

Minutes of the Little Burstead Annual Parish Council
Meeting held at Little Burstead Village Hall,
on Wednesday 10th May 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor John Mitchell: Councillor Abi Mohseni:
Councillor David Clark: Councillor Katrina Watts:

In Attendance: Mrs. Christine Barlow, Clerk to the Parish Council/RFO

Members of Public: 4

1/17 Introductions: Councillor Mitchell welcomed all to the meeting.

2/17 Election of Chair: To elect a Chair for the 2017/2018 Parish Council year.

Councillor John Mitchell was proposed and duly elected as Parish Council Chair for the fiscal year 2017-2018.

Proposed: Councillor Katrina Watts. Seconded: Councillor David Clark

3/17 Declaration of Acceptance - Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office by elected Chair.

Councillor John Mitchell accepted the Office of Chair and signed the Declaration of Acceptance which was countersigned to confirm by Christine Barlow, Clerk to the Parish Council.

4/17 Election of Vice-Chair: It was **AGREED** by all present not to elect a vice-chair. In the absence of the Chair at any meeting during the year a Chair would be appointed for the respective meeting.

5/17 Apologies for absence: None received as all Councillors were present.

6/17 Declarations of member's interest: To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests by members relating to any agenda items.

None received

7/17 Member Representation: To appoint representatives to the following areas of interest:

Councillors considered representation, by the Parish Council, on external bodies and activities and the following representations were confirmed:

- Association of Basildon Local Councils (ABLC) – Councillor Katrina Watts.
- Basildon Council Liaison Group – Councillor Katrina Watts / Councillor John Mitchell.

- Footpaths – Councillor David Clark
- Planting – Roger Savage (Resident Handyman)

8/17 Public Forum: The meeting will be opened to the public to give residents an opportunity to ask questions.

(i) A resident raised concerns regarding a car parking adjacent to the post box near Laindon Common and obstructing access to the post box for both residents and the postman being able to park to empty the post box. Councillor Mitchell advised that he had also noticed the vehicle but that the identity of the vehicle's owner was unknown. To resolve the problem, he intended to put a polite notice on the car's windscreen asking the driver to park in the Laindon Common Car Park a few meters away and not in the lay-by.

The same resident raised a query regarding the minutes of 8th March concerning the notification of a pre-application for planning for a property in Broomhills Chase. It was recorded in the minute that the property was Chase Farm but the property should have been recorded as Chase End. The Parish Clerk stated she would check the information for correctness and amend the minute as appropriate.

9/17 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 8th March 2017: Council to approve the accuracy of the minutes of previous meeting held 8th March 2017 and the Chair to sign.

Subject to the above amendment the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th March 2017 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed to confirm this by Councillor Mitchell, Chair.

10/17 Policy and procedure: To approve the policies and procedures submitted to the previous meeting in relation to:

- i) Freedom of Information – Publication Policy
- ii) Openness and Transparency Policy
- iii) Complaints Procedure

Having considered all three (3) documents all Councillors approved and **AGREED** the content of each. The Parish Clerk confirmed she would publish the documents on the Parish Council website as required under the Transparency Code 2015.

11/17 Finance Report: To confirm and receive comment on the following matters:

- (i) To confirm the Parish Council's current financial position.

A financial statement of account was provided by Christine Barlow, the Parish Council's Responsible Finance Officer and the following report was presented to Councillors.

	£
Bank Balance as of 9 th March 2017	5,441.50
Bank Balance as of 6 th April 2017	7,621.67
Expenditure	1,096.75
Income	3,276.92

Breakdown of account:	£
Expenditure	
(665) Clerks Net Salary (February)	294.65
(666) Clerks Net Salary (March)	386.39
(667) HMRC Clerks Tax (Feb/March)	155.80
(668) Councillor Planning Training (J.Mitchell)	45.00
(669) Councillor Planning Training (K. Watts)	45.00
(670) Printer Colour Cartridges	146.88
(671) Copier paper & stamps	<u>23.03</u>
	1,096.75
Income:	
Precept	2971.25
LCTS Grant	<u>305.67</u>
	3,276.92

Councillors approved the income and expenditure as presented in the financial statement.

(ii) To confirm the Parish Council's bank account signatories for 2017/18.

