**Bradwell with Pattiswick Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 11 November 2024 at Bradwell Village Hall, Church Road, Bradwell**

**Present:**

Cllr. Tony Dunn (Chair)

Cllr. Glenn Lockey (Vice-Chair)

Cllr. Adam Deighton

Cllr. Craig Evans

Cllr. Antony Harding

Cllr. Lesley Kinder

Cllr. Michael Turner

**In attendance:**

Mrs. Nicki Watkins, Clerk & RFO

Cllr. Playle, County Councillor for Witham Northern

Three members of the public were in attendance

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| **24-5/169** | **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**  The Chair declared the meeting open at 7.30pm and welcomed those present. |
| **24-5/170** | **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**  Members of the Council are subject to the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 (The Revised Code), adopted at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 13 May 2024. Appendix B requires Councillors to register and disclose pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.  Cllrs. Turner and Kinder declared an interest in agenda item 24-5/175 as members of the Village Hall Management Committee, where the draft budget included making provision for potential grants for the Village Hall. |
| **24-5/171** | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND OTHER MATTERS THAT ARE OF MUTUAL INTEREST**  The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by a member of the public regarding parking in The Street. This had been prompted by a Facebook discussion where several residents had raised concerns regarding the increased number of parked cars and impact on visibility of other drivers, safe access to Forge Cresent and cars being parked across driveways which restricted access. The Clerk noted that Braintree Community Policing Team have organised sessions across the district whereby they have contacted local councils and invited them along to patrol with them.  A member of the team would be available on Saturday 23 November at 3pm, meeting at Bradwell Village Hall to enable Councillors and/or other community members to speak with them in relation to concerns they may have regarding the parish. It is hoped that residents will go along to the meeting and raise these (and other) concerns.    The Clerk would also invite a representative from Essex Highways to the next Parish Council meeting to discuss this and other highways issues. The Chair suggested she also contact the Planning Enforcement Officer at Braintree District Council (BDC) given residents had suggested a business was operating from a residential address which was causing a disruption and impact to the other residents.  **ACTION – CLERK** |
| **24-5/172** | **COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**   1. Cllr. Playle reported on the following:  * BDC were currently undertaking a highways survey, the details of which he would forward to the Clerk. * BDC were offering various grants/funding to support local charities and services (i.e. Food Banks) assisting local pensioners and those disadvantaged and impacted by the withdrawal of the heating allowance and cost of living increases. * he was keen to ensure requests for the Locality Fund were submitted by the end of November. The Clerk noted that Parish Council had agreed at the last meeting (**24-5/156**) to apply for funding to contribute towards the cost of undertaking improvements to the path leading to the playing field. Unfortunately, she was still waiting for two quotes. Cllr. Playle agreed to make a submission between £800 - £1,000 on behalf of the Parish Council to contribute towards the costs, and Councillors would resolve which provider and quote to use at the December meeting. * there was nothing further to report on Ash Lane, but he would aim to report back on this for December. * Cllr. Harding noted that the footpaths at Forge Crescent were still in need of repair. Cllr. Playle was aware that Essex Highways owned the road but needed to confirm who owned the pavements (Eastlight or Essex Highways). * Similarly, regarding the street lighting along Church Road that required improvement (a concern that had also been raised in Neighbourhood Plan responses), he would need to check who was responsible.   Cllr. Playle left the meeting at 7.50pm.    Cllrs. Walsh and Abram had sent their apologies and were unable to attend the meeting. |
| **24-5/173** | **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2024**  Councillors received and considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 October 2024 and resolved to approve them as a true record.  The minutes were signed by the Chair.  **Proposed: Cllr. Dunn; Seconded: Cllr. Lockey; All in favour, RESOLVED.** |
