



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 12th January 2017 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 7.30pm

17/01. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Andrew Bull – Chairman
Councillor Dave Dyson – Vice chairman
Councillor Linda Bowen
Councillor Alan Preston
Councillor Andrea Chinery
Councillor Paul Thompson

Also in attendance:
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies were received from:
Councillor Mike James

17/02. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:

Councillor Dave Dyson and Councillor Andrea Chinery declared an interest in agenda point 17.4 No other declarations of interest were made.

17/03. Open Session – no members of public to raise any matters in the open session.

17/04. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting *(previously circulated)*

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st December 2016 were approved and signed as correct.

17/05. Matters Arising from last meeting - not dealt with below

Councillor Andrew Bull reported that he has received an invitation to speak on the Toppesfield Parish Councils purchase of land and the success of the listening events which have been held. Also that the RCCE have asked if Toppesfield Parish Council would run a conference on how the Essex Village of the Year competition was won. This would be until May 2017. This was discussed and agreed in principle.

17/06. Actions from previous meeting:

- 17/06.1 Kaaren Berry to speak to Essex County Council as to where the work in Park Lane will finish. No work is scheduled at present possibly for the new financial year. Residents that will be affected by the works will be written to or more information could be sort by emailing highway.enquiries@essex.gov.uk
- 17/06.2 Kaaren Berry to follow up with a resident of Camoise Close re footpath 51 – ongoing.
- 17/06.3 Kaaren Berry to follow up with Community Heartbeat Trust re adoption of the Toppesfield Phone Box. Emails sent but no response yet. Ongoing. Councillor Bull has spoken to the residents near the Toppesfield telephone box and in principle they do not object to it being changed to a defibrillator box.
- 17/06.4 Councillor Andrew Bull to follow up re position of the Gainsford End Pump project. This is still ongoing, Councillor Dave Dyson will follow up re the works to the pump and Councillor Alan Preston will make enquires with regard to the housing of the pump and costs.
- 17/06.5 Councillor Paul Thompson to seek quotes for work for the Cricket Club Storage Facilities for the budget meeting. Councillor Paul Thompson feels there is a lot of resistance for having the area modified. Councillor Paul Thompson to seek quote for the modifying of the breeze block structure.

- 17/06.6 Kaaren Berry to look into group training sessions for all Councillors. The two-hour short training courses and we will look at holding on in the new financial year.
- 17/06.7 Councillor Alan Preston to seek second insurance quote for the Pavilion. Councillor Alan Preston reported that this is in hand and all information should be available for the next Parish Council meeting.
- 17/06.8 Councillor Alan Preston to provide costings for maintenance to village noticeboards and community gate signs. Councillor Alan Preston reported that the cost of a full repaint to the village gate signs would be £500 and for freshen up would be £250. It was agreed that a refresh of the 5 pairs of gates would be sufficient next year.
- 17/06.9 Kaaren Berry to report damaged salt bin between Harrow Hill and The Causeway to Essex County Council. This has been reported and Essex County website shows it is 'in the process of scheduling works'.
- 17/06.10 Kaaren Berry to look up the cost of the noticeboard which was purchased for Camoise Close. The cost of the noticeboard was £1314.48 in November 2014. The noticeboard on the gates to the village hall belongs to the village hall committee so Councillor Dave Dyson will raise with them that a more professional board could be sort with the possibility of moving it onto the road side of the hedge (near the gates).
Councillor Alan Preston stated that he has tried to adjust the gates and has left a message for the village hall committee to consider further maintenance to the gates.

17/07. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

No issues were raised.

17/08. Correspondence Received:

- 17/08.1 Essex County Council - Minutes of DaRT working group 11 October 2016 received – there was a slight drop in the number of passengers of the DaRT3 service.
- 17/08.2 EALC – Parish Councils will not be capped currently – NALC Chairman released a statement to say “I very much welcome the government’s decision not to extend council tax referendum principles to any size of parish or town council in 2017/18. Parishes play an important role in communities and local democracy and I am pleased the secretary of state acknowledged this in his statement and he has listened to the sector’s concerns. I would urge councils to continue to be fiscally responsible and I am keen work with the government on ways to increase transparency and engagement with residents.”
- 17/08.3 Braintree District Council - Garden Communities update – This will be published on the Parish Council website.
- 17/08.4 Essex County Council – Withdrawal of some 89/89A bus services – revised early morning and mid-evening service as a result of withdrawal of services 34/34A.
- 17/08.5 Essex County Council – A120 consultation begins 17 January 2017 for 8 weeks. Please visit www.a120essex.co.uk for more information or to share your views.
- 17/08.6 Mhp- analytical report December 2016 received
- 17/08.7 EALC – help us plan Essex’s future survey – survey emailed to all Councillors for completion.
- 17/08.8 RCCE – Community Agents information received
- 17/08.9 Braintree District Council – Breakfast meeting dates for the coming year received
- 17/08.10 Braintree District Council’s Livewell campaign ‘If I Can, You Can’ launches January 2017
- 17/08.11 Essex County Council - Notice of Proposed Modifications of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Waste Local Plan, Consultation documents can be viewed at www.essex.gov.uk/WLP
- 17/08.12 Braintree District Council – Volunteer Awards – nominations can be made at www.braintree.gov.uk/BDVA
- 17/08.14 Clerk & Councils Direct and The Clerk magazines January Editions received
- 17/08.15 Request from Chair of BDC to visit Toppesfield in February 2017.

Late Correspondence:

- BDVSA – E-bulletin – circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting
- Ridgewell Parish Council – change of clerk.
- RCCE – Growing Communities – Competition for Schools and community groups.
- Real Nappy Campaign – Essex County Council has produced leaflets to promote this campaign.

17/09. Financial Accounts:

- 17/09.1 To receive the Clerk’s Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval – report received and payments approved – see Appendix A. Councillor Linda Bowen stated Ivy Cook was delighted and surprised with the flowers and cards for her 110th Birthday.

- 17/09.2 Insurance for the Pavilion proposal – all information should be available for the next Parish Council Meeting.
- 17/09.3 Budget for 2017/2018 – budget to be proposed for approval to set the precept for 2017/2018. The budget was present and discussed. Councillor Paul Thompson proposed the budget was accepted and Councillor Dave Dyson seconded the proposal. All present agreed.

17/10. Highways:

- 17/10.1 Upcoming maintenance work on A120 and A12 – From 9th January 2017 until May there will be renewing of various sections of the A12 and A120.
- 17/10.2 Cust Hall Bridge – response from Councillor David Finch was as follows: – ‘I have checked with our highways department who have confirmed that during a routine bridge inspection over the summer it was noted that the arch faces and spandrel walls on the bridge were in a poor condition, and as a result a 3 tonne weight restriction was implemented to safeguard highway users. Enforcement of such a restriction in a rural location necessitated a width restriction in the form of concrete blocks placed over the structure to physically prevent any vehicles greater than 3 tonnes from going over the bridge. Cars will still be able to traverse the bridge as normal. The concrete blocks are going to be replaced in the next few weeks with a barrier system that cannot be moved as we are aware that the blocks have been moved a number of times.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the repairs required it is not possible to implement these immediately, hence the requirement for the weight and width restriction. Due to the nature of the issues on site and the construction of the bridge, there are various elements of work that need to be completed prior to the actual repairs being carried out on site, such as engineering reviews and assessments as well as design works. These preparatory works are being prioritised along with works required across the county for the coming financial year, with the works on site scheduled accordingly once the outcome of these are known. Our provisional capital programme for the new financial year will also require sign off and agreement by Cabinet before it is confirmed.’

It is reported that several residents are going through insurance claims for damage to their vehicles due to the restriction on Cust Hall Bridge.

17/11 Parish Council Goal – ‘Love where you live’

- 17/11.1 Neighbourhood Watch Programme Update – Councillor Alan Preston stated that there was nothing further to add to other than the information in the next newsletter. It was reported that there has been a spate of criminal activity in Gainsford End recently.
- 17/11.2 Village Handyman Scheme – Councillor Alan Preston stated the scheme is up and running and an article is in the next newsletter to promote the service.
- 17/11.3 Proposal- Manifesto for our older generation. A draft proposal was handed out to all Councillors for discussion. This was discussed and with the addition of computer courses was proposed to be adopted by Councillor Linda Bowen and seconded by Councillor Dave Dyson. Councillor Andrew Bull went on to say that the next manifesto will be for the youth of the community.