The Parish Council's bank signatories were confirmed as Councillor David Clark, Councillor Katrina Watts and Christine Barlow, Parish Clerk. In compliance with Parish Council Financial Regulations two signatories were required to sign all cheque payments. It was noted that the Parish Clerk would only sign cheques in an emergency.

(iii) To discuss and confirm the renewal of the Parish Council's Insurance and Public Liability for 2017/2018:

The Parish Council Insurance Brokers Came & Company had advised that the Parish Council Insurance was due for renewal on 1st June 2017 for the period 1st June 2017 to 31st May 2018 and that the amount for the respective year was £168.00. The Clerk advised she had to inform the Insurers of the lecterns and maps, as an asset, in case of damage. All present were in **AGREEMENT** of the renewal premium being paid.

(iii) To agree and confirm the budget for small Parish maintenance works:

It was **AGREED** by all present to increase the sum set aside for small maintenance works in the village and planting to £450 and to advise Roger Savage of the decision. Proposed: Councillor John Mitchell: Seconded: Councillor David Clarke.

The Parish Council would discuss with Roger any ideas for future spending requirements. In answer to a question raised by Councillor Clarke it was confirmed the Parish Council were no longer using the services of the Community Payback Team because of the problems incurred the previous year in respect of highway safety. The Conservators were however using the Payback Team for work on the Common but it was not clear if this included the Village Hall. Councillor Mitchell advised he would speak to John Ellis, Chair of the Conservators, regarding clarification.

12/17 To confirm the Parish Clerk's pay scale increase for 2017/2018:

Councillors confirmed their acceptance of the mandatory increase in respect of the Parish Clerk's salary for 2017/2018 as set by the National Joint Committee (NJC) and **AGREED** an increment to the Parish Clerk's pay point from Spinal Column 23 to Spinal Column 24 as per the summary provided to them and in line with the requirements of the Clerk's Contract of Employment.

Proposed: Councillor John Mitchell: Seconded: Councillor Katrina Watts

13/17 Annual Governance Statement: To confirm that sound systems are in place for the internal control of Parish Council business and finances.

The Parish Council having considered the Annual Governance Statement **AGREED** that sound systems were in place regarding internal controls and that these were reviewed periodically in accordance with accepted guidelines. The Governance Statement for the year ending 31st March 2017 was approved by all present.

14/17 To approve the End of Year Accounts and ratify the Annual Return and Internal Audit:

The Responsible Finance Officer, having previously provided Councillors with all documentation and statements in respect of the annual income and expenditure of the Parish Council for 2016/2107, advised that an Internal Audit had been carried out by Heelis & Lodge, Internal Audit, during the day (10th May 2017) and all matters in respect of Council business were found to be in order. The report by the Internal Auditor, Heather Heelis, was distributed to Councillors (Attached Appendix A) and would be included with other Annual Return statements on the Parish Council website. The Internal Auditor recommended that the Parish Council's Standing Orders agreed in 2015, should be reviewed in 2017. Councillors noted this comment.

15/17 Planning – To record Councillors views and comments on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 17/00480/FULL**

Ground floor rear extension – Winters, Laindon Common Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex.

Councillors raised no objections to the application.

15/17/1 Planning decisions and comments: To receive updates and comments regarding planning applications within the Parish.

The Parish Clerk advised Councillors that a letter of notification had been received from Basildon Borough Council informing that the owners of Stead Hall Farm, Laindon Common Road, had lodged an appeal against a decision by Basildon Council to refuse their planning application (16/01589/FULL) for a single storey side and rear extension. Any previous comments by the Parish Council advised to Basildon Council in respect of the original application would be noted as part of the appeal but if the Parish Council had any additional information this could be

submitted. Councillors stated their position had not changed and they did not want to add anything to their original comments.

16/17 Parish Clerk's Report: The Parish Clerk to update on the progress of matters raised at previous meetings.