| **24-5/174** | **FINANCIAL REPORTS**   1. Councillors received and approved the financial statements to 31 October 2024. There were no queries.   **Proposed: Cllr. Deighton; Seconded Cllr. Kinder; All in favour, RESOLVED.**   1. Councillors approvedpayments for October 2024. There were no queries.  **Proposed: Cllr. Kinder; Seconded Cllr. Lockey; All in favour, RESOLVED.**   The Clerk noted that the Local Government Association that sets salaries for council staff (including Clerks) had advised that an agreement had been reached on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. The Employment Committee had confirmed the amount due to the Clerk for backdated pay and had also approved pay in lieu of nine hours leave she had been unable to take. The new rates of pay would be applied with immediate effect.  The Clerk had received notice from PKF Littlejohn of conclusion of the audit (AGAR), including the Certificate of Completion and the External Auditors Report, and it was a requirement to consider and note their comments. Two points had been noted, the first relating to two unpaid direct debits from 2022/23 which had been cancelled but incorrectly included as items of expenditure and as reconciling items in the bank reconciliation. The second point related to the S106 funds which the Parish Council had expected to receive by end March 2024, but which had not been received in the Bank until 13 May (the current budget year). This had been included in the items of income and on the bank reconciliation sheet incorrectly as it was received after the end of the budget year. PKF Littlejohn had therefore confirmed the correct figures for the current year, which the Clerk would include in the 2024/25 AGAR.  The Notice of Conclusion and external report had been posted on the Parish Council website and notice boards as required. |
| **24-5/175** | **BUDGET 2025/26**  The Clerk had prepared a first draft of the 2025/26 Budget for Councillors’ consideration. She had applied a 5% increase to most items other than those where the provider had confirmed price increase. For income, she had included the expected S106 funds which BDC had confirmed “would be payable prior to the occupation of ‘more than four’ dwellings.” She continued to wait for confirmation from Low Carbon, of the amount the PC could expect to receive from the Solar Farm.  New items for 2025/26 included: repairs to the gym equipment highlighted in the 2024 RoSPA report, maintenance of the two bus shelters owned by the Parish Council and replacement defibrillator pads agreed at the meeting in May **(24-25/057**). The Clerk noted that the Government’s recent budget had resulted in the lowering of the thresholds for National Insurance contributions for employees’ earnings (£5,000 from £9,100) from April 2025. Whilst bodies such as NALC were pressing the Government to rethink this, they had suggested councils include the financial implications in their budget setting process. The Chair had calculated the impact to be £225, based on a budget of £6,500, and it was agreed to amend this figure to £6,725.  Councillors discussed the VE-Day celebrations which were due to take place in 2025 and whether a grant should be given to the Village Hall to enable them to host an event like the D-Day celebrations. It was proposed that £500 be allocated. This would be included on the spreadsheet under Grants/Donations/S137.  **Proposed: Cllr. Evans; Seconded Cllr. Lockey; All in favour, RESOLVED.**  The Chair noted that, in preparation for the precept discussion in January, whilst the Parish Council was keen not to apply an increase, the precept had not been increased for several years, so Councillors should be prepared to consider an increase. He added that, whilst some income from Low Carbon was expected, the contract had yet to be signed, and the amount confirmed. The EALC had also advised this at the Councillors’ Training session earlier in year, to make provision for future projects and protect reserves.  The Clerk would update the draft budget for Councillors to review and finalise at the next meeting.  **ACTION – CLERK** |
| **24-5/176** | **PLANNING MATTERS**  **For information**   1. **Discharge of Conditions form Rivenhall IWMF ESS/39/23/BTE/69/01 – Noise Assessment** Following the approval of details required by condition 19 and prior to the installation of process equipment and plant, an updated noise assessment shall be undertaken and submitted to the Waste Planning Authority for approval to demonstrate that the maximum noise levels set out in condition 38 would not be exceeded. Installation of process equipment and plant for the IWMF shall not commence until the updated noise assessment has been approved by the Waste Planning Authority. **The application to discharge the condition has been made to the WPA and its not determined yet.**   **Applications determined: None advised**    **Appeals received/determined: None advised.** |
| **24-5/177** | **CONSULTATION ON THE DESIGN CODE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT** Braintree District Council were conducting a 6-week public consultation (closing date Monday 16 December) regarding their new Design Code project (a planning policy document used when determining planning applications setting out “clear expectations of good quality design principles for new development for the district”).  The Chair noted that the Parish Council had produced its own Design Code during compilation of the last Neighbourhood Plan, but which was never adopted by BDC. He would seek guidance on what to included in the revised Neighbourhood Plan given that many of the parish’s traditional building designs were not energy efficient and energy efficient designs had not been approved by BDC as “appropriate to the countryside.” The Parish Council agreed not to completed BDC’s Design Code.  **Proposed: Cllr. Turner; Seconded Cllr. Deighton; All in favour, RESOLVED.** |
