

## MINUTES

AGENDA

## Introduction

1. The Bell Fields
2. Venues for Parish Council meeting.  
Your views.
3. The Sonters Down Play Area
  - i) Cost of play area so far.
  - ii) Working Party
  - iii) Questions
4. The Newsletter  
This is a Parish Newsletter sponsored by the Parish Council, paid for with our money, not a Parish Council Publication.  
The Parish Council should not interfere if it has a disclaimer in the Newsletter.
  - i) Questions
5. Any Other Business

**Chairman:** Tom Chapman, Parish Council vice chairman.  
**Minutes secretary:** Barbara Wright

**Apologies:** Mark Fleming, Parish Council Chairman, Denise Fleming, Ray Ride and Lance Millane, Parish Councillors.

**NOTE:** The Parish Council will be referred to by the initials PC  
 Chelmsford City Council will be referred to by the initials CCC  
 Essex County Council will be referred to by the initials ECC

**Minutes:**

Hazel Dale-Evans	gave an introduction for safety at the hall and asked for mobiles to be switched off and no recording of the meeting because of data protection. read an extract from the Rettendon Review of 1968, page 16 (appendix)
<b>1.</b>	<b>The BELL FIELDS</b>
Peter Maloney	Why has the current PC used the Bell Fields as an item of expense in their Precept, for the last two years, despite no money being spent on it? In 2016 an amount of £450 was allocated and £4000 further being allocated.
Keith Marshall	Why has the planning application for the pavilion on the Bell field been allowed to expire? Why has there been no explanation of this? There was a survey done 4 years ago where the majority voted for the building of the pavilion, why has this decision not been followed? Why has the Precept increased but the only visible evidence of work by the PC is the addition of a dog bin and the buying of a defibrillator?
Chas Spearman	There was no mention of the pavilion project being abandoned in the PC manifesto, has the PC misled the public to get elected only to ditch the project?
Ron Fallows	Can you tell us about when the information to answer these questions will be forthcoming?
Tom Chapman	The answers will be discussed in an open meeting, but not the next open meeting. The questions are being recorded in writing and the answers will

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	be forthcoming in open meetings.
Paul Mayhew	There has been an increase in the Precept, but are not supplying any money to the village Hall or the Bell Fields, and now to the newsletter. Why not?
Dave Upton	Some of the PC refuses to acknowledge the survey already conducted by the previous council. I propose an official Parish Poll should be conducted on whether there should be a Community building supervised by the Electoral Services of Chelmsford City Council. The question that should be asked is "Should there be a multi-purpose Community building in the Upper Bell Fields, and paid for from the Parish Council reserves? Options: YES or NO"
PROPOSAL	PROPOSED BY DAVE UPTON SECONDED BY KEITH MARSHALL This will be paid for by the PC and everyone on the electoral roll will be able to vote. A list of the people present who agreed with the proposal was taken, and the abstainers and those unable to vote noted. 17 residents of the Parish of Rettendon accepted the proposal There were 3 abstainers and 6 unable to vote, due to not living in the parish.
Dave Upton	I would like to give the reason for bringing this up. I would like to stop the arguing. I would also like to make sure the PC will agree to the poll, and not worry about who is on a trustee, just get on with it.
Ron Fallows	For the poll the ordinary rules of election counting must apply.
Gill Mayhew	Is the money earmarked for the pavilion still being held in reserve?
Tom Chapman	Roy wanted to describe his plans for the pavilion but I am concerned about the time, I asked Roy if he would be happy to do this at the end of the meeting if there is time. (Roy Hart agreed to this).  Are there any more questions about the Bell Fields? No we will continue.
<b>2</b>	<b>VENUES</b>
Keith Marshall	The PC meetings have always been held in Rettendon Village Hall and were moved to Tuesdays for convenience. Why are they to be moved from the hall?
Paul Mayhew	Why is the venue for the PC meeting to be moved from the hall?
Peter Maloney	The Village Hall has been used for the PC all the time. Is it that now only Battlesbridge Church hall will be used? The PC is not supporting the Village Hall at all, and is now not paying for the insurance. This PC is now dead against the Hall and not supporting them, but the PC is still claiming the Precept for the hall. Because the PC no longer pays the insurance for the village hall they have put the rent up to the PC is this the real reason for moving to Battlesbridge does the PC have it in for the Hall and getting back at them by not supporting them.
Chas Spearman	Come clean on who is pulling the strings behind the PC.
Tom Chapman	From a personal point of view about the change of venue from a personal point of view not on behalf of the PC as I proposed it. Firstly I have nothing against the village hall and it has nothing to do with the price increase. There are people in Battlesbridge and other areas who cannot make it to the Village Hall and would like to come to a PC meeting. The change of venue is to include these people.

