



Minutes of the Meeting of Great Notley Parish Council held on 13th November 2023 at the Community Centre Great Notley

Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Griffin (Chair), Ricci, Pritchard, Cogswell, Cunningham, Crawford and the Clerk

23/114: Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Butland & Sheppard and these were accepted by the Council.

23/115: Declarations of Interests

Councillor Cunningham declared an interest as a member of Braintree District Council & a member of Essex County Council and he declared that his portfolio had been increased to include Essex Highways. Councillor Ricci declared an interest as a member of Braintree District Council and of the Planning Committee.

23/116: To consider and approve Minutes of the Meeting of 16th October 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2023 were **agreed** by Councillors as a correct record, proposed by Councillor Pritchard and seconded by Councillor Ricci, and the minutes were signed by the Chairman.

23/117: Public Question Time

None.

23/118: Reports

23/118.1: Report from County Councillor

No report presented owing to apologies sent by Councillor Butland.

23/118.2: Report from District Councillor

The Rural England Prosperity Funding is now open and available to Parish Councils to apply. There is an environmental theme for the scheme and it will remain open until mid-December.

23/118.3: Reports from Councillors attending External Meetings

Councillors Griffin and Ricci attended the NGCA AGM on 6th November 2023, at which they appointed a new Chairman and Treasurer on a temporary basis until permanent appointments can be made.

Councillor Ricci also attended a recent meeting, in his capacity as a member of Braintree District Council, relating to forthcoming changes to the parking system at Great Notley Country Park. The parking system is expected to change from pay on departure to pay & display, with parking compliance monitored by the North Essex Parking Partnership. Councillor Ricci stated that he had asked for assurance that an impact would not be felt on the parking habits within the wider Great Notley vicinity. Concerns were also raised regarding NEPP's capacity to police compliance at weekends. The situation will be monitored by Braintree District Council as and when the parking changes are introduced. Advice was given to retain the entry and exit barriers for protection of the land. The new machines will be set up to take contactless and app payments. Councillor Ricci also confirmed that there was a need to ensure that the messaging regarding disabled parking is transparent, as Braintree District Council does not charge for disabled parking but Essex County Council does.

Councillor Griffin mentioned that, together with the Clerk, she had recently met with the Reverend of the Church in Great Notley to discuss community engagement, which resulted in a possible Christmas event that is tabled for discussion at this meeting.

23/119: Parish Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported as follows -

1. I attended a Council Finance Course on 2 November 2023, which provided some useful understanding of the management of finances and raised two pertinent issues; a) the need for financial management software which would enable greater accuracy for detailed reporting and b) that is considered 'good practice' for a Councillor to review invoices against statements on a monthly basis, something which a lot of parish councils do but we do not.
2. I attended a Waste Management Strategy information meeting via Zoom on 6th November 2023.
3. I recently obtained a quote for the White Gates at Panners to be repaired (refilled) and repainted, rather than replaced, which I hope will reduce costs. However, due to the current damp season, work would have to be booked in for Spring 2024. Councillors are asked to consider the quote at its meeting on 13th November 2023.
4. Meetings to conduct annual appraisals of the Litter Team are currently being scheduled and are expected to take place in early December.
5. I have had a number of meetings with the Reverend of the Church in Great Notley and a representative of WINGs to discuss Community events.
6. I have ordered a replacement set of pads (to be kept as spares) for the Defibrillator under our Annual Support agreement. I have also registered our Defibrillator on 'Defib Finder UK' after discovering that our Defibrillator was not listed on their website.
7. Finally, I am listing some ongoing matters where no action is required by the Parish Council but where a response is awaited from others.

Issue	First raised
Transfer of land between developers and Braintree District Council – <i>agreement reached between BDC and Countryside Properties regarding land to be transferred and commuted sum. Only outstanding issue is the future of the Unity Hand sculpture</i>	May 2012

Parish Council application for a 'warning pedestrians sign on A131 adjacent to Astronomer pub – Signage recommended for funding in financial year 2022 – 2023 at an estimated cost of £5,000	January 2015
Tree Strategy for the Parish – await Braintree District Council – detailed response expected summer 2023	July 2019
Application for 20mph speed limit within White Court section of the Parish –feasibility to be undertaken and current listed in the 'awaiting funding' list of the LHP.	July 2020
Local Highway Panel application for tactile paving at Bridge End Lane – Installation of tactile paving, visibility improvements and replacement of the barrier with a bollard is investigated as a package of works for detailed design and works commission. Estimated funding £16,000.00	June 2022
Rewilding scheme – await more information from BDC in 2023/4	October 2022
Tree Warden – voluntary position continues to be advertised	September 2022
Report on electric vehicles – awaited from Braintree District Council	October 2022

The report was **accepted** and Councillor Cogswell offered to nominate himself as the Councillor to meet monthly with the Clerk to review invoices and bank statements as an added financial control.

23/120: Financial Report

23/120.1: Bank Reconciliation

It was noted that the date 9th October was a typing error on the paper submission and it was, in fact, calculated to 9th November. The bank reconciliation calculated to 9th November 2023 was **accepted**.

