

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF PURLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL, HELD IN THE WELLS PAVILION, HOWE GREEN ROAD ON FRIDAY, 19TH JUNE 2020 AT 7.00 P.M.

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

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

1/06/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr. N. Arthur and Mr. B. Oliver who were unable to attend the meeting due to prior personal commitments and for health reasons.

Mr. Bardwell apologised as he would have to leave the meeting early due to a prior personal commitment. Mr. Bardwell left the meeting prior to the discussion of Agenda item 11/06/20.

2/06/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS (Localism Act 2011)

The Chairman declared an interest in Agenda item 10/06/20 Allotment Matters, being an allotment tenant and having a personal relationship with one of the parties involved.

There were no applications for dispensations from the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

3/06/20 THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PURLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 15TH MAY 2020 having been circulated to all Members, were approved, and signed by the Chairman.

4/06/20 TO DISCUSS ANY MATTERS OF INFORMATION ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES:

4.1/06/20 Clerk: The Clerk did not have any matters of information arising from the May meeting to report to Members.

4.2/06/20 Members’: Members did not have any matters arising from the May meeting to discuss.

5/06/19 THE CONTENTS OF ‘CORONAVIRUS 3: JUNE 2020’, THE RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN 16TH MAY AND 12TH JUNE 2020, having been circulated to all Members, were approved, and it was agreed that this document would be attached as an Appendix to the June 2020 Minutes.

6/06/20 PLANNING MATTERS

6.1/06/20 Decisions taken between meetings: In addition to the recommendations on planning applications to Maldon District Council listed in ‘Coronavirus 3: June 2020’ attached as an Appendix to these Minutes, the following decision was taken between meetings:

- ◆ HOUSE/MAL/20/00543 Side extension, roof-light and balcony within the roof space. The Paddocks, Hyde Chase, Danbury.

The Parish Council **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL.**

6.2/06/20 Current applications: FUL/MAL/20/00533 Removal of condition 4 on approved MAR/499/72. Wagtails, Chelmsford Road.

The Parish Council **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL.**

Members noted that Chelmsford City Council had consulted the Parish Council on the following application. Although this site did not lie within Purleigh, Members noted that the Parish Council had been consulted due to its close proximity to the boundary.

20/00002/MAS. Stage two masterplan. Land North of South Woodham Ferrers, Burnham Road, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford.

Members agreed not to comment on the Stage 2 masterplan as the site did not lay within or abut the parish .

FUL/MAL/20/00486 Demolition of existing outbuildings and construction of 6no. dwellings (comprising two terraces of three 2 bedroom dwellings) with associated landscaping and access works. Novoli Farm, Pump Lane.

The Parish Council **RECOMMENDED REFUSAL** on the following grounds:

1. The application site was within a rural location outside of the defined settlement boundary of Purleigh where policies of restraint apply. The District Council could demonstrate a five year housing land supply to accord with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the site had not been identified by the Planning Authority for development to meet future needs for the District, nor did it fall within either a Garden Suburb or Strategic Allocation for growth identified within the Maldon District Local Development Plan to meet the objectively assessed needs for housing in the District.
2. The proposed development would substantially alter the open character and intrinsic beauty of the countryside on this side of Pump Lane and would detract from the equestrian character and appearance of the site, as a result of its domestication and the inclusion of associated residential paraphernalia.
3. If developed, the site would provide poor quality and limited access to sustainable and public transportation, resulting in an increased need for private vehicle ownership.
4. The Parish Council believed that some aspects of the application were misleading e.g. when describing the regularity of, and access to buses and in the assessment of the potential flood risk.
5. The development would therefore be unacceptable and contrary to policies S1, S2, S8, D2 and H4 of the Maldon District Local Development Plan and Government advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

FUL/MAL/20/00556 Enlarging existing pond by a maximum of 320m² to allow for additional surface water storage (associated with approved permissions FUL/MAL/19/00215 & FUL/MAL/19/00647.) Birchwood Farm, Birchwood Road, Cock Clarks.

