**Bradwell with Pattiswick Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 13 January 2025 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

PC James Draper, Braintree Community Safety & Engagement Officer, Essex Police

Simon Attwood, Neighbourhood Watch Deputy Co-ordinator, Braintree District

11 members of the public were in attendance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **24-5/215** | **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**The Chair declared the meeting open at 7.30pm and welcomed those present.Apologies had been received from Cllr. Ross Playle, County Councillor for Witham Northern and Cllr. Walsh, District Councillor, Coggeshall Ward. |
| **24-5/216** | **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 a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 24-25/223, as a member of the Village Hall Management Committee, where the Budget was being discussed, and requests had been approved to contribute to defibrillator training and give grants to the Village Hall.  |
| **24-5/217** | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND OTHER MATTERS THAT ARE OF MUTUAL INTEREST** A member of the public referred to recent social media activity regarding a sensitive issue in the village. Whilst the Parish Council had not received any contact relating to this issue, it was not permitted to comment on individual cases, either in person or on social media, and it was important to ensure the process of the official organisations involved was followed. Concern was also raised by a resident regarding, what they considered to be a safeguarding issue in the village. The Parish Council took all concerns seriously, however in this instance it had no authority to act. As PC James Draper was in attendance, he considered and advised that this was a matter requiring discussion outside of the Parish Council meeting. He would take this forward with the individuals concerned. A member of the public reported the considerable amount of litter and general rubbish along Coggeshall Road by the BP Garage, including at the bus shelter. The Clerk would report this to the Street Scene Team at Braintree District Council and request they attend to this. **ACTION – CLERK**  |
| **24-5/219****This item was brought forward** | **BRAINTREE COMMUNITY SAFETY & ENGAGEMENT OFFICER, ESSEX POLICE**PC James Draper had been invited to discuss concerns and issues raised by residents in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire. This predominantly related to the laybys in the village where there appeared to be an increase in “offensive” activity. The Chair said that the Parish Council was exploring how it could apply for a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to deter such activity. PC Draper confirmed that only Braintree District Council could apply a PSPO, which could relate to any disorderly activity such drug taking and drunken/antisocial/sexual behaviour. He suggested it would be helpful for individuals and/or the Parish Council to record when such activity takes place, as it needs to prove and provide evidence on how this behaviour affects the community. He recommended the Parish Council hold a separate public meeting with residents to discuss all the concerns and how it would go about collating its evidence to present to BDC. The Chair thanked PC Draper for his advice, noting this would be added to a future agenda for the Parish Council to consider how best to take forward.PC Draper advised that crime in general across the Braintree District had reduced. He urged residents to report all crimes and reminded them that non-urgent 999 crimes could also be reported either on-line or by dialling 101, as unless it’s reported it cannot be reviewed and/or dealt with. Residents could also use Crimestoppers to report concerns (i.e. drug related, anti-social and suspicious behaviour). He stressed that all reports were completely anonymous (even the Police are unaware of where the report has come from), but it gave the Police an opportunity to patrol the area.He also referred to the Op Growth incentive that the Braintree Community Policing Team have been trailing, where local police officers patrol a village/town on a particular date and invite residents to join them, providing an opportunity for any concerns/issues about the village and surrounding area to be raised. The last one in Bradwell took place on 23 November, and another is planned for March. The Clerk would advertise the date on the Notice Board, Parish Council website and Facebook in due course. PC Draper advised there had also been a reduction in Hare Coursing this year, and that the Essex Police Rural Policing Team had been actively advising on how best to tackle the issue. **PC Draper left the meeting at 8.10pm** |
| **24-5/218** | **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR BRAINTREE DISTRICT**Another request identified in the recent Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire was a request to reinstate a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the parish. Simon Attwood (Deputy Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator for the Braintree District) had been invited to the meeting to explain what was required. Mr. Attwood explained that there were three levels of Neighbourhood Watch operating across the UK:* National Association – who provide stickers and a general e-mail, but not general data about the area;
* Essex Association – as above, but hold quarterly meetings where general trends and advice are discussed; and
* District Association – local to villages and towns. Local co-ordinators (volunteers) in each village are responsible for distributing newsletters and leaflets, putting up NHW street signs, providing stickers for bins and windows, issuing personal alarms to those who might benefit, applying street sign, visiting those without internet access (typically more elderly residents). Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators liaise with other parish co-ordinators across the district and meet with local police to discuss issues closer to home and how to tackle those. Localised data is available on crimes that happen across the district which can me made available to residents.

