

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF PURLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL,
HELD IN THE WELLS PAVILION, HOWE GREEN ROAD,
ON FRIDAY, 13th SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7.00 P.M.**

Members present: Mr. G. Rayner (Chairman), Mr. C. Ash, and Mr. S. Potter.

Also in attendance: Mrs. Jane Potter (Clerk).

Mrs. Sue White (District Council Ward Member) attended the public session prior to the start of the meeting as did Mrs. Libby Johns (Purleigh Community Fund.)

The meeting was not attended by any members of the public

1/09/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr. N. Arthur, Mr. S. Bardwell, Mr. B. Oliver and Mr. G. Strathern who were unable to attend the meeting due to prior personal commitments and from Mrs. Jane Fleming (District Council Ward Member) and Mrs. Penny Channer (County Council Ward Member) who were also unable to attend due to prior civic engagements.

2/09/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS (Localism Act 2011)

There were no new declarations of interest made, nor were there any applications for dispensations from the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

3/09/19 THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PURLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 9th AUGUST 2019 having been circulated to all Members, were approved, and signed by the Chairman.

4/09/19 TO DISCUSS ANY MATTERS OF INFORMATION ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES:

4.1/09/19 Clerk: The Clerk did not have any matters of information arising from the August 2019 Parish Council meeting to report to Members.

4.2/09/19 Members': Members did not have any matters of information arising from the August 2019 Parish Council meeting to discuss.

5/09/19 PLANNING MATTERS

5.1/09/19 Decisions taken between meetings: FUL/MAL/19/00833 Demolition of existing one storey dwelling and the erection of a new replacement two storey dwelling. St Andrews Bungalow, Maldon Road, Latchingdon.

The Parish Council **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL.**

5.2/09/19 Current applications: HOUSE/MAL/19/00913 single storey rear extension. The Maples, Howe Green Road, Purleigh.

The Parish Council **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL.**

5.3/09/19 Notification of appeals: Members noted that the Parish Council had not been notified of any Appeals or Appeal decisions between meetings.

5.4/09/19 Maldon District Council planning decisions: Members noted that Maldon District Council had **APPROVED** the following planning applications:

- FUL/MAL/19/00456 Change of use of kennels to annexe and associated works. Construction of a replacement stable building and the addition of a manège, hay barn and horse walker pen. New boundary treatments to the site entrance. Eight Acre Farm, Birchwood Road, Cock Clarks.

- HOUSE/MAL/19/00712 Replace existing conservatory on rear with single storey extension. 1 Le Howe Farm Cottages, Howe Green Road, Purleigh.
- COUPA/MAL/19/00608 Prior approval of proposed change of use of agricultural building to No.1 dwelling house (C3) and for associated operational development. Agricultural building, Flambirds Farm, Hackmans Lane, Purleigh.
- FUL/MAL/19/00674 Erection of building for oyster purification and ancillary aquiculture storage by the Maldon Oyster Company. Birchwood Farm, Birchwood Road.

and had **REFUSED** to grant planning permission for the following development:

- HOUSE/MAL/19/00706 proposed two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, new porch and alterations and widen existing dropped kerb. 11, Westerings, Purleigh.

5.5/09/19 Other planning matters: *North Western Area Planning Committee:* Members noted that Maldon District Council had invited the Parish Council to make representation on the following planning application at the committee meeting held on 2nd September 2019:

- OUT/MAL/19/00740 Outline application to demolish chalet bungalow and detached double garage. Erection of 6no. dwellings to provide accommodation for seasonal workers ancillary to the premises at the rear. Matters for consideration: The lay out of the parking area, stop up vehicular access off Fambridge Road and form new vehicular access off Ben Rigby Game Limited private drive, with associated hard and soft landscaping works. All other matters are reserved. Atherstone Lodge, Fambridge Road, Mundon, Essex. Mr. Paul Scott – Ben Rigby Game Ltd.

In accordance with the policy agreed at the May 2019 meeting (Minute 10/05/19) it had been agreed not to send a representative to the committee meeting.

