



Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Wednesday 25th. May 2022 at 6.45pm in the Village Hall.

Present: M. Gibson (Chairman), D. Bonich, A. Gardner, R. Millett, E. Roberts, C. Thorne, and Kevin B. Money (Clerk to Parish Council). There were also 10 members of the public present.

1. **WELCOME.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from MDC Cllr P. Channer, MDC Cllr M. Helm
3. **2021-22 VICE-CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

I would like to start this report by thanking Gerry Lewsey for all the work he has done on behalf of St Lawrence Parish Council over the last few years. He has been a dedicated servant to the community always striving to improve facilities within our extremely limited resources. We are going to miss him. I would also like to thank our clerk, Kevin Money for the constant support and advice he gives the Council.

The Parish Council, within the last year, has replaced the gates to the Jubilee Field (noting that one has since been damaged beyond repair), repaired the car park surface, replaced the fence for the children's play area and renewed the bark on the surface of the playground. These have cost a total of £8687.99p in 2021/2022 year.

Over the last 3 years in addition the Parish Council has replaced the swings and the large climbing frame in the children's playground. We know that the small climbing frame is likely to have to be replaced in the very near future. In addition, the viewing platform by the river is due to be repainted. Wherever possible we look for grant funding to help with capital expenditure but it is not always available.

We also have the routine maintenance jobs - grass and hedge cutting, maintaining streetlights along most of Main Road and administration costs including insurance on the Parish's assets.

We are of course aware that there are always more things to be done but our limited budget – which comes by way of the Council Precept as part of residents' Council Tax bill means that we always must prioritise in order to get best value for residents' money.

The Greening the Village project will be ongoing, with the trees being planted on the Jubilee Field and planting at the entrance to Main Road being just part. This village does not have expanses of public land so we don't have the pretty village greens of the more historic communities. Indeed until 20 years ago there was no public open space in the village.

Many of you will be aware that the seawall to the immediate west of the village has been damaged by storms over the winter. The Parish Council led efforts to report the damage and push for a proper action by the Environment Agency. We have been assured that remedial work will be commencing within the next 2 or 3 weeks.

Like all communities we have problems from time to time with anti-social behaviour and we are working with the various authorities to see what can be done. It is never a simple fix but we are hopeful that we may be seeing a little more law enforcement over coming months. And of course, there is something you can do on this to help us help you. When you see abuse of parking restrictions, vandalism, etc, report it directly to the relevant authorities. Facebook isn't the authorities, and it works far better when it isn't just the same Parish Councillors reporting problems!

The Parish Council is only seven people strong. Our clerk, Kevin Money works very part time keeping us within the confines of the law (the rules can be mind boggling) but we are here on the ground. We are all volunteers. We are all happy to do what we can to help with issues but sometimes we just must refer things on – and hope that the authorities actually realise where St Lawrence is.

It has been a tough couple of years for everyone with pandemic affecting life everywhere. Hopefully we

Signed

Marian Gibson – Chairman of SLPC

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can now start to really move ahead, starting with celebrating the Platinum Jubilee around the village.

4. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

ECC annual report Cllr Wendy Stamp

Regardless of where your political allegiance sits, Kevin Bentley has certainly hit the ground running. I am sure you have all received a copy of Everyone's Essex but if not, I have included the link. Download the brochure as an accessible PDF: Everyone's Essex (PDF, 8.54MB)

Some of us may say not far enough when it comes to funding or new ways of working/future green methods for repairing potholes, reviewing speed limits and highway signs/verge maintenance.

There has been some improvement on school place provision at Ormiston Rivers Academy but sadly not at other local primary and nursery education place expansion as yet. New development is racing ahead without necessary infrastructure improvements.

Recent meetings have taken place regarding the urgent requirement for SEND provision within the area. One of the towns that ECC under consideration is South Woodham Ferrers as this is central and will serve Rochford too. We have a group of active committed parents who is certainly working extremely hard to bring much needed SEND provision to the area. A lot more work is required to bring this to fruition.

The locality fund of £10K benefited a number of our councils last year and I hope to see the projects finish and benefit the community later this year.