23/120.2: Payments for Approval

Councillor Ricci proposed to approve the payments, which was seconded by Councillor Cunningham and the following payments were **approved** –

23/120.2 Payments for approval

Direct debits

16/10/23	RAC Allstar fuel card	131.33
23/10/23	Lloyds Card	

One Drive	1.99	
Monthly fee	<u>3.00</u>	4.99

Online Payments October 2023

Salaries		4,378.68
Clerk	Expenses	19.18
Senior Litter Picker	Expenses (Van Clean)	30.00
Essex Pension fund	Pension Contributions	1947.02
Perspective Landscapes	Grass Cutting (9 th & 23 rd Aug)	144.00
Perspective Landscapes	Grass Cutting (8 th & 22 nd Sept)	144.00
Myers Scott Ltd	Website Hosting Charges	121.66
HMRC Cumbernauld	September Tax and NI Contributions	888.94
HMRC Cumbernauld	October Tax and NI Contributions	888.94
NGCA	July Hall Hire	11.00
NGCA	September Hall Hire	13.00
Community Heartbeat	Defib Annual Support	198.00
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd	Screwdriver	17.99
Richard Edwards Group	Payroll Services	169.20
Npower	Electricity	221.10
Braintree District Council	Election Costs	70.05
Seagrave Inspection Services Ltd	Operational Inspection Report	156.00

Payments made/to be made in November 2023

Howdens (formerly A Plan)	Van Insurance Renewal	872.07
RBL Poppy Appeal	Remembrance Wreaths*	92.50
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd	PPE	91.00
Allstar Fuel	Van Fuel	64.79

Clerk	Expenses	19.18
EALC	Clerk Training Courses	180.00
NGCA	October Hall Hire	13.00
JCS External Solutions	Repair to Flagpole	120.00
Paul Clark Printing Ltd	Print of GNT magazine	1603.00
Peter Willett	Production of GNT magazine	150.00
Peter Willett	Distribution of GNT magazine	180.00

***Power to spend, s137 of the LGA 1972**

23/120.3: To resolve to retrospectively approve the change in GNT magazine distribution

The Clerk informed the Council of the recent difficulties faced with distribution of the Great Notley Times magazine for the Autumn issue, caused by Royal Mail's ineffective 'Door to Door' service. Problems with the booking process for October meant that Royal Mail would have delivered the magazines much later than had initially been agreed. Vision Magazine – the company previously given approval by the Council for a trial run – were unable to fulfil a commitment to deliver the magazine on this occasion as their distribution dates were not aligned with the print run dates. In order to avoid further disruptions to delivery, the Editor of GNT (Mr Peter Willett) agreed to deliver the magazines himself for the same fee approved for Vision Magazine, which remained considerably less than that charged by Royal Mail. Councillors unanimously **approved** the decision to use Mr Peter Willett's service for this issue and to remunerate him for his service. The Council agreed to the use of Vision Magazine for Spring 2024 onwards.

Action: The Clerk

23/120.4: To resolve to retrospectively approve the charge for repairs to the flagpole at the American Hospital War Memorial

Councillors unanimously agreed to the retrospective repairs to the flagpole undertaken by JCS External Solutions and payment of the invoice was **approved**.

Action: The Clerk

23/120.5: To resolve to retrospectively approve the slight increased total cost for the Remembrance wreaths

The Council had previously approved £80 expenditure for the wreaths but the final cost charged by Daniel Robinson was calculated at £92.50 upon collection.

Councillors **approved** the total cost of £92.50 for the wreaths [*Power to Spend: s137 of the LGA 1972*].

Action: The Clerk

23/120.6: To resolve to approve expenditure for a community Christmas event

The Chairman advised that, during meetings with the Reverend of the Church and representatives from WINGs, it became apparent that there could be a need for the Great Notley Parish Council to help coordinate and facilitate a community Christmas event this year. Money for 'Christmas' had been allocated in the budget approved for 2023/24 for up to £2,000. Preliminary discussions with the various community groups led to a collaborative 'Christmas Carols and Crafts' event scheduled to take place on 16th December 2023 at the NGCA Community Hall. The sum of £600 for expenditure on this event [*Power to Spend: s137 of the LGA 1972*] was proposed by Councillor Ricci & seconded by Councillor Cogswell and this was unanimously **approved** by the Council.

Action: The Clerk

23/121: Substantive Matters for Consideration

23/121.1 Consideration of the first draft of the budget for financial year 2024/25

The first draft of the budget for next financial year was **agreed**, save for the following few changes to some projected calculations: reduce expected street scene payment by £3.2k; earmarked reserves for replacement van should be increased to £16k; add an additional earmarked reserve of £30k for future developments of the RAFT, possibly 2025/26.

Councillors asked the Clerk to present examples of nominal increases to the Band D calculation at rates of 5%, 10% and 15% at the next meeting. Second draft is expected for the December meeting.

Action: The Clerk

23/121.2 Consideration of Braintree District's Re-Wilding Scheme proposed for 2024

Councillor Crawford questioned whether the '2-3m uncut swathe' would benefit from re-seeding. Concerns were raised generally of the success and long-term effects of re-wilding schemes. After some discussion regarding the anticipated benefits and negatives, it was decided that the Council is not in favour of proposal and asks that BDC remains committed to cutting twice a year.