Chris Barlow, Parish Clerk, advised that the Parish Council progress chart would include the following information and would added to the website when updated.

i) **The Circular Walk opening:** The Walk opening had been held on 22nd April and Councillor John Aldridge, Chair of Essex County Council and Community Initiative Fund came along on the day to open the Walk. The facilities at the Dukes Head, Public House had been used and refreshments provided by the landlord, free of charge, for all attendees. A letter had been received from Councillor Aldridge thanking the Parish Council for their hospitality.

ii) **Parking:** The Parish Clerk advised that she had now sent a letter to the owner of the van which was parking in the lay-by adjacent to the phone box near to the junction of Laindon Common Road and obscuring a clear view of the junction and had subsequently received a telephone call from the owner of the van. She had been advised, during the telephone conversation, that due to a change of circumstances the van would be removed within the next two to three months. Councillors wished it to be noted that the vehicle was also now parking on the pavement on the bend near to the junction. The Parish Clerk advised she had sent an email to South Essex Parking Partnership requesting advice on the legal position but had to date received no reply. The Chair stated he was willing to follow up on any action when the reply was received.

iii) **Road safety issue adjacent to The Croft, Tye Common Road:** An email had been received from Will Price, Local Highways Panel Liaison Officer, informing that he would be happy to meet with Members of the Parish Council to discuss the matter of road safety in respect of concerns raised by Mr. Brooks of The Croft, Tye Common Road and the Parish Council. However, he suggested this should not happen until after the validation of the site by Essex County Council's Validation Engineer and a draft list of proposals drawn up. However, he did agree to discuss further the Parish Council's suggestion of SLOW markings with the Validation Engineer and include these in any prospective discussion. The Clerk had spoken to Mr. Brooks and appraised him of the situation.

iv) **The Willows, Tye Common Road:** An email had been sent to Basildon Council Enforcement Officer, Tony Buckley, for an update in respect of the matter previously raised by the Parish Council regarding illegal development of yet another barn on The Willows site. The Officer confirmed he had visited the site and planning permission was required for the barn and he would be writing to the owner advising him of his rights in making and submitting a retrospective planning application.

v) **Removal of trees at The Forge, Laindon Common Road:** No further update on the matter had been received from Tony Buckley, Planning Enforcement Officer and the Officer had previously advised he had received no reply from property owner. It was suggested that the Parish Council should write to the owner and request he replace the trees he had previously removed in 2016 in the Autumn of 2017. Councillor Clark advised he was intending to raise an unrelated issue with the Enforcement Officer and would again raise the matter of replacing the trees with the Officer.

vi) **Damaged culvert adjacent to Brook House, Laindon Common Road** : A site meeting had been arranged with Essex County Council for 17th May 2017.

vii) **Dunton Boot Sale**: The Parish Clerk had sent another email to Neil Costen, Planning Enforcement Manager but no reply to date had again been received.

17/17 Councillor Training: To provide Councillors with the dates for training being carried out by the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)

Councillor Watts and Councillor Mitchell had attended a Saturday morning Planning Short Course during the previous month and found it to be very interesting and informative. The course gave a good, although brief, overview of planning legislation.

The Association of Basildon Local Councils were arranging some Councillor Training on the "Role of a Councillor" A provisional date had been set for 17th June 2017. The training was open to all Councillors to attend and the cost incurred would be borne by the Association.

18/17 Parish Council meeting dates for 2016/2017: To confirm the dates for Parish Council Meetings and Annual Parish Meeting - 2017/2018.

The meeting dates for the Parish Council year 2017/2018 were confirmed as:

2017: 12th July: 13th September: 8th November:
2018: 10th January: 14th March: 11th April: 9th May

It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held on 11th April 2018.

19/17 Date of next meeting: To confirm the date of the next Parish Council.

The date of the next Parish Council meeting was confirmed 12th July 2017. The meeting would be held in Little Burstead Village Hall, Laindon Common Road commencing at 7.30 p.m.

HEELIS & LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Internal Audit Report for Little Burstead Parish Council – 2016/17

The following Internal Audit was carried out on the adequacy of systems of control. The following recommendations/comments have been made:

Income: £9,898.12 Expenditure: £9,818.34 Reserves: £4,345.78

Annual Return Completion:

Section One: No – draft figures available
 Section Two: No
 Section Four: No

Proper book-keeping Cash Book, regular reconciliation of books and bank statements. Supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts

All were found to be in order. LGAs137 and VAT payments are tracked and identified within the year end accounts. The cashbook is referenced providing a clear audit trail. Supporting paperwork is in place and well referenced.

