

MINUTES OF OVINGTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE MEETING ROOM IN THE OLD GRANARY AT OVINGTON HALL, OVINGTON ON TUESDAY, 5TH MARCH 2024 AT 7 PM

In the chair: Mr. P. J. Gentry
Present: Mrs. L. Lawrence
Mrs. D. Nott
Mr. A. Corder-Birch (Clerk)
Together with one member of the public

The Chairman thanked Mrs. D. Nott for providing the venue for the meeting.

1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr. P. Schwier (County Councillor) and post meeting apologies from Mrs. I. Parker (District Councillor)

2) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The minutes of Ovington Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st March 2023 were read by the Clerk, confirmed and duly signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES

a) Venue for Ovington Annual Parish Meeting

The Parish Council had accepted the kind offer of Mrs. D. Nott to hold the Ovington Annual Parish Meeting in the Meeting Room in the Old Granary at Ovington Hall.

b) Ovington Notice Board

The Parish Council had resolved not to replace the Ovington Notice Board, which is located inside the former telephone kiosk.

c) Highway issues

Mrs. L. Lawrence reported that the blocked drains in the highway between Upper Farm and Donkey Corner, first reported in 2021 and again in 2022, 2023 and 2024 to ECC Highways online reporting tool had still not been cleared and grass was now growing out of some of the drains. The pond at Donkey Corner was overflowing across the road, because the pipe under the road had not been cleared. The failure of ECC Highways to clear these drains was very frustrating. It was agreed to endeavor to arrange a special meeting with Cllr. Schwier, by Zoom if necessary, to discuss the long list of outstanding highway issues in the three parishes.

There were no other matters arising.

4) BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2024

It was resolved not to enter Ovington for the Best Kept Village Competition in 2024.

5) SKIP HIRE

Councillors reported that the skip was well used and successful last year. It was agreed to hire another skip for August Bank Holiday weekend 2024, to be located just over the wall at the entrance to Ovington Hall, courtesy of Mrs. D. Nott, who agreed to be the main contact for Colne Skips.

6) NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME REPORT

In the absence of Mr. M. Lewin no report was given.

7) RIDGEWELL AIRFIELD LIAISON AND JOINT ACTION GROUP REPORTS

In the absence of Mr. P. E. Pawsey no reports were given. It was agreed to retain this item on future agendas.

8) BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

A written report from Mrs. I. Parker, which was not received until after the meeting, was circulated. A copy accompanies these minutes as appendix one.

9) ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

In the absence of Mr. P. Schwier no report was given. Concern was expressed regarding flooding on the Ashen and Clare boundary, which prevented Ovington residents getting access to Clare. Mrs. D. Nott agreed to raise this issue with an Ashen Parish Councillor.

10) PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Mrs. L. Lawrence gave the annual Parish Council report a copy of which accompanies these minutes as appendix two. Arising from this report the future of the former telephone kiosk at Ovington was discussed. Mrs. L. Lawrence and Mrs. D. Nott will consult Ovington residents upon the possibility of disposing of the books, which are getting damp, but retaining the village notice board inside. Consideration may need to be given in the future to relocating the Ovington defibrillator inside the kiosk if the new owner of Upper Farm does not wish to retain it on the wall. Mrs. D. Nott advised that the defibrillator is in a heated cabinet so the problem of dampness in the former kiosk will not arise. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Lawrence for her report.

11) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Proposed Solar Farm at Cutbush Farm

Mr. K. R. Nott enquired the position concerning the proposed Solar Farm at Cutbush Farm close to the Ovington boundary. Mrs. D. Nott was thanked for drafting two excellent letters of representation to BDC and a decision by BDC is now awaited.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.45pm

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(Date)

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(Chairman)

APPENDIX 1 - BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Report for Parish Councils from Cllr Iona Parker, Braintree District Council – Feb/March 2024

1. The Council's budget for 2024/2025 of £19.6m was approved at the meeting of Full Council on 19th February. Despite ongoing cost pressures and increased demand for services, the Council remains in a sound financial position for the forthcoming year compared to other councils.
2. There remains a forecast deficit over the medium term to 2027/28 of £2.3m. The Council will be looking at ways to address this and will be developing a "Fit for the Future" transformation programme to look out how resources can be used more effectively and how we can work better with other partners. A sum of money has been set aside for this work from the New Homes Bonus the Council receives from the Government. A further sum has been set aside from the NHB to add to the risk reserves to recognise the uncertainties over future costs and demand.
3. Full Council also passed a resolution on Council Tax for the forthcoming year. The Braintree District Council element of Council Tax will rise by 2.96% which represents an increase of 11p per week for a band D property.
4. The main highlights from the Budget as far as my ward is concerned are:
 - Councillor Community Grants to continue – each Councillor to be allocated £1250 to award to community projects in their ward.
 - Street cleansing grants to Parish Councils to continue.
 - The garden waste subscription service has proved more popular than anticipated with a take up of over 50% bringing in an income to the Council of around £900k.
 - The Council is looking to charge a Council Tax premium of 100% on second homes in the district with effect from 1st April 2025.
5. The Council has updated its Livewell Health and Wellbeing strategy in conjunction with partners in the health services. The aim of the strategy is to focus on prevention and early intervention and to move beyond simply treating health conditions after they have arisen. The intention is to create an environment where everyone has the right facilities available to them to actively participate in improving their own health and wellbeing. The data shows a strong link between deprivation and poor health and we are particularly conscious that parts of Braintree and Halstead feature in the 20% most deprived areas in the country.
6. I have been trying to find out what is happening about the new health centre in Sible Hedingham. I am told the Integrated Care Board is due to consider the final business case very shortly. Once it is approved the land can be transferred to One Medical who can then start construction. We are continuing to keep the pressure on the ICB.

APPENDIX 2 – PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Ovington Parish Council report 2023/4

The annual skip was placed in the village over the August bank holiday and was as popular as ever

Blocked drains have been reported by Mr Adrian Corder Birch (in 2021,22 and 23) and reported to Mr Peter Schwier, more recently all drains in the village which are blocked have been reported again it would appear that the council no longer maintain drains, a standard response has been received from the council.

Solar farm an objection has been lodged to the traffic using unsuitable roads through the village for access, we have requested a traffic survey and suggested a speed limit should planning be approved, The Clerk had initially taken up the proposed weight and width restriction limit on the road between Great Yeldham and Clare through Tilbury Juxta Clare and Ovington with Highway Officers and Mr. P. Schwier. Mr. Schwier had raised it with ECC Highways and referred it to Braintree LHP. Mr. P. Patient had followed it up with Mr. Schwier, but it had not yet appeared on an LHP agenda. It will hopefully appear on the next agenda when Councillors desire to attend the meeting to speak under public comment. More recently the Clerk has once again written to the council asking for the impact on our village to be taken into account and asking once again for a traffic survey.

Footpaths, all footpaths have been surveyed and those without finger pointers and overgrown have been reported to the council. New signage has been provided in some areas. Vegetation clearance work was carried out to Footpath 1 by volunteers during the winter.

DaRT, the service will remain. Following a consultation by Braintree council the service will remain for a further two years.

Phone box, this is being used as a book deposit, however the same titles have been there for over a year, We will consult with the village as to the ongoing use of the phone box. We have requested email addresses of villagers as a way to keep households informed of relevant council business, only three households have responded and so we will continue to communicate through the notice board in the phone box.