It is up to each village to decide what would work better for their parish, Mr. Attwood’s view was that district co-ordination tends to work better for villages, where there is plenty of support from District Co-ordinators. He stressed that it is not the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Watch to tackle crime, that continues to be the responsibility of the police. The starting point was to engage volunteers to decide how best to take the scheme forward. The Chair thanked Mr. Attwood for his clear explanation and for his time. The Clerk would pull together the localised crime information circulated by the District Co-ordinator to include in the next newsletter and she would also encourage volunteers who would be prepared to assist with running a scheme in the parish.**Mr. Stewart left the meeting at 8.25pm****ACTION – CLERK** |
| **24-5/220** | **COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS** Apologies had been received by Cllrs. Playle and Walsh. Both had sent updates which were read by the Chair as follow:1. Cllr. Playle reported on the following: **Devolution Priority Programme** - Essex County Council held an Extraordinary Full Council Meeting on 10 January to debate the Government proposals in the recent white paper. A full press release had been issued but, in short it focused on three things:
* Working with central Government, upper tier and lower tier authorities to deliver a mayoral combined county authority with a view to holding a mayoral election in May 2026;
* A commitment in principle to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation (abolition of ECC, and redrawing of district, city and borough councils into unitary authorities);
* Requests the Government to postpone the ordinary elections to Essex County Council due to be held on 1 May 2025, initially by 12 months to May 2026 to enable the Council to focus on developing proposals for devolution and local government reorganisation as prerequisite of taking part in the Government’s Devolution Priority Programme.

The next step would be to wait to hear whether Essex has been accepted by the Government to partake in the priority wave of devolution, a response is expected at the end of this month/early February. **Update on the failed reinstatement works at Hollies Road** – Cllr. Lauren Shaw, Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, had advised that, when the team had attended the site, it was noted that the gap in the road had widened, meaning reinstatement would take longer than the permit afforded them. They had therefore, reverted to the council in order to arrange a site meeting to discuss both dates and materials in order to address the concerns.1. Cllr. Walsh reported on the following:**BDC recycling/waste management consultation** – proposals for the new waste collection scheme included a third bin for residents to collect glass and for residents to no longer have to use plastic sacks for recycling. Some collections would alternate on a fortnightly or three weekly basis, with other items being collected every week. It was unclear how the new collections would work for those needing assistance or living in flats. He noted that BDC had done much on this project; members were only recently aware and did not shape new scheme.

**Devolution** – As per Cllr. Playle’s report, Essex (and possibly Southend and Thurrock Councils) had expressed interest to Government on a reform that, if approved, would replace ECC and all Essex Districts with single tier Unitary Authorities and an elected Mayor for which elections may be held in 2026. District Councillors would serve out their current terms, but it is understood that County elections this May would not be held with members extended in office until new authorities take over in 2027. It was noted that, to date, there had been no consultation with members of public or District Councils. Whilst it was considered this incentive would bring local government closer to people, there would be no local/district councils, and some functions would aggregate upwards to new elected Mayors. **Cllr Dennis Abram** has been home for a few weeks and making good progress and hopes to be able to start attending PC etc meetings in due course. |
| **24-5/221** | **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2024** Councillors received and considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9 December 2024 and resolved to approve them as a true record.The minutes were signed by the Chair.**Proposed: Cllr. Lockey; Seconded: Cllr. Turner; All in favour, RESOLVED.**   |
| **24-5/222** | **FINANCIAL REPORTS**1. Councillors received and approved the financial statements to 31 December 2024. There were no queries.

 **Proposed: Cllr. Turner; Seconded Cllr. Kinder; All in favour, RESOLVED.** 1. Councillors approvedpayments for December 2024. There were no queries. **Proposed: Cllr. Lockey; Seconded Cllr. Dunn; All in favour, RESOLVED.**
 |
| **24-5/230****This item was brought forward** | **LINKS SOLAR FARM**The Clerk had written to Beverley Rodbard-Hedderwick (Stakeholder Manager at Links Solar) on 2 January, copied to the CEO, expressing her concern and disappointment at the lack of engagement with the Parish Council regarding the following points: * Community Benefit Deed had not been sent to the Parish Council for e-signature;
* Confirmation had not been provided regarding if/when the panels had been energised and whether work at the farm was now complete;
* Confirmation of when the Parish Council could expect its first payment;
* Failure to re-imburse the Parish Council’s legal fees as outlined in the invoice sent on 10 October 2024, breaching the 30-day payment terms.

