

Annual Meeting of Great Bentley Parish Council

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Public Questions None forthcoming.

Present: Councillors J. Hills, B. Herbert, P Balbirnie, K. Plummer, R. Taylor, G. Wright, R. Adams, L. Edwards and P. Drew. Also in attendance were K. Paradise (Parish Clerk) and approximately 20 members of the public.

- 1. Election of Chairman for 2017/18:** Following a discussion, Cllr Hills was proposed by Cllr Balbirnie and seconded by Cllr Plummer. Cllr Drew was proposed by Cllr Adams and seconded by Cllr Herbert. **Resolved** by 5 votes to 4 to elect Cllr Hills as Chairman.
- 2. Acceptance of Office by the Chairman:** Cllr Hills signed to signify his acceptance of the role of Chairman.
- 3. Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Adams, Cllr Plummer, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Edwards presented updated disclosures to the Clerk.
- 4. Apologies and Reasons for Absence:** TDC Cllr L McWilliams (meeting), Cllr Taylor meeting, needed to leave by 7.00 pm).
- 5. Minutes of the last meeting:** The minutes of the previous Annual Council meeting held on 5 May 2016 were proposed by Cllr Wright, seconded by Cllr Edwards, **all agreed** as a true record.
- 6. Chairman's Annual Report:** Cllr Hills presented his annual report see Appendix A
A copy of this report is also on the website
- 7. Election of Vice Chairman and representatives on other bodies:** Following a discussion, Cllr Kevin Plummer was proposed by Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr Balbirnie; Cllr Herbert was proposed by Cllr Taylor and seconded by Cllr Adams. **Resolved** by 5 votes to 4 to elect Cllr Bill Herbert as Vice Chairman.

Cllr R. Taylor for TDALC, Mr P. Harry for Transport, Mr D. Gollifer for Footpaths, Mr R. McWilliams for Village Caretaker (in his absence), were proposed by Cllr Adams and seconded by Cllr Balbirnie. **All agreed to elect en-block.**

- 8. Committee Structure and Appointment of Members:**

Grants: Proposed Cllr Balbirnie, seconded Cllr Adams, **all agreed** no change.

Finance: Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded P Balbirnie, **all agreed** no change.

Planning: Chairman for 2017-18 Cllr Plummer, all Councillors will remain on committee, proposed Cllr Wright, seconded Cllr Balbirnie **all agreed.**

Actions Committee, Village Green and Allotments Working Party and Public

Engagement Working Party: proposed P Balbirnie, seconded P Drew **all agreed** no change.

The 2017/18 Committee structure is set out in Appendix B.

19:07 Cllr R Taylor left the meeting.

9. **Appointment of Internal Auditor:** Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Balbirnie, **Resolved to** appoint Heelis and Lodge as the Parish Council's internal auditors.
10. **Review of Policies and Procedures:** To review the policies and procedures listed below.
- a) To adopt the Council's Standing Orders
The adopted Standing Orders are published on the Parish Council [website](#).
A discussion took place regarding live publishing.
 - b) To review the Council's Asset Register
A copy of the Register is available to view at the Community Resource Centre.
 - c) To adopt a Risk Management Strategy
A copy of the Strategy is published on the Parish Council [website](#).
 - d) To approve Financial Regulations
A copy of the Council's Financial Regulations is published on the Parish Council [website](#).
 - e) To carry out an assessment of the risks facing the Council
 - f) Review of the council's complaints procedure
A copy of the Council's complaints procedure is published on the Parish Council [website](#).
 - g) Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks The Council's insurance cover was noted
 - h) Review of the council's subscriptions:
A copy of the approved list of subscriptions is set out in Appendix B.

All the above policies and procedures were discussed, proposed by Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Balbirnie, **all agreed** policies and procedures reviewed with no alteration required.

11. **Schedule of Parish Council meetings in 2017/18:** Parish Council meetings will be scheduled on the first Thursday of each month. The next Annual Parish Council meeting will be held on 17 May 2018.

12. **Public Questions**

Mr Harry – Following the events in the Grenfell Tower, North Kensington, London, the gentleman asked if Great Bentley has an Emergency Plan for the village.

Clerk to investigate as it was thought this had been raised before. To be put on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting on 6th July 2017

APPENDIX A

Chairman's Report 2017

Good evening and Welcome

As I did last year I have combined the two annual reports. So I will not be reading this report twice you will be pleased to hear.

As a Council we continue to work hard for the community and along with our wardens, contractors and helpers, we strive to be the best custodians that we can be, for this wonderfully vibrant and evolving village. We ensure, to the best of our ability, that we as a group are a fit for purpose organization that represents everyone.