6/09/19 HIGHWAY MATTERS

6.1/09/19 Notification of road closure: Woodham Road, Stow Maries:

The Parish Council was notified by Highways England of an immediate road closure at Wellinditch Bridge, Woodham Road, Stow Maries due to an unsafe structure. The closure would be effective between the junction of Crows Lane and the Lower Burnham Road and was expected to be in place for approximately eight weeks.

Members noted that these works were being arranged and completed by Highways England who owned the structure, and not by Essex Highways. The Parish Council and surrounding communities would be updated about the works and any associated traffic management as the repairs progressed.

At Mr. Potter's suggestion Sue White (District Council Ward Member) agreed to recommend to Essex County Council that, in the interests of highways safety, a one way system was implemented in Church Lane and Honey Pot Lane, Stow Maries whilst the road closure was in place.

6.2/09/19 Other highway matters: *ECC Member Footpath Repair*

Scheme: Members noted that Penny Channer (County Council Ward Member) had informed the Parish Council that she had submitted her list of priority schemes to the Highway's Department, including the cutting back of the roadside hedge between the end of Norwood Cottage's garden and Sunnyside, Cold Norton Road.

Officers were now working hard to assess, schedule and mobilise the resources needed to deliver the repairs alongside existing services, commitments and activities.

Officers would assess the sites identified over the coming months and deliver works to resolve them up until March 2020.

ECC/EALC Highways Winter Briefing: Members noted that Essex County Council was holding a Highways Winter Briefing on Wednesday, 2nd October 2019 in the Foakes Hall, Great Dunmow.

The Winter Briefing would cover how Essex Highways planned, prioritised and delivered the county wide winter highways service.

The briefing would include the following topics:

Review of previous winters

- Weather forecasting – Essex Areas
- Optimisation of gritting routes
- Technology of salting and what's next?
- Collaboration with Districts, Boroughs & City
- Salt Bins and Salt Bags
- Self-help: 'Good Samaritan' legislation
- Communications & Enquiries
- Private winter supplies – optional direct supplier

It was agreed to see if Mr. Strathern would like to attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

7/09/19 PLAYING FIELD AND OPEN SPACES

7.1/09/19 Children's play Area: Monthly report: Mr. Ash reported that he had carried out his weekly inspections of the Children's Play Area and that all items of play equipment therein appeared to be in a satisfactory condition.

There remained a problem however with the picnic benches which weren't properly secured in the ground. It was agreed to ask Mr. Amos, who had made and installed them, to put longer chains on them to anchor them more securely into the ground.

Mr. Ash was also pleased to note that at the Parish Council's request Mr. Macmorland had cut back the vegetation alongside the footpath between Pump Corner and the playing field.

7.2/09/19 To receive a progress report on the refurbishment of the Children's Play Area: Members noted that Broxap Ltd had carried out the site survey in the presence of Mr. Bardwell and Mrs. Johns. The Chairman, and Mrs. Johns had then reviewed the results and the site plan was amended in light of their comments. The Parish Council had subsequently

confirmed the order on 6th September 2019. Members noted that Broxap Ltd anticipated starting work on 31st October 2019.

The Parish Council once again recorded its thanks to Mrs. Johns for all her hard work in getting the project finalised and to Mr. Bardwell and the Chairman.

7.3/09/19 Damaged Notice board – Rudley Green: Members noted that no further information had been received from Core Claims, the loss adjusters, for Members' consideration at the meeting.

7.4/09/19 Other playing field and open space matters: *Notice board doors:* It was noted that the notice board doors in Pump Lane and at the Roundbush weren't opening as the locks were sticking.

It was agreed that as this might be weather related, to monitor the situation and report back at the October meeting.

Allotment hedge: Members noted that the tenant of allotment plot 3 had very kindly cut back the allotment hedge and would burn the clippings as soon as possible. The Parish Council had subsequently received a complaint that the clippings had been put on the muck heap, so the tenant agreed to burn them as soon as possible. They did point out however that the access to the muck heap hadn't been blocked, in fact they had strimmed the area twice this year to keep the weeds down and make it more accessible. The tenant went on to ask if the Parish Council knew when the owner of the muck was planning to use it as it had been there for two years and was preventing anyone else getting deliveries in without blocking access through the gate, although this could be worked around with effort.