Financial regulations Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
 Tenders
 Appropriate payment controls including acting within the legal framework with reference to council minutes
 Identifying VAT payments and reclamation
 Cheque books, paying in books and other relevant documents

Standing Orders in place: Yes
 Reviewed: 13/7/2016 (Ref: 30/16)
 Financial Regulations in place: Yes
 Reviewed: 13/7/2016 (Ref: 30/16)

VAT reclaimed during the year: No Registered: No

General Power of Competence: No

Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in place. Financial Regulations have been updated to include the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Recommendation: *To update Standing Orders to incorporate reference to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.*

Risk Assessment

Appropriate procedures in place for the activities of the council

Risk Assessment document in place: Yes

Insurance was in place for the year of audit. The Risk Assessment was reviewed on 11/1/2017 (Ref: 82/16). Bank signatories were confirmed at a meeting held on 18/5/2016 (Ref: 11/16 ii).

The Council have satisfactory internal financial controls in place. The Clerk provides financial reports to council meetings. Councillors are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions.

Fidelity Cover: £150,000

The level of Fidelity cover is within the recommended guidelines of year end balances plus 50% of the precept.

Transparency Code

Compliance for smaller councils with income/expenditure under £25,000.
Smaller authorities should publish on their website from 1 April 2015:

Smaller Council: Yes

Website: www.essexinfo.net/littlebursteadpc/

- a) all items of expenditure above £100
Published – Yes (contained within the minutes)
- b) end of year accounts (By 1 July)
2016 Annual Return, Section One Published – Yes
- c) annual governance statement (By 1 July)
2016 Annual Return, Section Two Published – Yes
- d) internal audit report (By 1 July)
2016 Annual Return, Section Four Published – Yes
- e) list of councillor or member responsibilities
Published – Yes

- f) the details of public land and building assets (By 1 July)
Published – The Council have no public land or building assets
- g) Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings
Published – Yes

The Council comply with the Transparency Code requirements.

Budgetary controls

Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and supporting documents

Precept: £6,140.76 (2017-2018) Date: 11/1/2017
(Ref: 81/16 ii)

Good budgetary procedures are in place. The precept was agreed in full council and the precept decision and amount has been clearly minuted. The Clerk ensures the council are aware of responsibilities, commitments, forward planning and the need for adequate reserves. Budget papers are prepared to ensure councillors have sufficient information to make informed decisions. Budgets are monitored during the year.

Income controls

Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms

All were found to be in order. Income controls were checked and income received and banked cross referenced with the Cash Book and bank statements.

Petty Cash

Associated books and established system in place

A satisfactory expenses system is in place with supporting paperwork.

Payroll controls

PAYE and NIC in place where necessary.
Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures
Records relating to contracts of employment

PAYE System in place: **Yes**

The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. All supporting paperwork is in place and a P60 has been produced as part of the year end process. The Council are aware of their staging date for the pension regulations and have taken the appropriate steps.

Asset control

Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets

Cross checking on insurance cover

A separate asset register is in place. Values are recorded at cost value. The total value of assets are recorded at £7,132.

Bank Reconciliation

Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements

All were in order. The bank statements reconciled with the end of year accounts and bank reconciliations for all accounts. Confirmed bank balances at 31/3/2017 were as follows:

<i>Barclays Business Premium Account</i>	<i>Closed</i>
<i>Barclays Community Account</i>	<i>£4,344.75</i>

Year-end procedures

Appropriate accounting procedures are used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents
Verifying sample payments and income
Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate.

End of year accounts are prepared on a Receipts & Payments Basis.

Sole Trustee

The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee

The Council is not a sole trustee.

Internal Audit Procedures

The Council reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit alongside the Risk Assessment at a meeting held on 11/1/2017 (Ref: 82/16).

The Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 18/5/2017 (Ref: 11/16 i) and 30/6/2016 (Ref: 20/16). It was resolved to put measures in place to meet the recommendations contained in the report and to continually monitor progress and update within the minutes of future meetings.

External Audit

The External Auditor's report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 9/11/2016 (Ref: 58/16 ii and iii).

The following matters were raised by the External Auditor:

- *The Risk Assessment was not reviewed during the year of audit.*
- *Adequate explanation of the variance in Box 6 not provided.*

The Risk Assessment has been reviewed during the year of audit.

The Statement of Significant Variances will be addressed for the 2017 annual return.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Annual Parish Council meeting was held on 18/5/2016, within the required timescale. Following Introductions, the first item of business was the Election of Chairman, in accordance with Standing Orders.
- There are no additional comments/recommendations to make in relation to this audit.
- I would like to record my appreciation to the Clerk to the Council for her assistance during the course of the audit work



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10 May 2017

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