



Minutes of the Meeting of Great Notley Parish Council held on 11th December 2023 at the Community Centre Great Notley

Meeting commenced at 7.34pm

Present: Councillors Griffin (Chair), Pritchard, Sheppard, Crawford and the Clerk

23/127: Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Butland, Ricci, Cunningham and Cogswell and these were accepted by the Council.

23/128: Declarations of Interests

None.

23/129: To consider and approve Minutes of the Meeting of 13th November 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023 were **agreed** by Councillors as a correct record, proposed by Councillor Crawford and seconded by Councillor Pritchard, and the minutes were signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Crawford welcomed the addition of minuting the specific comments concerning planning applications and stated that he found it useful.

23/130: Public Question Time

None.

23/131: Reports

23/131.1: Report from County Councillor

No report presented owing to apologies sent by Councillor Butland.

23/131.2: Report from District Councillor

No report presented owing to apologies sent by Councillors.

23/131.3: Reports from Councillors attending External Meetings

Councillors Crawford recently attended the Patient Participation Group ('PPG'), which typically meets three times per year. It was confirmed that the PPG newsletter would be a feature in all parish council magazines. A County Councillor had advised at the meeting that the County Council has a substantial sum of Section 106 money which is currently unclaimed by many parish and town councils across the County. After 10 years, parish and town councils are not able to apply for a proportion of the S106 money to help improve

infrastructure and the money will likely be absorbed elsewhere within the County Council. The NHS needs to make an application for some of the S106 money in order to receive it and plans are in motion to attempt to meet with the NHS in January to action this. Great Notley Surgery requires expansion and an allocation of the S106 money would enable this. Planning permission for the surgery's expansion is already in place. Councillor Crawford will report back in due course.

Action: Councillor Crawford

23/132: Parish Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported as follows -

1. I met with Councillor Cogswell on 6th December to undertake the first review of statements and invoices as nominated at the November meeting as an added financial control. Statements and invoices were cross-referenced from April 2023 to November 2023. Going forward, this will be undertaken on a monthly basis.
2. Appraisals on the Litter Team were carried on 29th November 2023 and these appraisals are put to the Personnel Committee for sign-off.
3. Initial costings are being sought for a new Parish Council vehicle, with an electric utility vehicle being the model of choice. It may be prudent for the Council to increase its ear-marked reserve for this expenditure to 21k, given that electric vehicles have a current higher market price than fuel.
4. On 5th December, I was given an online demonstration of Rialtas Alpha Suite Accountancy Software (following approval to purchase at the November 2023 meeting) and I am pleased to advise that the software looks suitable for this Council and should enable for accurate financial reports going forward. At the point of installation, Rialtas works with the Clerk to attribute cost codes and cost centres to budget lines for a more detailed breakdown of payments & receipts. I am hoping to move forward with this purchase in January 2024, when Rialtas has capacity to work with GNPC.
5. I have been working closely with a team at Braintree District Council for a number of weeks concerning a person defecating on a BDC owned footpath in Mallard Close on a near daily basis. I am pleased to report that on Friday 1st December the person was caught and it is now a matter for the Police.
6. An online meeting with various volunteers aiming to help deliver the 'Christmas Carols & Crafts' community event on 16th December took place on 28th November via Zoom.
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. **As this is an inherited list from the previous Clerk, Councillors are asked to provide an update where possible.**

Issue	First raised	Comment
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	Ongoing

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	Cllr Butland to advise if there is an update
Tree Strategy for the Parish – await Braintree District Council – detailed response expected summer 2023	July 2019	Strategy has been shelved; expectation that they will naturally space when they decline
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	Cllr Butland to advise if there is an update
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	
Tree Warden – voluntary position continues to be advertised	September 2022	Clerk has contacted the Country Park and Flitch Green Ranger to ask if they can assist in any way
Report on electric vehicles – awaited from Braintree District Council	October 2022	

The report was **accepted**.

23/133: Financial Report

23/133.1: Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation calculated to 7th December 2023 was **accepted**.

