

***Minutes of The Great Bentley Parish Council Meeting Thursday 4th May
in Great Bentley Village Hall at 7.30pm***

Present

Cllr Robert Taylor (Chairman) Cllr Lynda McWilliams (Vice-Chairman), Cllr George Flint, Cllr Peter De-Vaux Balbirnie, Cllr William Herbert, Cllr Edward Fox, Cllr Jonathan Hills, Cllr David Gibbon, Cllr George Wright,

In Attendance

Miss Janet D Bloomfield (Clerk to the Council), Mr Geoffrey Catchpole (Retired Clerk to the Council), Cllr Derek Robinson (ECC), Ten members of the public and James Dwan (The press)

1. Apologies for absence

2. Election of Chairman for 2006/2007

Cllr R Taylor asked the council to put forward a Cllr for the election of Chairman. Cllr D Gibbon put forward Cllr L McWilliams for the position of chairman
Proposed by Cllr W Herbert and seconded by Cllr G Flint. Council agreed.

3. Acceptance of Office by Chairman

Cllr L McWilliams signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Document was then signed by the Proper Officer Miss Janet Bloomfield.

4. Election of Vice Chair for 2006/2007

Chairman L McWilliams asked the Council to put forward a Cllr for the Election of Vice Chairman. Cllr R Taylor put forward Cllr W Herbert for the position of Vice Chairman.
Proposed by Cllr J Hills and seconded by Cllr G Wright. Council agreed.

5. Adoption of Standing Orders

Cllr L McWilliams asked Council if they agree to adopt the Standing Orders. Proposed by Cllr G Flint and seconded by Cllr W Herbert. Council agreed.

6. Property and Assets Annual Report Under Standing Order 16a)

Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) handed out to all Cllrs a list of property and assets belonging to the Great Bentley Parish Council.

7. Appointment of Committees

- a) **Allotments** – Cllr W Herbert, Cllr G Wright.
- b) **Planning** – Cllr P De-Vaux Balbirnie, Cllr J Hills, Cllr R Taylor, Cllr W Herbert, Cllr E Fox, Cllr L McWilliams, Cllr G Wright
- c) **Play Area** – Cllr W Herbert, Cllr L McWilliams.
- d) **Village Green Management** – Cllr D Gibbon, Cllr R Taylor, Cllr L McWilliams, Cllr W Herbert.
- e) **Finance** – Cllr W Herbert, Cllr L McWilliams, Cllr R Taylor, Cllr J Hills
- f) **Action** – Cllr G Flint, Cllr W Herbert, Cllr L McWilliams, Cllr R Taylor

Chairman and Vice Chairman Ex Officio on all Committees

(b) Other

- a) **Chief executive/Proper Officer/Responsible Finance Officer** – Miss Janet D Bloomfield
- b) **Internal Auditor** – Chris Wright
- c) **Village Hall** – Cllr L McWilliams
- d) **Tree Warden** – Mr M Dorling
- e) **Essex Association of local Council** –
- f) **Rural Community Council of Essex** – Cllr L McWilliams
- g) **Foot Path Representative** – Mr D Kirby
- h) **Transport Representative** – Mr V Walsh
- i) **TDALC**- Cllr L McWilliams

8. Standing orders – To Adopted the Adopt

Cllr L McWilliams asked the council to reaffirm the standing orders. Proposed by Cllr G Flint and seconded by Cllr E Fox. Council agreed.

9. Code of Conduct – To Reaffirm

Cllr L McWilliams ask the council to reaffirm the Code of Conduct. Proposed by Cllr G Flint and seconded by Cllr R Taylor. Council agreed.

10. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2006 were approved and signed as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr G Flint and seconded by William Herbert.

11. Declaration of Interest

Cllr L McWilliams asked if Cllrs would now declare if they have an interest.

Cllr Edward Fox declared an interest in the Affordable Housing.
Cllr David Gibbon declared an interest in the Gravel Extraction.
Cllr George Wright declared an interest in the Gravel Extraction.
Cllr L McWilliams declared an interest in Net Work Rail.
Cllr R Taylor declared an interest in the Allotments.

