

Minutes of the Little Burstead Parish Council meeting
held at Little Burstead Village Hall
on Wednesday 11th March 2020 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Pauline Bowles: Councillor David Clark:
Councillor Katrina Watts: Councillor John Mitchell

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

Members of Public: 4

76/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None received

77/19 DECLATIONS OF MEMBER'S INTERESTS: To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests by members relating to any agenda items.

None declared

78/19 PUBLIC FORUM: The meeting will be opened to the public to give residents an opportunity to ask questions. (Time allowed for this is 20 minutes)

(i) **Dunton Fly – over Verge:** A resident advised that the issue with the over grown verge from the Dunton Road flyover to the Dunton Boot Sale site, raised at a previous meeting, had been cut back making it much safer to walk on. However, there was debris from the pruning now lying on the ground causing a hazard for anyone walking on the verge and asked if the debris could be mulched. The Parish Clerk advised that as requested an enquiry had been made regarding the frequency of cutting the verge and she had been informed that Basildon Council's contractors, ID Verdi, cut the verge twice a year and in the absence of any other information, it had been cut the verge by the contractors on this occasion. **Action:** The Parish Clerk would make further enquiries regarding the residents' request to reduce the debris on the verge to mulch.

(i) **White lining:** Councillors were asked if there was any update on reinstating the white lining in Rectory Road. The Parish Clerk responded and advised that Essex County Council (ECC) had informed, when this issue had been raised on a previous occasion, that they considered white lining was not necessary on the roads in the village because of the low level of reported accidents to support the need. She had been unable to contact the Casualty Reduction Unit to obtain their views on the matters but doubted ECC would reverse their decision. The resident stated that it was his understanding Ford Motor Company had pledged £170k when their new facilities were built at their site and he would like to know why some of this money had not been spent on white lining along Rectory Road as the road was heavily used as a 'rat run' to the Ford site. **Action:** The Parish Clerk to contact Essex County Councillors, who represented the Burstead Ward, to inquire if they would forward a Members enquiry request to obtain the information regarding how the money had been spent under a Freedom of Information request.

79/19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Council to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th January 2020 and Chair to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting were **AGREED** as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed to confirm by the Chair, Councillor Pauline Bowles.

80/19 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT:

The Parish Clerk to update Councillors on Parish Council business and Parish Council projects.

The Parish Clerk updated the meeting on the following matters:

(i) **Brentwood Road verge cut:** Discussed in the Public Forum.

(ii) **White lining:** Discussed previously in the Public Forum

(iii) **Barking dogs:** Councillor Bowles and the Parish Clerk had met with Basildon Council Environmental Officers to discuss the issues which had been raised by residents. Officers advised that although residents had initially completed monitoring sheets regarding incidents, they had not continued to monitor incidents over a prolonged period and report each event as it happened to enable Environmental Officers to take immediate action. Officers had carried out targeted investigations at different times of the day and night but had found no evidence to support the allegations of barking and without proof they had to close the case. Letters had been sent to each complainant to inform of them of this decision and advising that if the residents wanted to take the case further, they needed to take out a private prosecution. As the matter had been closed unless new information of a different nature came to light the case would remain closed.

(iv) **Culvert repair:** The Parish Clerk had written to Essex County Council Structural Repairs Team to ask for an update on the repairs to the culvert in Laindon Common Road but to date had not received a reply. **Action:** To chase for a response.

(v) **Potholes Laindon Common Road:** Potholes in Laindon Common Road had been reported and some had already been repaired. The Parish Clerk recorded her thanks to residents who had sent in pictures of the various potholes which required repairing. **Action:** The Clerk was asked also to raise the issue of potholes with Essex County Councillors.

(vi) **RCCE Village of the Year Competition** (invitation to attend) – noted but declined on this occasion.