The Parish Council **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL**.

6.3/06/20 Maldon District Council planning decisions: Members noted that Maldon District Council had **APPROVED** the following planning applications:

- ◆ HOUSE/MAL/20/00240 Raised ridge height, extended porch. Goose Patch, Pump Lane.
- ◆ HOUSE/MAL/20/00250 Detached garage with games room & storage within roof space, Primrose Howe Green Road.

And had **REFUSED** to grant planning consent for the following development:

- ◆ FUL/MAL/20/00310 Conversion of barn and cartlodge to 2 new dwellings, partially retrospective. Barns Adjacent to Mosklyns Farm, Chelmsford Road.

6.4/06/20 Notification of appeals: Members noted that the Parish Council had not been notified of any appeals or appeal decisions between meetings, other than those listed in ‘Coronavirus 3 – June 2020’ attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

6.5/06/20 Proposed Bradwell B Power Station - Stage One Public Consultation: The Parish Council noted the contents of a letter from West Mersea Town Council seeking the Parish Council's support to press for a deferment of the end of the consultation period beyond 1st July 2020, due to the situation with Covid-19, until effective consultation arrangements could be re-established, including public meetings.

West Mersea Town Council, mindful of the very serious impact of the proposals by Bradwell Power Generation Company (BRB) to develop a new nuclear power station upon communities in the area, was calling on BRB to delay stage one of the pre-application consultation believing:

1. Effective communication with local communities had not been possible in the present circumstances because of the impact of Covid-19 and discriminated against groups including the elderly and disabled.
2. Came at a time when residents were distracted and distressed during the coronavirus crisis.
3. Councils and community based bodies were unable to have public meetings to discuss their responses.

It had therefore resolved to:

1. Write to BRB to seek a deferral of stage one of the pre-application consultation until effective arrangements could be put in place.
2. Write to Colchester Borough Council and Maldon District Council seeking a deferral for the reasons given above.
3. Urge all other local authorities in the area to also write seeking a deferment.
4. Make immediate contact with MPs and the Leader and Chief Executive of Essex County Council to call for a deferment.
5. Urge representations seeking a deferment to be copied to the Planning Inspectorate.

Members noted that the Town Council was very concerned about the decision to cancel two-thirds of the planned public exhibitions that were integral to the whole consultation process and substitute them with a pale alternative of individual based activities and telephone contact. The Town Council believed that it was vital to have interactive discussions and local meetings when circumstances permitted, so that people could have their say on this crucial part of the consultation.

Members also noted that after the Parish Council had supported Cold Norton's request for a deferment of the consultation it had been informed that the response received from BRB had been "No", but that next year there may be an interim consultation before the Stage 2 Consultation. As more Parish and Town Councils were now realising the problems of trying to engage with their communities remotely given the restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic the parish Council felt that there may be more pressure on BRB, especially if, as West Mersea hoped, the Planning Inspectorate became involved.

It was agreed to support West Mersea Town Council's request for a deferment of the public consultation.

If the consultation deadline for responses wasn't deferred, apart from supporting Mundon Parish Council over its concerns about traffic and its request to upgrade the B1010 Fambridge Road, the Parish Council agreed to emphasise its concerns about traffic in its response and to include paragraphs on the scale and siting of the development, environmental concerns, loss of amenity and impacts on tourism and the local population, (particularly as the District was becoming an increasingly important wine region) and design and accommodation.

Members suggested that to deter Bradwell B traffic from using non-designated and unsuitable routes to and from the site, possibly along rural lanes, such short cuts should be made more time consuming for drivers to use *via* the introduction of traffic islands and other appropriate measures such as those installed in Rettendon, where traffic islands and road narrowing measures had been successfully introduced. The Parish Council would also advocate the creation and use of new railway lines in Essex.

It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate a draft response for the Council's approval prior to its submission.