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Dave Upton	There was a suggestion of Hayes Farm for another venue, but there is no hall there, and the club house is not a suitable venue.
Tom Chapman	I suggest Hayes Farm as a venue, but we have looked into it and the club house has a licence and therefore cannot be used for a PC meeting and there is no other place to hold it there.
Janys Jeffries	How about a venue in the East Hanningfield Road area?
Tom Chapman	I am in favour of holding it at a different venue. The move to Battlesbridge will not be permanent, only a one off.
Beryl Wilkinson	Rettendon Village hall is central to everyone so why move it?
Dave Upton	<p>This meeting is getting the residents together without the PC to bring up questions to ask the PC as a whole. The PC can still chose to ignore it, and just think the people are just causing trouble to bring it up.</p> <p>The PC is going ahead with various things. Are they legal? How can we stop them doing that? We keep asking the questions but not getting the answers.</p> <p>What about the report over the Manorial rights which has not been explained why this was done?</p> <p>A PC member sat on the committee which looked at the settlement boundaries, but they did not inform us about any of the changes.</p> <p>Can we just stop arguing with everyone and get on with it?</p> <p>Get on with getting the pavilion built. The trustees have done a lot of work on the fields: painting, cutting grass, and all that voluntarily, we don't who the trustees are as long as the work is being done we could have 10 set of trustees it would not matter.</p>
Tom Chapman	Called meeting to order and asked to get back to the subject on the agenda.
Paul Mayhew	There is no time limit for this meeting, why is the chairman trying to hurry it along?
Tom Chapman	Want to get home before the weather worsens. I want to bring this meeting to order. Any further questions on venues? We will move on.
<b>3.</b>	<b>SONTER'S DOWN PLAY AREA</b>
Peter Maloney	The PC had said that the Sonter's Down area was being completely paid for by the PC and that there would be extra no upkeep needed. Why has the PC now put aside £20,000 to pay for new play equipment, and £5,000 put aside for extras? The PC seems to have misled with what is going on with the Sonter's Down area.
Ron Fallows	<p>The land is owned by CCC, and should be wholly funded by the CCC.</p> <p>This was brought up as no cost to the Parish, but there has been a Precept request from the PC to look after this and will be put into the Precept as a charge to the residents in this Parish.</p> <p>Is this correct, or where is this information incorrect?</p>
Janys Jefferies	A survey should have been done to see whether the majority of residents wanted this to be done, but the PC did not ask and went ahead with it anyway, just because a couple of residents asked for it to be done. Why is it that the minority of residents get what they want or will the majority have a say in it?
Roy Hart	Only one person was needed to take the maintenance away. There was meant to be no increase, but there has been. The residents feel they have been hoodwinked.
Dave Upton	We need answers to these questions. The questions have already been asked before but no answers have been given.