23/133.2: Payments for Approval

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

Payments for approval

Direct debits

23/11/23	Lloyds Card		
	One Drive	1.99	
	The Works (Stationery)	4.50	
	Sainsburys (Stationery)	2.50	
	The Works (Christmas Crafts)	19.50	
	Tesco (Remembrance Chocs)	16.00	
	Tesco (Batteries)	9.00	
	Monthly fee	3.00	56.49

Online Payments November 2023

Salaries		4,858.41
Clerk	Expenses	19.18
Essex Pension fund	Pension Contributions	1081.31
HMRC Cumbernauld	November Tax and NI Contributions	1144.35
NGCA	September Hall Hire*	13.00*
NGCA	October Hall Hire	13.00
Howdens (formerly A Plan)	Van Insurance Renewal	872.07
RBL Poppy Appeal	Remembrance Wreaths	92.50
Marks Tey Radio	Hire of PA System for 12 th November	252.00
Paul Clark Printing Ltd	Print of GNT magazine	1603.00
JCS External Solutions	Repair to Flagpole	120.00
EALC	Clerk Training Course (10 th Oct)	90.00
Mr Peter Willett	Distribution of GNT Magazine	180.00
Mr Peter Willett	Editorial Work for GNT Magazine	150.00
EALC	Clerk Training Course (2nd Nov)	90.00

*Payment was listed as paid in October 2023 but it wasn't authorised for payment until early November so two invoices (for hire in September and October) were paid in November 2023

Payments made/to be made in December 2023

Allstar Fuel	Van Fuel	69.48
Clerk	Expenses	53.21
Senior Litter Picker	Expenses	30.00
NGCA	November Hall Hire	13.00
NGCA	BDC Licence Fee (For Green) & TEN	121.00
NGCA	December Hall Hire (11 th & 16 th)	88.00
Viking Office UK	Stationery	62.23
Seagrave Inspections	Operational Inspection November '23	156.00

23/134: Substantive Matters for Consideration

23/134.1 Consideration of the second draft of the budget for financial year 2024/25

The second and final draft of the budget for financial year 2024/25 was received. The Clerk advised that the following changes to earmarked reserves as requested at the previous meeting had been made and that a new budget line for Legal Services had been added. The proposed increase of the earmarked reserve for a new van/utility vehicle to £21k was agreed. The Clerk presented three examples of increases to the Band D calculation and associated Precept at rates of 2%, 5% and 10% to the Council and after some deliberation, it was unanimously agreed that a 5% increase was most appropriate.

Councillor Crawford proposed that the budget is accepted and that the precept demand is submitted in the sum of £115,754. This was seconded by Councillor Pritchard and **agreed** by all Councillors.

Action: The Clerk

23/134.2 Consideration of three quotations for the repair and repainting of the White Gates at Bridge End Lane

Councillors considered all three quotations for the repair works to the white gates. The Clerk declared that the gentleman whose company is True Colours

is her brother-in-law. The quotations from True Colours and SFX Property Solutions were broadly similar in cost and detail. Both appear reputable and either could be used. After some discussion, Councillor Pritchard proposed that True Colours be awarded the contract and this was seconded by Councillor Crawford and **approved** by the Council. Work will take place when the weather improves in the new year.

Action: The Clerk

23/134.3 Consideration of Braintree District Council's 'Potential Open Space Improvements Plan'

Councillors reviewed the District Council's action plan 2023 (published on its website). It was agreed that the following should be actioned:

- For 'Levens Way Playground' – change the nil entry for improvements required to the prioritised equipment upgrade list as provided by Councillor Crawford following his visual inspections;
- For 'RAFT' – remove the reference to 'phase 2' and submit a nil entry for improvements required

Action: The Clerk

23/134.4 Consideration of Braintree District Council's latest proposal for allotments space

The Chairman advised the Council that Councillor Ricci had reported back on a meeting he had attended last week with BDC concerning a potential site for Allotments space. During that meeting, it was reported that BDC had acknowledged that the previous four sites offered to the Parish Council were not fit for purpose. It was also reported that there is limited scope to factor any allotment development with The Marshgate Group at the Horizon 120 site. Instead, it is proposed by BDC that 50% of the existing playing field by Panners Pond and Notley Green School at Bridge End Lane is repurposed as Allotments space for residents.

