

CLERKS REPORT

FOR THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON ZOOM ON 11/5/2020 AT 7 PM.

This report is designed to give an update of what has been going on in the last few weeks and has been published ahead of the virtual meeting, so that members of the public and press can raise questions in the public forum. The Agenda has been kept to the bare minimum to be able to run through the items that need a decision and then any questions that arise from this report can be discussed by members under the agenda heading.

19-20/211 TEMPORARY WEBSITE ADDRESS:- <https://e-voice.org.uk/asheldham-dengiepc/>

a) Due to the Covid-19 and not having been able to fit in suitable training and a few hiccups with the new website and the imminent closure of the Essex info website on 31st March 2020, the Clerk opened a website with E-voice who use exactly the same set up as Essex Info. Also E-voice were able to transfer the site for free by the click of a button. As it is the same set up as Essex Info no training required. Once Covid-19 is over and training can take place the site will be moved over. Clerk was not able to get a response from the new website provider and hope all is well with the family.

19-20/212 HIGHWAY & PUBLIC FOOTPATH ISSUES

- PROW – A resident raised a question pertaining to footpath no. 10. running from Keelings Road to Glebe Road saying that access had been blocked by locked gate and waymarkers had been used to re-direct the footpath via a different route avoiding the field by. It was believed that the waymarkers had be placed there by the landowner, but were in fact put there by the Ramblers. The complainant stated there is a history with this path and the resident believed it to nothing to do with Covid-19.
This matter has been looked into and the landowner has applied to ECC for a re-direction of the footpath. The proposal is to be the current footpath be removed from the immediate boundary by approximately 50m to the East of the applicant's garden and outbuildings to the edge of his field on the East and thereafter sort the issues around the route going through the garden of the Old Rectory and onto Glebe Lane. The landowner did in fact, in anticipation build a pedestrian access point from Keelings Road to meet up with the route of the proposed new path and regular users have been using this new route as it is easier and quicker to walk. When lock down commenced the gate was closed to keep residents of the property safe as one of the resident's is considered to be in catergory A.
No other complaints have been received in relation to this case and members of the public will have the opportunity to make comment as to the proposed changes when and if it is sent out for consultation to the Parish Council by ECC.
- Update has been requested from Thomas Eng regarding the Local Highways Application reference no. DC1746 in relation to a reduction from 30mph to 20mph from the triangle at the junction of Tillingham Road (B1021) and Foxall Road. To date not received.
- Request to Local Highways Panel for reduction in speed limit to 40mph on the Tillingham Road (Dengie Straight) from Reddings Lane to the start of the existing 40mph speed limit on entering Tillingham has not be progressed – Clerk needs to request support from residents to give application more weight.
- TruCam – the Community Protection Officers will be starting limited duties and TruCam will be one of them. Speeding has been reported by a resident and there are enforcement issues more than normal due to the Covid-19. Also it raises the question

whether it would be money well spent at this moment in time, as the roads are less busy than usual.

- Clerk has chased about the terrible condition of the pavement from Rushes Lanes to the bend opposite “The Rest” bungalow – no news to date.
- Clerk has not progressed the request for a pavement to be installed from opposite Brooks Lane and again needs to write to residents to get support to add weight to the application and time constraints have not allowed at the moment.
- No further progress concerning trying to get ECC to look at improvements at the Hall Road junction. Parish Council liaising with Dengie Crops Ltd, Skeggs and G&B Finch to try and get safety improvements made.
- Some of the repairs promised from ECC Highways have been carried out on Southminster Road, Asheldham, as promised by them. The road surfacing remains as scheduled in 2021/22.

19-20/213 PLANNING MATTERS

a) Planning Application –

For Information Only: 20/00417/AGR -8668364 Prior Notification for a steel agricultural building. - Keelings Farm House, Keelings Road, Dengie.

19-20/214 FINANCE & INTERNAL AUDIT/AGAR (ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN TO 31ST MARCH 2020)

- a) Payments have been made after consultation via email with all members throughout March and April 2020 and will be ratified at the 11/5/2020 virtual meeting.
- b) The Barclays bank mandate had to be returned again after Barclays requested that a letter was sent confirming that two of the new signatories signatures had changed over time. Getting through to Barclays for an update is an impossible task and waiting times have been up to 1 hr 7 mins without getting through.
- c) Due to Covid-19 additional hours were spent, scanning and emailing bank statements for two accounts for 12 months, all the annual invoices together with all the other documents relevant to the audit, this took a lot of time in addition to normal years, as the files would have been dropped off to the auditor or collected.

19-20/215 INSURANCE

Members to ratify the payment of the Annual Parish Council Insurance premium decided via email by the members. Payment made £257.60 no increase from previous year and the certificate has been issued.