12. Correspondence

i) Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) read out a letter from Jan Turner (Chairman of Conservation Group)

Jan Turner asked the council if they could give some serious attention to the matter of a letter written to them regarding frog and toads trying to cross the road near pond house. The letter asked the council if they could put a dropped kerb opposite pond house for the creatures as they are finding this very hard to mount the high kerb and they are getting run over by traffic. The council discussed this and have decided to pass this to the Village green committee to look in to. Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) to write a letter to the Chairman of the conservation group to explain that the village green committee will be looking in to this matter with urgency.

ii) Clerk read out a letter from Bev Adams Secretary of the Great Bentley Carnival and fete committee. Bev Adams asked the council for permission to use the village Green for their event. Council Agreed. Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) to send The Great Bentley Carnival and fete committee the new conditions of use of the village green.

iii) Clerk read out a letter from Highways and Transportation. The letter stated that the Great Bentley level crossing would have temporary closure overnight. The closure, which is expected to last from: 2300hrs Monday 15th May 2006 – 5.30hrs Tuesday 16th May 2006, as they are required to carry out track maintenance work. The alternative route will be Thorrington Road / Great Bentley Road, B1029 Station Road, B1027 Clacton Road / Hollybush Hill, Dead Lane, South Heath Road and Coles Brook Road.

iii) Clerk read out a letter from Knowles Associates regarding the building of the barn and the erection of a fence at Red Lion House. The letter stated that Mr C Knowles had received no contact from Great Bentley Parish Council regarding the fence at Red Lion House and he states he is not aware of the nature of the complaint. Mr C Knowles asked the council if we could provide him with a full transcript of the letter and any other correspondence regarding this matter. Mr C Knowles stated that he would also like to be advised of what action if any has been taken by the Council's Officials.

Cllr R Taylor read out a letter that will be sent by the Clerk. The letter said that The Parish Council considered the letter from Mr Metcalf and were aware of the village concerns over the footpath and the area of the Village Green. We established that the new fence was not on the village green or the common land. Since the Issue of the foot path was a county council issue this was referred to them. When making contact it was also established that they considered the fence had been erected on their land. Thus as far as the Great Bentley Parish Council are concerned there is no dispute between us but as we understand it there is a dispute between you, The Parish Church and Essex County Council.

13 Information and Reports - none

14 County and District Councillors Report

a) Essex County Council Report

Cllr D Robinson congratulated Cllr R Taylor on becoming the Chairman of Tendring District Council and Cllr P De-Vaux Balbirnie on becoming the Vice Chairman of Tendring District Council.

Cllr D Robinson reported that he has spoken to Cllr R Bass Highways and Transportation Essex County Council regarding the Great Bentley level crossing gates. Cllr D Robinson said that Cllr R Bass will be Look in to this matter.

Cllr D Robinson reported that there has not been any decisions made regarding the mineral extraction, he said we will be advised in the autumn regarding this matter. Cllr D Robinson reported that there are issues with the Oasis site A120. He said that some of the village residents will not have certain access to the village. Cllr D Robinson said this will be looked in to.

Cllr D Robinson reported that when he was cabinet member he increased the amount available for the voluntary organisation from five hundred thousand pounds to seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Essex County Council had application for over £1 million pounds (2005). New cabinet member kept it to £750 thousand. There were applications for over £1.7 million; therefore there were many organisations that were sadly unsuccessful in their bids.

b) Tendring District Council Report

Cllr R Taylor reported that he is waiting to hear about the draft local plan regarding the Oasis site. He said that there will be an inspection on 12th September 2006 to start the public enquiry.

Cllr L McWilliams reported that she had filled in the form regarding the Oasis site on behalf of Great Bentley Parish Council and sent it back. She also reported that the relevant forms had been completed regarding the Omissions sites and that there is a copy on file in the office.

15. Update

a) Policing and PCSO

Cllr L McWilliams reported that she attended the Neighbourhood Policing Launch held at The Princes Theatre Clacton Town Hall on Wednesday 19th April 2006. (The report includes further information from the presentation by Chief Inspector Steve Robinson at the TDALC meeting held on Monday 24th April 2006)

Cllr L McWilliams read out her report.

The Aims - “The right people in the right places, in the right numbers, tackling crime, nuisance and disorder in order to make Essex Neighbourhoods safer”.

Neighbourhood policing is government lead, and the time scale given is to have everything in place by 2008.

The Chief Constable of Essex, Roger Baker, has acted to bring this into operation now.

With the changes that have taken place and the joining together of Colchester and Tendring, we now have a Divisional Commander, Chief Superintendent Dave Hudson, with Chief Inspector Steve Robinson as Tendring’s District Commander.

It was explained by the Chief Constable that because, we the public, had demanded that we need to see the police working on the ground and people feel safer if we see a police presence that these changes have been made: - after all we pay for the Police Force.

To use the phrasing in the presentation leaflet – What does this mean to the public?

