



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 27th. September 2023 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs M. Gibson (Chairman), Cllr C. Thorne, C. Crump, A. Gardner, R. Millett, G. Minish, J. Pollock and Kevin B. Money (Clerk to Parish Council). There were 21 members of the public present.

137/2023 Chairman's welcome. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

138/2023 Apologies for Absence were received from ECC Cllr W. Stamp & MDC Cllr L. Haywood

139/2023 Declaration of Interest

To declare any Pecuniary, Registerable or non-Registerable Interest relating to items on the agenda Cllr C. Thorne declared an interest in item 149/2023 (c)

140/2023 Minutes

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 26th. July 2023. **All Agreed**
To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Planning meeting on 7th. September 2023
All Agreed

141/2023 Chairman's report and any update since last meeting

The major issue recently has been the perennial problem of parking on Main Road on double yellow lines. Photographs have been sent to the parking partnership as we have been assured that they will follow up on this but it is interesting to note that we often see the same offenders time and time again. It is only if the double yellow lines are properly enforced that residents can have safe access not just for themselves but also for emergency vehicles.

The issue has been particularly bad in the last few weeks when beautiful warm sunny weekends have brought visitors out and into the village. There have been cars parked on Main Road almost up to the entrance to the Watersports Club as well as in Wick Farm Road. The parking style is frankly appalling. Woe betide anyone who needs to push a buggy, use a wheelchair, or even just try to walk along the pavement. It is frequently blocked so pedestrians are in the (narrow) road.

The abuse isn't down to one group. Some are visiting the Watersports Club as they can be seen heading in there on foot. Some are users of the Stone Inn (but that can only apply in opening hours). And there is a considerable group who come to use the somewhat misnamed beach and sometimes to walk along the seawall. Beach users can be spotted pretty easily by the mountain of stuff they unload from the cars. What they think when they get down to the beach and find an expanse of mud and shingle with a very narrow fringe of shingly sand above the high water mark I can only imagine! Let's be honest this isn't a beach destination in the normally accepted definition. We don't have the amenities that are thought to be normal these days.

Sorting the parking issue is not going to be simple. St. Lawrence simply doesn't have the space for more public parking. Both the Watersports Club and the Sailing Club are largely weekend venues and their car parks are frequently pretty full just with members at the time we get the largest number of casual visitors. And those visitors are reluctant to use the one public car park in the village as they have to walk to wherever.

On a very different note, some of you may have picked up about our secret garden. It's underwater, in the bay where an area of seagrass is being encouraged. It's not obviously pretty and getting to it at low water is a very muddy job. Seagrass is a natural carbon sink and the meadows can help with sea defences by trapping sediment and slowing down currents and waves as well as being a nursery for many baby fish. It is also increasingly rare. During the summer scientists, plus local volunteers, have been working to expand the area of seagrass in the bay. This is an important conservation project and we look forward to more information in coming months. There could well be other small areas of seagrass in the Blackwater but currently this small area is regarded as very special nationally.

Signed

M. Gibson – Chairman of SLPC

25th. October 2023

142/2023 Essex County Councillor Report – ECC Cllr Wendy Stamp

- 1) CIF Funding application – Update from the Clerk – No update yet

143/2023 District Councillor/s Report – Cllr Linda Haywood

No report was submitted to the Clerk

144/2023 Public Participation Session with Respect to items on the agenda

A total maximum time of 15 minutes is allowed for all public participation sessions

- **Dog fouling in the Childrens area and recreation ground**

Dog fouling on the Jubilee field is now problematic with the amount of mess being left laying about.

Diddydots has banned children from going onto the field.

Residents suggested that all dogs are kept on a short lead at all times. Also, having dogs off the lead is a possible danger to children. The gate to be locked at night. It is also a problem on the seawall and beach area. Also, dog litter bags are being left around the field and village. Contact MDC for their “Dog Warden” to patrol the area. More dog bin could be provided by the Council.