17/12. Parish Council Goal – ‘Bringing the Community Together’

- 17/12.1 Pavilion Project - Grant funding application update. Councillor Paul Thompson stated that he has applied for funding from Tesco’s Bags of help. Funding will be for windows for the pavilion, foil backed plasterboard on the ceiling and create a loft hatch, deep flow gutters on the back of the building (water can then be used to water the pitch) and paint the inside of the pavilion. An estimate for the works comes to £4795.60.
- 17/12.2 Appoint Parish Council representation on 1] Village Hall Management Committee – Councillor Dave Dyson was appointed; 2] Village Shop Committee – Councillor Linda Bowen was appointed; 3] Village Show Committee – Councillor Andrea Chinery was appointed; 4] Church Fete - Councillor Andrea Chinery was appointed; 5] Friends of St. Margaret’s School - Councillor Andrea Chinery was appointed; 6] Little Chestnuts Pre-School - Councillor Andrea Chinery was appointed; 7] Golden Chestnuts – Councillor Dave Dyson was appointed.
- 17/12.3 Community Payback Team – Update on current progress. Agree and sign off schedule of work for January 2017. Councillor Paul Thompson reported that they have cleared an ‘L’ shape along the bottom corner of the Toppesfield playing field and the hedge by the pavilion has been cut back. They will continue with the hedge along the Church yard and cut back the cut through but this will not be until February 2017. Future projects are to redress the gravel in the Park Lane carpark and paint the village hall if required (but the painting would only be at weekends), and public footpath clearing.

Councillor Paul Thompson also reported that a commemorative elm tree from the bottom corner of the playing field has gone missing. The community payback team were aware it was not to be removed. The tree went the week before Christmas and it is not known who removed it and there have been comments on social media regarding the trees removal. The question of recompense from the Community Payback team was raised but as it is not known who removed it this would not be possible. There are spare trees and one of these will be used to replace it. Councillor Andrew Bull to speak with Alan Collard re the tree and replanting.

Councillor Paul Thompson also stated there have been reports of mud in the pavilion and mouldy cups being left in there. Also, the bins have not been emptied and rubbish bags are needed in the pavilion. The mud has been swept onto the concrete and then should wash away with rain. Councillor Paul Thompson continued to say that he has sown wild flower seeds along the border of the school wall.

The question of litter collection was raised for Camoise Close bin – it is believed to be the responsibility of Braintree District Council. Also, could a bigger bin be placed in the playing field and move it away from the Dog waste bin – Kaaren Berry to check with Braintree District Council.

17/12.4 Detailed Plans and Costings for Cricket Club Storage Facility proposal - mentioned under agenda point 17/6.5.

17/12.5 Proposal to purchase robust padlock to restrict access to Playing Fields. Councillor Andrew Bull has had reports the padlock is broken, he will investigate.

17/13 Parish Council Goal – ‘Protecting our Heritage and Planning for the Future’

17/13.1 To plan a maintenance programme for the upkeep of The Dick Ruggles Pavilion [External] and Pump House. [All] It was agreed that the pavilion would need paint approximately every 7 years so no action at present. The Pump house needs a spray round to control weeds and an annual review of the structure and bench could all be carried out by the handyman.

17/13.2 Proposal for Parish Charities Group replacement for Tony Davison – Councillor Andrew Bull has approached a parishioner who is interested in the Parish Charities and has attended their annual meeting. Tony Davison will remain on the Parish Charities until the end of the financial year and new representatives will be formally appointed at the Annual Parish Meeting.

17/14 Complaint from Little Chestnuts Pre-School regarding Village Hall

17/14.1 Update on investigation – Councillor Andrew Bull reported that an independent electrical check is being carried out shortly, the Health and Safety Checklist has been completed and no problems arose from this. A letter to the village hall committee has been sent asking for dates to meet with them. The heaters in the toilets and PAT testing are being looked at by an independent electrician. The electric tariff has reportedly been reverted. He also stated that the decision with regards to the request for a tenancy will lie with the village hall committee but Little Chestnuts pre-school must put a case together. The leaking roof has been addressed. Councillor Andrew Bull will respond formally to the pre-school. Little Chestnuts would also like to extend their opening hours but a business case from them needs to be put to the Village Hall Committee for their response.

17/15. Information exchange / Feedback from Parish Surgery / Items for the next agenda

17/15.1 Parish Surgery feedback – Councillor Paul Thompson reported that:

Re cycle bin bags taken by several residents,

Complaint from local mother crossing the road about a speeding motorist;

Camoise Close -signage for ambulances on the green verge brought it up as a necessity due Ambulances in the dark not knowing whether to turn Left or right as they approach the fork.

Councillor Paul Thompson will make a sign indicating are houses numbers at the fork.

Complaint about the state of the road along Park Lane - Highways will be carrying out works but no date yet has been set.

17/16. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled for 2nd February 2017 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

