



Toppesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5th March 2020 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 7.30pm

20/37. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Alan Collard - Chair
Councillor Amanda Smith
Councillor Andrea Chinery
Councillor Boyd Page
Councillor Chris Neale
Councillor Robert Stafford-Baker

Also, in attendance:

There was 3 members of the public in attendance.
District Councillor Richard van Dulken
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Andrew Bull – Vice Chair
County Councillor David Finch

20/38. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:

No declarations of Members interests were made.

20/39. Open Session – opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.

The applicants representative of planning application 15/01435/OUT, land rear of Church Farm Barn, Church Lane spoke about the history of the application and the reasons for its withdrawal and how the plans have been revised that and informed the Parish Council that another planning application will be submitted for the Parish Councils consideration.

A representative from the Allotments Society provided paperwork to support the grant application for the water bill for the allotments – the chairman stated this would be considered later in the meeting.

Sites for tree planting are being sought and the allotments could be a potential site especially if they are fruit trees as there has been some damage to caused to the existing ones by the wildlife.

It was questioned if the cherry trees along The Causeway are being replaced and if there could be replacements for the daffodils that have been damaged due to the recent works by County Broadband digging up various areas. The chairman stated this will be discussed later on the agenda.

District Councillor Richard van Dulken reported that Essex are planning to plant 375,000 trees over the next 10 years. The new visit Braintree website has been launched and suggested that Toppesfield businesses could be represented on it. Work to Cust Hall Bridge should commence in the new financial year and the Councillors grant fund will be available again from April - £250 has been given to the Church towards the cost of the new bell ropes.

42 million pounds is being spent by Braintree District Council in terms of investments and these include the high spec business park being built on the A131 near Great Notley Tesco's. Gridserve are building a electric charging centre with 24 charging points and the Manor Street regeneration project is underway and the high street will be pedestrianised.

20/40. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th February 2020 were signed as a true record of the meeting. This was proposed by Councillor Stafford-Baker and seconded by Councillor Page.

20/41. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only

Councillor Page would like it noted that he feels it is pathetic that the clerk cannot hold a key to the village hall to use the facilities out of hours. Discussions followed and the chairman will write to the village hall.

20/42. Actions from previous meeting:

- 20/42.1 Councillor Page to update on enquiry to Highways regarding the legality of the signs on village gates. Councillor Page reported he has spoken to Essex County Council who said they wouldn't look to install new gates due to financial constraints but Councillor Page is seeking an answer to the original question as to the legality.
- 20/42.2 Clerk to draft a format for the Annual Parish Meeting and circulate to all Councillors for comment – see agenda point 20/43.5.

20/43. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 20/43.1 Neighbourhood Plan – Councillor Page reported there will be an open event on the 21 March 2020 from 10am – 2.30pm. This will be a drop in event with display boards to inform people about the Neighbourhood Plan and the Housing Needs Survey. It is also planned the Housing Needs Survey will be delivered with the March Parish Newsletter.
- 20/43.2 Discussion on environmental issues: update re Trees, Charging points, Refilling centre and Community electricity - this was not discussed due to item 20/43.6 as this could be covered by a working group.
- 20/43.3 Tree planting – place for trees planted have been located. Discussion on moving the project forward and the sourcing/purchasing of the trees ready to plant in November/December 2020. A few people have come forward for proposed sites and tree sourcing needs to be looked at.
- 20/43.4 Update on repairing Gainsford End Telephone Box door – Councillor Stafford-Baker confirmed this has been repaired and replaced. However, there is currently no power in the telephone box but Community Heartbeat Trust are trying to resolve this with BT/Openreach.
- 20/43.5 Annual Parish Meeting – the date is still waiting confirmation but is proposed as 23 April 2020 at 7.30pm. The draft invitation detailing the format was circulated prior to the meeting and approved. Clerk to send out invitations.
- 20/43.6 Proposal to establish an Environment & Ecology Group – see appendix A. Councillor Collard made the proposal which was seconded by Councillor Stafford-Baker and agreed by those present.
- 20/43.7 Spring Litter Pick - discussion if this should be carried out this year and if so date to be agreed. It was agreed this will be held on 4th April 2020 from 10am – 12pm. Councillor Smith to ask the school if the children can produce posters to advertise this event.

