

MINUTES OF THE ASHELDHAM AND DENGIE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD on Monday 3rd October 2022 at 6.30 p.m. in Dengie Village Hall, Manor Road, Dengie.

Present: - Cllr David Henson, Cllr Lisa Brown, Sally Russell & Cllr Rebecca Griffiths.

In attendance: Ms. K Andrews (Locum Clerk)

Members of the public: 2

Meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m.

080/22-23 WELCOME TO THE DENGIE & ASHELDHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 3rd OCTOBER 2022

Everyone participating in the meeting was reminded that they may be filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise reported about.

081/22-23 DEATH OF HRH QUEEN ELIZABETH II 8th September 2022

In recognition of the sad death of Queen Elizabeth II, Asheldham and Dengie Parish Council posted a message of condolence on its website.

In accordance with section 243 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the period of mourning announced by the Government this Parish Council confirmed that councillors followed the 10-day period of mourning.

RESOLVED: A moment of reflection was marked by the Parish Council by taking part in a one-minute silence in honour of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. Unanimous decision.

082/22-23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Nick Kelly Apologies accepted. Unanimous decision.

083/22-23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & CODE OF CONDUCT

- a) There were no declarations of interest for any agenda items.
- b) Members noted that it is their responsibility to check that their Register of Interests are up to date i.e. if any changes occur, then they are updated within 28 days, on the MDC website which is linked to the Asheldham and Dengie Parish council website and to inform the Clerk.

084/22-23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 3rd September 2022

- a) The minutes from the meeting of the Parish Council on 3rd September 2022 were reviewed. An amendment was required to agenda item 064/22-23 ii). The amendment was made and the minutes will be brought forward to the next meeting for approval and signing. Unanimous decision.

085/22-23 REPORT FROM DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLOR

- a) There was not a report available from the District Councillor.
- b) There was not a report available from the County Councillor.

086/22-23 QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC – FIRST SESSION

Following the presentation by BSR Energy at the September meeting, Mr Snowdon had written to BSR Energy with questions and concerns regarding the proposed solar farm. Mr Snowdon felt that BSR Energy provided disinformation to present an environmentally responsible image.

Mr Snowdon also questioned BSR Energy regarding the grant funding that would be available to the parish comparable to the offerings from other solar farms, which is £1,000 megawatt to £1,500 per megawatt, per annum for the lifetime of the solar farm.

Mr Snowdon also raised concern in his correspondence with BSR Energy regarding the method of grading of the land to deem suitable for the permitted use of solar farms. Mr Snowdon also pointed out that if the land became a haven for wildlife, then it would be very difficult to then revert to farmland use, especially if the field was a habitat for badgers. BSR Energy have informed Mr Snowdon that they are working on holding the public consultation soon, where further questions from residents would be encouraged.

Mr Snowdon raised the concern of the permissive paths and Public Rights of Way in the area and noted that there was a way marker missing and an obstruction on footpath 10. Mr Snowdon suggested that a fresh enquiry is made to the Essex County Council Highways department raising existing concerns.

087/22-23 RESIGNATION OF PARISH CLERK/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- c) Cllr Henson reported that the applications had now closed for the position of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and confirmed that there would be a closed agenda item at the end of this meeting to discuss the applications received.

088/22-23 ASHELDHAM RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

- a) Mr R Pond updated the council on recent activity from the ARG and expressed apologies on behalf of Colin, who was unable to attend the meeting due to Covid. Mr Pond reported that a work party would be organised to clear the fallen trees and debris from the ditches. The new saplings would be planted sometime during the first few weeks in November. Cllr Brown wished Colin well on behalf of the council.

089/22-23 HIGHWAY & PUBLIC FOOTPATH ISSUES

To receive updates on outstanding highways issues *and* an opportunity for members to raise any new highways issues and make decisions accordingly.

- i) Essex Highways Devolution Pilot – It was decided at the Parish Council meeting, held on Monday 5th September that once the new clerk has been appointed that they would be requested to investigate the return of the £1,000 funds. No further update or correspondence had been received by councillors from the representatives of the Essex Highways Devolution Pilot and this subject would continue to be reviewed.
- ii) An update had not been provided by ECC Highways and the LHP regarding the Asheldham Bends Project.
- iii) No update had been received regarding the Asheldham Brook Bridge.
- iv) No update had been received on the 30mph signs (Ref: 2752071) and the give way sign (Ref: 2752040) facing the incorrect way.
- v) No update received regarding FP 10 and FP 12 (Ref: 2752089)
- vi) MDC had written to the council and stated that roads are swept a minimum of every three months with ad hoc inspections carried out when it is necessary. Litter picking is scheduled to be carried out by Appletons every six weeks at a minimum. Correspondence had been received from Nicola Syder that she had done all that she could on this matter. Cllr. Brown suggested that another FOI request is put in place to obtain details of dates and times that the roads are swept and when litter picking is conducted. RESOLVED: Cllr Henson will write a letter to Maldon District Council. Unanimous decision.
- vii) Update on the clearing/sluicing of gullies and the FOI request for details of the regularity it is carried out and to make any decisions required.