- Dedicated Officers known to and contactable by residents
- “Dixon with Attitude” – leading the fight against crime and disorder.
- High levels of foot and cycle patrol
- Not routinely abstracted
- Problem solving with local partners and local people
- Locally led and Performance managed
- Listening, acting and up-dating

f) Affordable Housing

Cllr L McWilliams asked Councillors to note the report received from Anne Bishop of the Rural Housing Trust which had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. It stated that:- “Unfortunately the bid was not successful this time round but that is not a cause for concern. We are continuing to work towards the planning application - there is quite a lot still to be done including getting our engineers to look at how the road can be made a little wider and therefore safer where the access to the site is proposed to be. We will continue working on the scheme and eventually submit the planning application. Then, with planning approval, we are confident the scheme will pick up slippage funding that will no doubt be available later in the financial year. This is quite a common course of action for us and we do not get concerned when schemes don't attract funding first time round. If all our schemes were funded immediately, we would not be able to cope with all the work we have on!”

We have 48 local households registered now.

g) Village Map

Cllr L McWilliams reported that Mr M Dorling has a key to the TDC notice board at the Plough Public House. Cllr W Herbert reported that he is looking in to prices for the Village map and has not yet had a response. Council decided that Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) would write a letter to the brewery with an attached map of the site to ask if the Great Bentley Parish Council could put a new board containing the new village map on their land.

h) Village of the Year Competition

Cllr L McWilliams reported that the Village of the year Competition is well under way, and that the Judges are coming on Monday 8th May at 2.30pm in the Mitchell room. Cllr L McWilliams will take the Judges round the village and then return to the Mitchell room for a two hour presentation. Cllr L McWilliams thanked the working party for their help.

i) Gravel Extraction

Nothing to Report

j) Railway- Crossing and signalling

Cllr L McWilliams reported that there will be a meeting with Network Rail Gary England on 17th May 2006 regarding the level crossing gates, she asked Councillors if they would like to attend. Cllr D Gibbon, Cllr G Wright, Cllr P De-Vex Balbirmie, Cllr R Taylor, Cllr W Herbert, Cllr J Hills, Cllr L McWilliams will be attending the meeting.

16. Finances

a) Bank Account

Geoffrey Catchpole (Retired Clerk) reported that the Great Bentley Parish Council has. £36,366.17 in the Bank Account. The interest this month is £11.59. There is £16,000.00 in an Investment Account. The interest is working at 3.84%.

b) Items of Expenditure for Approval

The schedule of expenditure for May was submitted to Council, Schedule attached. Proposed to be approved by Cllr Edward Fox and seconded by Cllr William Herbert. Council agreed.

c) Report of Chairman of finance committee 4/5/06

Cllr R Taylor read out the finance committee report.

The last Parish Council meeting asked the finance committee to meet and arrange the details of employment of Geoffrey Catchpole as a consultant to assist the new Clerk. Unfortunately I was away on holiday at the time and when I returned was up to my eyes in preparations for this meeting and meetings at TDC. I apologise that I did not manage to call a meeting of the committee. Thus I present this report having discussed the situation with Geoffrey.

It is very difficult to assess how much we are going to need to ask for Geoffrey Catchpoles assistance. The work of preparing the accounts for the year 2004/5 for audit were part of his duties for which we have already paid when he was Clerk. The basic correct record of 2005/6 accounts was part of his duties and then the final presentation for the audit would normally be completed after the time that he retired. Thus there will be some time needed to finalise the year just completed and then the main calls upon his time will be to help the new Clerk with her duties.

Geoffrey is asking for £500.00 fixed fee for these two months of April and May in which he will undertake to fully prepare the books for audit and be ready to help the new Clerk with any queries including work in Great Bentley. Part of this time has obviously just past during which he has been advising the Clerk and working with Lynda McWilliams to finalise the books, thus he will have just one month to finish it all off.

Recommendation

For a fix sum payment of £500.00 I propose that be employed on a consultancy basis to carry out the following work. To support the existing Clerk to the end of May and fully prepare the accounts for audit for the two years 2004/5 and 2005/6 working with Linda McWilliams and George Flint.

Cllr G Flint expressed his concerns regarding this matter and felt that the Audit for 2004/5 should have been finished a long time ago. Cllr G Flint said that he has declined his offer to help with the Audit for the two years 2004/5 and 2005/6. Cllr L McWilliams asked council for there vote. Cllr E Fox, Cllr J Hills, Cllr G Wright, Cllr W Herbert, Cllr D Gibbon, Cllr P De-Vaux Balbirnie, Cllr R Taylor voted for. Cllr G Flint voted against and asked for this to be recorded in the minutes.

