Pentlow Parish Council

Parish Clerk / RFO: Kevin B. Money
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Minutes of the Parish Council Annual meeting held on Wednesday 7th. May at 7.50pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs T. Bartlett, D. Wright, I. Bower, R. Simnett, M. Stuchfield, BDC Cllr I. Parker and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were also 4 members of the public present. Plus 1 member of the press

022/2025 Apologies for Absence were received from ECC Cllr P. Schwier

a) Cllr R. Simnett submitted her resignation from the Parish Council with effect following this meeting. Councillors reluctantly accepted her resignation

023/2025 Election of Chairman for the 2025/2026 year

The Chairman to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form
Cllr D. Wright proposed Cllr T. Bartlett to act as Chair for the 2025-2026 year. Cllr M. Stuchfield seconded.
All Agreed Cllr T. Bartlett then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

024/2025 Election of Vice-Chairman for the 2025/2026 year

The Vice-Chairman to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form
Cllr D. Wright proposed Cllr I. Bower to act as Vice-Chair for the 2025-2026 year. Cllr R. Simnett seconded.
All Agreed Cllr I. Bower then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

025/2025 To re-adopt all Council policies for 2025/2026 year

Documents can be found at **https://e-voice.org.uk/pentlowparishcouncil/policies-procedures/**
Co-option Policy: Equal opportunities Policy: Financial Regulations: FOI Policy: Grant Application form Grievance Policy: Health & Safety Policy: Internet Banking Policy: Risk Assessment: Social Media Policy Standing Orders: Statement of Internal Control: Training

Cllr T. Bartlett proposed accepting the Councils policies en-bloc for 2025-2026. Cllr I. Bower seconded.
All Agreed

026/2025 Declaration of Interest

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Pecuniary or non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda
Cllr I. Bower declared and interest in item 033/2025 (c)
Cllr M. Stuchfield and I. Bower declared an interest in the PCC

027/2025 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Pentlow Parish Council

To receive and agree the minutes of the last PPC meeting held on 19th. March 2025 **All Agreed**

028/2025 Essex County Councillors report – ECC Cllr P. Schwier No report was given

029/2025 District Councillors report – BDC Cllr I. Parker

This is the end of my 10th year as your District Councillor for the Stour Valley North Ward, which takes in the villages of Ridgewell, Ashen, Little Yeldham, Tilbury-Juxta-Clare, Ovington, the Belchamps, Pentlow, Foxearth, Liston and Borley. I aim to do my best to represent the interests of your communities on Braintree District Council, help residents with their enquiries and serve on Council committees.

I am a chair of the Planning Committee and am also a member of the Local Plan sub committee, Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Licensing Committee. I also represent the Council at meetings of the Essex Rural Partnership. In addition, I endeavour to attend Parish Council meetings in my ward or send a written report if I am unable to attend in person.

I received £1,250 under the Councillors Community Grant Scheme and was able to provide funds for a new picnic bench in Ridgewell and a new fridge/freezer for Belchamp Walter village hall. Since the inception of this scheme, I have tried to distribute the funds equally around my ward. I am pleased that despite ongoing pressures on the Council's budget, the Council will be continuing this scheme in 25/26 and has maintained the Street Cleansing grant given to Parish Councils and allocated an additional £50,000 for new dog waste and litter bins across the District, something I know has concerned some Parish Councils.

As always I have been dealing with a variety of issues raised with me including bus transport, planning issues and the never ending potholes. Resurfacing has taken place on various sections of road in my ward and I know more is planned, including in Foxearth and Tilbury. I continue to report potholes on the Essex

Highways website when I see them as well as reporting any fly tipping to BDC. I have been pressing cabinet members about the grass verge obstructing visibility on single track roads in the summer and am pleased to report that it has been agreed that twice yearly verge cutting should resume. I know that solar farms cause deep concerns for many residents. It is very difficult to resist solar farms under current Government policy but along with others, I have been working behind the scenes to make sure the planning conditions are as robust as they can be, that hedging is planted as early as possible to provide an effective screen and that traffic issues during construction are addressed.

In wider terms, Braintree Council has continued with its priority of delivering high quality services on a balanced budget (unlike a number of well-publicised other Councils). Residents will be aware of the plans for devolution in Greater Essex which will have a Mayor elected next year, and the creation of 3, 4 or 5 new unitary Councils in 2028 which will take on the responsibilities of both District and County Council – in our case at Braintree we will be merged with a number of neighbouring Essex Councils and have a population of 400-500,000.