The Chairman agreed to talk to the tenants concerned.

Condition of the pavilion floor: Members noted that whilst Mr. Russell had been painting the Pavilion ceiling he had had an opportunity to look at the floor and had advised the council that the floor was of considerable age and was now showing signs of degrading. He therefore suggested that the Council considered replacing the floor in the next year or two. As a guide to

cost Mr Russell anticipated that it would not cost more than £2,000 but until the floor had been lifted it was impossible to assess the condition of the joists and sleeper walls and any need to alter the structure in any way. Mr. Russell's costing was based on a 5% need to repair floor structure, to take entire floor up and dispose of and re-lay using 22mm t&g P5 (moisture resisting) chipboard and overlay with carpet tiles. Costing was roughly equally split between labour and materials.

It was agreed that carpet tiles would be impractical in this setting, and to discuss the matter at the December 2019 meeting with a view to obtaining quotations for different solutions in time for setting the precept 2020/2021 at the January 2020 Parish Council meeting.

Poplar tree seedlings on the playing field: It was agreed to ask Andrew Macmorland to cut down the Poplar tree seedlings in the hedge near the natural play area before they grew too big and encroached further into the playing field ditch and on the surrounding area.

8/09/19 Parish Council Website and Accessibility Regulations Compliance

Members noted the contents of a report from Mr. R. Rapley, the Parish Council's webmaster. The report's conclusions were as follows:

The website was partially compliant with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1AA](#) standard, due to the non-compliances listed in section 4.1. of Mr. Rapley's report.

Where possible the website pages had been amended or enhanced to bring them as close as possible to meeting the guidelines. Where this was not possible due to the constraints of the supporting software provided by Cambridge Open Systems and essexinfo.net it would be necessary to purchase third party support to add to the required additional facilities. This would incur a cost estimated to be in excess of £1,000.

Since this review had commenced notice had been given that essexinfo.net was ceasing to support websites after March 2020 due to Essex County Council withdrawing its financial support. Cambridge Open Systems had

been contacted and approval obtained to store a website on their servers but they, too, had stated that with the withdrawal of funding from essexinfo.net they may also have to cease supporting free websites.

Unless this situation was resolved before March 2020, it would be necessary to identify a commercial website design and support company to produce a new website which had the necessary facilities to meet the website accessibility guidelines in full.

If a new website was to be developed it had to be compliant by 23rd September 2019 as the website would come under the first obligation shown in Section 1.2 of Mr. Rapley's report, making action a priority. A specification would need to be defined to assist in identifying a development company and funding would have to be identified.

However, the provision of specific 'add-ons' for website visitors with disabilities using the website would be the responsibility of the visitor. Advice may be offered but it would not be the duty of the Parish Council or its website developer to provide these 'add-ons' for the visitor.

Members also noted details of a company offering a compliant website template and hosting for £120 per annum.

It was agreed to liaise with Mr. Rapley over potential solutions and the cost of each.

9/09/19 MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

Members noted that the half day's free mental health training from Provide in association with Essex County Council and the Essex Association of Local Council's had been arranged for Thursday, 14th November 2019 between 9.00 a.m. and 1.15 p.m. in the Pavilion. Nine parishioners had asked to attend. The Parish Council needed to provide the pavilion free of charge, tea and coffee and a café style layout as agreed at the July meeting (Minute 9/07/19).

The Clerk agreed to attend and make the teas and coffees.

10/09/19 TO REVIEW THE GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT FOR THE 2020 SEASON

The Parish Council reviewed details of the grass cutting contract for Purleigh, as the current contract (awarded to A.G. Macmorland Farming Partnership) was due to expire at the end of the 2019 season.

It was agreed to amend the contract for 2020 to incorporate:

Cutting the roadside hedge between Purleigh House and the Cemetery (Minute 7.6/02/19.)

Extending the cutting of the roadside hedge in Howe Green Road as far as the lay-by opposite Dovecote

It was also agreed to retain the stipulation that contractors must use a cylinder mower (rather than a rotary mower) to minimize the appearance and effect of the grass left behind once cut.