A new year of funding should be approved at Full Council in May and as explained I have a few applications to carry over from last year's allowance so I may not be able to help every council for another request – but I will do my best.

LIBRARIES

The Deputy Leader Louise McKinley has certainly championed on libraries and the diversification and multipurpose use of the ones that are still open and safeguarded for the next 4 years.

The Plan outlines our commitment to keeping all 74 libraries open and highlights the following key areas for focus:

Library Service and Literacy

- Improving Literacy for children and adults and creating 'Literacy Areas' in every Essex Library by the end of June. Literacy Areas are new areas that group together materials to support children and adults with reading and literacy skills. They are interactive areas that provide activities and signpost residents to literacy schemes and programmes.
- Supporting children in becoming school ready.
- Offering up to date and refreshed stock and resources (Physical and online).
- Delivering a programme of exciting events in the libraries.
- Upskilling Staff and working with volunteers to enhance the service.

Communications and Infrastructure

- Improving communications with residents so they know what is on offer and working to attract new users.
- Investing in our spaces so they are vibrant, accessible and flexible.
- Ensuring our buildings are as 'green' as can be.

Supporting our communities and levelling up

- Making sure no one is left behind by expanding our outreach and community involvement.
- Enhancing employability, wellbeing, culture and arts through bringing people
 - Encouraging greater footfall, including welcoming new users through exciting new activities.

Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026 (essex.gov.uk)

HIGHWAYS

Cllr Scott is the Cabinet member with the unenviable task of being responsible for 5000 miles of our road network.

I have briefly listed some areas of his responsibilities which may help our residents when wishing to report faults or issues.

Update on projects and a brief description of services.

Major infrastructure investments and different stages.

Chelmsford HIF Projects Beaulieu Station

Colchester-Tendering HIF Projects A120-A133 link road/rapid transport

Harlow HIG projects: Sustainable transport corridor

Fairglen: A130/A127

M11 J8 at Stanstead: M11 new junction 7a at Harlow.

Highways England led projects.

A12 Chelmsford to A12 widening

A120 Braintree to A12

A12 Concrete roads programme.

Other capital works.

Alongside large projects Essex Highways also have an asset condition-led pipeline on many other schemes commissioned and delivered annually using available capital funding. They are locally significant and can cause disruption but are generally quicker to deliver than costly major projects.

Capital schemes include

- 1) Surface dressing
- 2) Machine surfacing (inlay)
- 3) Microsurfacing
- 4) Road reconstruction
- 5) Recycling

Structures

- 1) Bridges
 - 2) Culverts
 - 3) Subways
 - 4) Retaining Walls
- Traffic Signals (ITS) and Vehicle Restraint Systems (VRS)

Footways

LHP works (Local Highways Panel)

SWAS (Surface Water Alleviation Schemes) These schemes are more than cleansing or jetting – more planning and complex and very often need to collaborate with landowners.

LED streetlight installations still continuing.

SEPP South Essex Parking Partnership

Highways are trialling 6 new innovations and let's hope there will be many more

- 1) Warm Asphalt -A13 Hadleigh
- 2) Hybrid electric/diesel van
- 3) Electric mini-digger
- 4) Rubber kerbs
- 5) Recofoam surfacing material
- 6) Hydrogen fuel cell lighting.

Sadly carriage way repairs (pot hole) repairs are only to make safe until resources allow to carry out permanent repairs.

They also offer emergency out of hours repairs – overnight/weekends dealing with

- 1) Dangerous potholes and sudden collapse and damage
- 2) Fallen trees
- 3) Highway flooding
- 4) Fuel spills
- 5) Clean up and repair's following accidents.

Winter service

Flooding – Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) manages flood risk from rainfall, surface water and ground water. Essex highways as the Highway Authority (HA) is responsible for flood control on the publicly maintainable highways. Highways England are responsible for highways drains on their roads in Essex A12, A120, M11, and M25.

ECC and Essex Highways do work together on Gully cleansing, SWAS (Surface water alleviation schemes), planned pre-surfacing jetting and investigation and highway flooding emergencies. I won't go into any greater detail.