It was agreed that the pedestrian gate on to the field would be removed, and that notices would go up saying dogs should be kept on lead, and not allowed there at night?

It was also commented that removal of the gate would help disabled access.

if these rules aren't adhered to including picking up and disposing in the bins, or taken home, then we will have to ban dogs altogether!!

- **Parking problems in St. Lawrence**

The problem is not new. Apply to get double yellow lines reinstated. The village needs to make St. Lawrence safer. Traffic calming issue needs to be installed. MDC TruCam dates are being arranged. The Clerk to arrange having MP John Whittingdale, ECC Cllr W. Stamp, Cllr Shaw, Lee Williams, Nicola Syder to the November meeting to listen to and take away all the complaints and provide any possible solutions.

A resident raised the question of funding from the Parish Council for a firework event at the Watersports Club having been informed that the Parish Council had suggested this at a meeting earlier this year. It was pointed out that the suggestion came from the Residents Association and no funding has every agreed by the Council. It was further pointed out that during 2022 the Residents Association had undertaken a number of fundraising events in the village and the Council had been led to believe that there were funds there for events in the village

145/2023 Representative Reports

- a) **Greening of the village** – To receive a written report from Cllr C. Thorne

The fairly new plants that have been planted by the Car Park sign are surviving quite well, and we have weeded this area several times to try and keep it looking tidy. The weather is causing the normal problems for this time of year, but we are manging to keep the trees and plants alive and some seem to be enjoying the heat. The Dinghy planter has struggled with the dry weather of recent weeks, and we have reduced our watering this year to try and be more environmentally friendly, and the tomato plants have provided a few fruits.

We still need volunteers to assist us with all of the Greening Project as it is the same few people doing all of the work.

- b) **Asset Management report** – To receive a written update report from Cllr C. Thorne

This list will be updated on a monthly basis as to the current state of condition. This list will now require to be referred back to October 2022 for comparison. This is to reduce the amount of paperwork that is produced.

1. **Play equipment:** 27-09-23: The general state of condition is good, although the play bark is showing signs of settlement and will require toping up in the not-too-distant future.
2. **Toddler Multiplay equipment.** 27-09-23 We now need to **build up the funds to allow** us to replace this item of equipment and the play Bark. **We have received an up to date Estimate from Playdale and we have applied for a CIF Grant / Fund application.**
3. **Play Area Gate:27-09-23:** This suffered some considerable damage about a month ago, but with the help of Ian Crump from JWA construction this was rectified free of charge. It has been reported by Rachel of Diddydots that several weeks ago that a child caught his finger in the gate. I have looked at the ROSPA recommendations for the play Gate and it is clear that we should

make some alterations to it to conform. I am in the process of obtaining some urgent costings on this.