| **24-5/178** | **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REFRESH**  The Neghbourhood Plan Refresh questionnaires had now been returned and the Chair had undertaken a full analysis of responses and prepared a final report identifying the key issues raised by residents. The report had been circulated to Councillors and would be made available to residents later that week on the Parish Council website, with a notification on the village Facebook page to that effect.  Questionnaires had been hand delivered to every household in the parish (232 households), between 9 September and 1 November 2024. Ninety-nine households had returned these (42.7% compared to 44% in 2016), thirteen of which were returned blank; therefore, eighty-six households (37.1%) had returned valid questionnaires which had been analysed.  The report provided information on policy decisions which needed to be made by the Parish Council/Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Parish Council Action Plan (which forms part of the Neighbourhood Plan). It also provided the updated statistical data. The Chair proposed that the Steering Group planned meets in December to discuss any policy changes required. The Chair could then discuss these with the consultants to identify what was required to prepare the final plan.  The Chair suggested the final re-draft be undertaken by February 2025 so that it could be submitted to BDC to advise of the next steps, and hopefully it would be signed off. He noted that, should it not get signed off, the next stage was for it to go to an independent inspector, if at that point it still was not signed off, it would have to go to another independent inspector and a referendum.  As noted in the previous item, the Parish Council would seek guidance in producing its own Design Guide and what to include in the revised Neighbourhood Plan. Further discussion required.  **Proposed: Cllr. Dunn; Seconded Cllr. Lockey; All in favour, RESOLVED.**  The Parish Council again thanked the Chair for the considerable amount of work he had undertaken in collating the responses and preparing the final report. |
| **24-5/179** | **GRANTS/FUNDING 2024/25**  The Clerk confirmed that she had completed and sent the Councillors Community Grant application forms for approval. She had applied for £400.00 to contribute towards two new salt bins for the village, and £400.00 to contribute towards a new bench. Councillors had initially discussed replacing the old bench at Church Road, however Cllr. Lockey had suggested the Parish Council consider installing a bench by the wildflower area near the Church for village to enjoy. The Clerk asked the Parish Council to make a final decision so that she could advise BDC accordingly. Councillors agreed to replace the bench at Church Road.  **Proposed: Cllr. Turner; Seconded Cllr. Deighton; All in favour, RESOLVED.**  With regards to the Locality Fund, as previously discussed, Councillors had agreed in October (**24-25/156**) to apply for funds to contribute towards improvement to the path leading to the playing field. The Clerk had requested three quotes for this work, only one had been received to date, which the Councillors had seen, the amount of which was significantly higher than expected. Councillors were keen that this project be progressed, especially as it has also been one of the requests raised in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaires. Councillor Lockey proposed obtaining a further quote which could be considered along with the others at the next meeting. Councillors agreed to request £1,000 from the Locality Fund to contribute towards this. The Clerk agreed to advise Cllr. Playle of the range of costs in the quotes to improve the path by the end of the month to enable him to make his submission.  **Proposed: Cllr. Lockey; Seconded Cllr. Dunn; All in favour, RESOLVED.**  **ACTION - Clerk** |
| **24-5/180** | **POTENTIAL OPEN SPACES IMPROVEMENT PLAN**  The Parish Council had discussed the POSI at the last meeting (**24-25/157**), however based on the budget discussion and grant and funds applications, the Clerk could now incorporate amendments and update the plan.  Councillors agreed that improvements/repairs to the play equipment could be removed, as could installation of the roundabout as these had now been completed. Similarly, so could improvements to landscaping at Forge Crescent, footpath improvements at Watery Lane and the wildflower garden at the Church.  Councillors agreed that the following items should be included in the 2025 plan: White Gates at either end of the village (speeding measures), new notice boards for both Bradwell and Pattiswick, repairs to gym equipment on the playing field, new bench and table on the playing field, two new salt bins (Hollies Road and the recycling bank), improvements to the path leading to the playing field, flower planters, a village bench near to the wildflower area at the Church.  The Clerk would update and return the POSI plan.  **Proposed: Cllr. Dunn; Seconded Cllr. Evans; All in favour, RESOLVED.**  **ACTION - CLERK** |
| **24-5/181** | **PLAYING FIELD**   1. Cllr. Kinder had nothing to report on the playing field. Cllr. Evans reported that he had spray painted the goals, which were now in better condition.   With reference to the issue of dog fouling raised at the last meeting (**24-5/158**), the Clerk had put a notice in the most recent newsletter reminding residents that dog-fouling was an offence, and owners could be fined if caught. She had also spoken to the Street Scene Team who had confirmed that, whilst CCTV could not be installed there, they could provide more signage. They could also deploy officers to patrol the area if residents were aware that dog-fouling was occurring at a specific time.  Councillors agreed that more signs at the playing field and by the meadow entrance would be useful.  **ACTION - CLERK** |