Risk assessments – road defects 50mm for carriageway and 20mm for repairs. Inspections of PROW, (Public right of way 4000 miles of).

There are many other responsibilities which I am more than happy to assist clerks and residents with information or sign posting if and when required.

Income comes from – permit charges – Section 74/over running works – defects – skip and scaffolding licensing- temporary traffic regulation order notices, this is exhaustive.

I am looking forward to new strategies/policies and smarter ways of delivering a service which affects us

Signed

Marian Gibson – Chairman of SLPC

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all. Full details of the above is on Essex County Council Highways website.

An up-to-date report on Ukraine.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme Update 22.04.22

Key figures:

- The latest data indicates there have been 969 requests from Ukrainians with 654 sponsors in the ECC area. **Sponsor Packs and Comms**
- All of the translated versions of packs (in Ukrainian and Russian) for Ukrainian guests are now available online here [Ласкаво просимо до Ессексу: інформаційні матеріали для гостей - Essex County Council](#)
- Paper versions for distribution via district/borough/city council teams will be available from next week.
- FAQs on the ECC website are being updated on a weekly basis. The latest set is here: Information for sponsors welcoming a Ukrainian person or family: Homes for Ukraine scheme - Overview - Essex County Council
- Guidance is still awaited from DLUHC on the process for re-matching Ukrainian guests in the event that arrangements with initial sponsors break down.
- General information and updates are available here: Essex stands with Ukraine: what you can do to help - Essex County Council

Health Group update:

- A primary care guidance document that outlines likely health issues can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arrivals-fromukraine-advice-for-primary-care>

Housing Assurance/Safeguarding update:

- We are continuing the assurance process for accommodation safety checks and DBS checks.

Ports of Entry update:

- Arrivals at Stansted are currently averaging over a week at around 120 every day.
- The welcome desk at Stansted now helps guests with instances access via QR code to the DLUHC welcome pack <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainiansarriving-in-the-uk>
- There are low numbers of arrivals at Harwich, with Stena Line notifying the port of any entering under the 2 key schemes.
- Work is underway in terms of sustainable staffing with Uttlesford CVS volunteers taking over from the Red Cross on May 1.
- The majority of guests arriving do not require extra support.

Finance update:

- The districts are looking at agreeing an approach on how to distribute the £200 payment for new arrivals.
- We are awaiting formal guidance for the process on how sponsors apply for the £350 payment.

School places for Ukrainian children:

- We continue to support Ukrainian families and their sponsors to help them settle into their new communities. This includes meeting any welfare needs as well as children and young people's educational needs.
- All schools have been communicated with to confirm that children from Ukraine have the right to access a school place in the normal way. We are aware of a number of schools who have already received applications and are admitting children. Schools have also been advised about the additional funding from central government to support the needs of Ukrainian children.
- All families arriving from Ukraine will need to follow the established process for mid-year school admissions.

We continue to work closely with schools to ensure that all children are placed in schools within a reasonable distance from their homes.

- The educational needs of all children living and arriving in Essex remains our top priority and we will continue to support both families and schools with school admissions along with other needs the families may have.

Essex County Council in brief

Tovi Eco Park in Basildon is to be demolished – this is the waste treatment contract for the mechanical and biological waste treatment facility (MBT) – contract mutually terminated between ECC and UBB waste (Essex) Ltd.

Education

Out of 16,067 applications received on time, 14,382 pupils due to start in reception year Sept 22 have been offered their parent or carers first choice 89.51% whereas it was 89.75% last year. This year a further 6.45% was offered their second choice 1.45% third place, 0.50% fourth preference, 2% could not be offered one of the parents preferred schools and was offered a place at the nearest school with a place available.

Adult funding for numeracy funding of £7,908,304.04 has been given from DfE for adult community learning. Visit Essex Opportunities for more information.

Free webinars are being offered on how to reduce waste and reuse more, its part of the circular economy project. Cllr Malcolm Buckley is the Cabinet Member for waste reduction and Recycling. It encourages collaboration, education and promotes change for sustainable businesses, schools, and households.

