

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at The Pavilion on 18th January 2024 at 8pm

Present:

Councillor R Collins (Chairman), Councillor C Knapman (Vice Chairman), Councillor M Davis, Councillor L Holt, Councillor E Miles, Councillor Richard Siddall and the Clerk and 4 members of the public

23/81 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received as all Members were present.

23/82 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23/83 Declarations of Interest

None declared.

23/84 Maldon District Councillor Update

Cllr Siddall provided an update on District activities including:-

- Cllr Siddall was the Leader of Maldon District Council running a minority administration and his priority is to transform the council and build confidence.
- In addition to the above role, Cllr Siddall is the Independent Representative for the East of England Local Government Association and Chair of the North East Economic Board.
- Maldon District Council is currently working on the 2025/26 budget which will be balanced and he hopes this will continue for 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- The Council is financially secure with over £5 million in reserves.
- The Council is aiming to source more commercial income.
- Building work has commenced on the new crematorium which is being built on the A414 between Maldon and Danbury.
- St Peters Hospital is due to close with services being moved to alternative locations. The Council is working with the NHS to ensure there is adequate cover provided to residents.
- Work on the Local Plan is progressing with modelling being completed and then a consultation will take place. The new Local Plan will include a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which are funds provided by developers which are paid directly to Maldon District Council.
- The land supply is currently at 6.3 years against a government target of 5 years.
- Community Hubs are continuing each month, focusing on topics such as sustainability and health and well-being.

- A service guide is available for residents who are struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis and winter hardship.
- Another restructure of the Council is in progress to ensure the services provided are meeting the needs of the community.
- Maldon District Council is encouraging Town and Parish Councils to consider Climate Action in the services they provide and are being asked to sign up to be a Climate Action Friend.
- Beat the street competition will launch in the summer to encourage residents to increase their activity level and prizes will be given to those who take up activity.
- The likelihood of devolution to the Greater Essex Authority is unlikely due to a lack of parliamentary time before the next general election.

Cllr Miles asked if a new secondary school was planned. Cllr Siddall advised the Plume Academy is due to expand with a satellite site.

23/85 Public Participation Session

A member of the public summarised agenda item 8.3, Speed Camera Signs and the reasoning for the quantity quoted for.

A member of the public asked if the Parish Council was considering budgeting a sum of money toward the upkeep of the churchyard.

Cllr Collins advised 1/3 of funds raised from the quiz night was given to Great Braxted Church, All Saints and 1/3 given to St Nicholas Church, Little Braxted.

A member of the public advised a tree has fallen in the area of dead ground on the field and that there are a considerable number of brambles.

Cllr Collins asked for suggestions to improve the area, requesting Members bring suggestions to the next meeting. It was agreed residents should also be consulted on how the area should be used.

RESOLVED: that Members will bring suggestions to improve the area to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: Cllr Davis will include an article in the Braxted Bulletin regarding the area of land.

A member of the public asked for an update regarding the old sign which was displayed on the Pavilion.

Cllr Knapman advised the original sign is to be replaced in a design in keeping with the new sign acknowledging those involved in the 2023 project works.

A member of the public suggested using a mobile WI FI connection instead of using a fixed fibre cable. Information will be sent to the clerk.

23/86 Pavilion Refurbishment

The Chairman provided an update on the pavilion refurbishment project noting:-

- The project to refurbish the pavilion, improving its carbon footprint has been completed with the installation of new cladding, a thermal blanket and insulation and new soakaways.
- A grant of £70k has been awarded by the Community Ownership Fund. Great Braxted was the only parish Council to receive an award. These funds will cover the cost of a new roof and storage area.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

23/86/1 Solar Panels on the Pavilion Roof

ClIr Holt reported her findings in investigation the possibility of installing solar panels on the pavilion confirming solar panels could be installed on the south side of the roof with or without a storage battery. The first quote was for £8,482 without battery storage and £12,643 with battery storage. Based on historic electricity records provided by the Pavilion Management Committee the panels would be able to provide 35% of the electricity needed.

ClIr Siddall advised funding for the project may be available from Rural Prosperity Fund

RESOLVED: that the council is keen to progress the installation of solar panels on the pavilion and comparative quotes will be sought.

23/86/2 Planning Application for Pavilion Storage Room

ClIr Collins distributed proposed plans for the storage room and advised planning permission would be required for the proposed storage room to be built on the eastern aspect of the pavilion.

RESOLVED: that the Council support the application and include the installation of solar panels on the pavilion roof in the same application. George Traer Clark will submit the application on the parish council's behalf for a cost in the region of £500.

23/86/3 Pavilion Energy Saving Project 2023 Phase 2

This item was covered in Minute number 24/06/2.

23/86/4 Reallocation of Balance from National Lottery Coronation Grant

ClIr Knapman advised there was a residual balance of £362.39 from the National Lottery Coronation Grant which had been allocated toward the cost of a replacement of the water heater. ClIr Knapman advised a 200m of hose pipe, trolley and outside tap would be beneficial to water the new trees on the field.

A member of the public advised there was an outside tap but did not know the exact location.

RESOLVED: that the Council agree to reallocate the balance of £362.39 from the National Lottery Coronation Grant toward the cost of a 200m hose, trolley and outside tap, if the existing tap cannot be located.

RESOLVED: Cllr Colins will ask a resident with a metal detector to try to locate the tap.

23/87 Planning

23/87/1 ESS/42/23/BTE/

Councillors considered the application and letter from Essex County Council dated 28th December 2023 asking for formal observations to relocate the plant site, ready mixed concrete plant, bagging plant and associated ancillary facilities including a conveyor network with bridge over Braxted Road.