In her letter she had advised that, should there be no response addressing all the issues by 31 January 2025, she would contact Birketts Solicitors again to seek their legal advice.Councillors considered the negative impact on the Parish Council finances, should Low Carbon be unable to fulfil its commitments. It was agreed that, should there be no further contact by 31 January 2025, the Clerk write to Pritti Patel, Member of Parliament for the area, copied to District and County Councillors, Bradwell Estates and Low Carbon’s CEO, making them aware of the situation, seeking their advice and support and highlighting the impact this has, not only to the finances, but the community in general due to the disruption, not to mention the significant loss of crops which could have grown on the field.**ACTION – CLERK** |
| **24-5/225****This item was brought forward** | **PATH TO THE PLAYING FIELD** At the September 2024 meeting (24-5/131), the Parish Council agreed to make improvements to the path leading to the playing field and that it would apply for a Locality Fund to contribute towards the cost of this. However, from the quotes received to date it had become apparent that the cost of the path was more than originally expected. Even with a grant from the Locality Fund, financing the path from the current budget would have a detrimental effect on the Parish Council’s finances. It was therefore proposed to postpone this project and consider the cost of this when considering the 2025/26 precept request. The Clerk would add the path to the POSI (Potential Space Improvement Plan).**Proposed: Cllr. Evans; Seconded Cllr. Turner; All in favour, RESOLVED****ACTION – CLERK** |
| **24-5/223** | **BUDGET 2025/26** Councillors had agreed the Budget for 2025/26 in principle at the last meeting, and the Clerk had finalised the agreed changes. Councillors were now required to finalise the budget in conjunction, and with consideration to, the precept request for 2025/26.There were no further changes, and the budget was formally agreed to be adopted. **Proposed: Cllr. Turner; Seconded Cllr. Evans; All in favour, RESOLVED.** The Clerk advised that, with regards to the unmetered lighting supplied by SSE, the last invoice paid by the Parish Council was for £88.03, for the period 1-28 February 2024, dated 22 April 2024. She was aware from other Clerks, that SSE were experiencing problems with its on-line billing system and that invoices had not been issued to other councils. Based on the last invoice, it was estimated that the outstanding amount would be in the region of £1,000. As the Parish Council had budgeted for this amount, the Chair suggested that a cheque be prepared for SSE to pay for lighting until the end of March 2025, which would settle the account for the current budget year and fulfil the Parish Council’s requirements for the audit. Councillors agreed this proposal. The Clerk suggested contacting SSE a final time to see if the issue could be resolved and, if not, she would calculate the outstanding amount and prepare a cheque to present at the March meeting. **Proposed: Cllr. Dunn; Seconded Cllr. Evans; All in favour, RESOLVED.** **ACTION – CLERK**  |
| **24-5/224** | **PRECEPT 2025/26** The Parish Council had received notification from BDC for its 2025/26 precept request. In recent years the Parish Council had resisted increasing this, however the Clerk had met with the Chair to review the budget figures and future finances, and it had become apparent that, unless an increase was applied this year, the Parish Council would fall into a deficit. Councillors discussed the financial statements, including the impact of income from the solar farm not materialising, the plan to install a path to the playing field, which would have to be a future project, and the requirement to retain 50% in reserves. Based on this, the Chair proposed submitting a request for £16,900, equating to an increase just over 40% (an annual increase per household of £21.52, approx. £.1.79 per month). Councillors agreed there was no choice other than to apply an increase this year and hoped income from Low Carbon did materialise which could be off-set against future precepts. A statement to residents explaining the increase would be prepared and publicised to residents. **Proposed: Cllr. Dunn; Seconded Cllr. Lockey; All in favour, RESOLVED.** **ACTION – CLERK** |
| **24-5/226** | **PLANNING MATTERS****New Applications/Variances:** 1. **24/02562/HH**