Ride London doesn't come to our part of the division but it does to Maldon Town on the weekend 29th April over 25,000 cyclists are expected to participate.

Kickstart Essex (a national government scheme) has invested over 1 million pounds and has helped over 250 young people start new jobs across the county. 87% have gone on to secure jobs or apprenticeships at the end of their placement.

Essex Climate Action Commission.

A huge amount of work is being carried out on reaching carbon/net zero. An Essex advice-pack is being released in May that I will send out for councils in addition to all the other information available on The Essex Climate Action Commission website. The site contains all the information about the commission's work as well as news concerning the environment and climate action across Essex. The Target is 1 tonne per person our UK average is 7.7 tonnes of CO2 per person. The GOOD LIFE IS 7 THINGS – Healthy Food – Togetherness – Connected to Nature – Physical Activity/mobility – Personal growth & Learning – Ethical/Spiritual framework and Sustainable consumption. The good life is low carbon. For more information use the links below and start reducing your carbon footprint.

The Commission released its report Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral on 20 July 2021.

www.essexclimate.org.uk www.julespretty.com <https://www.essexclimate.org.uk/essex-advice-> for information.

Finally the budget for 2022 – 2023 headlines are: -

£1.3 billion over four years on major infrastructure projects including new schools and large road improvements. £200 million spending commitment towards Essex net zero targets and achieving a high-quality environment. Supporting businesses through backing Essex business programme, supporting business growth and creating jobs as well as investment in skills for young people to get back into work. Libraries we covered in detail previously.

The council tax was increased by 4.49%. 2.99% council tax increase 1% specifically for adult social care plus a further 1.5% for adult social care that was deferred from last year. (Election year).

I am sure there are many other items I could have included in this report but I have written far more than I intended.

I have helped with the officers and some member support, numerous residents over the first year and I hope to continue to do with more confidence now I am settling in a little.

We have all been impacted by Covid 19 in different ways and I wish to send my thoughts, prayers and best wishes to everyone who has personally been affected.

I will endeavour to attend some of the council meetings this year and will start a surgery when I get the feedback from each council if this is wanted.

5. MALDON DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Report for Annual Parish Council Meeting of 2022 Regarding MDC 2021/2022 – Cllr Penny Channer

I have provided reports throughout the year to the Parish Councils within the Ward of Mayland so I will not repeat all those matters reported.

The financial year 2021/22 was a challenging one for Maldon District Council, again impacted by the Covid-pandemic, but one in which much had been achieved.

The Council continued supporting the national response to the Covid Pandemic during 2021/2022 assisting the Vaccination programme, by provision of the Maldon vaccination centre delivered, by the NHS, through our District Council offices.

We continued to support our businesses distributing over £10 million of government support to local businesses to ensure that they, associated jobs and livelihoods were protected. Improving engagement

Signed

Marian Gibson – Chairman of SLPC

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with businesses progressed with a range of wider business support to enable not just survival but to thrive as the economy recovers.

Core services throughout the pandemic have been maintained, including:

- Increasing the number of people we were able to help who were threatened with homelessness
- Maintaining kerbside collection of waste and recycling through working with our partners SUEZ, despite challenging operating conditions including the national driver shortage.
- Delivered Environmental Health service whilst meeting the increased challenges and regulation regarding Covid
- Ongoing delivery of customer engagement and service delivery whilst working remotely

We continued supporting the community response to Covid. We will build on the strong partnerships formed, with the establishment of 'One Maldon District'. Bringing together the public, private and community sectors to support health and wellbeing in the district, recognising the role that economy and community safety have as determinants of public health. The first meeting of One Maldon has been held and Jane Gardner, the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner was appointed Chairman with Charlie Fillingham the Chairman of Sense of Place appointed as the Vice Chairman.

We adopted our Climate Action Strategy – Our Home Our Future, - to bring about positive change for the District. The Strategy was welcomed and praised as excellent work by ECC's Climate Action Commission's Chairman.

The Maldon District Local Development Plan (LDP) is an essential important document. The LDP Review commenced during 2021/2022 and the Issues and Options consultation has been undertaken and the consultation responses will be reported back in due course to Members. I urged everyone to make a response and I hope that all the Parish Councils in the Ward of Mayland did so.