Running a successful council is not an easy job, and there is a large amount of work that goes on to keep things on track, particularly with the business that needs to be done, and the meetings that need to be organized. We are very lucky to be able to welcome back Karen Paradise to the role of Clerk, after more than a decade; who together with myself undertakes a considerable amount of work on all our behalves. She has already made a big impression and I look forward to working with her in the future.

There is also however a huge amount of work that goes on in the background by not only Councillors, but also other members of the public that do this work free of charge for essentially the love of the village and their community. Of course, some people get paid for doing the work, but it constantly amazes me the amount of people that continue to work for all our benefits for free. These people do it quietly and sometimes choose to do it away from the public view, but they certainly deserve our respect and also our thanks.

I am happy that Alan Goggin, our County Councillor, has been returned to us after the election and I am very pleased with all the good work he has done for us. He has been an outstanding County Councillor and never shirks away from working on behalf of our community in a very unselfish and non-prejudicial manner. I personally thank Alan for his proactive work this year and look forward to working with him in the years to come.

Lynda McWilliams, our District Councillor, has continued to work hard on behalf of the village this year. Lynda sits on many of the committees at Tendring including the cabinet and of course planning. She works tirelessly and we also thank her for the work she does on our behalf.

Now last year I singled out some individuals for the work they did on the bus service, as well as the local farmers who do innumerable jobs for us, helping out with labour and machinery.

This year I would particularly like to thank Mary Maskell for the work she's done and continues to do on behalf of the community. Mary is a stalwart of our village and despite having a particularly difficult year, this year, she has managed to produce a first class magazine with integrity, grace, and strength. She has also carried out an innumerable number of other tasks around the village on behalf of us all. Mary thank you.

In the normal way, I shall run through the various aspects and what has been going on.

Allotment Site

Quite a bit has gone on this year with the allotments, with the construction of new fences and continuous maintenance work. We do still have spare allotment capacity this year so please get in touch if anyone is interested in taking on a plot.

We are very concerned about the possible diversion of the footpaths across the new allotment area but we have been taking legal advice on this and we aim to robustly defend any encroachment or loss of land.

Footpaths

As I have just mentioned, there have been attempts to close a number of footpaths and crossings over the railway. One of these potential closures has been dropped as an idea, but there are two crossings close to the station that are still being considered. These closures have the added complication, that if they occur, they unlock a planning application for 150 units on Plough Road.

I would particularly like to thank Kevin Plummer for his excellent work and support on this issue.

Car Parking

We are pleased to encourage people to park in our station car park. However, we are having considerable issues with the amount of vandalized cars that are being dumped there and sometimes the abuse of this facility by car traders. We are continually monitoring this, and while working closely with our PCSO, we are looking to remove these vandalized and dumped cars as soon as possible and to try and ensure that this facility is not abused.

As part of our proposal for this, we are looking to restrict the amount of time that people can use the car park and then we will monitor once again to see how successful it has been. It is the ambition of the Parish Council to be able to retain this as a free car park. However if the current abuse continues, it may well be that we have to consider changing this philosophy.

The Green

The diary system that is utilized for the green is to be updated this year to allow for it to be more visible on the internet. However with the introduction of the system last year, there have not been any conflicts as have occurred in the past.

We are fortunate to have this wonderful open space that we can all benefit from, as well as use as a general thoroughfare across the village and we are lucky that we don't get the wide variety of problems that other village greens do.

There are still issues of antisocial behavior. The green is precious and must be protected but it is there to serve the community and therefore the more or alternative uses it can be put to, the better. However please note that alternative uses may well need the permission of the Parish Council. Again this year, we have seen the green used by all sorts of different people for all kinds of different reasons. With hard work, great communication, and a little common sense, everybody has had successful events without any major or long lasting damage to the green surface

Encroachment of the green will be rigorously defended and we already have had an issue this year around the Forge area.

Improvements made have been areas of kerbing and attempts to reduce the flooding around Forge Lane. We hope to be successful with this.

Street Lighting

Through Robert Taylor's continued vigilance, repairs to our street lights are always carried out quickly and efficiently. As I always say, we ask members of the public to report to us when lights are out so Robert and the Parish Clerk can take appropriate actions.

Parish Community Resource Centre

This Centre continues to thrive and is not just a place where our Parish Clerk can carry out day to day functions of the Parish, but can also be a modal point where people can pick up things, such as bins and notices that perhaps otherwise they could not.

First Responders

We are still lucky enough to have First Responders in our village and this is due to the hard work and determination of a few individuals. We continue to support them and thank them for their most useful contribution.

Young People Activities and Clubs

Fit Clubs, Youth Clubs, Gym Clubs, Nurseries and pre-school - all of these activities happen within our village. We are lucky enough that we do not have to go to other villages to partake of these facilities. We encourage all types of sport and outdoor activity. Support for these clubs is most important, as it promotes not only social responsibility and team building, but also brings the family unit together, as well as creating a greater village spirit.