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Keith Marshall	From what I understand if we are not happy with this arrangement we have 1-2 years in which we can hand it back to the County Council for maintenance. Could this be confirmed?
Tom Chapman	Any other questions?
Hazel Dale-Evans	There is a working party for which 2 councillors have volunteered, but they would like 2 people from the estate to join them.
Paul Mayhew	What would it involve?
Tina Sampsey	I live backing on the area. I would be willing to be part of the working party.
Janys Jefferies	What about the inspection of the field? There have been no inspections since the contractors started. There used to be inspectors come round to make sure the maintenance was done correctly and that the equipment was not damaged or needed repair. Who are the people who are inspecting and checking the equipment and the maintenance now? Are they qualified?
Chas Spearman	I have seen the contractors "inspecting" the equipment. They have a quick look and kick the equipment to make sure it does not move.
Scott Wilson	The maintenance of the playing area was bad before. My children played there and the grass was not cut properly and was not collected, leaving grass stains on clothing, and there was dog muck around. The play area in Woodham Ferrers is much better cut, and the weeds are removed. The maintenance needed improving. We should have the skills to look after our own backyard, manage our own assets as much as possible with anything extra. There will be extra money needed for extra cuts and the money is coming from the council.
Hazel Dale-Evans	Since your children play there are you willing to go on the working party?
Scott Wilson	Yes, I will go on the working party.
Chris Cheater	The Sonter's Down play area is not an asset of the Parish, it is owned by the CCC. The PC decided to maintain the area themselves on the basis it could be better maintained and at no extra cost. Why has the special expense charge by CCC Parks Department to the PC, previously £1,924 for the year, been replaced by a £4,000 provision in the budget and now an earmarked amount of £20,000 made? It seems to be in the first year of looking after the Sonter's Down area the playground has cost £24,000, instead of less than £2,000 when maintained by CCC. Residents and councillors were told it would not cost any more money and only a small amount of money per year be earmarked for replacement of the play equipment. This appears to be double taxation. Have we been misled about the actual costs to residents and councillors? The CCC are closing other play areas but have agreed Sonter's Down is OK. The money residents pay has now gone up because it is now under the PC. In the latest newsletter, Councillor Jones is incorrect about how the Precept works, also why has the PC now decided to ask for ideas on how to improve the play area, did they not have these plans before taking over the extra expense of running it?
Chas Spearman	Will the working party clear up the fly tipping? I have cleared up venetian blinds, gas cylinders which have been sniffed and the council took away some long wardrobe doors.
Tom chapman	As I understand it the working party will be a permanent group to oversee the area to look after the maintenance, not to take any physical tasks.

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Paul Mayhew	Is the maintenance contract with the same contractor as the CCC?
Hazel Dale-Evans	No – different contractors.
<b>4</b>	<b>THE NEWSLETTER</b>
Peter Maloney	Mark Fleming claimed that “Freedom of speech was much overrated.” We do not want censorship from the PC.
Scott Wilson	I used to work in the media. The problem with it is that by law all opinions should be neutral – the principle must be neutral and unbiased. If all 600 residents wanted to have their opinions the newsletter would go to 10 pages. Freedom of speech is not overrated. 99% of the newsletter is fine, but not the opinionated pieces. The collator should not include these pieces. I had sent in 3 pieces for the newsletter but none were included by the last newsletter compiler.
Dave Upton	The newsletter should not be edited by the PC. Will Scott Wilson offer to be the editor of the newsletter? The PC wants to edit it. If someone knows how to edit should they not offer to edit it to avoid argument. Why don't we do it take it over ourselves. All the PC seem to do is fight, but who is it down to? - All of us not just the PC. The PC is made up of different councillors, not one camp or the other. It needs to be a democracy.
Roy Hart	Scott Wilson's item in the newsletter seemed to indicate that the PC was not against football being played on the field, but I have the enforcement notice to say otherwise. The football team also had an injunction taken out against putting up the notices on the field. Both of these have been removed. There was one objector to the football – from the chairman of the PC.
Jane Fallows	Why is the PC going to edit the newsletter? I am furious – how and why do they know better? It is dictatorship. However when I went up to the church coffee morning the other day there was one person who delivers the newsletter on a big round. He is so cross he will not do it anymore. Quite a few people have felt that way. Here in Rettendon they are sensitive to this issue.
Hazel Dale-Evans	If that continues they will not deliver the newsletter at all
Ron Fallows	There is one person who has been delivering the newsletter since the first one, but will not continue.
Hazel Dale-Evans	Chalk street does now need a new deliverer as the present one cannot do it any longer due to failing health.
<b>5.</b>	<b>AOB</b>
Paul Mayhew	The gateways. The PC allegedly is to spend £18,000 to put in new plastic gateways. The wooden ones need a new lick of paint and a clean-up and need to be maintained, but we do not want plastic ones.
Keith Marshall	The gateways belong to Highways. Why haven't they been asked to maintain them?
Chris Cheater	The gateways look an eyesore, but if they are replaced with plastic and then even the same day someone damages them who is responsible to replacing them? I have put in a Freedom Of Information (FOI) request to the Highways to see who owns them and the land they are on. I informed them they were installed at Rettendon Place and Rettendon village, but Highways has no record of these, but they said they would be the sort of asset which is under Essex Highways.