6.6/06/20 Other planning matters: Members did not have any other planning matters to discuss.

7/06/20 HIGHWAY MATTERS

7.1/06/20 Highway safety: Hackmans Lane and Marl pits Road: Members noted that the Parish Council had received a letter from residents of Marl pits Road describing the increased number of heavy goods vehicles using Marl pits Road and Hackmans Lane, which was causing them considerable concern.

This, combined with the problem of speeding traffic through Cock Clarks, was an issue the Parish Council had been made aware of and as a result had asked Essex County Council to install fixed speed cameras and ban HGVs from using Hackmans Lane.

7.2/06/20 Other highway matters: Enclosure of the highway verge: Maldon Road: Members noted that Essex County Council had informed the Parish Council that it had carried out an initial assessment of this issue, but was working to gather further information to determine what action, if any, could be taken.

Damaged Cock Clarks Gateway sign: Members noted that the Parish Council had reported the damaged gateway sign at Corporation Bridge, Hackmans Lane, to Essex County Council (ref: 2667885) and had asked for the sign to be straightened out and reinstated as soon as possible. Members were reminded that the Parish Council had contributed towards the cost of this sign, so that its design incorporated the Bittern like the other gateway signs in the parish. Should the County Council deem it necessary to install a new sign, the Parish Council had asked that it be replaced with an identical one which also incorporated the Bittern to help to preserve Purleigh's local distinctiveness.

Road closures: Fambridge Road (B1010): Members noted that residents of Roundbush Road had requested that, in the interests of highway safety, when Fambridge Road was closed again for roadworks, Roundbush Road and Simmons Lane were closed as well, except for access, to prevent HGV's from using these wholly unsuitable rural roads as a shortcut. During the recent road closures both roads had experienced a high volume of HGV's which had damaged verges, trees and property and saw a number of minor accidents including a lorry going off the road in Simmons Lane. During the road closure the Parish Council had managed to get signs installed at the Fambridge Road end of Roundbush Road and the Barons Lane end of Simmons Lane stating that the roads were unsuitable for HGVs. These signs had been frequently ignored however.

Members noted that Penny Channer (County Council Ward Member) had informed the Parish Council that she had made enquiries and there was a long diversion in place using roads that the heaviest traffic on Fambridge Road could use.

She had forwarded details of the accepted Traffic Management Drawing for the scheme showing the diversion route for the duration of the works and road closure notices. Unfortunately, the manager for the scheme had reported that drivers were ignoring these and trying to take short cuts. Essex County Council believed that Simmons Lane already had 'blue unsuitable signs' but last week the contractor had put some additional ones up, thanks to the Parish Council's intervention.

Members noted that there would still be some work left to complete probably towards the end of June but that the road wouldn't need to be closed for road marking. In August however the road would need to be closed again to install the road studs removed prior to the micro surfacing. There would therefore be more traffic disruption so the scheme could be completed.

Footpath from Fambridge Road to Hales Farm: It was agreed to inform Essex County Council that the footpath was inaccessible at the Fambridge Road end and probably where it went from the grass field into the arable field.

8/06/20 PLAYING FIELD AND OPEN SPACES

8.1/06/20 Children's Play Area: Members noted that the Children's Play Area remained closed.

It was also noted that on the advice of Alan Lingley (Playground Inspector) and Maldon District Council, on Monday, 15th June 2020 the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk had removed the red and white tape from inside the play area, which remained surrounded by Harris security fencing, had removed the physical restrictions on the use of the slide, and had put up additional signage.

8.2/06/20 The potential identification of Giant Hogweed alongside the Telephone Exchange Road: Members noted that the Environment Agency had informed the Parish Council that Giant Hogweed was not reportable to it. It was the landowner's responsibility to control these plants.