Councillors Crawford and Sheppard strongly objected to the proposal, stating that the field is used regularly by families for a variety of reasons and that BDC should not be proposing recreational land as a solution. They argued that it would detrimentally impact the landscape and the whole feel of the area. Councillors agreed that BDC need to deliver an alternative, more suitable site. Proposal **rejected**.

Action: The Clerk

23/134.5 Consideration of a new Biodiversity Policy for adoption in 2024

Councillors agreed with the Clerk's suggestion to remove the landholdings reference under 'Land and Property Management' heading. Councillors **agreed** to adopt the policy from 1 January 2024.

Action: The Clerk

23/134.6 Consideration of Braintree District Council's England Rural Prosperity Fund

Councillors were asked whether it wished to make an application to Braintree District Council before the deadline at the end of this year. The Clerk advised that three options could be explored: to apply for funding of a community orchard (though it is unclear who would be available to maintain it), to apply for funding of some bird/bat/bee boxes or to apply for funding of a repair café (as a joint venture with NGCA). Councillors commented that, whilst there may be an appetite for a repair café, the Council could not commit to a project that large at such short notice and it would therefore be sensible to concentrate on a more realistic project such as the purchase of bird/bee/bat boxes. The Clerk suggested that the boxes could be divided equally for use across the two primary schools. Councillors **agreed** to this proposal and an application for £300 funding. If the application deadline is extended, the matter may be revisited by the Council.

Action: The Clerk

23/134.7 Renewal of SLCC's Membership

Councillors were asked to consider renewing SLCC's membership following a relapse after the previous Clerk left. Councillors **approved** the renewal.

Action: The Clerk

23/134.8: Consideration of an alternative bank account for the Council's reserves

The Council was asked to consider three options for an alternative account, all of which would yield a higher AER return than Saffron (the account currently held by the Council for some of its reserves). These options were: Nationwide, Redwood Bank and Cambridge & Counties Bank.

Councillor Crawford proposed to move £50k reserves to a Nationwide 'Business 1 Year Saver' account, which was seconded by Councillor Pritchard and **approved** by the Council.

Action: The Clerk

23/135: Planning applications, Tree Preservation Orders and other planning matters

23/135.1: New Applications within the Parish

Application No.	Application	Representations
23/02851/TPO	80 Skiddaw Close Great Notley Essex CM77 7UR - Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation	Very tall and old Turkey Oak. The English Oak is extremely close to the house. Works

	Order TPO - 10/2010 Turkey Oak - Reduction of 3m English Oak - reduction of 1.5m	recommended by a Tree Preservation Officer. Support application.
23/02807/OUT	Land West of Horizon 120 Phase 2 Horizon Boulevard Great Notley Braintree Essex – Hybrid Planning application for part full, part outline consent for up to 55,000 sqm of employment floorspace. Full planning permission for a 15,925sqm (GEA) building for Storage and Distribution (Use class B8), with ancillary office (Use class E(g)(i)) and associated amenity space landscaping, car and cycle parking, refuse storage, servicing area, and other associated infrastructure works. Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) for up to 39,075sqm of employment space for Research and Development (E(g)(ii)), and/or Industrial Process (E(g)(iii)), and/or General industrial (B2), and/or Storage or distribution (B8) with ancillary office (Use class E(g)(i)) with all associated access, servicing, parking, drainage infrastructure, landscaping, open space and utilities infrastructure.	Application for the other side of the development, not near the Country Park. Roadways has not raised any objections. No objection.

23/135.2: To note results of planning applications

The following results were **noted** -

Application No.	Application	Result
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	Pending Consideration
23/02708/TPO	1 Campanile Close Braintree Essex CM77 7AS - Notice of intent to carry	Pending Consideration

	out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order TPO - 8/94. G1 - 2 Ash trees – Remove. G2 - 1 Lime 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	
23/02605/HH	30 Grantham Avenue Great Notley Essex CM77 7FP - Proposed garage conversion	Granted
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)	Pending Consideration

23/136: Matters to be raised for next meeting

- Precept Form – Clerk [lead]

23/126: Chairman to close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 8.53pm.