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Hazel Dale-Evans	<p>It has been quoted £18,000 to replace the gateways with plastic, but if a group of parishioners were to do the work by repairing and repainting the ones already there it would save the council money. They would have to be needful of the insurance and the restrictions, but that could be looked into.</p> <p>I have had a letter back this morning from ECC Customer Services with an attached form produced by ECC and counter-stamped by Ringway-Jacobs. There is a Public Liability insurance up to a limit which has to be got and accreditation for the supervisor, etc.</p>
Roy Hart	Community groups are encouraged by the CCC and they will cover the insurance for a payment of £160. I will do the work at cost and not spend the £18,000
Paul Mayhew	Who checked out about the gateways?
Katherine Clark	Has the PC agreed to go ahead and pay for these works?
Tom chapman	We have agreed to go ahead with the works and pay it.
Katherine Clark	Where are the 3 quotes needed? For any work over £2,000 there has to be 3 quotes, regardless of whether the work is undertaken by the preferred Highways contractors. The work is being done by the PC and it has to have 3 quotes. It is not legal otherwise.
Tom chapman	As I understand it the contractor chosen is a term contractor and explained how he believes term contracts work. That is the only contractor and they were chosen by the CCC out of the original contractors who tendered for the work.
Dave Upton	Why did the PC not look into it first?
Katherine Clarke	That relates to major highways and is not relevant to the Gateways. It is not governed by the CCC and PC. It is Essex Highways. The PC have acted on their own
Tom Chapman	This will be reported back to the PC.
Katherine Clarke	This is an illegal action
Tom Chapman	I believe this has been thoroughly looked into but it will be passed back to the PC and if need be the Highways to be looked into again.
Sandie Cottee	Can the PC make decisions without consulting the parishioners?
Roy Hart	£18,000 is to be spent when a group of parishioners could do it. Look at the group of residents who want to do it before signing on the dotted line.
Dave Upton	<p>What actually happens in the PC meetings here is different to other pC meetings. I have been to other PCs. Big decisions are only made after all the facts are put before them. Should you not go rushing off to get things done and not find out who they belong to to start with?</p> <p>People have been upset that shouldn't have been. Thought this PC was meant to be open, but they do not appear to be open. With the previous PC when I had a problem with any decision or item that I could not understand I went to Ron and he would explain it to me.</p> <p>Here we are not getting any answers and only the suggestion we are putting a spanner in the works. Have to open up and it done.</p> <p>Everyone here wants to go forward and get things sorted out.</p>
Chas Spearman	What happens to all the questions being asked tonight?
Tom Chapman	They will be passed to the PC and the PC will decide how to answer them. They may decide to answer them directly, or outside of the PC meeting.
Chas Spearman	So all the questions will be passed to the PC for answering. Let us know who is pulling the strings.

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Tom Chapman	I take offence to that last comment.
Paul Clark	The questions will be sent to the PC For the Parish Poll a question has been agreed on and it has been proposed and seconded. It will now go to the CCC and is now not a function of the PC to answer. A card will be sent out to each resident to be invited to vote. It is not legally binding, but the PC should take notice.
Dave Upton	That seems to be the only thing we have achieved tonight.
Paul Clark	A village survey is ad hoc, a poll is not.
<b>5.</b>	<b>AOB</b>
Paul Mayhew	So we have a poll for the vote. Will the questions be answered?
Barbara Wright	The questions will be given to the PC. If you have any other questions they should be sent to Katherine Kane, the clerk, to be put on the agenda. If the question is included on the agenda you can ask about it at the meeting.
Tom chapman	Is correct, questions can be answered individually in the standard PC meetings. However, I believe the volume and depth of this questions require them to be discussed and answered in depth and this may require a separate meeting to the standard PC meeting.
Roy Hart	The pavilion was passed but may need extra funding. I think we can get that from Sports England. Rettendon Village Hall and the Bell Fields has nothing. The building for the Bell fields is to be a Community building and will be vandal-proof. There is already a Brownie troop who want to hold a jamboree on the field next year. The fence has been paid for by the Bell Field money. This piece of land has to be protected at all costs. I am holding the subsoil rights – it has been in the Manor for 400 years it will stop someone building on it and keep the site for recreation for the residents of the Parish. Gave a description of the pavilion building. Suggestions of holding a beer festival and a classic car event. The field is now well drained and the football club is happy with it. There is money in the bank and the future looks good. We might not win the referendum, but if we do then this is the sort of building which will be built.
Paul Mayhew	Is there money available?
Roy Hart	Yes
Tom Chapman	Meeting closed at 9pm
	Vote of thanks for chairman and minutes secretary.