Some highlights of the Braintree District Council achievements or activities during the 2024/25 year are:

- Continued to support residents and communities impacted by the cost of living crisis. A new Cost of Living Grant Scheme has just been launched for groups and organisations.
- Delivered over 250 affordable homes.
- Awarded grants from the Rural England Prosperity Fund to a number of businesses and community organisations, including one for refurbishment of Borley village hall.
- New 3G all-weather pitch at Witham Sports Ground
- Delivered the Home Upgrade grant Phase 2 (HUG) for people living in cold homes or struggling with winter fuel bills.
- Introduced a landlord incentive scheme to help prospective renters.
- Launched round 2 of the Halstead Community Fund (a large part of which went to the upgrade of the Empire Theatre in Halstead).
- Put in motion the construction of a Witham Community Centre.
- Supported local investment in a number of local communities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Year 3)
- Starting work on physical improvements to Halstead and Witham town centres.
- Increased capacity at the successful The Plaza, Great Notley, to support local businesses, and continued work towards sale of the last remaining plots at Horizon 120.
- Organised well-attended jobs fairs and a Digital Business Expo in Braintree.
- Provided funding for transport to Essex University for 13-14 year olds from local schools to enable them to learn about further education.
- Installed solar panel arrays and LED lighting at Witham Leisure Centre to make the building largely self-sufficient in electricity.
- Collaborated with other Essex authorities to establish and begin to implement a new Waste Strategy for Essex, as well as consulting on a proposed new waste and recycling regime for Braintree, in line with government requirements, and with the aim to reducing residual waste and raising the proportion of material which can be usefully recycled.
- Continued to collaborate with other Essex Councils on shared services and begun to take part in the the process of devolution and local government reorganisation in Essex, as per government mandate.
- Followed up on the Action Plan which stemmed from the Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in late 2023 and which found BDC to be a well-run and ambitious council.
- Started work on a new Local Plan for the District to extend the current plan to 2041. A review of employment need has already been considered and additional housing sites will be considered in May and June.
- Responded to Government changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

030/2025 Planning – including any Current Planning Applications requiring a response

25/00578/VAR - Solar Farm Pentlow Hill Pentlow Essex
Variation of Condition 2 (Approved plans) of approved application 20/ 01107/FUL granted 23.04.21 for: Solar farm and associated development. Variation seeks retrospective permission to regularise what has been built at the site, including amendments to the site layout, substation, switchgear, fencing,
CCTV, inverters/transformers, racking and panels, storage container and internal tracks (including culverts) comparatively to the original proposals
RESOLVED: Pentlow Parish Council has No Comment on this application

031/2025 Planning Decision/s made by BDC affecting Pentlow No decisions have been made

032/2025 2024/2025 Annual Return

1) To Receive the Internal Auditors report for 2024/2025

Councillors noted the Internal Auditors report for 2024/2025

2) To Receive and, if agreed, sign the Certificate of Exemption for 2024/2025

Cllr T. Bartlett proposed accepting and signing the Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2024/2025 part 2.
Cllr M. Stuchfield seconded. **All Agreed**
The Chairman and Clerk then signed the Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2024/25 part 2

3) To Receive and, if agreed, sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

Cllr T. Barlett proposed accepting and signing Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025.
Cllr I. Bower seconded. **All Agreed**
The Chair and Clerk then signed Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

4) To Receive and, if agreed, sign Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

Cllr T. Bartlett proposed accepting and signing Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/2025
Cllr D. Wright seconded. **All Agreed**
The Chair and RFO then signed Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

033/2025 Finance

a) To receive the Bank balances as at 30th. April 2025

Councillors noted the Bank balances as at 30th. April 2025

b) To receive the comparison of Actual against Budget 2025/2026

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual against Budget 2025/2026

c) Councillors to agree the April & May 2025 finances and to agree a transfer of any funds to meet the Parish Council's financial requirements Cllr T. Bartlett

034/2025 Village Hall update Cllr T. Bartlett

The Lease is being looked at by Cllrs T. Bartlett and M. Stuchfield and the lease is progressing well.
An annual rent of £500 has not been paid for a number of years. The Village Hall Governance document should be looked at again where Councillors should be part of the committee. Also, a SLA may be looked at but are looking for guidance. A good understanding is with the Village Hall committee to maintain the Village Hall as a community asset.

035/2025 Village Sign - update from Cllr M. Stuchfield

Nothing to add on this item

036/2025 Public Participation Session

The Chairman will invite questions and observations from members of the public present.

Can a SLA be sought from RCCE on the running and organisation. Is the village hall a member of RCCE? However, RCCE do not have a SLA agreement form template

037/2025 Items for Next Agenda

Parish Councillor vacancies

038/2025 Date of Next Full Council meeting – Wednesday 29th. October 2025 at 7.30pm

039/2025 Closure of the Meeting

To Close the meeting having considered and determined all items of business

The Chair then closed the meeting at 8.25pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed *TBartlett* 29th. October 2025

T. Bartlett - Chair