**The Meeting of the Parish Council Meeting was held**

**on**

**Tuesday 17th September 2024 at 7.15pm in Ashen Village Hall**

**Minutes**

Present: Cllr R. Purchas (Chairman) (RP)

Cllr L Cockburn (LC)

Cllr O Palmer (OP)

Cllr V Ovenden (VO)

Public: 2 members of the public were present

In attendance: Karen Melville-Ross, Clerk to the Council (KMR)

RP opened the meeting to the public and John Whitwell, Chairman of the Gliding Club, spoke of his wish for the club’s amenities to be used by members of the community. The grounds are now used by Essex Fire & Rescue to practise drone flights. He was also keen to ascertain if the club was a nuisance to the parish, which he was assured it was not now that the aerotowing is in frequent use and noise is reduced. RP emphasised that open communication on both sides was vital. VO mentioned the issue of people not picking up after their dogs on the airfield. Mr Whitwell then left the meeting.

**24.22 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Sam Simpson was not present.

**24.23 Declarations of Interest**

The declarations are as registered and any additional interests will be recorded as necessary.

**24.24 Approval of the minutes for the Council Meeting held on 8th August 2024.**

The minutes of the above meetings were approved and signed.

**24.25 Financial Matters**

a) The interim accounts were circulated and approved.

b) The notice of public rights was from 3 June to 12 July but no requests to view the accounts were made. KMR confirmed that the certificate of exemption had been sent to the auditors.

c) Payments was made to the village hall for their annual grant, for the contribution to the electricity and for the hire of the hall for the meeting. Further payments were made to the church for their grant and to RP for materials used to repair the play area.

**24.26 Playing Field**

a) The orchids have been protected during grass cutting without any objections from members of the public.

b) RP is to organise a working party for the orchard for the end of October. VO expressed concern at wild animal becoming tangled in the football nets but they are needed to protect the play area and housing and it was agreed to monitor the situation.

**24.27 Village Hall**

a) The new heating system has been installed and the committee have applied for a grant to plant a community garden at the rear. LC expressed concern that the defibrillator battery may be nearing the end of its life but is not due to be replaced until Nov 2025. LC to check when it was installed.

b) The lease has been signed and sent by guaranteed delivery to BDC. It will be completed at the same time as the underlease. Both titles will then need registering.

c) The revarnishing and oiling have been carried out to the bus shelter and the notice board.

**24.28 Highways**

a) SS was not present but has been liaising with Cllr Parker regarding the Lower Ashen footpath to Clare.

b) There was nothing specific to report on footpaths.

c) OP reported that the verges are currently in good condition.

d) VO expressed concern again at the litter on the roads in and out of the village. RP is to approach Hilary & Mark to see if they would be willing to undertake extra hours litter picking.

**24.29 Neighbourhood Watch and Police**

Julie is currently circulating the Neighbourhood Watch reports around the village and on Facebook, but ideally someone else would take on the role. Thanks were expressed.

**24.30 Village Amenity**

a) Janet and Geoff from Mansfield have been very kindly maintaining the waiver. RP had spoken with Janet and agreed that they would look for a date in January on a Saturday to organise a working party.

b) The telephone box is a listed structure with a working card telephone but had been suggested that it should be adopted by the council. After exchanges with other local parish councils, it was decided that the liability of looking after the listed structure, finding a volunteer to run a book exchange and the loss of a valuable amenity was not the right path to take and it was agreed to leave matters as they are, especially as the PC has not been approached by BT to adopt it.

**24.31 Administration to include:**

a) Clerk & Councils was put on the notice board.

b) RP thanked OP for removing the old filing cabinet at the request of the VHC. RP has been through the papers and taken advice from NALGO as to the retention of documents. On that basis he had retained the papers relating to the transfer of the playing field to the parish council and those relating to an earlier rent charge for one guinea secured on Stours Farm which had been removed. He had also retained the keys for adjusting the Wicksteed play equipment. With the agreement of the council the remaining documents were destroyed and the old filing cabinet removed.

**24.32 Planning**

a) Application 24/02713/OUT for land at the rear of Hope Cottage has been rejected.

b) The call for sites representation were made and is in on the website. The issues and options consultation is now scheduled for Jan/Feb next year with the pre submission version of the plan review now scheduled for Spring 2026, with final adoption by the end of the year.

**24.33 Parish Plan**

a) The plan is up to date

b) The action points table has been updated. No points were raised.

**24.34 Matters raised by the Community Agent.**

There was nothing from the Community Agent.

**24.35 Other Urgent Business**

Nothing was raised.

**24.36 Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on 9th January 2025 at 7.15 pm in the village hall.