

RETTENDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 29th October 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 12 members of the public present.

103-19/20 Apologies and Reasons for Absence

There were no apologies to receive.

104-19/20 Declarations of Interest on Items on the Agenda

Cllr Dale -Evans declared an interest in Item 109-19/20 due to her position as a member of the Village Hall Management Committee.

Cllr Wright declared an interest in Item 109-19/20 due to her position as a member of the Village Hall Management Committee.

105-19/20 Public Forum – strictly 5 minutes only per speaker

A resident referred to the issue of the Bell Fields. He said he had experience as a trustee and accountant and having attended the last meeting he failed to see why the Council was spending money on legal costs. He said a report should be given to residents.

Mr Marshall referred to 115-19/20 and asked if the comment about the Parish Council being regarded as dysfunctional referred to the Chairman, the Clerk or the whole Council. He asked in view of this comment whether it was lawful for the Council to continue.

The Clerk said she would clarify the matter.

106-19/20 To agree the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24th September 2019 as a true record for signature by the Chairman

Signed _____
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

Cllr Phillips referred to Cllr Hart's comment at the meeting held on 24th September 2019 regarding the figure of £228,000 and the Bell Fields dispute and asked if this was an estimate of the Council's likely costs or those of the purported trustees.

Cllr Hart said these were the estimated costs for the managing trustees of the Bell Fields.

With the word "View" omitted from the name of Meadow Road twice in Item 87-19/20 the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24th September 2019 were **agreed** as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

107-19/20 To receive the Essex County Councillor and Ward Councillors' reports.

There were no reports received.

108-19/20 To receive a report from the Sonters Down Working Group

Cllr Phillips said all equipment had been repaired.

He said a meeting was planned with Paul van Damme from Chelmsford City Council later in the week.

Cllr Hart said he was referring to previous minutes of the Parish Council which said Cllr Ride had stated that it was ex-Councillor Ron Fallows who had instigated the Parish Council taking over the Sonters Down Play Area, and not Cllr Ride himself.

Cllr Ride said this was not true and that the records showed that he had proposed the current arrangement, and that the minutes of the Parish Council showed that that was the case.

The Chairman read from Standing Orders regarding measures to prevent the disruption of meetings. He referred to a meeting held by Councillors to discuss how to address the problem of disruptive behaviour and achieve peaceful, orderly meetings.

Cllr Ride said the statement Cllr Hart had made was untrue and he should retract it and apologise.

Cllr Hart said he would not do that.

The Chairman said this matter could not be progressed further.

Cllr Hart referred to a previous meeting of the Sonters Down Working Group and asked why Cllr Ride had not attended.

Cllr Ride said he had explained in his email of 17th August 2019 why it had not been appropriate for him to attend.

Cllr Phillips apologised to Cllr Ride for not making this clear in the relevant report.

Cllr Cottee said documentation was lacking which was the reason for the meeting with Paul van Damme.

Cllr Phillips said the Working Party had the agreement document and the specification but there was no mention of repair of equipment, and the Working Party were seeking clarification on this matter.

109-19/20 To receive a report from the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Management Committee

Cllr Cottee said she had not attended the last Village Hall Management Committee meeting but that she had received the minutes.

She said the Committee Room was being decorated and carpet was being laid in the room behind this in preparation for the library. She said a dance group was now using the Hall on Monday to Thursday.

110-19/20 Finance

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

Invoices were **authorised** for payment, and copies of bank statements and details of expenditure to date were received.

Payee	Reason for Payment	Amount
Staff costs	October salary/expenses	£691.32
Rettendon Village Hall	Hall hire	£193.00
EALC	Training	£552.00
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit	£408.00
Skippers Ground Maintenance	Sonters Down maintenance	£432.00
Essex Community First Aid Events Volunteers	Donation for First Aid Course	£200.00
Skippers Ground Maintenance	Revised invoice – 2060	£96.00
Tees Law	Legal costs	£1510.00
Tees Law	Legal costs	£3214.20
Total		£7,200.52

Signed _____
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

b) To discuss invoices from Tees and agree any action necessary

It was **agreed** that payment would be sent for invoices 297476 and 299012, but withheld for invoice 302040. It was **agreed** that Councillor Knight would draft a letter to be circulated to Councillors prior to sending to Tees raising queries about specific items in the breakdowns.

111-19/20 To agree the response to planning applications received since the last Parish Council meeting

19/01445/FUL - Site At Hunters Lodge Chalk Street Rettendon Chelmsford - Demolition of existing stables and structures, with the construction of a new dwelling and all associated works including parking.

It was **agreed** to support this application, with the comment that the new dwelling will be close to the boundary line of the property.

19/01490/FUL - Greenfields East Hanningfield Road Rettendon Chelmsford - Demolish existing detached garage, construction of new attached double garage. First floor side extension and ground floor rear extension. Site hoarding fence to be positioned adjacent to highway at height of 2.2m.

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

19/01468/LBC - Barn At Laceys Farm Old Barn Lane Rettendon - Proposed part demolition, alteration and extension of existing barn including conversion to residential dwelling.

19/01467/FUL - Barn At Laceys Farm Old Barn Lane Rettendon - Proposed part demolition, alteration and extension of existing barn including conversion to create a residential dwelling.

It was **agreed** to support both the applications above, noting the listed building status of Lacey's Farm.

19/01726/FUL - Land South Of The Wheatsheaf Main Road Rettendon Chelmsford - Improvement to surface of an existing agricultural access

It was **agreed** that the Council had no objection to this application.