17. Clerks Report

a) Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) reported that the TDC Forward Plan 55 1st May 2006 – 30th August 2006 was now in the office. If Cllrs would like to look at the Forward Plan this would be kept in the Community Resource Centre.

b) Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) handed out leaflets for training courses for Cllrs. The Clerk explained that if Cllrs would like to go on a training course to let her know.

c) Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) reported that she has ordered the litter bin to replace the vandalised bin.

d) Miss J Bloomfield (Clerk) asked council if they would be prepared to pay £350.00 for a (CiLCA) Training Course and £70.00 for Registration for the Certificate for herself. Council agreed.

19. Committee Reports

a) Allotments

Nothing to report

b) Planning

The Council received a written report of the meeting of the Planning Committee. Council decided that the planning application to change the Butcher General store to a fish and chips takeaway at Ashleigh House and Village Store Plough Road as long as the normal conditions are applied to this type of establishment regarding chimney flues etc., and that the conditions be applied that the proprietors are made responsible for supplying litter bins and the cleaning of the inevitable litter from the area around the establishment and in particular the Village Green.

Council agreed with the action taken and the views expressed.

c) Play Area

Cllr Lynda McWilliams reported that the play area committee have for sometime now considered replacing the springy animals as they are worn out and have been repaired for some time and that she forgot to deal with this. Cllr L McWilliams apologised that she had forgotten to act on this and will deal with this straight away.

d) Village Green Management Committee

i) Football

It was reported that the council's goalpost which has been in place since 12 April has been well used by the youngsters. The fixing bolts have been checked regularly by us. At the time of the meeting there seems to have been no attempt at vandalism. The grass in that area, which is of different type than that on the north side of the road, shows very few signs of wear at the moment. The sockets were concreted in position as per the manufacturers' instructions by our contractor, Mr M Dorling. A second pair have also been concreted in, exactly 35 mtrs towards the signpost so that the goal post can be moved quickly when necessary. The only comments made about the goalposts by the public, as far as we are aware have been positive.

ii) Strimming

Helen was asked to strim the grass in the spinney and in and around the ditches.

iii) Contractors Rates of Pay

At a recent Parish Council meeting it was agreed to increase the contractors pay by 4% and we agreed with Helen that in her case, with her providing her own equipment, that the rate would increase to £7.30 per hour (seven pounds and thirty pence)

iv) Broken tree

It was reported to us that there is a broken silver birch tree in Birch Avenue which it seems is beyond recovery, we will ask the tree warden if it can be replaced.

v) Carnival

We are becoming concerned that the Carnival Committee may not be aware of the length of notice they need to give us in order for the event to take place under the new conditions of use. Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) is to send the new licence conditions to the Carnival Committee.

20. Other Reports

a) TDALC

Cllr Lynda McWilliams reported that the AGM meeting was held on the 24th April 2006. Cllr L McWilliams said that Cllr G Flint had checked the proposed TDALC changes to the Constitution document to enable the Association to represent town and parish councils at the LSP.

Cllr L McWilliams reported that delegated powers were not being given and that it was agreed at the AGM that the constitution was altered to read: -

The Chairman or Acting Chairman representing the Association at meeting of the Tendring Local Strategic Partnership has executive powers on behalf of the Association providing he/she acts in the general interest of Town and Parish Councils to improve the quality of life of residents of Tendring

b) Foot Paths

Nothing to report

c) Transport

Nothing to report

d) Caretakers Report

Miss Janet Bloomfield (Clerk) read out the following report from David Tyler (caretaker).

Very few months go by without fly tipping and this one is no exception. We have had tyres, Homebase leaflets by the dozen, a bicycle, clothes just left again loose by the clothing bank, a car battery by their side, 3/4 cardboard crates of empty bottles left by the bottle bank and not put in and a car set on fire in Heckford Road.

The play area has seen no problems and apart from the usual litter thrown onto the green, the reported vandalism to the cricket club that is about it for this month.

I was contacted by nearby neighbour who had been annoyed by the litter at the back of his rear garden (Simmonds land) that had been put there by an adjacent person causing a

health/fire hazard. The man concerned runs the roadside mobile cafe near St.Osyth and is known for attitudes. I contacted Mr Simmonds and believe he was later given days to remove the rubbish placed on his land. Robert advised at the time.

Chairman.....

Date.....