Play Area

We are currently investigating the possibility of replacing and renewing the existing play area on the Green. We have been allocated a considerable amount of funding from Section 106 agreements and we will soon be consulting the customers of our play area, the children, in order to receive some what we hope to be positive feedback. We are also looking into the provision of some adult outdoor gym equipment. More on this later in the year.

Mowers and Tractors

Our current cutters were passed their "sell by date" approx. 45 years ago. I am not referring to Mick Dorling of course, I am referring to the mowers and the tractors. Again with the allocation of some Section 106 money and from savings that have been allocated for this replacement that we have been accumulating over the last few years, we are investigating the purchase of some new equipment that will hopefully cut the Green more efficiently, and with a greater quality of cut.

Police

As you will all be aware, we locally fund a PCSO with Alresford Parish Council and this partnership seems to be working well. Julia is our current PCSO and she is brilliant. She is building a great relationship with members of the public. She is visible she is brave and she is greatly improving things, and we see her as great value for money.

Pond

The pond continues to look healthy and ecologically thrives.

Surgery/Pharmacy

Our Surgery thrives and again we are lucky to have this and the Pharmacy as a facility. In the future this may not always be the case. The surgery is under pressure to grow to support the growth demands of the village, and particularly the surrounding areas where the bulk of the patients come from. Patient numbers are possibly projected to grow from 8 to 10 thousand, and therefore better facilities are needed to be considered.

The Parish Council took a proactive view to support the potential relocation of the surgery, when a planning application was submitted that included this. However despite our wishes, and the officer recommendation for approval, the TDC planning committee decided to reject the proposal, and therefore the long term future of our surgery being located in Gt Bentley is currently uncertain.

The doctors do a fantastic job and we are lucky to have them based in our village and they should be supported by all of us.

General Facilities

We are lucky to have restaurants, a small hotel now, shops, pubs, cafes, garages and a thriving business centre. I urge you all to support localism where you can.

Highways

Highways are a constant source of frustration to the Parish Council. Unfortunately, it seems that budgets, being what they are, are still very tight and despite our continual, and I must emphasize the word 'continual', logging of all potholes and problems, the whole process seems to be a very sorry and unsatisfactory way of dealing with highway repairs.

The highway verge continues to be cut by us the Parish Council as this allows the work to be carried out more often and at more appropriate times of the year.

License for use of Green for entertainment

Anyone wishing to use the green for organised functions must have written permission and sign up to the conditions that the Council has to apply. Once again, I would like to remind members of the public that if you would like to erect signage on the green for a limited amount of time for any reason, you must have written permission. I would also urge you that when you do this. LOCK YOUR CARS!!

Housing

We have seen the completion of the first new development to affect Gt Bentley this year off Sturrick's Lane. Over the next few years, further integration into our community will occur and we will need to closely monitor this to ensure that it is as successful as it can be. Certainly, with the influx of new people into the area, it will be good for our existing businesses and hopefully the existing facilities we be able to cope. Those new people that I have met and spoken to, feel very lucky to be a part of our community and the integration so far seems to have been a success.

Previous concerns with regard to increased traffic and congestion as well as services issues along Sturricks Lane seems not to have materialized to any great extent. However, as a Parish Council, we will continue to monitor this to see if any further work is necessary or required.

We are told by TDC that there is now a 5 year supply of land. If this is the case then one would have thought there should be no more applications received outside of the Local Plan identified sites.

I thank you all for coming this evening.
Thank you

APPENDIX B

Committee Structure and Membership – Agreed 15 June 2017

Grants Working Party
Cllr K. Plummer (Chair) Cllr L. Edwards Cllr P. Drew
Finance Committee.
Cllr R. Taylor (Chair) Cllr K. Plummer Cllr B. Herbert Cllr G. Wright Cllr L. Edwards Cllr R. Adams
Planning Committee.
Cllr K. Plummer (Chair) Cllr J. Hills Cllr B. Herbert Cllr R. Taylor Cllr L. Edwards Cllr P. Balbirnie Cllr G. Wright Cllr R. Adams Cllr P. Drew
Actions Committee
Cllr J. Hills (Chair) Cllr B. Herbert Cllr R. Taylor
Village Green and Allotments Working Party
Cllr B. Herbert (Chair) Cllr G. Wright Cllr R. Adams Cllr P. Drew
Public Engagement Working Party (minute 12.15.307 refers)
Cllr P. Drew Cllr L. Edwards Plus co-opted members.

APPENDIX C

Annual Subscriptions 2017/18

Set out in the table below is a list of annual subscriptions paid by the Parish Council in 2016/17. The newly adopted NALC model standing orders require parish council's to review these types of payments annually.

	Organisation
1.	Open Spaces Society
2.	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)
3.	Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
4.	Community Voluntary Services Tending (CVST)
5.	Friends of Historic Essex
6.	Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)