RESOLVED: that the Council will not submit observations regarding this application due to the complexity of the application.

23/88 Environment

23/88/1 Annual Village Spring Clean

Councillors discussed the logistics of the annual village spring clean/litter pick.

RESOLVED: that the annual litter pick take place on Saturday the 16th March 2024.

RESOLVED: that the clerk will collect litter picking equipment from Maldon District Council.

23/88/2 Post and Rail Fencing

Councillors received a report and considered quotes to repair a section of fencing in the new financial year.

RESOLVED: that the quote provided by R Clark Landscaping for the sum of £1,090 be accepted for the works which will commence in the new financial year.

23/88/3 Speed Camera Signs

Councillors received a report and considered quotes for the purchase of speed camera signs to install on existing posts in the village.

RESOLVED: that the quote for £511 be accepted.

23/89/1 Accounts for Payments

The Council approved the following payments made between the 8th December 2023 and the 11th January 2024:-

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Total</i>
12/12/2023	ECS Carpet Care	Deep clean pavilion carpets	£ 293.46	£ -	£ 293.46
13/12/2023	AM Landscaping	Additional stones for pavilion carpark	£ 600.00	£ -	£ 600.00
14/12/2023	Cllr Knapman	Items for pavilion	£ 92.70	£ -	£ 92.70
14/12/2023	AM Landscaping	Carpark labour and materials	£ 400.00	£ -	£ 400.00
21/12/2023	Cllr Knapman	Foyer rug for pavilion	£ 34.12	£ 6.82	£ 40.94

21/12/2023	Maldon Town Council	Recharge clerks training course	£ 75.00	£ 15.00	£ 90.00
24/12/2023	Cllr Knapman	Door mats for pavilion	£ 27.47	£ -	£ 27.47
25/12/2023	AJ Adams	Window cleaning of pavilion	80.00	£ -	£ 80.00
24/12/2023	ID Mobile	Mobile phone bill - December 2023	£ 5.00	£ 1.00	£ 6.00
09/01/2024	Information Commissioner's Office	Data Protection Fee	£ 35.00	£ -	£ 35.00
09/01/2024	Cllr Knapman	Expenses	£ 26.43	£ -	£ 26.43
11/01/2023	Wickham Bishops Parish Council	Remembrance Day costs	£ 160.60	£ -	£ 160.60

TOTAL:

£1,852.60

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

Cllr Holt queried the sundry costs charged to the pavilion project and felt the cost of over £2k for sundry items was excessive.

Cllr Collins provided a summary of the costs and advised these were made in order to expediate the project and to replace items which had been discarded during building works.

Cllr Holt queried why the Pavilion Management Committee had not covered the cost of these items.

Cllr Collins advised all the pavilion costs had been covered by grant funding and the Pavilion Management Committee had contributed £29,100 from grants they had received toward the cost.

23/89/2 Quarter 3 Bank Reconciliation

Councillors received the bank reconciliation to 31st December 2023 which had been scrutinised by Cllr Holt prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the bank reconciliation be noted and signed by Cllr Holt as a true account.

23/90 2024/25 Budget and Precept Demand

Councillors discussed the proposed budget and precept for 2024-25 and agreed a budget of £14,202.24 in expenditure, £225 in income and a precept demand of £13,977.24 giving a Band D rate of £77.01. This represents a 36.6% increase on the previous year.

A member of the public suggested a reduction in costs could be achieved if the frequency of mowing and strimming was reduced when the grounds maintenance contract next goes out to tender.

RESOLVED: the Parish Council approved the budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

RESOLVED: the Parish Council agreed the precept demand of £13,977 for the 2024/25 financial year.

23/91 Hiring Terms and Conditions

Councillors received draft terms and conditions to be given to hirers when using Parish Council land and equipment.

The use of Bylaws was discussed to enable enforcement of the proposed rules.

RESOLVED: that the clerk and Cllr Knapman will investigate introducing Bylaws to enforce rules.

RESOLVED: Cllr Knapman will distribute the draft terms and conditions to the Pavilion Management Committee for comment and will include reference to the proposed Bylaws in a second draft.

23/92 Selecting Information to Disseminate to Residents

Councillors discussed the type of information received by the Parish Council which should be disseminated to residents via the Braxted Bulletin and the Facebook page.

Cllr Davis advised it would be feasible to include this information.

RESOLVED: Cllr Collins will send relevant information to Cllr Davis to include in the Braxted Bulletin.

23/93 Hedgehogs R Us Highway Project

Councillors considered information received from Hedgehogs R Us to purchase hedgehog highway surrounds.

RESOLVED: that the project would not be suitable to use in such a rural area.

23/94 Schedule of Meetings

Councillors were provided with a calendar of proposed meeting dates for the civic year 2024/25.

RESOLVED: that the schedule of meeting for the civic year 2024/25 be approved.

23/95 Sole Trustee Status of the Pavilion

The chairman advised this matter was progressing.

23/96 Hedges Impeding Footpath Access

The council discussed the process which should be followed when complaints are received regarding matters affecting the village.

RESOLVED: that the Council will, in the first instance, post a letter to residents requesting which action they would like to be taken to improve conditions in the village.

23/97 Installation of a Village Christmas Tree

Members requested this item be discussed in September.

RESOLVED: that the item be included on the agenda in September 2024.

23/98 General Announcements

No general announcements were made.

23/99 Items to be Included on the Next Agenda

Any items to be included on the agenda should be submitted to the clerk.

RESOLVED: that Members will send information for future agenda items to the clerk.

23/100 Date of Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be held at 8pm on Tuesday the 12th March 2024, in the pavilion

23/101 Chairman Closed the Meeting

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 22.08

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Cllr R Collins

Chairman