Action: The Clerk

23/121.3 Consideration of an email from a resident regarding Tesco HGVs in the village

Councillors reviewed the email and supporting photographs from the resident after a complaint was raised about Tesco HGVs taking wrong turns into Bridge End Lane, getting stuck and causing damage to the bollards along Cuckoo Way. The Clerk was asked to obtain consent from the resident to share the details of their email with Tesco's Head Office, in order to seek assurance from Tesco that HGV drivers will be instructed not to follow 'fastest route' on their satellite navigations into Bridge End Lane and instead remain on the A131 up to the Superstore. Tesco will also be asked to pay compensation for repairs to the bollards. The Clerk must contact Braintree District Council to find out who owns the land which has sustained the damage.

Action: The Clerk

23/121.4 Consideration of the EPOA Parking Guidance Consultation for Essex

The Consultation was noted.

23/121.5 Resolution to approve appointment of an Internal Auditor for financial year 2023/24

Councillors **agreed** to the re-appointment of Ann Wood as Internal Auditor for financial year 2023/24, subject to her availability.

Action: The Clerk

23/121.6 Repair and Repaint of the existing white gates at Panners

The Council was asked to consider a quote from True Colours for the repair and repainting of the white gates, as a cost-effective alternative to replacement. Councillors agreed in principle to the repair and repainting, rather than replacement, subject to receiving two additional quotations for comparison. The Clerk raised the ongoing matter of obtaining a licence agreement from Essex County Council for the existing gates. Councillor Cunningham asked that the Clerk send the email, with the additional information requested by Essex County Council, to Essex County Council and to copy himself and Councillor Butland into it.

Action: The Clerk and Councillors Cunningham & Butland

23/121.7 Consideration of a quote for Rialtas Suite Alpha Financial Management Software

Councillors were asked to consider a quote to purchase Rialtas accountancy software for the Council in order to streamline financial processes. Rialtas offers packages specifically designed for the use by Parish and Town Councils and was recommended to the Clerk by trainers at the Essex Association of Local Councils. The Council was asked to consider the 'Alpha' package. It was noted that there are currently funds in the budget to allow for this purchase. Councillor Crawford proposed the purchase for current financial year 2023/24, which was seconded by Councillor Ricci and this was **approved** by the Council.

Action: The Clerk

23/122: Review of the Remembrance Sunday Service 2023

Councillors commented that it had gone smoothly and appeared to be well-received by those in attendance. The service led by Reverends Rachel Prior and Nichola Horsley was particularly poignant. Some discussion concerning the new addition of the Choir by Notley Green Primary School was had and Councillors mostly agreed that it added to the commemorations.

23/123: Amended Meeting Dates for 2024

Councillors were asked to consider the amended schedule of dates for Council meetings in 2024. The amended dates were **agreed**, subject to sufficient undertaking on 20th May 2024, where it is known there is a clash with a Braintree District Council meeting.

Action: The Clerk

23/124: Planning applications, Tree Preservation Orders and other planning matters

23/124.1: New Applications within the Parish

Councillor Ricci left the room.

An erection of a single storey rear extension and conversion of garage to habitable accommodation on 39 Hidcote Way was **noted**.

Pre-submission consultation on the Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan was **noted**.

Application No.	Application	Representations
23/02551/TPO	83 Windermere Drive Great Notley Essex CM77 7UB - Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order TPO - Reference: 11/2010 1No. Pine tree - Felled	No objections
23/02605/HH	30 Grantham Avenue Great Notley Essex CM77 7FP - Proposed garage conversion	No objections
23/02708/TPO	1 Campanile Close Braintree Essex CM77 7AS - Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order TPO - 8/94. G1 - 2 Ash trees – Remove. G2 - 1 Lime	House has been there for 1 year and the trees were there before they were built. The trees overhang the adjoining garden.

	Tree & 1 Oak Tree - Reduce overall size by 3 meters and remove deadwood. T1 - Oak tree - Reduce overall size by 3 meters and remove deadwood	Express concern and hope there shall be due consideration of planning permissions by the Unitary Authority
23/02724/HH	82 Skiddaw Close Great Notley Essex CM77 7UR - Proposed two storey front/rear extension with internal and external fenestration changes (revised approved scheme)	Concerned about the scale of the extension, though the proposed plans look encouraging in design. Subject to support from the adjoining neighbours, no objections.

23/124.2: To note results of planning applications

The following results were **noted** -

Application No.	Application	Result
23/01818/SCR	Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 SI 2017/571 Screening Opinion Proposal on 13.75ha of land to the west of the existing Horizon 120 Business. Park to provide up to 55,000sqm of floor space for Research and Development, and or Industrial processes, and/or B2 (General Industrial), and or B8 Storage or Distribution.	Pending Consideration

23/125: Matters to be raised for next meeting

Councillor Ricci returned.

- Saffron Bank Account – Clerk [lead]

23/126: Chairman to close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 9.17pm.