20/44. Correspondence Received:

- 20/44.1 EALC Legal and County Updates, Essex County Council Highways Highlights, RCCE Essex Warbler – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 20/44.2 Nominations are now officially open for the Braintree District Volunteer Awards. There are several awards up for grabs, including: Inspirational Role Model, Long Service, Going the Extra Mile and Volunteering Group. Residents can nominate now by filling out the form online at www.braintree.gov.uk/volunteerawards or by calling 01376 552525 to receive a paper version. The closing date for receiving nomination forms is 5pm on Friday 1st May. Nominations will be considered by a panel of judges
- 20/44.3 EALC – Velo Essex – Cycling event on 20 September 2020.
- 20/44.4 Responses received from Essex County Council re concerns raised regarding the recent County Broad Band works in the parish.
- 20/44.5 Braintree District Council - New tourism website launch - Braintree District Council have officially launched their new Visit Braintree District tourism website, capturing what our unique and attractive district has to offer. From visitor attractions, independent shops to local events and things to do, you'll be able to find it all under one roof. You can view the website at: www.visitbraintreedistrict.co.uk.
- 20/44.6 Enquiry regarding the works to the Cherry trees along The Causeway and will those removed be replaced. The replanting of trees was discussed and it was agreed to look at locations for

replacement trees and to enquire what type of trees are not susceptible to disease.
Any replacement trees will not be cherry as per advice received.

The replacement of daffodils was discussed and agreed to see how many come up this year before considering replacements.

20/44.7 Essex County Fire and Rescue Service - Before they publish their final Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2020-2024, residents have the opportunity to make further comments or suggestions. The consultation will run until Tuesday 17 March. To see the draft and have your say, visit: www.essex-fire.gov.uk/irmp

20/44.8 PC Craig Wheeler – update on what's been happening in the District received.

20/44.9 RCCE – Essex Village of the Year competition 2020 – closing date is 24th April 2020.

20/44.10 Essex Rural Partnership – Have your say on the future of rural Essex. Consultation open until 30th March 2020. For more information please visit <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/essex-rural-strategy-2020-consultation/>

Late Correspondence:

Rye Street Group – Tree planting scheme and offer of trees. Clerk to respond as the parish council would like to be considered for some trees but types to be confirmed.

NS&I – letter received to confirm interest rates are reducing.

EALC – Health and Wellbeing – Pilot for Councils to develop a Health & Wellbeing Plan. This was discussed and the parish council are keen to support this.

Essex County Council – Application for new government funding for supported local bus services. Priority of proposals discussed.

20/45. Financial Accounts:

20/45.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. The report was received and payments approved – see Appendix B

20/45.2 Electronic payments – Parish Councils are able to use electronic banking, at least two people should be involved in any truncation, one of whom must be a member. Direct debit and standing orders are permitted if approved by the council. Information acquired from The Good Councillor's guide to finance and transparency. This was discussed and approved to pursue. The Councillors with signing powers are to contact the bank directly to sign themselves up for electronic banking.

20/45.3 Grant request from Toppesfield & Gainsford end Allotments Society – the application from the Allotments society to pay the water charges for the allotments each year. This was discussed and it was agreed to pay the water for the period 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 and this will be reviewed in April 2021. It was agreed to pay up to a maximum of £180 on the presentation of the water bills the allotment society has paid and then they will be reimbursed.

20/45.4 Renewal quotes for the electricity supply to the pavilion – renewal quotes have been received but a further quote is required. Clerk to obtain this before a decision is reached.

20/45.5 VE Day celebrations – estimated costing has been received from Jacqui Burnett who is heading the event. The costings were agreed and Councillor Collard to speak to Jacqui regarding this.

20/45.6 End of year accounts and independent check. Clerk proposed that Karen Baker audits the accounts again, this year. This was agreed by the councillor's present.

20/46. Highways:

20/46.1 Cust Hall Bridge, Toppesfield – Essex County Council have confirmed that Cust Hall Bridge is currently in the detailed design phase. The design will be completed by the end of this financial year and sent out to tender early in the next financial year.

20/46.2 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order of Stambourne Road, Toppesfield. Please see the following link <https://one.network/?tm=116447985> to find details of the intended closure of Stambourne Road, due to commence on 25th May 2020 for 12 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while County Broadband LTD undertakes installation of fibre broadband.

20/47. Benches within the parish:

20/47.1 Bench near Hill Farm: What if anything should we do with this? This was discussed and agreed to a replacement in principle. Approximate cost would be £300. Councillor Stafford-Baker to look at costings for this bench and a bench for Gainsford End playing field.

- 20/47.2 Bench in churchyard: Request to provide funds for its replacement. This was discussed, the location would be for a bench under the large oak tree. Councillor Stafford-Baker to speak to the church wardens regarding the proposed bench.
- 20/47.3 Dick Ruggles bench could this be relocated to outside the Dick Ruggles pavilion and removal of the concrete base. Councillor Page asked if the bench could be relocated to the righthand side of the petanque court. This was discussed and it was agreed to leave it where it is at present.

20/48. Planning:

There were no planning issues raised.

20/49. Toppesfield Village Hall

- 20/49.1 Update from Village Hall Management Committee – Councillor Chinery stated there was nothing further to report at this time.