80/19/1 Projects:

(i) **Defibrillator:** The Parish Clerk had completed an Essex Association of Councils (EALC) funding application to request a grant of £500 to support the money already raised for the village defibrillator. She had obtained three quotations all of which were between £1,500 - £1,750. Currently the money raised or pledged for the equipment was £1,000

(ii) Village Gateways: A funding application had been made to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners (PFCC) Office for funding to assist with the installation of Village Gateways at various locations in the village. A total of £6,787.70 had been requested but due to the high level of applications - 40 in total - the Parish Council had been recommended for an award of £3,500. The amount when confirmed would provide for the initial installation at some of the Gateways proposed.

(iii) Village Hall Noticeboard: The Parish Clerk had assisted the Village Hall Committee in making an application of £2000 to Basildon Council's Community Fund in order to purchase a new noticeboard. A decision should be notified at the end of March to the Village Hall Committee Chair.

Refurbishment of the Telephone Box and War Memorial base were pending.

81/19 PLANNING: To record Councillors views and comments on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) as received from Basildon Borough Council.

(i) PLANNING APPLICATION: 20/00180/FULL: Meadway Farm, Rectory Road, Little Burstead, Essex CM12 9UA. Demolition of existing dwellings and other buildings, removal of structures and erection of three dwellings including new internal road access, infrastructure and associated works

Councillors having discussed the planning applications recommended refusal on the grounds that:

- (i) The planning application was overdevelopment of the site in the Green belt.
- (ii) The access to the site on a bend was a safety issue and as a result would increase traffic on an already busy road.
- (iii) The development obstructs Public Right of Way No: 49
- (iv) The proposed development is not in keeping with the street scene and adds no amenity value to the area.

(ii) PLANNING APPEAL: APP/V1505/C/19/3239994: The Willows, Tye Common Road Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9SD

To receive comments from the Parish Council in respect of an appeal against Basildon Council serving enforcement notices for the erection of a building without planning permission.

An Enforcement Notice had been served by Basildon Council on The Willows, Tye Common Road for the erection of a building without planning permission in 2019. The Parish Council fully supported the action taken by Basildon Council in issuing the Notice, having raised the issue of the illegal building on the site with them. The owner of the property was now appealing to the Planning Inspectorate against the action taken, by Basildon Council, stating that planning permission should be granted. A letter detailing the appeal advised that any comments regarding the appeal should be sent to the Planning Inspector, for consideration, by 17th March

2020. **Action:** It was **AGREED** by all Councillors to respond, with their views, to the Planning Inspector by the due date.

(iv) PLANNING APPLICATION: 20/00242/PDPA: Dell Cottage, Broomhills Chase, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex CM12 9TE

Notification for a proposed larger home extension projecting 8 metres from the rear wall of the original dwelling with a maximum height of 3.85 metres and an eaves height of 2.805 metres. Materials to match existing.

Councillors discussed the application and raised no objections.

82/19 PLANNING DECISIONS AND COMMENTS: To receive updates and comments regarding planning applications discussed at previous Parish Council meetings.

Planning Application NO: 19/01640/FULL: Erection of first floor front extension - Red Brick Cottage, Laindon Common Road, Little Burstead, Essex - **Refused**

83/19 FINANCE REPORT:

(i) To report on the Parish Council's financial position

A summary account of income and expenditure covering the period from 8th January to 11th March 2020, together with a bank statement covering the same period, was provided to Councillors.

	£
Balance at bank as of 8 th January 2020	5,417.65
Balance at bank as of 11 th March 2020	4,416.22
Expenditure:	1,101.43
Income:	100.00
Expenditure:	
(760) Clerks Tax (Dec & Jan)	193.40
(761) Clerks Salary (Dec & Jan) Plus Sub: Tel/BB & Office	839.52
(762) HP Black Toner Cartridge	38.51
(763) Poppy Wreath – Remembrance Sunday 2019	<u>30.00</u>
	1101.43
Income:	
Defibrillator Donation	100.00

The Parish Clerk /RFO also noted that there were no income or expenditure payments or receipts between 7th February & 8th March 2020.

