbourhood Action Panel and Police

An email had been received from David Whiteing. The next Neighbourhood Action Panel Meeting would be held on 8th August 2012. There were no updates from the last meeting. David Whiteing would send out crime statistics to members as and when he received them from the police. It was felt that these meetings were no longer useful as they provided very limited out of date information and could now be removed from the agenda.

RESOLVED: that Danbury Parish Council no longer sends a representative to the NAP and that David Whiteing and South Woodham Ferrers police are informed of this. Members would also like to thank David Whiteing for attending the meetings.

20 Danbury Times

20.1 Cllr Mrs Chapman updated the meeting. Delivery would be week commencing 9th July. Cllr Berlyn would deliver if necessary on return from holiday. Mr Bowen was also away during this week.

20.2 Members did not have any suggestions for articles for the Autumn/Winter Issue.
RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

21 Danbury Common/Cyclists

Richard Wallace had now retired. The new Head Ranger would be Stuart Banks who has already worked with Richard for the last 4 years. Stuart had provided the latest report from the cycling area on the common.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted

22 Hedging

22.1 The Anchor Pub – There was a boundary dispute between the owner and ECC over who is responsible for cutting the hedge. ECC had advised the owner that if he doesn't cut it then they will do it and recharge him the costs.

22.2 The Assistant Clerk had reported the following hedges to ECC Highways:

Items for Report	Authority Sent to	Actions Taken
Overhanging hedge to footway outside Russetts, Mayes Lane	Essex County Council	Reported 14/06/12
Overhanging hedge to footway from top of Mill Lane to Danbury Mission	Essex County Council	Reported 14/06/12
Overhanging hedge to footway and road along Elm Green Lane	Essex County Council	Reported 14/06/12
Overhanging hedge to footway between Co-op and Village Hall	Essex County Council	Reported 14/06/12

22.3 Cllr Scaife reported that the triangle of land between Nursery Lane and Hopping Jacks Lane had a number of large trees and bushes that were overgrown and should be reported to ECC. It was not known who owns this piece of land.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted and any new issues be reported to ECC Highways for action.

23 Living Landscapes

There were no further updates from Cllr Thomson but he would be happy to take any proposals from the Council.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted.

24 Climate Change/Green Group

24.1 Green Group

No further meetings were held.

24.2 Climate Change

There was nothing further to report.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted

25 Proposed deforestation at Lingwood Common, Lt Baddow

This work is happening in the summer. Cllr Bolwell reported that there was no evidence of work happening as yet. Little Baddow Parish Council had met with the National Trust but no update had been given. Cllr Keeler had been told that the work would now happen in October.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted

26 Essex Youth Offending Service

A letter had been received from Joanne Shaw, Referral Order Co-ordinator asking for the Parish Council to donate a raffle prize for their panel members annual BBQ. Cllr Berlyn declared an interested as he may be attending the event. There was a discussion regarding the donation of a prize. Some members felt that as the Reparation Team had previously carried out a lot of work for the Parish Council that it would be appropriate for a prize to be given. Other members felt that this would be an inappropriate donation and it did not fall within the Councils donation policy. It would also be setting a precedent for further requests from other organisations. Cllr Berlyn proposed that this item be withdrawn from the agenda and discussed at the Resources Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Scaife.

RESOLVED: that the item be withdrawn from the agenda and discussed at the Resources Committee.

27 NHS Constitution

An email was received from NHS regarding the constitution.

RESOLVED: that the information be noted

28 Matters for Report

There were no matters for report.

29 Dates of Meeting for 2012

Wednesday 5th September, 17th October, 5th December

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.58pm,

Cllr Alan Keeler
Chairman

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Signed

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Date