It was then proposed and agreed to invite the following contractors to tender for the grass cutting and hedge trimming contract for the 2020 season:

A.G. Macmorland Farming Partnership, PG Groundcare Ltd and Maldon District Council.

Members noted that quotations would be opened by the Chairman at the Parish Council meeting due to be held on Friday, 11th October 2019.

11/09/19 FINANCIAL MATTERS

11.1.09/19 Completion of the external audit of accounts (limited assurance review) for the year ended 31st March 2019: Members noted that PKF Littlejohn LLP had concluded its audit of the Parish Council's accounts for the financial year 2018/2019 and had concluded that on the

basis of its review, in its opinion, the information contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was in accordance with proper practices and that no matters had come to its attention which gave cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

A copy of Section 3 of the AGAR (External Auditor Report and Certificate) had been distributed to each Councillor before the meeting.

The successful conclusion of the audit would be advertised on the Parish Council's notice boards alongside a copy of the completed AGAR, and had already been published on the Parish Council's website.

11.2/09/19 To approve the purchase of a wreath for Remembrance

Sunday: Members noted that the sum of £40 had been set aside in the precept 2019/2020 to purchase a wreath from the Royal British Legion to be laid at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday, which this year would fall on 10th November.

It was agreed that Mr. Ash would lay the wreath at the War Memorial on behalf of the Parish Council.

11.3/09/19 To receive a report of receipts: members received a report of the following receipts:

Table Tennis Club	Pavilion hire (April – July inclusive)	£78.00
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Barclays Bank Interest:
Plc

Capital Projects Fund	£12.81
Business Premium Account	£21.42
Legacy	£3.63
	£37.86
	£115.86

11.4/09/19 To approve payments of accounts between meetings:

Members noted and approved that the following accounts had been paid between meetings, adhering strictly to the procedures outlined in the Parish Council's Financial Regulation 5.5.

Broxap Limited	Site survey re: Play Area	£825.00	
	VAT	£165.00	
			£990.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP	Audit fees		
	Year ended 31st March 2019	£300.00	
	VAT	£60.00	
			£360.00
R. Rapley	Participation in 2 webinars		
	Amending website where possible		
	Production of compliance level report		£120.00
			£1,460.00

11.5/09/19 To approve payment of accounts to hand and transfers

between bank accounts: It was unanimously agreed to approve payment of the following accounts to hand:

Mrs. Jane Potter	Salary – August 2019	£1,311.00	
	Less tax	£38.40	
	National Insurance	£71.04	

	And Pension Contributions	£76.04	
			£1,125.52
H.M. Revenue & Customs	Tax	£38.40	
	National Insurance (employees)	£71.04	
	National insurance (employers)	£81.70	
			£191.14
Essex Pensions Fund	Employee contributions (5.8% pensionable pay)	£76.04	
	Employer contributions (21.7% pensionable pay)	£284.49	
	Administration charge (8% employee contributions)	£6.08	£366.61
RBS Invoice Finance Ltd	Photocopying	£9.55	
	VAT	£1.91	£11.46
Mrs. R. Dilworth	Pavilion cleaning – August 2019		
	20 hours @ £8.50 per hour		£170.00

A.G. Macmorland	Grass cutting – August	£597.00
Farming Partnership	VAT	£119.40
		£716.40
Mrs. Jane Potter	Petty Cash reimbursement	£5.22
Mr. S. Russell	Painting the Pavilion ceiling	£750.00
		£3,336.35

Transfers: Members noted and approved the following bank transfers:

1. On 1st September 2019 the sum of £825.00 had been transferred from the Capital Projects Fund (30567361) to the Community Current Account (40731080) to cover the net payment of Broxap Ltd's invoice for the site survey (pursuant to Minute 9/01/19 and leaving in the fund the remaining £2,019.00 of the Parish Council's financial contribution to the redevelopment of the Children's Play Area.)
2. On 1st September 2019 the sum of £645.00 had been transferred from the Business Premium Account (80731099) to the Community Current Account (40731080) to cover payment of the remaining two payments made between meetings and leave approximately £1,500 in the current account.
3. On 12th September 2019 the sum of £2,767.23 had been transferred from the Business Premium Account (80731099) to the Community Current Account (40731080) to cover payment of the above accounts to hand and leave approximately £1,500 in the current account.