Cllr. Henson suggested that the council investigate whether a response had been received regarding this FOI request. Cllr. Brown said that a response had been received some time ago that the clearance is carried out twice a year, however the clearance was not carried out at the times most required.

RESOLVED: Cllr Henson will write another letter to Maldon District Council and Cllr Wendy Stamp for assistance with the matter. Unanimous decision.

090/22-23 PLANNING MATTERS

- a) Planning Application(s)- None received

- b) Decisions Made by Maldon District Council.
 - i) Application No: 22/00558/FUL PP-11204409
Proposal: Change of use of land from paddock to residential and erection of 4no. 3 bedroom wheelchair accessible bungalows with detached garages. Location: Land North Of End Way Farmhouse, Southminster Road, Asheldham. Deadline 25th August 2022.
Members dealt with using delegated powers and objected to this application.
APPLICATION REFUSED

- c) **Enforcement**
Reference No. 21/00180/BC – adj. Endway Farmhouse – new build fence interfering with line of sight on the carriageway – Nicola Syder has raised the councils concerns again with the Enforcement Officer and has asked that they provide an update to Asheldham and Dengie Parish Council. Cllr. Henson will send the enforcement officer another letter.
- d) To receive an update on the letter sent to Maldon District Council regarding the length of time that Enforcement cases are taking to progress/resolve. No update received.
- e) **United Dengie Councils** – Cllr Griffiths reported that the online survey had been well received and that there had been 84 clicks so far from the public taking part.

091/22-23 FINANCE

- a) In the absence of a Clerk, the bank reconciliations were not available for review. The review of bank reconciliations will be carried forward to the next meeting. Three payments were approved for payment.

092/22-23 DENGIE VILLAGE SIGN

- a) No update received.

093/22-23 THE GRASS VERGE - ASHELDHAM

- a) No update received.
- b) Mr Pond reported that the damaged posts, which require cementing in would be repaired as soon as Colin has recovered from Covid.

094/22-23 GREEN CANOPY PROJECT/JUBILEE BENCH PROJECT PC

- a) The tree warden reported that planting of the saplings was scheduled for sometime in mid-November. A budget of £75.00 per tree had already been agreed by the council.
A working party would be formed and Colin would be appealing to residents to volunteer.
- b) No update received.

095/22-23 ASHELDHAM & DENGIE BEACON

- a) Cllr Griffiths reported that the Public Consultation on social media had resulted in a unanimous decision that residents would like to see the reinstallation of the Asheldham & Dengie beacon. The consultation would be available for comment online until the next council meeting.

096/22-23 TRAINING/WORKSHOPS/OUTSIDE MEETINGS AVAILABLE TO ATTEND

- a) Cllr Griffiths attended the EALC AGM and found the event very informative. Cllr Griffiths suggested that the council consider introducing the Local Council Award Service where a local person can be nominated for outstanding services carried out during the year. Cllr Griffiths noted that there is a clerks bursary applicable for any training courses that may be required for the new clerk. Cllr Griffiths reported that, with regards to the Highways Devolution Local Council Pilot project, the EALC assured that the system of structure of local governance is under constant review and will be reviewed soon. At the meeting, Cllr Griffiths took part in a vote for an increase in the affiliation fee. The EALC also expressed that vulnerable residents in the local area were identified to assist with wellbeing.
- b) Cllr Hansen attended the first session of the Chairmans training course and has been able to take a lot of information away from the course and is looking forward to the next session.
- c) Cllr Griffiths expressed an interest in attending the finance training course that is provided by the EALC.

097/22-23 QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC – SECOND SESSION

Mr Pond reported that he has an appointment scheduled with workman to establish the location and direction of the pipe, believed to be located under the Asheldham Brook bridge. Mr Pond will report back the findings at the next meeting.

Mr Snowdon enquired what is happening to the defibrillator and if regular inspections of the defibrillator were being carried out. Cllr Henson reported that he was aware of a repair to the hinges on the defibrillator cabinet and would investigate if and how regular checks are being made and reported.

Mr Snowdon asked when a voluntary litter pick is next scheduled to be carried out. Mr Pond advised that they are waiting for the verges to die back before arranging a date.

Mr Snowdon queried if the due date for the councils comment on planning applications would expire between now and the next scheduled council meeting. Cllr Henson advised that an extraordinary meeting would need to be arranged.

Mr Snowdon pointed out that VAT had now gone digital and if the council are registered for this. In the absence of a clerk, Cllr Henson will investigate this.

Mr Snowdon reported that his research regarding the proposed solar farm had discovered that Essex Police had commented that solar farm attract crime, particularly metal theft.

098/22-23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- a) Monday 7th November 2022 in the Dengie Village Hall, unless there is reason for an extraordinary meeting to be called.

099/22-23 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2), the public and press were excluded from the meeting for agenda item 0100/22-23 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Unanimous decision
The Chairperson thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

0100/22-23 STAFF VACANCY – PARISH CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

RESOLVED: Council members were updated following the applications received for the vacancy of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. A decision was made to hold interviews on Monday 18th of October. Unanimous decision.

0101/22-23 ALL BUSINESS HAVING BEEN TRANSACTED – THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING IS CLOSED.

Meeting closed at 7.26 pm

Signature of Chairperson

D Henson
D. Henson

Date 7th. November 2022