| **24-5/182** | **FOOTPATHS**  The Footpaths’ Officer had nothing further to report other than the damage to the bridge by Cressing (**Bradwell 33**) had been reported to the PROW Officer.  The footpaths near the Old School House and the one along Blackwater Mill near to the bridge had now been cut back. The land was owned by Bradwell Estates, the management of which had now transferred from Strutt & Parker to Ceres Property Management. Kathryn Roberts (Rural Surveyor) had also transferred to Ceres and had confirmed the transfer would not materially affect the tenancy between the Parish Council and the Bradwell Estate. She had confirmed the Parish Council would continue to receive a £500.00 annual donation to contribute towards maintenance of the field. Strutt & Parker were still in the process of transferring the management, but Ms Roberts would keep the Clerk informed of anything should there be in the future. |
| **24-5/183** | **LINKS SOLAR FARM**  The Clerk had sent the invoice for reimbursement of the Parish Council’s legal fees to Low Carbon on 10 October, but this had not been paid. She had also e-mailed Beverely Rodbard-Hedderwick, Senior Stakeholder Manager on 10 October, 16 October and again on 28 October requesting answers to the following:   * When the panels will be energised; * When the Parish Council could expect its first payment and how much would this be; * When the e-doc could be expected for signature.   To date there had been no response, so she would continue to pursue a response.  **ACTION – Clerk** |
| **24-5/184** | **CCTV/FLY-TIPPING IN BRADWELL VILLAGE**  There had been two further incidents of fly-tipping in the village, one at the recycling bank, the other along Church Road, both of which had been reported to BDC.  The pole for the CCTV camera had been installed on 30 October and the Street Scene Team had been advised. As soon as the Clerk knew when the camera was being installed, she would advise the Councillors and place a note on the village Facebook page, Parish Council website and village newsletter, reminding residents BDC might issue fines should anyone be caught fly-tipping.  The big blue recycling bin (previously used for newspapers) had also been removed and the area looked much neater, and it was hoped that, once the CCTV was installed, incidents of fly-tipping would stop.  The Parish Council again expressed its thanks and gratitude, both to Cllr. Lockey and Mr Scripps, for their help in sourcing and installing the pole. |
| **24-5/185** | **RECTORY MEADOW**  The Chair updated Councillors on the Friends of Rectory Meadow Ltd, which was **separate to the work of the Parish Council.** This relates to a dispute between the residents of Residents of Rectory Meadow and a claimed Right of Way for Motor Vehicles to access Land South of Coggeshall Road via Rectory Meadow, leading to High Court action which is being defended by residents of Rectory Meadow on behalf of the Village. |
| **24-5/186** | **VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE**  Cllr. Harding reported on the following:   * There were still potholes at the recycling bank, which had been previously reported, so he would raise with Cllr. Playle again. * The cracks in the road at Five Ash Lane and Keepers Lane had still not been repaired, this is something else he would report to Cllr. Playle. * Following the discussion at the last meeting regarding bus shelters owned by the Parish Council, Cllr. Harding suggested he undertook a quarterly inspection and report back on whether there were any repairs required or issues.   Cllr. Lockey reported that:   * The weeds on the path at the church had been sprayed and that EH Countryside would undertake an inspection of the playing field to advise whether a final cut of the year would be required. |
| **24-5/187** | **INFORMATION EXCHANGE & AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**  The Clerk confirmed that Nigel Allsopp from National Highways would be attending the next meeting on 9 December. She would invite someone from Essex Highways who could hopefully also attend on that date. She had not heard from PC James Draper whether he could attend a Parish Council meeting, however the Community Patrol session on 23 November would enable residents to discuss areas of concern, and hopefully a member of the Parish Council would be in attendance.  All invitees had been provided with a copy of the draft report, highlighting the key items of relevance to them.  The Clerk reported that Clive Stewart, Chair & Treasurer Braintree District Neighbourhood Watch had also been invited to a future meeting to discuss instigating a Neighbourhood Watch in the parish. He had suggested a zoom meeting, however Councillors would prefer that he attend in person. The Clerk would advise him and schedule his agenda item at the start of the meeting.  **Future agenda items**:   * First Aid Defibrillator Course * A120 Footpaths * 2025/26 final Budget/Precept considerations |
| **24-5/188** | **NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**   1. The next **Parish Meeting** will be held on **Monday 9 December 2024** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Bradwell 2. Items for inclusion in the agenda to be sent to the Clerk no later than 12 noon on **Friday 29 November 2024.**   The meeting closed at **9.15pm** |