Erection of Barn**Comments by 14/01/2025****There were no comments from the Parish Council** |
| **24-5/227** | **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REFRESH** Following the last meeting, the Chair had revised para 4.55 and the entire (Annex 3) Action Plan. He had met with Alan Massow (Principal Planning Policy Officer at BDC), who had provided comments and suggestions on the documents. He had offered to assist with updating the policy numbers at various sections of the plan if DAC (the Parish Council’s Planning Consultants) were unable to do this. The amended document was now with BDC and DAC for completion. Once this was finalized, the next stage would require the Councillor to hand deliver the document to all residents within the Parish, with a summary of the changes made and asking for residents’ agreement to the changes. The Chair sought resolution to include two further changes, reinstatement of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and to work with BDP and the Police services to try to introduce a PSPO to the area by the Church layby.**Proposed: Cllr. Dunn; Seconded Cllr. Evans; All in favour, RESOLVED**Councillors were reminded that the Parish Council had received a grant from Groundsworks UK for the Neighbourhood Plan refresh exercise and that any unspent funds would be refunded.  |
| **24-5/228** | **PLAYING FIELD** Cllr. Kinder had nothing to report on the playing field.  |
| **24-5/229** | **FOOTPATHS** There was nothing to report on the footpaths. Cllr. Turner asked whether there had been any further information regarding Footpath. 33, whereby it appeared that damaged undertaken to the bridge had been done deliberately. The Clerk had not been made aware of anything and would contact the Footpath’s Officer and report back.**ACTION – CLERK**  |
| **24-5/231** | **CCTV/FLY-TIPPING IN BRADWELL VILLAGE** The Clerk had contacted the Parish Council’s insurance company who had confirmed that the post and surrounding area would be covered under the Parish Council’s insurance policy. BDC had confirmed their equipment and data handling would be covered by their insurance. On that basis the Clerk had completed the permit to proceed which was being processed by BDC. As soon as the Clerk knew when the CCTV would be installed, she would inform the Councillors. She would also advise residents via the website, Facebook and the parish newsletter.  |
| **24-5/232** | **PARISH NEWSLETTER** With effect from February and going forward, all households in the Bradwell, Pattiswick and Stisted parishes would receive a free copy of the newsletter, which would mostly be funded through advertising. Some volunteers have offered to assist with delivering the newsletters across the parish. Should anyone does not receive a copy, they are requested to let the Clerk know, who will pass details on to the Editor. Should anyone have any items for future newsletters, or are interested in advertising in the newsletter, they should e-mail Eleanor Mcmillan at emcmillan46@gmail.com. Articles need to be sent to her by the 20th of each month. If anyone would like to assist with distributing the newsletter either in Bradwell or Pattiswick they should let the Clerk know.  |
| **24-5/233** | **BUS-STOP INSPECTIONS**Cllr. Harding had undertaken an inspection of the bus stops owned by the Parish Council and Councillors had received his report. Whilst there was nothing urgent to report, Councillors were made aware that the bus stop by the BP garage was structurally in a good state, but there was an amount of rubbish overspilling from the bin. The Clerk would report this when she reports the rubbish along this stretch of Coggeshall Road. The broken glass previously reported at the October meeting, appeared to have been repaired, but this had not been actioned by the Parish Council. Whilst it was previously understood the bus shelter belonged to the Parish Council, the Clerk was asked to confirm this at the next meeting.Regarding the bus stop along from Waduds going towards Braintree, whilst action was not urgently required, it appeared to be in disrepair. The covering roof was buckled and covered in grass and foliage; the ground around the shelter is uneven and there is a mound of earth higher than the shelter, impacting the framework. There is a tree growing behind the shelter and a number of items of litter and the area looks generally tired. The Chair thought the area around the shelter belonged to Essex Highways and asked Cllr. Harding to raise the issue with them and report back at the next meeting.**ACTION – CLLR. HARDING/CLERK** |
| **24-5/234** | **ESSEX VILLAGE OF THE YEAR 2025**In 2024, the RCCE had reinstated its Essex Village of the Year competition. The Parish Council had decided not to enter at that time given the short notice, however Councillors were asked to consider whether they wanted to enter in 2025 and who would take responsibility for compiling the application. There was a mixed response from Councillors as to whether the Parish Council should submit an entry for the village. The Clerk was asked to circulate the application form to Councillors for consideration at the next meeting.**ACTION- CLERK**  |
| **24-5/235** | **VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE**Cllr. Harding reported on the following:* The potholes at the recycling centre were yet to be repaired. As the land belongs to Bradwell Estates, Cllr. Harding was liaising with Ceres Property and Essex
* The cracks in the road at Five Ash Lane and Keepers Lane remained unrepaired and appeared to be getting worse. Cllr. Playle was aware and was taking this forward.

Cllr. Kinder had been made aware that a few lorry drivers had used the side of a house situated along by the BP garage as a toilet. This appeared to happen as the facilities at the BP garage were unavailable during the evenings/overnight. With reference to PC Draper’s advice, anyone who saw such behaviour should maintain a record and speak to the police for advice.  |
| **24-5/236** | **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. |
| **24-5/237** | **INFORMATION EXCHANGE & AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING****Future agenda items**:* 2025 Village of the Year
* Bus shelters
* Holy Trinity Church
* Neighbourhood Watch
* Links Solar Farm
 |
| **24-5/238** | **NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** 1. The next **Parish Meeting** will be held on **Monday 10 February 2025** 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 31 January 2025.**

**The meeting closed at 9.30pm**  |