



**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Great Notley Parish Council held on
20th May 2024 at the Community Centre Great Notley**

Meeting commenced at 7.31pm

Present: Councillors Griffin (Chair), Ricci, Cogswell, Crawford, Pritchard (entered as Apologies were being heard) and the Clerk & RFO

24/45: Election of the Chairman for the Civic Year

The Clerk opened the meeting by welcoming Councillors to the annual meeting of the Parish Council. Councillors were asked to elect a Chairman for the Civic Year. Councillor Ricci proposed that Councillor Griffin be elected as Chairman, which was seconded by Councillor Crawford and unanimously **agreed** by the Council. Councillor Griffin signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

24/46: Appointment of the Vice-Chairman for the Civic Year

Councillor Cogswell proposed that Councillor Ricci be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the Civic Year, which was seconded by Councillor Crawford and unanimously **agreed** by the Council.

24/47: Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Butland, Cunningham and Sheppard and these were **accepted** by the Council. Councillor Pritchard arrived.

24/48: Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ricci declared an interest as a member of Braintree District Council and the Planning Committee.

**24/49: To consider and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on
29th April 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2024 were **agreed** by Councillors as a correct record, proposed by Councillor Ricci and seconded by Councillor Pritchard, and the minutes were signed by the Chairman.

24/50: Public Question Time

Councillor Crawford presented a matter for consideration in this session as a member of the public. It had been reported to him by a neighbour, who suffers with poor mental health as a result of this issue, that two manhole covers which are positioned in the road directly outside his house are

loose. For this reason, both manhole covers reportedly rattle considerably when traffic crosses them, causing a constant noise disturbance. In addition, it was heard that a large hole exists in a footpath nearby his house, which is also causing some issue. The Clerk confirmed that she would report both matters to Essex Highways via the online portal.

Action: Clerk

24/50: Reports

24/50.1: Report from County Councillor

None owing to apologies.

24/50.2: Report from District Councillor

Councillor Ricci reported that a Councillor Grant Scheme for the Braintree Repair Café had been awarded to Notley Green Community Association for approximately £700, which will help with some initial running costs. It was noted that this grant is separate to the grant recently awarded by the Parish Council for the same initiative.

24/50.3: Reports from Councillors attending external meetings

None.

24/51: Parish Clerk’s Report

1. The village white gates at Tesco have now had a Spring clean, thanks to our Litter Team.
2. The Internal Audit inspection went ahead as planned on 8th May 2024 and a report is submitted to the Council at our May PC meeting.
3. As instructed by Councillor Ricci, I have now handed the matter of the damaged bollards at Bridge End Lane to the District Council after the legal firm representing Tesco asked for video footage of the damage being done, which we were unable to provide. The District Council has confirmed that the Street Scene Team has been instructed to repair the bollards and BDC will seek to try to recover costs from Tesco, if possible.
4. Meanwhile, another matter related to Tesco has arisen. Our Litter Team complained to me that Tesco has not been keeping the land around the store clear of litter. Following a site visit with Steve, I met with a Duty Manager at Tesco and reminded them of their duty to keep the land tidy. Several emails later, Tesco has confirmed that their Ground Force team is requesting permission from their senior management to clear the ditches. I shall continue to update you as needed.
5. I recently submitted a VAT reclaim to HMRC for financial year 2023-24 and the sum of £2,353.99 has now been paid into our bank account.
6. Further information in support of our application to Nationwide for a 1 Year Business Savings Account has been requested and a related agenda item will be discussed at our May PC meeting.
7. One recommendation arising from the Internal Audit was the need for budget line for s137 (LGA 1972) expenditure. You will note there is a related agenda item for our May PC meeting.

Issue	First raised	Comment
Transfer of land between developers and Braintree District Council – <i>agreement reached</i>	May 2012	Ongoing

<i>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>		
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 advised at our April 2024 meeting that the work is scheduled for implementation this year
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 provided an update at our April 2024 meeting - ongoing
Tree Warden – voluntary position continues to be advertised	September 2022	Remains vacant
Report on electric vehicles – awaited from Braintree District Council	October 2022	

The report was **accepted**.

24/52: Financial Matters

24/52.1 Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliations calculated to 30th April 2024 were **accepted**.

24/52.2 Payments & Receipts for Approval

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

Direct debits

15/04/24	RAC All Star (Fuel Card)		61.17
23/04/24	<u>Lloyds Card</u>		
	Microsoft	1.99	
	Monthly fee	<u>3.00</u>	4.99

Online Payments April 2024

Salaries		4,668.46
Essex Pension fund	Pension Contributions	1,113.70

HMRC Cumbernauld	April Tax and NI Contributions	943.52
NGCA	March Hall Hire	13.00
Clerk	Expenses	26.64
Senior Litter Picker	Expenses (Van Clean)	30.00
Ernest Doe & Sons	Litter Tools & PPE	16.97
Richard Edwards Group	External Payroll Services	169.20
Rialtas Business Solutions	Accountancy Software & Set Up	786.20
EALC	EALC/NALC Affiliation Subs	1,021.47
NPower	Street Lighting Supply	381.06
True Colours	Refurbishment of White Gates	950.00

Receipts in April 2024

Want PE	GNT Advert for Summer Edt 59	160.00
Braintree District Council	Precept (1 st Instalment)	55,877.00

Payments made/to be made in May 2024

RAC All Star	Van Fuel Card	38.46
Lloyds Credit Card	Monthly Payment	124.37
NGCA	April Hall Hire	13.00
ICO	Annual Data Protection Fee	40.00
Rialtas Business Solutions	Year End Close Down Service	648.00
Ann Wood	Internal Audit for 2023/24	190.00

24/52.3 Authority to Act for Cllr Crawford as Signatory on Nationwide Account

The Clerk advised the Council that, as part of its application process to open a new Nationwide 1 Year Business Savings Account, the Council had been asked to agree to Cllr Crawford acting as 4th signatory on the account and a formal minute of this decision being taken. However,

between assigning this item to the agenda for the meeting and the meeting taking place, the Clerk had received an unexpected email from Nationwide stating that “owing to high demand, the range of business products had been withdrawn from sale” and that our “application has been cancelled”. The Clerk confirmed that she would add this matter to the next agenda for further consideration and indicated that Redwood bank (one of the other bank accounts initially presented to Council for consideration) was reportedly highly recommended by other Parish Councils. Item for next agenda.

Action: The Clerk

24/52.4 Amendment to Budget 2024/25 – s137 expenditure line

The Clerk advised that this item had arisen from the Internal Audit inspection on 8th May 2024, when it was brought to her attention that Council did not have an expenditure line for section 137 in the 2024/25 approved budget. The Clerk explained that the Council had, until May 2023, previously held the General Power of Competence (GPOC), meaning that s137 was not relevant to the Council. However, as the Council no longer holds GPOC, a budget line for any expenditure incurred under the power to spend s137 of the LGA 1972 [*Power of local authorities to incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised*] is required. The Clerk advised that Councils are permitted to spend up to a maximum £10.81 per elector in any given financial year under s137. The Clerk confirmed that it was too late to amend the 2024/25 budget but EALC had advised that this should be factored into the budget setting for 2025/26.

Action: The Clerk and Council (Autumn 2024)

24/53: To review and agree year end documents

24/53.1: To consider and agree the accounts for financial year 2023-2024

The receipts and payments for year end 31st March 2024 were considered and **accepted**.

24/53.2: To consider the internal Audit Report for 2023-2024

Councillor Ricci proposed to approve the internal audit report, which was seconded by Councillor Crawford and the report was unanimously **approved** by Councillors.

24/53.3: To consider and agree the Annual Governance Statement on the Annual Governance and Accountability Review Form 3

Councillor Ricci proposed to approve the Annual Governance Statement, which was seconded by Councillor Cogswell and this was unanimously **approved** by the Council. The Annual Governance Statement (page 4 of the form) was then signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

24/53.4: To consider and agree the Accounting Statements on the Annual Governance and Accountability Review Form 3

Councillor Cogswell proposed to approve the Accounting Statements, which was seconded by Councillor Ricci and this was unanimously **approved** by the Council. The Accounting Statements (page 5 of the form) was then signed by the Chairman and the Responsible Financial Officer (the Clerk).

24/53.5: To agree the proposed dates for the Exercise of Public Rights 2023-2024

The dates for the 'Exercise of Public Rights', as recommended by the External Auditor (PKF Littlejohn), were **agreed** by Councillors to be **3rd June 2024 to 12th July 2024**.

24/54: Substantive matters for consideration

24/54.1: To consider the three quotations for Parish Council Insurance

The Parish Council's insurance cover is subject to renewal on 1st June 2024. The Clerk had presented the Council with three quotes for renewal from AJ Gallagher (Hiscox – current Insurer); Zurich and Community Action Suffolk. The Clerk advised Councillors that all three quotes did not include Cyber cover. After some discussion, it was agreed that Community Action Suffolk represented the best choice financially, with a cost saving of £872.55 compared the current Insurer's renewal quote. Councillors also liked the company's ethos which is to donate any profits to charity. Councillor Ricci proposed to proceed with Community Action Suffolk for a 3-year LTU, which was seconded by Councillor Cogswell and this was unanimously **approved** by Councillors.

Action: The Clerk

24/54.2: Pedestrian Crossing at White Court

Councillor Ricci advised that he had received an email from James Cleverly MP regarding the crossing on London Road near to White Court, after he had been contacted by a constituent regarding the risk to pedestrians after a number of failures to stop. A request was made for it to be changed to a pedestrian crossing in an attempt to mitigate the risk to life. Councillor Ricci advised that because one side of the road fell within the boundary of Black Notley, the Clerk might need to seek support of an application for a pedestrian crossing from Black Notley Parish Council. An application could then be made to the Local Highways Panel. Councillors **agreed** to support this application.

Action: The Clerk

24/54.3: To consider a Grant Application from NGCA for the annual Village Fete

Councillor Ricci proposed to approve the grant application under power to spend s144 with the caveat that the Fete goes ahead as planned, which

was seconded by Councillor Cogswell and this was unanimously **approved** by Councillors.

Action: The Clerk

24/54.4: To record the reclamation of VAT for financial year 2023-24

The RFO confirmed that Council had successfully submitted and been remunerated for the reclamation of VAT for financial year 2023-24 for the sum of £2353.99.

24/54.5: Annual Review of Policy Documents

The Clerk confirmed that at each Annual meeting the required policy documents are usually reviewed. However, following some issues with the new Financial Regulations model template recently published by NALC, it was proposed that this item should be deferred until June, when a revised document is anticipated. The Clerk also confirmed that the District Council had, at its recent AGM, adopted a new Code of Conduct. Councillors were asked whether it would like to adopt the District Council's new Code of Conduct as its own Code of Conduct, a move recommended by both the District Council and EALC. Councillors agreed that it would adopt the District Council's Code of Conduct as its own, subject to relevant amendment by the Clerk. For these reasons, it was **agreed** to defer until the next meeting.

Action: The Clerk

24/54.6: To consider the following suggested improvements around the Village

24/54.6.1: To approve the replacement signage at Levens Way Park & Skate Park

The Clerk asked Councillors to approve the expenditure for replacement signage for both the play park and skate park. A quote for costs had been obtained from Signs n Such in Braintree. Councillor Ricci proposed to approve the expenditure, which was seconded by Councillor Crawford and this was **approved** by Councillors.

Councillor Crawford notified the Council that the repairs to the roundabout and the activity climber play equipment in the play park had been carried out.

Action: The Clerk

24/54.6.2: To consider numbering the Parish Council owned dog waste bins

Councillors **agreed** to roll out the numbering of bins to include the dog waste bins.

24/54.6.3: To consider additional warning signs at Bridge End Lane re Ducks crossing

Councillors heard that a post had been made to the Council's Facebook page asking for signage warning road users of crossing ducks at the bridge on Bridge End Lane. The Clerk informed the Council that she had advised the original poster on social media that a red hazard sign on either side of the bridge already exists. Councillors discussed the possibility of additional signage but it was agreed that signage fitted at heights lower than what is currently there would present a risk of injury and a licence would be needed from ECC for any new signs. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should draft a new Facebook post on the Council's page, which could then also be shared to local village groups on Facebook, informing residents that signs are already in existence and to remind them of the 20mph speed limit.

Action: The Clerk

24/54.6.4: To consider obtaining quotes for levelling the ground underneath the Parish Council owned green benches

The Clerk advised that this too was a result of a request made to the Council via Facebook. The Clerk confirmed that 1 green bench on the spine footpath needed resurfacing. Councillors recalled that such work had previously been carried out to the memorial bench by the duck pond on Bridge End Lane – in 2018 – and that it had been the Council's intention to roll it out to all other PC owned benches. The Clerk was asked to look back at previous minutes to see which company carried out the resurfacing work.

Action: The Clerk

24/55: Planning applications, Tree Preservation Orders and other planning matters

The following application, which had a deadline that occurred prior to this meeting, was noted:

24/00580/HH - 2 Carpenters Drive Great Notley Essex CM77 7ZQ
Erection of a single storey rear extension (re-consulted, deadline 15th May 2024) – **Pending Consideration by BDC**

The following application, which had been for notification only, was noted:

24/00947/PLD - 8 Burghley Close Great Notley Essex CM77 7WY
Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development - Removal of existing garage door and installation of a brickwork wall and window

24/55.1 New Applications within the Parish

Application No.	Application	Representations

24/00917/TPO	3 Thirlmere Close Great Notley Essex CM77 7UL - Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order TPO - 10/10 G7 T1 - Lime - Crown lift and remove epicormic growth to 4m. Crown thin by volume - 30% - Deadline 31 st May 2024	No objection
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24/55.2 To note results of previous planning applications

The following results were **noted** -

Application No.	Application	Result
24/00690/FUL	The Barley Barn Slamseys Farm Blackley Lane Great Notley Essex CM77 8QF - Conversion & extension of commercial barn (class E(c)(iii) to 1 No. dwelling (class C3) & demolition of industrial building	Pending Consideration (determination deadline 31 st May 2024)
24/00442/FUL	Plot 5 Horizon 120 Business Park London Road Braintree Essex - Erection of an employment building comprising of uses falling within Use Classes E(g)(i, ii, iii) and B8 (or a combination of those uses) with associated access, service areas, parking and landscaping.	Pending Consideration (determination deadline 12 th July 2024)
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	Remains Pending Consideration (determination deadline was 13 th December 2023)

24/56: Matters for next agenda

- To agree a new Savings Bank Account – Redwood bank?
- Review of Policy Documents – Adopt BDC Code of Conduct

24/57: Chairman to close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 8.23pm.