Councillors were provided with a Cash Book Reconciliation showing the breakdown of income and expenditure on a quarterly basis from 1st April 2019 to

the date of the meeting which reconciled to the figures withing the summary statement.

The Parish Clerk minuted the Parish Council's thanks to a resident who had made a £100 donation to the Defibrillator fund.

- The Parish Clerk advised that she had now passed the CILCA examination. The CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) is a foundation qualification for local council officers and others working within local Councils and is a one year course and examination based on the completion of 32 modules which are completed remotely via the internet and marked by an external assessor. The modules related to all aspects of a Clerk's work. Over a six-month period, the Clerk had attended 6 monthly training sessions to support learning outcomes in the qualification. The Parish Council had covered the cost of the Clerk's training sessions (£465) 75% of which was covered by a bursary payment to the Parish Council from the EALC together with a part payment of the examination registration fee. A cheque, in the sum of £498.75 for the course fee of 75% and £150 of the registration fee had now been received. It was **AGREED**, by Councillors, that the £150 registration fee would be reimbursed to the Parish Clerk as she had paid the examination fee herself when registering for the course and to date had not been recompensed.

- A claim had been made to HMRC for the reimbursement of VAT for the financial years 2017- 2019 in the sum of £838.78

(ii) To agree to engaging an internal auditor and the date, for the purpose of carrying out an end-of-year internal audit for 2019/2020.

The Parish Clerk confirmed she had arranged for the Parish Council's internal audit to be carried out on 7th May 2020 and the Parish Council confirmed they were in **AGREEMENT** with this arrangement. The appointed Internal Auditor was Heather Heelis of Heelis & Lodge.

(iii) To amend or approve the Parish Council Financial Regulations.

A copy of the Parish Council Financial Regulations had been provided to Parish Councillors. No changes had been requested but the RFO/Parish Clerk advised that there was one amendment that she would like to put forward with Councillors permission. Currently incidental expenses are repaid at bi-monthly Parish Council meetings by cheque. This payment meant that sometimes it was more than two months before the Parish Clerk was reimbursed. The Parish Clerk/RFO proposed that the Financial Regulations be amended to make provision for a petty cash float of £150 to cover minor day-to- day expenses i.e. stationery and ink toner and emergency payments. The amended wording was suggested as:

i) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £150 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate any payment.

- ii) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to the Council and maintained separately for audit purposes.

Councillors unanimously **AGREED** to the above amendment.

- 84/19 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2020/2021:** To confirm the Parish Council Meeting dates for the financial year 2020/21 and agree the date and time of the Annual Parish Meeting.

The following dates and times for 2020/2021 forthcoming Parish Council meetings were **AGREED** as:

2020: Wednesday 13th May (Annual Meeting of the Council) :

Wednesday 8th July: Wednesday 9th September: Wednesday 11th November

2021: Wednesday 13th January: Wednesday 10th March:

In addition, there was a requirement to hold a separate Annual Parish Meeting at which members of the public could ask questions without having to attend a full Parish Council meeting. It was suggested and **AGREED** that, as in 2019, this meeting should be held on the same evening as the Parish Council Annual Meeting but at the earlier time of 7.00 p.m. Councillors considered inviting a guest speaker and it was agreed that as elections would be over by 13th May and a new Ward Councillor might be elected. Councillors **AGREED** to invite the new or re-elected Ward Councillor to attend the Annual Parish Meeting. **Action:** The Parish Clerk to invite the successful candidate to attend.

- 85/19 PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2020:** To discuss arrangements for the forthcoming Parish Council elections on 7th May 2020

Parish Council elections are scheduled to take place on 7th May 2020 and Councillors were circulated with the information required to put their names forward for nomination and re-election.

Councillors Mitchell had advised he would not be standing for re-election, due to other commitments and provided the Chair with a letter of resignation.

The Parish Council thanked Councillor Mitchell for the support and contribution he had made over the past four years both as a Councillor and for a period of time, as Chairman. The Parish Clerk also said she had enjoyed working with him and congratulated him on his professional approach to Parish Council matters.