Work continued throughout 2021/2022 to improve the efficiency of the Council via the process improvement programme funded through the 20220/21 budget.

Other notable achievements include:

- Resilient IT systems meant we were not impacted by the national 'Log4j' cyber-attack in December 2021
- New Telephone system for the call centre removing legacy systems and costs for MDC and improving front line contact with the public.
- Shortlisted for the Workplace Transformation award for our work on Future Ways of Working (Shortlist | Smarter Working Live 2021)
- Jointly secured a Local Digital Fund (LDF) bid of £280k with Colchester and Tendring, to develop a Dynamics task allocation tool in line with our ICT strategy
- Awarded a £60,000 transition funding and £38,000 in burdens funding to migrate our Land Charges data to the bespoke HM Land Registry system, so our customers can receive the LLC1 information immediately at a fixed price.
- Continued commitment to encourage residents' views, using them to shape services through running a budget survey as part of the budget setting process, plus our annual resident and business survey.
- The Council developed and approved a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy with a focus on how we can support and engage better with our communities.

In November 2021, we launched the 'Enough is Enough' campaign highlighting the recent increase in unacceptable behaviour towards our staff and members. This has been supported by other local authorities. We look now to move on from these challenges but it remains we will challenge any form of unacceptable behaviour towards the Council.

We now need to continue our march already underway to keep moving positively and proactively forward in the recovery from Covid.

Promotion and support of our economy; environment; efficient, effective and value services are important.

We had to be innovative and adopt new ways of working during the pandemic and those foundations can be built upon in seeking further improvements in the delivery of accessible cost- effective services.

We need to do the right things. To continue to be a Council that is focussed on its residents. Services need to support people. It matters for them ,we need to be responsible. People need to have confidence in our Council, our ability to deliver.

Therefore, budgets need to be sustainable, it is not just about balancing budgets, it is important that use of reserves is not increasing year on year. We need to continue to look ahead, organise things, consider, and take action ie: income generation and savings.

With the challenges of the past year, 2021/2022, it is not totally unexpected that the budget for the year succumbed to some pressure. There was additional budget pressure that could not be offset.

Council finances may appear healthy with the General Fund Reserve currently sitting at £5.6 million.

Signed

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Marian Gibson – Chairman of SLPC

However, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy shows increasing budgetary pressures for the coming years forecasting that the General Fund level will slip below the minimum reserve level of £2.6m by 2024/25, unless action is taken. This being against a potentially worsening picture with costs rising due to increased inflation. Regular review of the MTFS is being undertaken and will maintain an accurate forecast. The Council throughout the year (2021/2022) was planning ways that revenue income can be increased and it has refreshed its commercial strategy. Several commercial projects are being developed.

The financial settlement from Government for 2022/23, which we became aware of before our Budget Setting meeting in February 2022 and was considered during the budget setting process, was a one-year settlement. It included Business Rates Baseline funding; Lower Tier Services Grant; Services Grant; Rural Services Delivery Grant plus New Homes Bonus with an increase to £961,172 from £929,981 in 2021 / 22. The Rural Services Delivery Grant remained the same as 2021 /22 regarding our allocation of £32,339. The Services Grant allocation of £105,646, to help alleviate the 1.25% increase in National Insurance. The provisional base Homelessness Prevention Grant was maintained at £142,320, with an additional £3,690 for Domestic Abuse New Burdens

It is important to highlight that the settlement funding assessments calculation regarding the core spending power of local authorities included Councils increasing Council tax by £5 per annum.

During the budget setting process of 2021/2022 for the budget of 2022/23 the Council's cross-party Finance Member Working Group met on several occasions to provide input into the budget that was announced at the Budget Full Council Meeting in February 2022.

Members had the opportunity to work collaboratively and share their views at these and other meetings, particularly the Strategy and Resources Committee. Part of that process ensuring that any growth was kept to a minimum recognising the financial challenges and unknowns ahead of us.

However, some investment was considered right. This includes:

Some additional staffing to ensure services have the capacity to operate.