**Bradwell with Pattiswick Parish Council**

**Addendum to 11 November 2024 minutes**

**Cllrs. Walsh and Abram, District Councillors Coggeshall Ward, were unable to attend the Parish Council meeting on 11 November 2024.**

**Cllr. Walsh subsequently provided the following report and, as always he is happy to receive any questions or concerns.**

**Highways**

ECC’s budget for road maintenance for 2024/25 was initially £39million, which is a decrease from £46million in previous years. In September, ECC announced the Essex road network is in line for a £25million “boost” which will fund resurfacing on key roads, as well as allow roadside vegetation to be kept in check and signs and lines are repaired and repainted. The new programme has been dubbed ‘Priority One’ by highways chiefs. The latest funding comes after £12million of extra investment was announced earlier this year for highways. £8million of this supports the Members’

**Highways Initiative (where County Council Members prioritise the issues they want Essex Highways crews to repair).**

The council has also announced a 25% decrease in funding for footpath maintenance. The £12m and £25m “boosts” are still £9m short of the £46m required to meet previous years’ budgets but the shortfall is likely to be even larger than this because Essex Highways’ maintenance programme was underfunded in 2023/24 by about £20m and therefore the “knock-on” effect means the gap for what needed and what’s actually budgeted for is widening.

**Independent & Green Group Update**

Cllr. Walsh has also provided an update from the latest Independent & Green Group newsletter

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