- 86/19 REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT:** To discuss and agree to adopt the revised Code of Conduct as adopted by Basildon Borough Council.

Parish Councillors had been circulated with a revised version of Basildon Council's Member Code of Conduct, which had been approved by Basildon Council at their Full Council meeting on 16th January 2020. Local Councils had adopted the original version when it was first drawn up in 2012 in response to the Localism Act 2011.

Basildon Council had recommended that, as previously, all Local Councils should adopt the revised version in order to provide the same level of constancy for all Councillors across the district. All present **AGREED** to adopt the revised document and abide by the conditions set out within the body of the Code. NB: A revised copy, as of January 2020, will be provided to Councillors and a copy provided on the Parish Council website for information.

- 87/19 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL WEBSITE CLOSURE:** To discuss progress regarding replacing the Parish Council website due to the closure of essexinfo.net

As reported at previous meetings the Parish Council's current free website - essex.info.net operated by Essex County Council - was due to close on the 1st April. In preparation for this a new free website had now been set up. The name of the website remained as Little Burstead Parish Council and could be accessed by logging on to: **e-voice.org.uk/lbpc**. Most of the Parish Council's relevant files and folders had now been transferred to the new site and other information would be updated in due course. The new website must follow government guidelines regarding web accessibility for all users by September 2020.

- 88/19 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2020 – BASILDON BOROUGH:** Councillors to note the content of the review and to receive Councillor comments on the proposals.

Councillors agreed to review the documents provided and provide the Parish Clerk with their comments. The closing date for all comments was 10th April 2020.

- 89/19 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT:** To confirm there is a sound system of internal control in place regarding the business of the Parish Council.

In view of the next meeting of the Parish Council not taking place until after the date of the Internal audit, which was programmed for the 7th May, Councillors were asked to review and approve the Annual Governance Statement to confirm that there were sound systems of internal controls currently in place. These controls included arrangements for the preparation of accounting statements and the mitigation of risks, including all areas identified on the Annual Governance Statement for Local Councils, published annually by PKF Littlejohn, the government's external auditors, ensuring all were in order. Councillors **AGREED** with the statement of fact and Councillor Bowles, Chairperson, signed the Statement on behalf of the Parish Council.

- 90/19 MEETINGS ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS:** To receive information of interest regarding any meetings attended by Councillors since the last meeting.

Councillor Katrina Watts and Christine Barlow Parish Clerk had attended the Basildon Liaison Meeting. Issues discussed included: (i) New Street Cleaning initiatives which included, for a twelve - month period, the engagement of an Enforcement Team via an external organisation and the issuing of 460 Penalty notices since its inception in February 2020. (ii) Community Funding for VE and VJ Celebration – Grants were proposed for three key events in the district totaling £13,000 (iii) Proposals for a Borough War Memorial to include 800 names drawn from all the War Memorials across the district were discussed. Members present

felt that this proposal was inappropriate and the names on Memorials as in most cases the names were linked each respective locality and nominated by family. (iv) The Local Plan which was expected to be heard in September 2020 but might now be delayed because of an issue with the air quality along the A127. (v) Changes to the Borough Councils Planning and Enforcement structure, agreed by full Council in January 2020, to improve the service and delegate some decisions for routine applications to officers and also, when breaches of enforcement were notified, for officers to take more direct action to resolve. (vi) Funding for Neighbourhood Plans and new Parish Councils (vii) The potential for Basildon to become a unitary authority. (viii) The Community Governance Consultation. A full transcript of minutes of this meeting would be provided to Councillors when received from Basildon Borough Council.

90/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To confirm the date of Parish Council Annual Meeting to be held on Wednesday 13th May 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

The date of the Parish Council Annual Meeting was confirmed as 13th May commencing at 7.30 p.m. and held in Little Burstead e Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

Signed:  Councillor Bowles, Chair

Date: 3rd June 2020