

RETTENDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 17th December 2019 at Rettendon Memorial Hall, Main Road, Rettendon, at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Mark Fleming (Chairman)
Cllr Sandie Cottee
Cllr Hazel Dale Evans
Cllr Denise Fleming
Cllr Roy Hart
Cllr James Knight
Cllr David Phillips
Cllr Ray Ride
Cllr Barbara Wright

The Clerk

There were 16 members of the public present.

Chelmsford City Councillor Paul Clark also attended.

140-19/20 Apologies and Reasons for Absence

There were no apologies to receive.

141-19/20 Declarations of Interest on Items on the Agenda

Cllr Dale-Evans declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Village Hall Management Committee.

Cllr Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Village Hall Management Committee and as editor of the Rettendon and Battlesbridge newsletter

142-19/20 Public Forum – strictly 5 minutes only per speaker

Mr Wilson said he had a plea with regard to the Sonters Down Play Area. He said this was a great local resource and the only play area in the village. He said the Council had taken over management in 2015 and had run it successfully with more grass cuts and the bollards replaced more quickly. He said if the Parish Council could not manage this resource, what purpose did the Council serve? He said the funding was an issue and this needed to be addressed.

Mr Spearman said he would like to report fly-tipping on the Sonters Down Play Area, which he had cleared up and which had been taken away. He said residents and the Council should keep an eye on this.

Signed _____
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

Mrs Wilkinson said she would like to report fly-tipping near the gate of the school.

Mr Marshall asked if there was an answer to the question he had asked at the October meeting.

The Clerk said she had received an answer from the Monitoring Officer at Chelmsford and apologised for not bringing this to the meeting. She said she would send the reply to Mr Marshall in the post.

A resident referred to the ongoing issue of the streetlights on East Hanningfield Road near to the Bell Public House.

A resident referred to Item 150-19/20 and said his appearance was on behalf of Le Benaix. He said the application was to provide overnight accommodation which would be similar in appearance to the existing building. He said accommodation would be competitively priced and there was no need for additional carparking. He said he hoped the application would be well-received by the community.

A resident referred to the application mentioned by the previous speaker and asked if the application site was owned by the applicant.

The Chairman said questions should be addressed to Parish Councillors and not to other members of the public. He said he had no knowledge of the ownership of the application site and ownership was not relevant in consideration of planning applications.

143-19/20 To agree the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2019 as a true record for signature by the Chairman

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2019 were **agreed** as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

144-19/20 To receive the Essex County Councillor and Ward Councillors' reports.

There were no reports to receive.

145-19/20 To receive a report from the Sonters Down Working Group

a) To receive a report from the Sonters Down Working Group

Cllr Phillips said Paul van Damme of Chelmsford City Council had given a quotation to resume maintenance of Sonters Down Play Area and the surrounding grass areas.

b) To agree the recommendation of the Sonters Down Working Group that the Parish Council should terminate the current Licence to Maintain the Sonters Down play area and equipment in accordance with the terms of

that Licence and to return the care and maintenance of the same to the Parks Dept of Chelmsford City Council

Cllr Phillips referred to the report circulated prior to the meeting and said the figures were accurate as far as he was aware.

Cllr Cottee said there had been some consultation with residents but this had not been documented.

Cllr Knight said the play equipment belonged to CCC and would not be transferred to the Parish Council. He said some money could be put aside for funding a piece of equipment. He said the Working Group had considered a lease but this would involve considerable legal costs. He said the current contractors cut the grass areas around the Play Area as it was not economic for CCC to cut these if they were not also maintaining the Play Area.

Cllr Ride referred to Runwell Parish Council which ran a Play Area and allowed for maintenance and replacement of equipment in its budget. He said the Council had looked to improve the quality of the maintenance of the grass with more frequent cuts. He said in his opinion Skippers had done a good job. He said figures in the position document were slightly confusing as amounts for Sonters Down and the other verges had been conflated. He said Parish Councils had been given a chance to look after their own assets and that Sonters Down was the only Play Area in the parish.

Cllr Hart said Skippers had done a poor job. He said the last figure charged by CCC had been in the region of £1,800.

Cllr Cottee said she had received a number of complaints about the state of the grass.

Cllr Knight said he had visited the area at the beginning of the summer and the state of the grass had made it unplayable.

Cllr Phillips said he had tried to arrange a meeting with the contractor, who had not turned up.

The Chairman said he would allow comments from members of the public.

Mr Upton said he would recommend returning responsibility of the Play Area to CCC. He said he would suggest retaining the Working Group as it was not the intention to have nothing further to do with the Play Area.

Mr Wilson said he was reassured by this but he said the Play Area would be a low priority for CCC and that more cuts had been done while the Parish Council had had responsibility.

City Councillor Paul Clark said Runwell Parish Council maintained 18 acres of land owned by CCC. He said the annual maintenance cost was £30,000 and an

estimate for replacing the equipment was £100,000 for which funding would come from the Community Infrastructure Levy. He said CCC charged for maintenance under Special Expenses.

Cllr Hart asked for the annual cost to the Parish Council.

The Clerk said the basic maintenance charge by the contractor was £4,200pa, with additional work quoted for as necessary.

Cllr Ride said his concern was the figures in the circulated report were not correct.

The Chairman said he had concerns about the numbers given in the report.

Cllr Knight said the Working Group had also considered safety concerns as well as the financial position.

