

BELCHAMP WALTER PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council meeting was held on 31st January 2024 at 7:30pm at the village hall.

Present:

Cllr J Walker (Chair), Cllr A Hogsbjerg, Cllr P Scott, Cllr R Teverson, Cllr M. Winter, Ms J Munro (Parish Clerk)

Apologies

Cllr C Krelle, Cllr E Poels, Dist Cllr I Parker, County Cllr P. Schwier

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2023 were approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

2. Declaration of interest in agenda items

None

3. Reports

None.

4. Parishioner Statements

None

5. Matters Arising

(a) Planning

Draft drawings of a house to replace the Mission Hut on Hall Rd had been widely circulated to village residents by the treasurer of the PCC (Ms Munro), for comment. The owner of the land wanted to obtain views on the drawings to help him decide whether to apply for planning permission from BDC. If the development went ahead he proposed making a donation to the church to fund parish share. He had asked Ms Munro to collate the comments. Ms Munro reported that she had received 35 comments, 21 of which were in favour, 2 expressed no view, 3 were not opposed but expressed some concerns and 9 were opposed.

Supportive comments included:

- The new house would be a good addition to the village and will bring additional people to the village
- The current building is unkempt and the parking area is muddy and untidy
- The drawings provide parking for the houses on Hall Road
- The owner of the land has proposed a donation to the church which would provide for several years of parish share

Concerns and opposing comments included:

- Height of the new building
- Loss of views, privacy and light for neighbouring houses
- Traffic issues as the passing space would be lost
- Mess and noise during the construction process.

The council agreed should a planning application be submitted it would to hold an extraordinary meeting to discuss the application – i.e. there was no need to first circulate the application to the planning advisory committee for its consideration.

(b) Speed limit

Ms Munro referred to the email she had circulated in December from the 20's Plenty for Us organization. This is an organization that works with local groups that ask for a speed limit of 20mph to be the norm in residential areas. The council discussed the idea of supporting a speed limit of 20mph in the village. While councillors were generally supportive of a 20mph limit in the village of Belchamp Walter, concern was expressed that blanket 20mph speed limits in all villages would not be appropriate. It was agreed input from village residents should be obtained – through the BW e-news.

Action: Ms Munro

Cllr Scott expressed concern about the speed of the traffic past the pond and along Gestingthorpe road, noting that children play in the road and the pond ducks sit in the road. After discussion it was agreed to install some 'Children playing' signs near the 30mph speed limits signs on Gestingthorpe Rd and North Road.

Action: Ms Munro and Cllr Scott

(c) Village Hall Lease

Ms Munro reported she was meeting with a village resident on 2nd February to discuss a lease for the village hall between the council and the Village Hall Committee. She was hopeful she would be in a position to present a draft lease at the next council meeting.

Action: Ms Munro

(d) Footpaths

Ms Munro reported she had ordered some footpath way markers from Essex Highways.

Ms Munro reported she had received an email from the chair of the Belchamp P3 group stating a footpath marker post just over the BW boundary from Belchamp Otten had rotted away. The P3 group has the materials and manpower to get the job done and wanted permission from the council to proceed. The council gratefully accepted this offer and asked Ms Munro to communicate the acceptance.

Action: Ms Munro

(e) Grant Funding

Cllr Hogsbjerg suggested several grants that were available which might be of interest to either the Parish Council or the Village Hall Committee:

- Defibrillator – matched funding up to £750 is available
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Small grants programme – Sports England

The Council discussed the need for a second defibrillator in the village – for example one at Puttocks End. It was noted defibrillators need a power source. Another option would be to have a defibrillator in the village hall. Ms Munro was asked to investigate defibrillators without a power source and look into the grants mentioned.

Action: Ms Munro

(f) Other

It was noted that the kerb on the blind corner on the road to Sudbury before Eyeston Farm had eroded because of the flooding. There was no a dangerous drop of about 12 inches. The flooding had been reported to Essex Highways who responded they were aware of the issue but it was not a priority and would be addressed as part of

their regular maintenance. Because the flooding has not been addressed the side of the road now presents a danger. It was agreed the matter should be reported again.

Action: Ms Munro

6. Finance Report

(a) Ms Munro reported on the bank balances at 27/01/24

Community Account	£1,510
Reserves Account	£12,684
Restricted Playing Field Acct- included in above	£122

(b) The Council considered the 2024/2025 budget. It agreed the budget should be set at a level that resulted in no increase in council tax. The precept was set at £5,927. It was noted that this level of precept would build up the reserves levels as the budget provides for £1,300 in donations.

7. Items for next regular meeting

Village hall lease

Footpaths

Grants

Signs

Speedlimit