The agency had advised that it was down to landowners to control these plants, but they did not have to remove them, as the natural growth and spread of the plants was not illegal. Allowing the plants to spread onto land outside of the ownership or control of the landowner however could be seen as an offence. Also causing the plants to spread by removing or disposing of them incorrectly would be illegal.

The Police were responsible for investigating any offences and each police force had a wildlife liaison officer who could be contacted. The Act however did not define what was meant by '*cause to grow in the wild*' which meant that some offences were hard to prove.

If the police could not take action, a civil action could in certain circumstances be taken against a person to ensure that the invasive plants on their land were controlled.

8.3/06/20 Risk assessment and inspection of the Parish Council's tree stock: Members noted that Mr. Macmorland had advised that he could attend to the work required to the following trees identified as high risk in the Parish Council's Tree Inspection reports:

Church and War memorial.

Can fell and remove: G3, G6, T7 and T8

Playing field

Can reduce T1. Remove deadwood on T2 (but in Mr. Macmorland's opinion it would be better felled to the ground due to disease in the base of the trunk on the side nearest the road which he can do.) Reduce T3. Remove deadwood on T14, Crown lift G15 and T16.

Members also noted and approved that between meetings the Vice Chairman had contacted his arboriculturalist at Manor Tree Services to obtain quotations for the work that A.G. Macmorland Farming Partnership couldn't carry out to the trees identified in the Parish Council's Tree Inspection Reports (circulated to all Members between meetings) categorised as 3 'High Risk.'

It was agreed to authorise A.G. Macmorland Farming Partnership to carry out the above work and to fell T2 on the playing field.

Mr. Bardwell reported that Manor Tree Services would provide the Parish Council with a quotation to carry out the remaining work.

8.4/06/20 Letting the Pavilion and associated risk assessment: Members noted that according to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) during the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government's guidance and rules had been highly prescriptive and clear. As the situation had developed the country was moving into a new phase where increasing emphasis was being placed on making individual or organisational decisions based on available information. From a local council perspective the decision to re-open certain facilities or to return to office working would need to be made based on the specific, local situation. A key part of that decision making process would be the requirement to assess and manage risk.

NALC had advised that a COVID-19 risk assessment was a logical step by step process looking at each individual place, service or activity to identify who used them and the risks to those people when they did. It was fundamentally no different in format from the risk assessment process that the Parish Council was familiar with, but it focussed on the specific risks arising from the coronavirus pandemic. It should allow the Council to identify and put in place additional measures so that it could meet the COVID-19 criteria of social distancing, cleanliness and hygiene. The key principles were:

1. To carry out a separate assessment for every facility/open space to ensure a consistency of approach, thus the Pavilion and Children's Play Area would require separate risk assessments.
2. Documents had to be specific to the Parish Council's own facilities.
3. Identification of the different users who would access the facilities including the public, staff, councillors, contractors and visitors and consideration of the requirements of different age groups. For example, the toilet cleaner would face different risks while carrying out their work, to those people using the toilets, therefore the risk assessment needed to look at the needs of everyone who had access to the facility.
4. The assessment had to establish what actions could be taken to manage or mitigate the risk in order to ensure social distancing, cleanliness and hygiene.
5. If there were precautions and solutions these had to be recorded on the assessment and then be checked regularly. A record of each assessment had to be kept together with the rationale for the final decision, review points for the future, inspection timetable and the naming of responsible individuals in each case.

Members noted that the Government's guidance on working safely, read in conjunction with the HSE Guide to Working Safely during COVID-19, should help identify the risks to the Parish Council's facilities and what steps may be possible to allow for safe distancing, cleanliness and hygiene.

As the restrictions were eased, there would be wide variation in the way in which public facilities and public spaces reopened. NALC believed it was really important that councils communicated the reasons for keeping some places closed or the basis on which they were partially or fully reopened to the public.

When Government rules on the re-opening of village halls etc. were relaxed, it was highly likely that insurers would also require evidence that a Covid-19 risk assessment had been carried out on each council run facility.

