

## RETTENDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held remotely on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Councillors attended the meeting through digital link.

**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

Two members of the public attended through the digital link provided.

**33-20/21 To Receive Apologies and to approve Reasons for Absence**

There were no apologies to receive from Parish Councillors.  
ECC Ward Councillor Paul Clark sent apologies for the meeting.

**34-20/21 Declarations of Interest on Items on the Agenda**

Cllr Hart referred to Item 41-20/21 and said he would like to declare an interest in applications 20/00818/FUL and 20/00819/FUL.

**35-20/21 Public Forum – strictly 5 minutes only per speaker**

A resident referred to the footpath leading up to the Rettendon Bell and referred to a car travelling up the pavement at 30-40mph before exiting the footpath at the Wheatsheaf. He said bollards had been removed or cut off. He asked if there was anything the Parish Council could do.

He said the bins on the Sonters Down field had not been emptied.

The Chairman said the first point would be investigated by the Council.

Cllr Knight said he would empty the bins on Sonters Down.

A resident said Cllr Hart had said during the recent hearing at the High Court that he had evidence that the Parish Council had stopped children playing football on the Bell Fields. He asked if it was possible to see the evidence for this assertion.

The Chairman asked the resident to submit the question in writing to the Clerk who would pass it on to Cllr Hart.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

**36-20/21 To agree the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 as a true record for signature by the Chairman at a later date**

Cllr Cottee referred to Item 17-20/21 and said she would like to clarify that she had only voted against the payments to Tees.

With the insertion of "23-20/21" after the word "Item" in the first line of Item 12-20/21 the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were **agreed** as a true record for signature by the Chairman at a later date.

**37-20/21 To agree the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 as a true record for signature by the Chairman at a later date**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were **agreed** as a true record for signature by the Chairman at a later date.

**38-20/21 To receive the Essex County Councillor and Ward Councillors' reports.**

The following report had been received from Ward Cllr Paul Clark and was read out to the meeting.

*I can report as Ward Councillor, the City Council has continued to provide some of its services throughout the lockdown such as refuse collection - other services had to be suspended through Government legislation. The waste collection service has successfully handled the challenge which saw the quantity of recycling and waste increase substantially, as many residents remained at home.*

*The food hub set by the Council, and has provided much needed assistance to "shielded and/or self-isolated" residents, will gradually be scaled down.*

*Some of the facilities such as Leisure are beginning to re-open, with the Riverside Centre from Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July, albeit on a restricted and pre-booked basis for the time being.*

*Following a short hiatus at the beginning of April, I have continued to be busy on a daily basis, assisting residents in the Ward with various enquiries for help or advice in Council related matters.*

*The District Commander for Chelmsford and Maldon at Essex Police has advised the Essex Roads Policing Unit are continuing operations in our area, following many complaints by residents regarding speeding traffic. Please drive carefully.*

**39-20/21 To receive a report from the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Management Committee**

Cllr Cottee said no meetings had been held and there were no updates on the hall re-opening. She said the pre-school had now broken up for the summer and the herb garden was being installed.

Cllr Hart asked about the potential for resuming physical meetings.

The Chairman said that the ability to hold digital meetings was currently in place until May 2021. He said the safety of councillors and residents had to be considered and there could be no constraints on attendance by members of the public. He said further information would also be needed from the Village Hall committee. He said he was aware some Parish Councils had fewer councillors and members of the public attending meetings, and that Rettendon was exceptional in the number of residents who attended.

**40-20/21 Finance**

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

Cllr Cottee queried the necessity for two payments per month for Zoom.

The Chairman said the two payments were made to replicate as closely as possible the physical meetings and that in this way the two groups of councillors and residents could be separated. He said this still cost less than hiring the Village Hall. He said he had been keen to ensure the digital meetings had no constraints to access by residents. He said he had considered the webinar option as the best way to chair meetings effectively and to counter any disruptive behaviour. He said he had also considered that using the webinar option also meant that residents could join without passing over contact details, in the same way that they could simply walk into a physical meeting.

It was **agreed unanimously** to authorise invoices for payment as detailed below.

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Reason for Payment</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Staff costs	June	£692.98
Zoom	Meeting arrangements	£149.41
Allen Leslie Associates	Internal audit	£300.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1142.39</b>

**41-20/21 To agree the response to planning applications notified to the Parish Council as statutory consultee**

20/00818/FUL - Land South West Of Riverside Maltings Road Battlesbridge Wickford - Part retrospective application for the construction of a fence and access gates. Construction of formation of vehicle access.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

20/00819/FUL - Land South West Of Rivaside Maltings Road Battlesbridge Wickford - Erection of stable building

20/00995/FUL - The Ridings Chalk Street Rettendon Chelmsford - Proposed demolition of existing porch and construction of new open porch. Conversion of existing garage with the installation of new windows.