**Appendix: Extract from the Rettendon Review of 1968, page 16**

An important difference between Parish and larger units of government is that the electors should know the Councillors as people. What better form of democracy could you have the certainty of being able to attend a meeting where you can tell your Councillor exactly what you think of him or her.

Parish councils are limited in the services which they provide and the amount of money they may raise. Parish Councils may provide a swimming pool, tennis courts, football pitches or 'bus shelters. They may also provide and maintain Parish Halls, public seats or public clocks, provide allotments and burial grounds, plant trees, repair footpaths and make grants for the upkeep of the Churchyard and War Memorials. But one of the most important functions of the Parish Council is to be watch-dog for the Parish, on the activity of the larger authorities and to see that the wishes and opinions of the parish are made known.

A rural parish with its own Council is the only form of local government which can offer such privileges to its electorate.

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**Questions to be answered by PC****Item 1. Bell Fields**

1. Why has the current PC used the Bell Fields as an item of expense in their Precept, for the last two years, despite no money being spent on it?
2. Why has the planning application for the pavilion on the Bell field been allowed to expire?
3. Why has there been no explanation of this?
4. There was a survey done 4 years ago where the majority voted for the building of the pavilion, why has this decision not been followed?
5. There was no mention of the pavilion project being abandoned in the PC manifesto, has the PC misled the public to get elected only to ditch the project?
6. Why has the Precept increased but the only visible evidence of work by the PC is the addition of a dog bin and the buying of a defibrillator?
7. There was no mention of the pavilion project being abandoned in the PC manifesto, has the PC misled the public to get elected only to ditch the project?
8. There has been an increase in the Precept, but are not supplying any money to the village Hall or the Bell Fields, and now to the newsletter. Why not?
9. Is there money in the PC funds to pay for the new Pavillion?
10. Why is the PC so intent on having the PC choose the trustees for the Bell Fields?
11. If the Trustees have money in the bank and people who want to rent the field and it is being maintained properly why do the PC want to change it?

**Item 2. Venues**

1. Why is the venue for the PC meeting to be moved from the hall?
2. How about a venue in the East Hanningfield Road area?
3. Rettendon Village hall is central to everyone so why move it?
4. Is the real reason because the Village Hall have put the rent up for the PC meetings?
5. Is the real reason because the PC has it in for the Village Hall and refuses to support them anymore?
1. 6 Who is pulling the PC strings?

**Item 3. Sonter's Down Area**

1. The PC is going ahead with various things. Are they legal? How can we stop them doing that?
2. What about the report over the Manorial rights which has not been explained why this was done?
3. The PC had said that the Sonter's Down area was being completely paid for by the PC and that there would be extra no upkeep needed. Why has the PC now put aside £20,000 to pay for new play equipment, and £5,000 put aside for extras?
  - a. Have we been misled about the actual cost to the residents?
4. Why is it that the minority of residents get what they want or will the majority have a say in it?
  - a. Why was a survey not undertaken to make sure that a majority of residents was in favour of it before a decision was made?
5. From what I understand if we are not happy with this arrangement within 1-2years we can hand it back to the County Council for maintenance. Could this be confirmed?
6. What about the inspection of the field?
7. Who are the people who are inspecting and checking the equipment and the maintenance now? Are they qualified?
8. Will the working party clear up the fly tipping?



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9. Is the maintenance contract with the same contractor as that used by the CCC?
10. Why has the PC now decided to ask for ideas on how to improve the play area, did they not have these plans before taking over the extra expense of running it?

**Item 4. Newsletter**

1. Why is the PC going to edit the newsletter?
2. Who is the newsletter down to?
3. Why can't we take over the newsletter ourselves?

**Item 5. AOB**

1. The gateways belong to Highways. Why haven't they been asked to maintain them?
2. Who checked out about the gateways?
3. Has the PC agreed to go ahead and pay for these works?
4. Should you not go rushing off to get things done and not find out who they belong to to start with?
5. Where are the 3 quotes needed? For any work over £2,000 there has to be 3 quotes, regardless of whether the work is undertaken by the preferred Highways contractors. The work is being done by the PC and it has to have 3 quotes.
6. Why did the PC not look into it first?
7. Will the questions be answered?