It was agreed to wait until further Government advice on the re-opening of public buildings had been issued before carrying out Covid-19 risk assessments on the Pavilion and Children's Play area.

8.5/06/20 Other Playing field and open space matters: *Replacement bench for Rigby's Path:* Members considered the following quotations for a replacement bench for Rigby's Path:

Glasdon UK

Larbreck FSC certified hardwood seat	£945.95
Concrete surface and paving slab fixing kit	<u>£46.32</u>
	£992.27

Wealden Benches

Commercial Teak wooden bench 1.5m	£450.00
Delivery	£34.95
Fixings	POA
Stain	<u>POA</u>
	£484.95

Sloane& Sons

Henley Teak Commercial bench 1.5m	£349.00
Hard surface anchoring kit	<u>£40.00</u>
	£389.00

All quotations were net of VAT.

It was agreed to purchase a 1.5m commercial teak bench from Wealden Benches and to ask the owners of the tree that had fallen on the original bench to consider making a donation towards its cost rather than claiming against their insurance. It was also agreed to ask S.P. Bardwell Ltd to install the bench once it had been delivered.

New Notice Board at Farther Howe Green: Members noted that S.P Bardwell Ltd had installed the new notice board in Howe Green Road. As usual the company had done a really wonderful job and the Parish Council looked forward to receiving its invoice for the work in due course.

9/06/20 TO DISCUSS PURSUING A LEGAL MATTER

It was proposed and duly resolved that under the terms of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, having regard for the confidential nature of this item of business which related to a legal matter, it be held in committee and secrecy be imposed on Members.

The Parish Council authorised Mr. Strathern to negotiate the terms of a legal agreement on behalf of the Parish Council with the Clerk providing administrative support.

10/06/20 ALLOTMENT MATTERS

The Chairman declared an interest in this Agenda item and left the Pavilion, thus playing no part in the Parish Council's discussion of it.

The Vice-Chairman, Mr. Bardwell, took over as Chairman for this Agenda item.

Members noted the contents of a letter from an allotment holder which described the actions of another tenant which was adversely affecting the enjoyment of their plot. There were accusations of theft, intimidating and erratic behaviour and the involvement of the Police.

It was agreed to write to the complainant, sympathising with their predicament, but explaining that without concrete evidence it would be very difficult for the Parish Council to take action such as terminating a tenancy at this juncture. The Parish Council would suggest that the tenant kept a detailed, dated log of all incidents with as much corroborating evidence as possible to support it over the coming weeks and to keep the Parish Council fully informed of any further incidents.

It was also agreed to write to the other party involved advising them that the Parish Council would be substantially increasing its monitoring of the allotment site.

All the other tenants would be contacted about recent events to request that if anyone saw anything untoward at the site or witnessed any criminal or destructive activity they let the Parish Council know immediately. These reports would be treated in confidence and tenants' anonymity would be preserved if required.

Water usage at the site: Concern was expressed that one tenant was using much more water than anyone else resulting in extremely high water bills £704.55 in the financial year ending 31st March 2020 compared with £400.86 in the year ending 31st March 2019 and £90.62 in the previous year. The Parish Council had already established that the water meter wasn't faulty but agreed to install a new tap to stop any leaks. Mr. Bardwell kindly agreed to put this work in hand and the Parish Council looked forward to receiving his company's invoice accordingly.

11/06/20 FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Chairman returned to the Pavilion at this juncture and resumed the chair and the Vice-Chairman left the meeting, due to a prior pressing commitment.

11.1/06/20 To receive a report from the independent auditor, to be submitted with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2020: Members noted that Mr. Smith-Daye had carried out an internal audit of the accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2020 and completed his report to the external auditor on 21st May 2020. There were no matters arising from the internal audit to report to the Parish Council. A copy of Mr. Smith-Daye's Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR) which had been submitted with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return had been given to each Councillor prior to the start of the meeting.

