

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at the Pavilion on 14th May 2024 at 8pm

Present:

Councillor C Knapman (Vice Chairman), Councillor E Miles, Councillor Holt, Cllr R Siddal, and the Clerk.

24/1 Election of a Chairman

It was proposed and agreed that Councillor Collins be appointed as Chairman for the civic year 2024/25.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Collins be appointed Chairman of Great Braxted Parish Council.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Knapman would act as Chairman for this meeting.

24/2 Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Resolved: that the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office be signed by Councillor Collins and the clerk when time permits.

24/3 Appointment of Vice Chairman

It was proposed and agreed that Councillor Knapman be appointed as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Knapman be appointed as Vice-Chairman of Great Braxted Parish Council.

24/4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Collins and Councillor Davis.

RESOLVED: that the apologies for absence be accepted.

24/5 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman.

24/6 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they are required to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests which they know they might have in terms of business on the agenda. They were also reminded that they will need to repeat their declarations at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if required under the Code of Conduct which took effect in July 2022. Further they were reminded that unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time.

There were no interests declared.

24/7 Maldon District Councillor Update

District Councillor R Siddall advised:

- Maldon District Council had received feedback from the Finance peer Review and confirmed the council's finances were strong with £5m held in reserves and no debt.
- The Council has set an ambitious balanced budget for 2024/25.
- The Council has been rated the 4thbest council in country in a recent survey published by The Times.
- The council is currently reviewing the Local Development Plan which will include an updated design guide.
- The Local Government Association are satisfied with the work undertaken by Maldon District Council both financially and politically and further support will be sought if needed.
- Politically, there is still no overall control at the council but all political parties have recognised the need for cross-party co-operation.
- Suez, the Waste Contractors run by Essex County Council have been ranked 10th in the country for the provision of waste services, which includes high percentages of resident recycling.
- The Waste team within Maldon District Council has recently been restructured.
- A top level restructure is currently underway, with shortlisting due to commence in July.
- The Council is holding monthly Community Hubs, each with a different theme.
- The proposed changes advocated by the South East Essex NHS is still in the forefront of people's mind and the Council is doing what it can to ensure outpatient services remain in the district.
- The Council has asked the Department of Community and Levelling if the recently awarded grant of £5million could be diverted to support medical services in the district. If this is not possible the money will be spent, as intended, on cultural projects in Burnham-on-Crouch and Maldon.
- The Council was successful in bidding for £200k of funding for community and wellbeing projects and has recently launched the Rural England prosperity Fund which will see over £400k distributed to local businesses and community organisations.
- Cllr Siddall advised he was Chair of the North Essex Economic Board which is working collaboratively with neighbouring councils.
- The Council's Beat the Street community game starts on the 15th May 2024.
- A public survey is being launched to gain community feedback on proposals to redevelop the skateparks in Maldon and Burnham-on-Crouch.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Siddall for his interest in the village and for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: Cllr Siddall's update was noted.

24/8 Public Participation Session

No members of the public were

24/9 To Confirm the Council's Bank Account for the Year 2024/25.

The Council confirmed their banking arrangements will be held with Unity Trust Bank for the coming year.

RESOLVED: that the Council will continue banking with Unity Trust in 2024/25.

24/10 Appointment of Signatories on the Bank Account

The Clerk confirmed the current signatories on the bank account were Cllrs, Collins, Davis, Knapman and Miles.

Councillors discussed the benefits of having several signatories on the account to authorise payments.

Clerk to check with Unity what action needs to take

RESOLVED: that Cllrs Collins, Davis, and Miles remain as signatories on the Unity Trust Account.

24/11 To Appoint a Member to Review the Quarterly Bank Reconciliations.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Holt, who is not a signatory on the account, be appointed to verify the bank reconciliation, accounts for payments and source documents on a quarterly basis.

24/12 To Appoint an Internal Auditor for 2024/25

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council agreed to retain the services of Jan Stobbart as the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2024/25 at a cost of £170.00.

RESOLVED: that, in line with good practice, the Council will look to appoint a new auditor for the year 2025/26.

23/13 Adoption of Policies and Procedures

Members reviewed and agreed to re-adopt the following policies without any amendments:

- A) Equal Opportunities Statement
- B) Grievance
- C) Data Protection
- D) Data Retention
- E) Social Media and Electronic Communication
- F) Publication Scheme
- G) Training
- H) Complaints

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council re-adopt the above policies and procedures for the coming year.

Members reviewed the amended Standing Orders which included an updated public contract value of £30,000, including VAT.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council adopt the amended Standing Orders.

Members reviewed the new Financial Regulations, which had been adapted to the Council's requirements from the recently published National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council adopt the new Financial Regulations.

24/14 To Adopt the Financial Risk Assessment for 2024/25

Members reviewed the Financial Risk Assessment for 2024/25 which now includes mitigation for non-financial risks such as loss of key staff, business continuity and reputational risks to the council.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council adopt the Financial Risk Assessment for the year 2024/25.

24/15 Annual Return for the Year Ending 2023/24

24/15/1 Internal Audit Report

Members discussed the recommendations highlighted in the internal audit report which was completed on the 10th April 2024 and noted and agreed the clerk's recommended actions.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council receive the Internal Audit report for 2023/24 and the recommended actions be put in place.