It was **agreed** to support all three applications.

**42-20/21 To agree that Rettendon Parish Council having met the criteria of having two-thirds elected members and a qualified Clerk adopts the General Power of Competence**

It was **agreed** that having met the criteria of having two-thirds elected members and a qualified Clerk that Rettendon Parish Council adopt the General Power of Competence.

**43-20/21 To consider the extent of coverage by S-Type Security Ltd and to confirm that the Parish Council is limited to responsibility for patrols on public property.**

Cllr Dale-Evans said that there had been only one meeting regarding the security patrols and she felt it was time for another. She said she was concerned about misuse by the public of the arrangement.

She asked if the concerns about the contract raised by Cllr Phillips had ever been addressed.

Cllr Phillips said the issues arising from the contract wording had been addressed. He said the reporting side needed to be considered but that he was happy with what they were doing.

Cllr M Fleming said the Council was not paying them to respond to members of the public but that if S-Type received intelligence they would investigate.

Cllr Dale-Evans said the Council had never addressed a contact point and reporting back.

Cllr Phillips said the Working Group should meet and report back to the next meeting.

Cllr Knight said the option to do a drive-round with S-Type was available to all councillors. He said they seemed to be in touch with what was going on in the parish through Facebook and that possibly Facebook Messenger was being used to contact them.

Cllr Knight asked for the security patrols to be a regular agenda item.

Cllr Wright asked if they was allowed to patrol private property.

The Clerk said she did not believe this was a correct use of public money.

**44-20/21 To receive an update on the High Court proceedings in the Bell Fields dispute.**

The Chairman said the hearing had been held the previous week.

He referred to the request by the defendants for an adjournment and said the hearing on that issue had been held following the last extra ordinary meeting of the Council. He said the outcome of that hearing was that room had been found for a physical presence but that space was limited so councillors had attended the main hearing by Skype.

He said the hearing on the main issue had been held and had finished at 4.20pm on day 1. He said there would be no further Court activity and that the Council was now awaiting the judgment to be provided which could take up to a month.

He said the judgment would go in confidence to the claimants and the defendants for correction of typographical errors and would then be published.

He said the Council had been put on the spot at the end of the first day regarding one possible outcome and whether the Council would challenge this outcome resulting in further cost and delay.

He said there had been no time for a Council meeting and that he and the Vice-Chairman had spoken to all councillors, most of whom had been supportive of not challenging that scenario.

He said once judgment was available if necessary this decision could be added to the agenda and ratified.

Cllr Knight said the request had come from the judge and not from either Tees or the Council's barrister. He said Tees had passed on the Council's instruction and the Council had used their best efforts to go back with a decision.

The Chairman said councillors had responded by email either to all or to the Clerk alone. He said only the Clerk was aware of the full response. He said ideally a meeting would have taken place but this had not been possible.

Cllr Cottee said she was happy with the way the matter had been handled and that the Council had done the only thing they could do in the circumstances.

**45-18/19 To agree the amount of the following precepted donations:**

- a) All Saints Church, Rettendon, for maintenance of the churchyard (up to £1,000)
- b) Battlesbridge Free Church, Battlesbridge, for maintenance of the churchyard (£750)

Cllr Ride queried the absence of the precepted amount to be granted to the primary school to support swimming lessons.

The Clerk said an issue had arisen with the payment of this amount and that this needed to be investigated further before the payment could be brought to a meeting for agreement.

The Clerk said she would investigate the matter fully and it would be added to the agenda for September's Council meeting.

It was **agreed unanimously** to make the donations as follows:

- a) All Saints Church, Rettendon - £1,000
- b) Battlesbridge Free Church - £750.

**46-20/21 Reports from Councillors on Council activities since the last meeting**

Cllr Cottee referred to the broken pane at the turnpike bus shelter. She said it would be useful for councillors to consider the ongoing maintenance of the shelters.

Cllr M Fleming referred to the proposed Village Survey and asked whether it would be possible to bring this forward with a view to identifying support that could be offered to residents.

Cllr Cottee said one meeting had been held but further meetings were not possible as the hall remained closed. She said support during the past few months had been offered by the Government and there were issues with GDPR and how to identify vulnerable residents. She said she and Cllr Wright were looking at the Health and Well-Being Agenda supported by EALC and were looking at ways to push this out.

Cllr Phillips suggested meetings for the HR Committee and the S-Type and Survey Working Groups could be held via Zoom with any recommendations to come back to full Council.

**47-20/21 Date of the next Parish Council Meeting**

It was **agreed** that the next Parish Council Meeting would be held online on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020, at 7.30pm.