Members noted that the Parish Council's completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2020 had been sent to Littlejohn LLP for external audit and copies of completed sections 1, 2 and the AIAR along with 'Notices of public rights and publication of unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020' had been published on the Parish Council's website alongside copies of 'Council accounts - A summary of your rights', as required by the new Regulations.

Members also noted that this year the period of public rights would run from 15th June to 24th July 2020.

11.2/06/20 To receive a report of receipts: Members received a report of the following receipts:

Barclays Bank Plc	Interest:		
	Business Premium Account	£6.64	
	Capital Projects Fund	£2.82	
	Legacy	<u>£1.96</u>	
			£11.42

11.3/06/20 To approve payment of accounts between meetings: Members noted that there had been no payments made between meetings other than those listed in the document 'Coronavirus 3: June 2020', the record of decisions taken between 16th May and 12th June 2020 which are reproduced below:

A.G. Macmorland Farming Partnership	Grass cutting VAT	£869.00 <u>£173.80</u>	£1,042.80
Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Ltd	Insurance Premium (Playing Field)		£224.00
Friends of Essex Heritage	Subscription 2020/2021		£25.00
Anglian Water Business National Ltd	Water re: Pavilion	<u>£205.92</u>	£1,497.72

11.4/06/20 To approve payments of accounts to hand and transfers between bank accounts: Members unanimously approved payment of the following accounts to hand:

Mrs. Jane Potter	Salary – May 2020	£1,338.00	
	Less tax	£43.60	
	National Insurance	£65.52	
	And Pension Contributions	<u>£77.63</u>	
			£1,151.25
H.M. Revenue & Customs	Tax	£43.60	
	National Insurance (employees)	£65.52	
	National insurance (employers)	<u>£83.63</u>	
			£192.75

Essex Pensions Fund	Employee contributions (5.8% pensionable pay)	£77.63	
	Employer contributions (% pensionable pay)	£311.89	
	Administration charge (8% employee contributions)	<u>£6.21</u>	£395.73
Office Power Limited Re: Supplies 4 Business	Tape	£8.04	
	VAT	<u>£1.61</u>	£9.65
Lambert Chapman	Independent audit fee for the year ending 31 st March 2020	£260.00	
	VAT	<u>£52.00</u>	£312.00
Mrs. Jane Potter	Petty Cash – Reimbursement Postage		£12.28
Mrs. R. Dilworth	Pavilion cleaning		<u>£175.00</u>
			£2,248.66

It was noted that Mrs. Dilworth had not submitted an invoice for cleaning the Pavilion in May 2020 due to ill health. It was agreed to pay Mrs. Dilworth her usual charge of £175.00 for pavilion cleaning as a gesture of goodwill.

Transfers: Members noted and approved the following bank transfers:

- 1 On 6th June 2020 the sum of £1,497.72 had been transferred from the Business Premium Account (80731099) to the Community Current Account (40731080) to cover payment of accounts between meeting listed in ‘Coronavirus 3 – June 2020’, and leave approximately £1,500 in the current account.
- 2 On 11th June 2020 the sum of £2,310.16 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 May 2020: A bank reconciliation for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st May 2020 was carried out by the Chairman and approved by the Parish Council as follows:

Statement of Accounts:

Receipts:	£79,140.41	Barclays Bank Plc:	
Payments:	£9,896.82	Current account	£1,500.00
		Business Premium Account	£49,907.55
		Historic Buildings Fund	£10,489.05
		Miss Pawsey’s Legacy	£7,296.99
		Petty Cash	<u>£50.00</u>
	<u>£69,243.59</u>		£69,243.59

Members noted that the Parish Council still owned a tin box with ‘Purleigh Parish Council’ written on it which was in a truly dreadful condition, and was locked but there was no key. It was listed on the asset register as having no value.

The Chairman agreed to ascertain if the box could be opened/restored.

12/06/20 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence for Members' consideration.

13/06/20 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 9.15 p.m.

Chairman:..... Date:.....