Investing in our commercial activity to bring forward income generation and wider benefits for the District
Ensuring capacity to deliver on Council policy such as the Climate Action Strategy.

Due to the financial challenges ahead in 2022/23 at the Budget Setting Council Meeting of February 2022 requirements announced were of consolidation, focus on delivery of existing policies and priorities, as per our Corporate plan 2021-23. Plus, it was agreed that the Council will be exploring the opportunities for the District that may emerge from the recently published Levelling Up White Paper. Priorities that have been decided in February 2022 will include going forward in to 2022/2023 year:

- Embedding a Climate Action Culture across the organisation, to enable the Council to lead by example
- Deliver process improvement training for staff and build capacity for continual improvement work across the organisation
- Review major corporate contracts including waste and leisure.
- Explore opportunities for closer partnership working and shared service opportunities with other local authorities where they improve efficiency, enhance resilience and capacity of the individual councils.
- Deliver a Customer Access Strategy, linking with the ICT strategy and Process Improvement Framework and demonstrating how we will support our customers offline.
- Delivery of the refreshed /updated commercial strategy, seeking to increase Council income through an approach that brings together our strategy and commercial objectives.

Tourism is a key driver for our local economy and the council can help to create opportunities for further growth and prosperity focussing as we have done in the past on our tourism offer now restrictions are lifting.

Constant challenges remained in 2021/2022 and do so now in the 2022/2023 year. Challenges remain to ensure best value services and deal with the need for financial sustainability whilst acknowledging the pressures that households are also facing.

Bearing in mind the financial pressures and need for financial sustainability MDC agreed at the Budget Meeting of the Full Council of February 2022 that Maldon District Council's Band D Council Tax was increased by £5 for 2022/23; this equates to 42p per month for a band D Property. Whilst bringing in this increase, MDC noted that:

- Government has recognised the pressures currently facing both Councils and residents and has introduced a £150 refund for those in band A-D properties as well as allocating money for a discretionary fund.
- The Council tax rise of £5 equates to approx. 10p a week.
- The Council continues to be impacted by the cost of COVID

Signed

Marian Gibson – Chairman of SLPC

29th. June 2022

- Inflation was at 5.5% (note: now in May 2022 inflation has risen higher), Council tax increase was well below at 2.41%.
- Commercial activities in development to generate income.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

- Residents talked about the damage car park gate
- Anti-Social behaviour and parking issues were raised and discussed.
- CCTV cameras need to be re-directed and serviced.
- Car parking sign to be installed
- 2 dog bins have been delivered and awaiting installation.
- Parish Council notice board by the dairy has been damaged
- New notice board to be moved to the old area of the broken notice board
- All notice boards need restoring works
- A new Residents Association has been set up and they require a 2-hour session once a month
- Can a public toilet/s be looked at installing in the village?

a) Queen's Platinum event on 2nd. – 5th. June 2022 – To co-ordinate with other events being held in St. Lawrence over the weekend. Beacon to be lit on Thursday 2nd. June at 9.45pm together with a BBQ at the Church – Insurance and risk assessment for any bouncy castles being installed on the recreation ground to be supplied to Parish Clerk **PRIOR** to the event

- All insurance and risk assessments were handed to the Council, and it appears to be in order
- Bows to be placed around poles in the village
- Refreshments will be available
- Electricity to be used via the village hall
- All outside licences have been obtained
- First-Aider and Fire Marshall will be in attendance

b) MDC Community Engagement Team Officers – Cost £35.94p +VAT per hour

It was discussed that using the MDC Community Engagement Team Officers for 70 hours per year would cost about £2500. The residents agreed to this but would also do some fund-raising to supplement any further hours

A further ECC Highways Speeding survey was requested.

c) Sea wall collapse – on 16.05.22 MDC wrote *"I appreciate that you may well have received an update directly, but the EA have advised they are looking to carry out works to the collapse toward the end of this month/beginning of June. MDC don't have any specific dates yet but they will advise slightly closer to the time"*

Residents noted the action being taken by the Environmental Agency

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 8pm and thanked everyone for attending.