24/15/2 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the Year Ended 31st March 2024

The Chairman read to the Council the statements contained in Section 1 of the Annual Return and the Council agreed that each statement had been complied with. The Council approved the signing of the Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/24 and the Chairman and Clerk duly signed.

24/15/3 Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the Year Ended 31st March 2024

The Council noted and agreed the financial data in Section 2 of the Annual Return and approved the signing of the Accounting Statement for the year ended 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council approve Section 2, the Accounting Statements, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/24 and the Chairman duly signed.

24/15/4 Period of Public Rights

The Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return was provided to the Council.

RESOLVED: that the Period of Public Rights was noted as being from the 3rd June 2024 to the 12th July 2024.

24/16 Planning

24/16/1 To Consider Planning Applications Submitted and Published on the District Council's Website between Circulation of the Agenda and the Meeting

No applications were received.

24/16/2 To Note Planning Decisions Made by Maldon District Council

24/16/2.1 FUL/MAL/24/00082 Construction of a single storey extension to existing pavilion to form a new store room at the Village Hall, Tiptree Road Great Braxted. **Approved.**

24/17 Braintree District Call for Sites

Councillors considered Braintree District Council's call for sites for possible development site in the village.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council's cannot provide any suitable planning sites to Braintree District Council.

24/16 Finance

24/16/1 Parish Council's Insurance for 2024/25

Members discussed the Council's insurance policy for the year 2024/25.

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council agree the quote from BHIB for the Council's insurance commencing on the 1st June 2024 for £452.11.

24/16/2 Bank Reconciliation

The council received a bank reconciliation to the 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED: that the bank reconciliation to the 31st March 2024 be approved and the bank statement be signed by Cllr Holt.

23/17 Accounts for Payment

23/17/1 To Approve Accounts for Payment Between the 2nd March and the 9th May 2024

The Council approved the following payments: -

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Total</i>
02/04/2024	RCCE	Annual membership	£ 44.10
03/04/2024	SLCC	Clerk's affiliation fees	£ 34.02
04/04/2024	Combat Fire	Extinguisher service	£ 25.00
03/04/2024	Cllr Knapman	Wheelchair ramp	£ 142.99
03/04/2024	EALC	2027/25 Affiliation Fees	£ 123.76
03/04/2024	DW Maintenance	March Grass Cutting	£ 185.00
11/04/2024	Cllr Knapman	Wheelchair straps and padlock	£ 9.68
13/04/2024	Jan Stobart	2023/24 Audit fee	£ 160.00
24/04/2024	ID Mobile	Mobile phone April 2024	£ 6.00
24/04/2024	CN Electrical	Smoke and emergency lighting in pavilion	£ 1,064.58
24/04/2024	Cllr Knapman	Washing up liquid	£ 17.99
28/04/2024	Lynda Townend	April salary	£ 247.80
28/04/2024	HMRC	April payment	£ 61.80
29/04/2024	Cllr Knapman	Paint	£ 71.42
09/05/2024	Point Graphics	Traffic Signs	£ 107.52
09/05/2024	Cloud Next	Gov.uk domain	£ 12.00
09/05/2024	DW Maintenance	April grass cutting	£ 370.00
09/05/2024	Clear Insurance	Annual insurance premium	£ 452.11
TOTAL:			£ 3,135.77

RESOLVED: The accounts for payment listed above be approved for payment:

24/17/2 Agreement to Pay Regular Payments

Members received a list of regular direct debits and BACS payments made by the Council.

RESOLVED: that the following payments will be made, outside of the meeting schedule, if required:-

Description	Frequency
Clerk's salary and expenses	Monthly
Mobile phone	Monthly
DW Maintenance – Grass Cutting	Monthly during the growing season
Maldon District Council – TRUCAM patrols	Quarterly
HMRC payments	Quarterly

24/18 Sole Trustee Status for Great Braxted Pavilion

Councillors considered the request from the Pavilion Management Committee for Great Braxted Parish Council to become the Sole Trustee of the general management of the affairs of the Pavilion Management Committee and the administration of the Charity No. 301309.

RESOLVED: that the Council agree to the request and the Clerk will make the necessary enquires with the Rural Community Council of Essex and the Charity Commission.

24/19 Great Braxted Terms of Hire

24/19/1 Councillors considered updated and amended terms of hire for those utilising council owned facilities, as requested by the Pavilion Management Committee on the 18th January 2024.

RESOLVED: that the Council agreed the amended Terms of Hire and will request the Pavilion Management Committee include the agreed terms of hire for Parish Council owned assets in their hire agreement.

24/19/2 Councillors reviewed the proposed wording for field usage which will be affixed to the notice board, inside the pavilion, providing hirers with the rules of use.

RESOLVED: that the Council agreed the wording on the signage with the following amendments:

1. 'No excessive consumption of alcohol which leads to disturbance of the peace'.
2. 'No model aircraft, drones or model cars'.

24/20 Items for Next Agenda

- Pavilion Phase two update
- Braxted and Blackwater Conservation Group (BBCG)

RESOLVED: that these agenda items be added to the next agenda.

24/21 General Announcements

- The Clerk provided an update on the River Trust meeting / Fluvial Audit

The update was noted.

24/22 Chairman Closed the Meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.06

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CLlr R Collins

Chairman