



Bulmer Parish Council

Mrs Claire Waters (Parish Clerk)
25 Bayley Street, Castle Heddingham, Essex CO9 3DG
07845 056597 bulmerparishclerk@gmail.com



Minutes of the Bulmer Parish Council Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 23rd June 2021 at 6.00pm at Coes Meadow

Present: Cllrs Crawshay, Crome, Kershaw, Nichols, Ponty, Raymond, Street
In the Chair: Cllr Raymond
Clerk: Claire Waters
Also Present: 22 parishioners

Cllr Rosemary Raymond as Chairman welcomed everyone and introduced the Parish Councillors and the clerk to the parishioners present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – There were no apologies for absence

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3. LAND ADJOINING COES MEADOW

Following an unsuccessful planning appeal, an area of land adjoining Coes Meadow and Church Road is available for the Parish Council to purchase on behalf of the community. This could be financed from Parish Council capital reserves, possibly with support from community fund raising and/or grant funding. Cllr Raymond explained that the purpose of this extraordinary meeting was to gauge residents' views on the possible purchase of this piece of land by the Parish Council. A price of £20,000 had been suggested to the Parish Council. Including legal and professional fees this makes a very rough estimate of £25,000 cost to the parish. Many residents objected to a recent planning application for the land. The unsuccessful planning appeal gives temporary protection but there is no guarantee that this will provide long term protection from unwelcome or inappropriate development at the site. The landowners have been approached by another interested purchaser but they would like to give the Parish Council first refusal for the benefit of the village of Bulmer.

3.1 PUBLIC FORUM

Questions and comments from residents were noted by the clerk for further consideration and discussion by the Parish Council on behalf of the village. Issues and questions raised by residents included:

- What is the purpose for the village of buying the land? What would we do with it?
- If the Parish doesn't buy the land, we may get something the village doesn't like
- The benefit would be to make sure no-one else buys it for unwanted development or a travellers' site
- What are the ongoing costs of maintenance? The whole site is in need of work
- If it's left as a woodland area could it not be managed by volunteers?
- Who is going to do the work? Coes Meadow is not being looked after as it is.
- Maintenance could be minimal if we leave it as a natural space. Roe deer currently play there.
- Many of the planning objections were on the basis of the flora and fauna at the site.
- Would the land need to be fenced off from the road for safety?
- Is there a proper business case from the Parish Council? We can't agree or disagree without a proper proposal.
- What would be the cost and where would the money come from?
- Why did some people not know about this meeting?

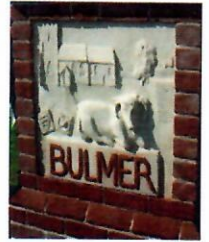
Councillors gave responses to some questions raised:

- The Parish Council wished to consult with residents before spending public money on preparation of a business case or developing full proposals. This is the purpose of this extraordinary meeting.



Bulmer Parish Council

Mrs Claire Waters (Parish Clerk)
25 Bayley Street, Castle Hedingham, Essex CO9 3DG
07845 056597 bulmerparishclerk@gmail.com



- The Parish Council currently holds £67,845.70 in capital reserves which can only be spent on capital (not revenue) projects.
- In answer to questions about increasing the parish precept to pay for the management of more land, it was clarified that the Parish Council currently claims a precept of £38.34 per year per household (based on a Band D property) which equals a cost of just under 74 pence per week per property.
- Coes Meadow is managed by volunteers including the Coes Meadow Management Committee which has recently been recruiting new members. The Stour Valley & Dedham Vale volunteer group carry out conservation work annually at Coes Meadow and receive a voluntary donation from Coes Meadow funds and the Parish Council. Any residents who wish to volunteer to help at Coes Meadow in any way are very welcome to contact the Parish Clerk or Coes Meadow Management Committee members.
- Parish Councillors are elected to act in the best interests of the village of Bulmer and so could make this decision without consulting with residents, but chooses to ask the opinion of residents in this case.
- The agenda for this extraordinary meeting was published on the parish noticeboards and on the Parish Council website giving over a week's notice. The information was also shared on social media and by word of mouth. This more than meets the statutory requirements for publicising the meeting, however there is a strong feeling among Councillors that no residents should be able to say they weren't asked their opinion. A leaflet drop to all village properties is therefore proposed if the feedback from this meeting suggests the Parish Council should take this land purchase to the next step.

RESOLVED: To move on and make a formal approach to the owners of the land, then let the Parish know the outcome and give them a time frame to respond with their views.

Proposed: Cllr Crome **Seconded:** Cllr Kershaw *Agreed by majority vote (6 in favour, 1 abstention)*

A show of hands from all residents present also showed majority approval for this decision. Practical considerations for managing a leaflet delivery to the whole village were discussed.

4. MEETING DATES 2021 – Remote meetings are no longer permitted after 7th May 2021

19th July 2021	Ordinary Parish Council	Bulmer Village Hall
20th September 2021	Ordinary Parish Council	Bulmer Village Hall
15th November 2021	Ordinary Parish Council	Bulmer Village Hall

The meeting closed at 18.57pm

Signed.....

Cllr Rosemary Raymond