4. **Jubilee Field: 26-07-23:** My main concern on this is regarding the amount of Dog fouling that is being left behind. I have looked at the ROSPA recommendations on this matter and feel that this item needs swift action. **Basketball equipment:** 27-09-23: We now have 2 estimates for new equipment.
5. **Portacabin in Play area:** The Water company sign has been fixed to the side of the cabin and fits in well with the environment and recycling message. The Portacabin is now being used for storage by the new Village Youth Club, Which I feel is already showing the value of the cabins refurbishment. Key Holders: Marian Gibson. Chris Thorne, Rosemary Millet, St Lawrence WI (Ann Johnson), Chelsea Crump,
6. **Car park: 27-09-23:** is in a sound condition.
7. **Signage: 27-09-23:** The new sign to Jubilee Field Car Park is still looking smart, and I would once again like to give our thanks to Mr Jez Mc Coy of Planet Graphics who carried out the Art work and installation of said art work totally free of charge.
8. **Hedges:** All hedges have now received there autumn cut.
9. **River Viewing Shelter:** 27/09/23: This requires Re Decoration. We have been supplied with a professional Specification by Dulux Trade. **We require the nomination of contractors to obtain prices, can we have some recommendations please.** At present we only have one person who has looked at this with a view to giving a price, Messrs. A Lipscombe
10. **Dog Bins:** The new Dog Poo Bin has been erected by Councillor John Irish in Seaway. And I understand that it is also proving very popular.
11. **CCTV Equipment** Key Holders: CCTV Room- Marian Gibson, Christopher Thorne, and Rosemary Millet. John Pollock. CCTV Cabinet- Marian Gibson. Rosemary Millet, Christopher Thorne, John Pollock
12. **Table Tennis Table (external by Water sports Club):** This is in a sound condition. Several of the bricks to the steps from the road are loose and require repair, as does some cracking to the floor in this area. We have asked for quotations for this works. We have received 2 Estimates for this work from A Lipscombe, on 2 ways of addressing the problem, but no other contractor has come forward! We have accepted the Estimate from A Lipscombe to Remove all of the brick nosing's and to re bed them in mortar on the existing concrete foundation, making them secure for future years.
13. **Goal Posts:** These are in a reasonable state of repair.
14. **Field gates main entrance to Jubilee Field:** We have increased the strength to some of the hinges by fitting through bolts instead of the coach screws that were fitted.
15. **Village Sign adjacent to Bradwell road:** Is in sound condition.
16. **SLPC display Notice board (opposite Stone Pub):** Is in sound condition, although the timber support post does rock slightly.
17. **SLPC display Notice board (by Dairy Stores):** Is in a sound condition.
18. **New equipment for older children:** Please see Estimate from Playdale and Zip wire costing via John Pollock.
19. **Disability Access:** This is an area that I feel we will have to have a closer look at in the near future, especially the entrance gate to Jubilee Field and Play area gate.
20. **Single bar play equipment:** Is in a sound condition.
21. **Other items of note/concern: Rubbish Bins:** It would appear that we have a temporary problem on changing the rubbish bags to the bins in the play area /car park. Has this item been rectified?

146/2023 Planning Application/s submitted plus any application/s after agenda published
No planning applications have been submitted affecting St. Lawrence

147/2023 Planning decision/s made by MDC affecting St. Lawrence
FUL/MAL/23/00081 - Pebbles 59 Mountview Crescent St Lawrence Essex

Signed

M. Gibson – Chairman of SLPC

25th. October 2023

Demolition of existing dwelling and replacement with 2 storey dwelling with 3 bedrooms, associated external works (including an air source heat pump) and landscaping. **REFUSE**

148/2023 Planning Appeal/s made affecting St. Lawrence

No planning appeals have been submitted affecting St. Lawrence

149/2023 Finance

a) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. August 2023

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. August 2023

b) To receive the comparison of Actual to Budgeted for 2023/24

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budgeted for 2023/24

c) To approve the payment of Accounts for August and September 2023 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements. **All Agreed**

d) Update on adding Cllrs R. Millett and J. Pollock as signatories for Unity Trust Bank
Cllr R. Millett has contacted UTB for a new letter with logging in details

e) Councillors to note the External Auditors report for 2022/2023

Councillors noted the External Auditors report for 2022/2023

150/2023 Councillors to list any defective streetlights with location/s in the village

No defective light/s reported

151/2023 Items for Next Agenda

Items for the October agenda to be supplied to the Clerk by 11th. October 2023 at the latest.

152/2023 Next meeting will be held on 25th. October 2023 at 7pm in the village hall

155/2023 Councillors to note provisional meeting dates in 2024

24.01.24: 28.02.24: 27.03.24: 24.04.24: 22.05.24: 26.06.24: 24.07.24: 25.09.24: 23.10.24: 27.11.24: 18.12.24

156/2023 Exclusions of the public and press

Councillors to Resolve that by virtue of the provisions of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded during discussion of the following business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

157/2023 Closure of the Meeting

To close the Meeting having considered and determined all items of business.

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.10pm and thanked everyone for attending.