Bank reconciliation as at 31st August 2019: A bank reconciliation for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st August 2019 as carried out by the Chairman and approved by the Parish Council as follows:

Statement of Accounts:

Receipts: £96,709.24	Barclays Bank Plc:	
Expenditure £22,007.35	Current account	£1,319.12
	Business Premium Account	£40,342.51
	Capital Projects Fund	£25,699.47
	Legacy	£7,290.79
	Petty Cash	£50.00
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£74,701.89		£74,701.89

12/09/19 CORRESPONDENCE

EALC

Annual General Meeting and Essex County Council and EALC's Annual Conference: Members noted that this combined event would take place on Thursday, 19th September 2019 in the Foakes Hall, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow. CM6 1DG.

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome

Annual General Meeting: Members noted that Peter Martin (Chairman, Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome) had extended an invitation to Parish Councillors to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome (SMGWA) which would take place on Tuesday, 17th September 2019 in the Airman's Mess commencing at 7.00 p.m.

RSVP's via celebration@stowmaries.org.uk were required.

It was agreed to ask Mr. Bardwell if he would like to attend the AGM on behalf of the Parish Council.

NALC

Independent review into Local Government Audit. Members noted that Sir Tony Redmond was undertaking an [independent review](#) into local government audit. The review would make its initial recommendations to the Communities Secretary in December 2019 and a full report would be published in March 2020.

Context:

The remit of the review was to assess the arrangements in place to support the transparency and quality of local authority financial reporting and external audit including those introduced by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act). NALC was minded to reiterate some of its main recent positions on audit in its response and submissions and would include feedback from the sector on its experiences on how well or otherwise the transparency and audit changes introduced by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 had bedded in:

1. NALC wanted to support the continued principle of audit proportionality (i.e. a lighter-touch for smaller bodies) and of safeguards to contain excessive fees brought about by habitual (local resident) audit complainers.
2. In the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Practice there should be the inclusion of a principle relating to proportionality in respect of smaller authorities, especially where the authority had an annual budget / turnover below £25,000 and was potentially exempt (i.e. smaller and subject to the Smaller Authorities' Transparency Code). The local councils with annual budgeted incomes of less than £25,000 per annum would need further support moving forward in terms of ensuring complete compliance with the transparency requirements of the Act.
3. The Review needed to be aware that to a smaller local council the costs of an audit investigation could cost more than the council's annual precept.

4. The 2014 Act was still very new, was largely working and stability for this reason was needed to give the main changes from 2014 a chance to bed-in.

NALC was additionally interested in the Parish Council's views on the effectiveness and consistency of current internal audit arrangements, and on the following review questions:

1. Had audit standards been maintained or improved, and not been compromised?
2. Was there an 'expectation gap' in what external audit provided? What was the nature of the gap and how could it be filled?
3. Were auditors properly responding to questions or objections by local taxpayers?
4. Were audit recommendations effective in helping local authorities to improve their financial management?
5. Did the financial information provided in local authority accounts facilitate scrutiny by local taxpayers and by the local press?

It was agreed that the new audit regulations contained within the Act were broadly working and that transparency in local government finance had been maintained and enhanced as a result.

CPRE

Annual General Meeting: Members noted that the Parish Council had been invited to attend the CPRE Essex Annual General Meeting, which would take place on Saturday, 5th October at 2.45 p.m. for 3.00 p.m. at Cressing Temple Barns, Witham Road, Braintree, CM77 8PD. The meeting would welcome Vincent Thompson the Vice Lieutenant of Essex and the guest speaker would be Simon Amstutz who managed the staff team at the Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Report for parishes on Essex County Council matters: A report from Penny Channer (County Council Ward Member), updating the Parish Council on

the work of Essex County Council was placed in the circulation folder for Members' information.

13/09/19 POINTS OF INFORMATION

Members did not have any points of information to share.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1988 (SECTION 17)

Consideration was given to the crime and disorder implications of all decisions made at this meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.58 p.m.