19-20/217 BRADWELL B STAGE ONE PUBLIC CONSULTATION – DEADLINE FOR RESPONSE – 1/7/2020

Clerk attended the Planning Aid webinar on 22nd April where good advice was given in how to make a response. Individuals can access the consultation documents on <https://bradwellb.co.uk/consultation-documents/> and individuals can fill in a questionnaire or send a response via email or letter the new deadline date is 1st July 2020 although the old date still shows on the documents.

The Parish Council are in the process of discussing and drafting up a response and would welcome input from residents so that the response made is a fully informed one.

Please email/call/write to the Parish Clerk detailing your thoughts regarding the Stage One Bradwell B Consultation, however reiterate as above that you can respond as an individual. A link relating to this consultation can also be found on the Parish Council temporary website.

19-20/218 DELEGATION OF POWER TO THE CLERK/RFO.

EALC/SLCC/NALC/ECC/MDC have been sending daily emails to the Parish Council keeping them up to date with the daily changes regarding the Covid-19 lock down and how the law has changed to enable Parish Councils to continue to function. The EALC provided the wording as below for the Parish Council, if they resolve to do so to delegate power to the Parish Clerk.

"Delegation of power to act during the COVID-19 crisis to the Clerk in Consultation with 2 or 3 members. Members to consider devolving power to enable the council to continue to transact business and make payments. LGA 1972 sec 1010. Members are not to be named but a hierarchal list can be created and followed; Starting with the Chair/ Vice-Chair and one other member, if not available then move down the list until you have the number decided on 2 or 3"

MALDON CVS DATABASE

Asheldham and Dengie joined the MDCVS database which has been set up to help people in the Parishes that do not have friends/family or neighbours who are able to help them with shopping, making sure they have a continual supply of their medication etc. and regular checks are made by the Clerk to the database to make sure people who have registered do not need anything organised. This database has co-ordinated together several different organisations who are all pulling together to help people during the Covid-19 crisis and it has been well received. There was just one person who benefitted in Dengie and then neighbours have stepped in, so it is great to say that Asheldham and Dengie look after their own. Regular meetings have taken place hosted by Ben Page keeping the Clerks up to date with the work of the database.

ZOOM

Clerk looked into and liaised with Maldon District Council and the two most widely used conferencing software is Zoom and Microsoft Teams. After emailing with all the members of the Parish Councils that the Clerk works for, Zoom was the one that came on top and EALC had negotiated a discount which could be accessed by a special code to utilise the Zoom Pro plan which is usually £11.99 per month, or £9.99 a month if you pay for the whole year in advance. The special price was for £7.99, however the Zoom website allows you to get so far and when you get to press subscribe, stops, several attempts have been made but with no luck. Also contact via email has been made and whilst a response is sent, it only directs you to use the website and the sales team are not responding so the special code has not been used. Access to the free Zoom has been achieved, although there are limitations, one being that if more than 2-3 are having a meeting, the meeting time is limited to 40 minutes, although it has been known that meeting times are allowed to continue beyond that, but it is very hit and miss. Attempts will continue to be made to upgrade to Zoom Pro, but in the meantime we will attempt to manage with the very basic zoom at no cost to the budget.

COMPLAINTS

The Chair of the Parish Council has received via email further complaints from a resident about the way in which the Parish Council is run and one against the Parish Clerk, the nature of which is not clear other than a generalisation that the Clerk is not doing her job properly, therefore, in order to clarify the situation a "Complaints Form" has been sent to the resident requesting they complete the form and explain in detail the nature of the complaint(s) so that they can be dealt with in an official capacity, going through the process as detailed in the complaints

procedure, being open and transparent and hopefully bringing a satisfactory conclusion to all concerned. The resident replied and stated that "Before wading through over 200 e-mails to put on this form, which is not the only option, please remember that all of the information is in communications with the Parish Council anyway, and supported in many cases by audio files.

I would also like clarification on how this is being handled, as I note the mail to me was not cc'd to anyone else."

The Chair sought advice from Simon Quelch who in his capacity as Monitoring Officer for Maldon District Council is able to provide advice to District and Parish Councillors and he advised the Chair on this matter and following that advice, the Chair sent the following response on 6th May 2020 which was agreed via email by all members of the Parish council: "I have sought advice and we are now forced to request that you must not contact Asheldham and Dengie PC for the next six months unless seeking information as any other parishioners would do. We as a committee wish to protect our members and clerk from what we all consider vexatious complaints, which are not well motivated. To clarify: we shall not reply to any email, telephone call or letter that we consider unacceptable"

EMAILS

Since the middle of March more than 700 emails have been received, read, forwarded and actioned. The majority to do with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sarah Sayer – Parish Clerk/RFO