112-19/20 To agree the Business Contingency Plan

The Business Contingency Plan was **agreed** as circulated prior to the meeting with the addition of Cllr Cottee's address.

113-19/20 To discuss the Chelmsford Mobile Customer Information Service and agree any action necessary

Cllr Knight outlined the service. He said a meeting was planned on 8th November 2019 to progress the matter and get regular visits for the residents of Rettendon, Battlesbridge and Hayes. He said if the service was not used, the parish would be taken off the schedule.

114-19/20 Mediation

a) To receive an update on the current position

The Chairman referred to the previous mediation session and said there had been no resolution at that session. He said both parties had expressed an interest in further mediation and this was being progressed.

Cllr Hart said a meeting of the other party had been planned for the previous night but that it had not taken place. He said he was happy to hear what the Council had to say.

The Chairman reminded Cllr Hart that he was at this meeting as a Parish Councillor, and should consider action as necessary regarding declarations of interest.

Cllr Hart said he would speak to his trustees and revert as soon as possible. He said the Council was paying with public money while the purported trustees were paying out of their own back pocket.

b) To agree to pay the full cost of £400 plus VAT for a further mediation session of four hours regarding the Bell Fields dispute plus £150 plus VAT for each additional hour should the session last more than four hours

It was **agreed** to pay the full cost of £400 plus VAT for a further mediation session of four hours regarding the Bell Fields dispute plus £150 plus VAT for each additional hour should the session last more than four hours.

c) If Item 114-19/20 (b) is not agreed, to agree to pay 50% of the cost of a further mediation session regarding the Bell Fields dispute (costs as above)

This item was withdrawn.

115-19/20 To receive the Chelmsford City Council's Report on the Governance hearing held on 22nd July 2019 and to agree any action necessary

The Chelmsford City Council's Report on the Governance hearing held on 22nd July 2019 was received.

Signed _____
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

The Clerk said she would confirm the cost of the Governance Committee hearing to the Council.

Cllr Knight said he took exception to the word “dysfunctional” as used within the report.

Cllr Ride said he supported Cllr Knight’s comment.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk would draft a letter to the Monitoring Officer expressing the Council’s view on this matter and would bring it to the next meeting.

116-19/20 To note the External Auditor’s report and to agree any action necessary

The External Auditor’s report was noted.

117-19/20 Bus Shelters

Cllr Cottee said seven people had volunteered to help clean the shelters.

a) To agree to pay ongoing costs of cleaning materials for bus shelters

It was **agreed** to pay the ongoing costs of cleaning materials for the bus shelters.

b) To agree to set up a Working Group to oversee cleaning of the bus shelters

It was **agreed** to set up a Working Group to oversee cleaning of the bus shelters.

Cllrs Hart and Knight offered to be members of the Working Group.

118-19/20 To discuss the position of the Parish Council if the court action against the management trustees ceased now

Cllr Dale-Evans questioned the costs involved in pursuing the legal dispute.

Cllr Knight said a Notice to Discontinue could be issued but that there would be repercussions for costs.

It was proposed to suspend Standing Order 3(x) due to the meeting having lasted two hours with further business to be transacted.

It was **agreed unanimously** to suspend Standing Order 3(x) for the duration of the meeting.

The Chairman referred to the legal dispute and said a previous resolution agreeing to continue with the High Court action could not be rescinded within six months without proper notification to the Clerk.

Cllr Hart said the Council was not likely to recover 100% of their costs even if they won the case.

119-19/20 Highways and Footpaths – to note Essex Highways Notices and receive reports from Councillors.

Cllr Wright reported a kerb in South View Road.

Cllr D Fleming said she and Cllr Phillips were due to inspect South View Road later that week.

Cllr Dale-Evans referred to a missing manhole cover on the main road near the Le Benaix restaurant.

120-19/20 Street Lighting

Cllr Dale-Evans reported the bollards at East Hanningfield Road.

121-19/20 Reports from Councillors on Council activities since the last meeting

Cllr Wright referred to the defibrillators and said:

- new batteries and pads had been ordered for the Battlesbridge defibrillator;
- the Village Hall defibrillator was now operational and
- the designation was now on the boxes and they had been registered with the Ambulance Service.

Cllr Cottee said the date of the Mental Health First Aid Training would be 16th November 2019.

Cllr Hart said the lock gates at Battlesbridge had been moved back for the winter. He said he had blocked access to an area suffering from fly-tipping with concrete blocks.

Cllr Knight said he had attended a Facebook training session at the EALC and would come back to the Council with proposals in due course.

Cllr M Fleming said he had been approached by All Saints Church to lay a wreath on behalf of the Council on Remembrance Sunday.

Cllr Hart said he had put a commemoration silhouette up at the church in Battlesbridge.

Cllr Wright said a cross had been cut into the grass in All Saints churchyard for residents to place small crosses for Remembrance Sunday.

122-19/20 Date of the next Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 26th November 2019, 7.30pm at the Rettendon Memorial Hall, Main Road, Rettendon, CM3 8DP

123-19/20 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Signed _____
Councillor M. Fleming, Chairman

Having regard to the confidential nature of the business proposed to be transacted, to agree to exclude the Press and Public pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

Having regard to the confidential nature of the business proposed to be transacted, it was **agreed** to exclude the Press and Public pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

124-19/20 To discuss the proposed mediation session regarding the Bell Fields and agree any action necessary

The proposed mediation session regarding the Bell Fields was discussed and necessary action was **agreed**.