It was **agreed** that the Parish Council should terminate the current Licence to Maintain the Sonters Down play area and equipment in accordance with the terms of that Licence and to return the care and maintenance of the same to the Parks Dept of Chelmsford City Council (7 For; 1 Against; 1 Abstention)

146-19/20 To receive a report from the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Cottee said the library was now officially open in the back room of the hall and that the hours would be extended in due course.

147-19/20 Finance

- a) To agree to authorise invoices for payment, receive copy Bank statements and details of expenditure to date.

There were no bank statements to receive.

It was **agreed** to authorise invoices for payment as set out below.

Payment of invoices outstanding to Tees for legal costs was deferred to the January Council meeting to allow for further clarification on the charges incurred so far.

Payee	Reason for Payment	Amount
Staff costs	December salary/expenses	£695.22
Cllr Wright	Expenses – stationery	£5.70
Tees	Legal fees	£2,340.00

Signed _____
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

Total	£3,040.92
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148-19/20 To agree the budget for the year 2020/21.

Cllr Ride declared an interest as a Governor of Rettendon Primary School.

Cllr Dale-Evans asked about the ability of the Parish Council to contribute towards swimming lessons for Rettendon Primary School.

The Clerk said she would seek clarification on the matter and that she was aware of the particular reasons for this grant having been made historically.

Cllr Dale-Evans asked for clarification on the money set aside for the Bell Fields.

The Chairman said the money had been set aside for the Council's expenditure on the Bell Fields once the issue of trusteeship had been resolved.

Cllr Dale-Evans asked for clarification about the inclusion of an amount for Community Transport.

Cllr Knight said this had been discussed at the previous month's meeting. He said he thought this would be worth investigation and that there was potential for seeking grant funding.

Cllr Hart said he had raised the issue before but again he could see no benefit from the inclusion of the extra dwellings at Hayes within the budget.

The budget for 2020/21 was **agreed** as circulated and is attached as Appendix 1.

149-19/20 To agree the precept demand on Chelmsford City Council for 2020/21

The precept demand on Chelmsford City Council for 2020/21 was **agreed** to be £41,494.00.

150-19/20 To agree the response to planning applications received since the last Parish Council meeting

19/01963/FUL - 3 The Old Nursery Rettendon Wickford Essex - Extension to front of existing single storey garage.

It was **agreed** to support this application.

19/01944/FUL - Le Benaix Main Road Rettendon Chelmsford - Construction of rooms to be used as 8 hotel suites (use Class C1) within the garden of existing restaurant to be managed as part of the existing business

It was **agreed** that the Council had no objection in principle to this application. It was noted that the proposed construction would be residential in appearance, and the Council would look for reassurance that the use of the building would remain as a hotel. The Council also expressed concern about the extent of development on the site.

Cllr Hart and Cllr Cottee said they were concerned about sprawl on the site and abstained from the vote.

151-19/20 To receive an update from the Chairman on mediation in the Bell Fields dispute

The Chairman said the Council had previously agreed to pay towards the cost of a further mediation session

He said the mediator had now had one-to-one conversations with both him and Cllr Hart. He said the mediator had asked for the parties to share their legal position and advice following the letter from the Charity Commission received by the Parish Council at the end of 2018. He said he would look for availability of Councillors for this further mediation session.

152-19/20 To agree expenditure of £250 for a traffic count on Burnham Road

Expenditure of £250 for a traffic count on Burnham Road was **agreed unanimously**.

153-19/20 Highways and Footpaths – to note Essex Highways Notices and receive reports from Councillors.

Cllr Hart reported a blocked drain in Maltings Road.

Cllr D Fleming said she and Cllr Phillips had met with Essex County Councillor Ian Grundy to look at South View Road and Meadow Road. She said following this she had spoken to Essex County Councillor Kevin Bentley.

She said South View Road was due for an annual inspection in December and that defects would be dealt with accordingly. She said the schedule for 2020/21 would not be known until February but that she would continue to deal with Councillor Bentley.

She said Meadow Road would be inspected in June but that at present it did not meet criteria for work. She said she would continue to chase this.

She referred to the parking of coaches on verges on Main Road and said she had spoken to City Councillor Lance Millane about this. She said Councillor Millane had advised that “No Parking” signs and bollards would be installed in the New Year. She said she would continue to monitor this.

154-19/20 Street Lighting

Signed _____
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

Cllr Wright said conifers within the school boundary were obscuring the streetlights.

The Clerk said she would write to the school to ask them to look at this problem.

Cllr D Fleming said the Council's contractor had replaced three bulbs in Battlesbridge.

155-19/20 Reports from Councillors on Council activities since the last meeting

Cllr Hart said he had entered Battlesbridge in the Best Village competition.

Cllr Cottee said she and Cllr Dale-Evans had tested the bus shelter cleaning equipment and all had gone well.

Cllr Knight said he had swept out and cleaned the seats of the four Turnpike shelters.

Cllr Dale-Evans said she had a nomination for a trustee for the Richard Cannon charity.

The Chairman asked Councillors to pass all nominations to the Clerk. He said more information would be in the next issue of the Rettendon and Battlesbridge newsletter and it would be on a future agenda.

Cllr Hart asked for his nomination to be recorded.

156-19/20 Date of the next Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 28th January 2020, 7.30pm at the Rettendon Memorial Hall, Main Road, Rettendon, CM3 8DP

Signed _____
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman