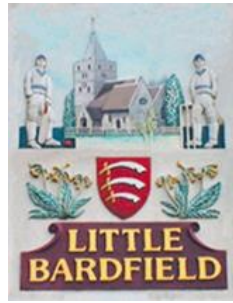


Little Bardfield Parish Council



www.littlebardfieldparish.org.uk

Meeting of the Parish Council
Wednesday 10 May 2023 at 7.15pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Cllr Andrew Davies (Chair), Cllr Juliet O'Brien and Cllr Colin Simpson (Vice-chair). Clerk: Kate Rixson
District Councillor Dr Mike Tayler, County Councillor Martin Foley and retiring councillor Terry Cutmore attended.

- 1. Chair's Welcome:** The Chair welcomed all present and opened the meeting at 7.30 pm.
- 2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 February 2023:** The minutes were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman Cllr Davies.
- 3. Declarations of Interest in matters on the agenda:** None.
- 4. Matters arising from the minutes for discussion**

Cllr Davies reported on the Planning Parish Forum he had attended on 28 March where some grant funding for rural business development and for hosts of Ukrainian refugees was announced.

5. Public Forum and Reports from District and County Councillors

5.1 District Council

Results of Election on 4 May 2023

Cllr Dr Tayler had been elected on 4 May for The Sampfords ward. He had provided a note for the council and explained that whilst a District Councillor for Thaxted and the Eastons, he had been on the Local Plan Leadership Group, and the Licensing Committee. He also attended the Health and Wellbeing Board. He has requested, and it has been agreed, that he stay on these committees. In addition he has been given the lead role in "health" for the Council. Cllr Dr Tayler said that this was not a portfolio or cabinet position, and clearly it was a very wide brief. District Councils have few direct involvements with health, but it does come into many areas in an indirect way, such as the Local Plan. Having spent much time living and working in the most rural parts of Uttlesford, he is very concerned about rural isolation and the poor access our residents may have to services, including health services. He has made this clear at the one committee meeting (Health and Wellbeing Board) on which he sat this morning. There may be funding from UDC to address this.

Styles' road repairs

Cllr Dr Tayler is aware of this problem and with Cllr Foley will pursue it with Uttlesford. The council would like the County Council to adopt the road, in the long term.

Local Plan

The collection of evidence relating to the sites put forward following the “call for sites” was still going on. It was expected that the government would be reducing its targets for the number of houses to be built, and an increasing number of councils were not going ahead with their Local Plans until the government’s position was made clear.

5.2 County Council

Cllr Foley had provided a note of recent developments and referred in the meeting to:

Booking system at recycling centres – it is now possible to make a booking on the day of the visit. The new system will be reviewed in the autumn.

Mental health practitioners in secondary schools – some funding has been secured for Saffron Walden and Dunmow schools

The standard of work on potholes – repaired potholes are deteriorating quickly and Cllr Foley is taking this up with Essex Highways.

6. Update on Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee (WASC) concerning plans for a mega-prison or asylum seekers’ centre

Cllr O’Brien reported on the work done by WASC to build a case against the use of the site for either a prison or an asylum reception centre (ARC). Most recently a desktop contamination survey has been carried out which showed that because of the past uses of the site, there is a high risk of contamination primarily from hydrocarbons and radiation. Braintree District Council had been unsuccessful in its recent application for an injunction against the Home Office preventing use of the site as an ARC but had decided to appeal. Both a local resident and Braintree District Council have also applied for judicial review of the Home Office’s decision to house asylum seekers at Wethersfield airfield. No application had yet been received by Braintree District Council from the Ministry of Justice for use of the site for the mega-prisons. The provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill would in the future enable the Home Office to bypass the usual planning processes at district council level in respect of Crown Land. If the Bill is passed, an application to develop Crown land such as the airbase could be made directly to the Secretary of State, if the development was of national importance. There would be no obligation to consult the district council or the public, and WASC hopes that Uttlesford District Council will write to object strongly to the legislation.

WASC agendas and minutes are on the Wethersfield Parish Council website.

7. Clerk’s report

The clerk had circulated a report on recent action points. No questions were raised.

The clerk will prepare an article reporting on this council meeting for the Bardfield Times’ June edition. The clerk would arrange a postal subscription to obtain future editions.

8. Finance

a) Balances: From the bank statements dated 30 April 2023 the balances were:

Treasurer’s account £12,758.55; Community Fund £14,326.22.

The first half of the precept had been received.

b) Payments: Those made from 8 February 2023 to 10 May 2023 (previously approved or made under contractual or statutory obligations), including salary, were reported. A schedule is annexed to the hard copy of these minutes.

c) Bank account details and contact information

Mr Cutmore pointed out that the addresses and phone numbers on the two bank accounts were inconsistent and very out of date despite his requests to the bank to change them to the clerk's. He will make one further attempt. It was noted that the signatories on the mandate will need to be changed following his retirement.

d) Councillors were not aware of any public events for the coronation in the parish so did not anticipate any requests for grants.

9. Planning applications and update on planning matters

A schedule of decisions and outstanding applications had been circulated. There were no new applications.

The clerk was asked to find out when the planning committee would be deciding the Frenches Farm application. **Action: Clerk**

10. Decisions to be taken

a) Donation to the Alms Houses Trust – no further decision needed to be made, the amount having been previously decided.

b) Donations from the Community Fund and/or under s137 Local Government Act 1972

It was agreed that grants would be made as follows from the Community Fund:

Thaxted minibus £150

100 Parishes Society £10 (Local Government Act

Essex and Herts Air Ambulance £150

Stansted Airport Watch (previously Stop Stansted Expansion) £100

Uttlesford District Food Bank £200

Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee £315

CREAMER fund at Finchingfield GP practice £300

Thaxted GP Surgery Patients' Fund £300

The powers used, which include s137 of the Local Government Act where necessary, will be noted in the cash books.

It was proposed that the council should join the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and the clerk was asked to report on the benefits of membership. **Action: Clerk**

c) To approve payments

The following payments were approved:

To Mr Cutmore for expenses relating to the Annual Report £131.98 (paid from Parish Council account)

To the clerk to reimburse for spare defibrillator pads for the Hawkspur Green defibrillator: £101.94 (to be paid from the Community Fund)

To Hearts and Crafts for website support £150 (paid from the Community Fund)

To EALC/NALC annual affiliation fee £93.38 (to be paid from the Parish Council account)

To transfer £120.80 reclaimed VAT from the Parish Council account to the Community Fund

Action: Clerk

d) To comment on new planning applications : None had been received.

e) To approve a Scheme of Delegation setting out what decisions could be taken by the clerk: the draft scheme was approved and is annexed to the hard copy of these minutes.

f) To approve insurer, new policy from 1 June 2023 and payment of the premium

Comparative quotes and cover details had been circulated. It was decided to renew the policy with Zurich insurance with the cover specified, at a premium of £417.70. **Action: Clerk**

g) To approve contract for verge-cutting 2023

The tender from C W Low and Sons was accepted.

11. Items from councillors to be added to the next agenda: None.

12. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 13 September 2023.

13. Presentation to retiring Councillor Terry Cutmore

Terry Cutmore joined the council in 2006 and retired on 4 May 2023. His 17 years as a parish councillor concluded with producing and circulating the very informative Parish Annual Report to all parish residents earlier this year.

The council is immensely grateful for Terry's involvement in the parish council and his major contribution to the local community. From relentlessly pushing the county council to repair potholes, to creating and managing the website, the list of tasks and projects he has taken on is immeasurably long. The council was glad he could attend on 10 May to receive a token of the council's great appreciation of his work, as well as everyone's thanks in person.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.15 pm.

DRAFT