20/50. Playing Fields & The Dick Ruggles Pavilion

- 20/50.1 Update on Gainsford End playing field project – this is progressing and the equipment is planned to be installed at the end of March 2020.
- 20/50.2 Possible removal of the large old metal roller in the south east corner of the playing field. This was discussed and it was suggested it may be moved to the allotments. Councillor Stafford-Baker to speak to the chair of the allotment society regarding this.
- 20/50.3 Tidying up the south east corner of the playing field. Removal of tree stumps and concrete and re grass seed. This was discussed and agreed as the area needs some work to be carried out. Councillors Page and Stafford-Baker to progress.
- 20/50.4 Discuss having a work party day in the Park. Pavilion to be painted, trees and bushes to be tidied up, ditch cleared and possible BBQ afterwards. This was discussed and agreed, Councillors Page and Stafford-Baker to progress.

20/51. Events

- 20/51.1 VE Day Celebrations – planning is progressing and the event needs to be further advertised.

20/52. Communications

- 20/52.1 Broadband Update – Councillor Chris Neale reported that Open Reach have completed approximately 95% of the project and we are still waiting the final sign off. Councillor Collard expressed gratitude from the Parish Council for Chris's work on this project.
- 20/52.2 Website update – the new website is now live. This looks identical to the Essex info site but information is still required to complete some updates. The new web address is:
<https://e-voice.org.uk/toppesfield-parish-council/>

20/53. Information exchange / Parish Surgery / Items for the next agenda

The next parish surgery will be held on the 7th March 2020 and Councillor's Collard and Neale will be available for this.

20/54. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 1st April 2020 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

20/55. Close

The meeting closed at 10.25pm

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

Councillor Collard to write to the village hall committee.

Councillor Smith to liaise with the school to ask the children to produce posters to advertise the community litter pick.

Councillors with signing powers are to contact the bank directly to sign themselves up for electronic banking. Clerk to seek a further quote for the electricity supply to the pavilion.

Councillor Stafford-Baker to look at costings for bench near Hill Farm and a bench for Gainsford End playing field.

Councillor Stafford-Baker to speak to the church wardens regarding the proposed bench for the Church yard.

Councillor Stafford-Baker to speak to the chair of the allotment society as to whether the large metal roller can be moved to the allotments.

Appendix A

Proposal to establish an Environment and Ecology Working Group

Background and overview

- It is widely accepted that climate change, resource management, habitat protection, our carbon footprint etc are amongst the most important issues we all face;
- The proposal is to establish a working group to consider what we, as a small community, can do to address these topics;
- The Working Group would effectively be sponsored by the PC but would not be a formal part of our structure, i.e. there would be no requirement for formal minutes, agendas nor public access to meetings;
- Parish councillors could attend as they wish;
- The working group could support (or lead) some of the things we are starting to consider, such as a refilling station, tree planting etc, as well as recommending potential new projects;
- Being viewed as linked to the PC (albeit not part of it) would help in seeking funding, should this be required;
- In addition to addressing the key issues around climate change, this may also prove attractive to many younger members of our community, a cohort with we have struggled to engage in the past;
- A nascent Environment & Ecology Group is meeting on 4th March. This comprises at this stage six parishioners and has enthusiastic members from the younger generation;
- If established as a PC working group, the Group would make regular reports and updates as well as recommendations to the PC.

The Parish Council's support for this initiative is sought.

Alan Collard

25 February 2020

Appendix B

Accounts - 5 March 2020		£	£	
National Savings Deposit Account:				
Balance as at 1st January 2020		<u>£2,646.58</u>		
Community Account				
Balance as at 28 February 2020			<u>£33,434.46</u>	
Subtotal:		<u>£2,646.58</u>		
All previous issued cheques cashed balance should be		<u>£2,646.58</u>	<u>£32,780.46</u>	
Income Received				
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice			Chq No:	Unrecoverable VAT
17.02.20	E.on - electricy supply to the Pavilion at Toppesfield Playing Field		101920	£8.51 £0.00
18.02.20	CCC Finance - Sovereign Play Systems - 20% deposit for play equipment		101921	£1,063.37 £0.00
02.03.20	RCCE - Housing Needs Survey Based on a 30% response rate		101922	£1,198.70 £0.00
02.03.20	Graham P Wood - installation of Defibrillator to Gainsford End Telephone Box		101923	£90.00 £0.00
05.03.20	Paul Clark Printing - March Newsletter		101924	£210.00 £0.00
01.03.20	Toppesfield Village Hall - Neighbourhood Plan meeting and open day event		101925	£81.00 £0.00
29.02.20	K Berry - February wages		101919	£380.94 £0.00
				<u>£3,032.52</u>
Balance		<u>£2,646.58</u>		<u>£29,747.94</u>
Last bank statement received up to 28 February 2020				