

BELCHAMP WALTER PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council meeting was held on Tuesday 18th February 2025 at 7:00pm.

Present:

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

Apologies

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

- 1) **To confirm the minutes**
The minutes of the meeting held 13th November 2024 were approved as a correct record.
- 2) **Matters Arising**
None
- 3) **Members to review or present declarations of interest of items on the agenda.**
None
- 4) **County and District Reports**
County Cllr P. Schwier had sent his apologies and asked that his regular emails be used as his update.
- 5) **Opportunity for Parishioners to make statements.**
None
- 6) **Planning Advisory Committee**
Cllr Scott presented the report from the Planning Advisory Committee.

He noted that BDC is considering changes to its waste collection. Under consideration is replacing the clear sacs with two bins, one for paper and card and another for glass, metal, plastics and cartons – this would bring the number of bins to five, if a household was paying for the garden waste bin. It was noted that this might be problematic for some of the houses in the village that has little space to store current bins. It was suggested that Dist Cllr I Parker be contacted to see if consideration would be given to a central collection point, for example, the village hall, to be used by those who do not have room to store additional bins.

Action: Ms Munro

He requested all PAC members respond to his emails asking for comment on a planning document. Even if PAC members have no comment they should note this.

Action PAC Members

- 7) **Matters arising:**
 - a) **Village Hall lease**
Cllr Walker reported that the Village Hall Committee (VHC) had not had the opportunity to continue with its discussion of the lease Heads of Terms because it had been busy with preparing for events at the Village Hall.

At the previous meeting, the Parish Council had asked the VHC to contact the insurance company and ask whether there would be any issue if a claim were made under the insurance policy given the hall is owned by the Parish Council and there is no lease or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The insurance company had been contacted and Cllr Walker was on the call. The insurance company said that if a matter went to court, the owners of the building, that is the Parish Council, would

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be at fault if there was no agreement between the VHC and the Parish Council. The Parish Council would be liable.

Cllr Walker circulated a draft of an MoU, which could be an interim step before a lease was prepared. She noted that the matters in red would need to be changed to fit the Belchamp Walter circumstances. She asked the Parish Council to read this and provide comments on any changes they thought were appropriate. She noted that the document had not been circulated to the VHC.

Ms Munro stated that she thought councilors should be given time to look at the document. She noted that the document contained matters that weren't necessary for an MoU and could be confusing. For example:

- The MoU states the Parish Council is the custodian trustee, given the Council owns the building and the intent is there will be a lease between the two parties, is this still appropriate?
- The MoU states that there is no need for a lease agreement between the two parties.
- The MoU states the Council will appoint a Councillor to act as a representative member, but this is not the case, the Council appoints two members of the VHC who are then trustees of the VHC charity.

Ms Munro suggested that she customize the MoU and circulate it to the councilors for their review and approval. Depending upon the comments received it might be possible to approve the MoU via email without the need for another meeting. Cllr Walker said that once the Parish Council had approved the MoU she would circulate it to the VHC and call a meeting to discuss the matter. The Council agreed with this approach and councilors would provide their comments to Ms Munro.

Action: Ms Munro

b) Overhanging Vegetation

Ms Munro reported the landowner had been contacted as asked to cut the trees back. She would follow up on the matter.

Action: Ms Munro

c) Signage

Signage for footpaths and children playing has been received and will be installed.

Action: Cllr Scott

d) Pot holes

Ms Munro stated that she had reported the numerous potholes around the village.

The Council discussed the soft verge on the road up to Eyston Hall. It has been reported several times to Highways but is not seen as a priority. The Council expressed the view that it is dangerous because, when flooded, motorists cannot see the edge of the road surface and could easily drive into the trench that is getting gradually deeper.

The Council discussed the matter and concluded it could not address the issue because, as it did not own the land, there might be a liability issue. The Council instructed Ms Munro to contact the land owner to see if she might address the matter.

Action: Ms Munro

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8) **Finance.**

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| a) Bank Balances. 13/02/25 | Community Account | £1,128 |
| | Reserves Account (BPA) | 13,347 |
| | Above includes restricted | 122 |
- b) Precept – Ms Munro reported that she had, in accordance with the Council's decision at the previous meeting, requested a 2025/2026 precept that would result in a zero increase in the PC's portion of Council Tax. The 2025/2026 precept would be £6,034 as opposed to £5,927 for 2024/2025
- c) Cemetery Fees – The Council reviewed and approve the revised cemetery fees and agreed that these should be generally increased each year in line with inflation

9) **Other matters**

Ms Munro raised the issue of an additional defibrillator for the village. She noted that the previous week someone had become ill at a village hall event. Someone went to get the defibrillator but due to poor telephone reception and difficulty in opening the cabinet because there was no light in the phone box, it had taken some time to get the defibrillator to the hall. Had the person been in cardiac arrest that time would have been critical. She asked the Parish Council whether it would make a donation towards the cost of a defibrillator, should the VHC decide to buy one for the village hall.

Cllr Winter explained that he had disconnected the light in the telephone because water was infiltrating the light box thus tripping the power supply for the telephone box and cutting of the power to the defibrillator box. The defibrillator box has a light which indicates it is operating and keeping the defibrillator at the necessary temperature. The Parish Council agreed the light should be replaced. Cllr Winter said he would replace it.

Action: Cllr Winter

Cllr Hogsjberg noted that grants were available for defibrillators. The Council discussed the matter and it agreed that should the VHC decide it wish to get a defibrillator to be kept at the village hall and it could not get grant money to cover all the cost, it would consider a request from the VHC for a donation towards the cost of a defibrillator.

10) **Items for next meeting**

- Village hall lease
- Planning – including any comments on the BDC local plan
- Overgrown hedges
- Telephone box light

11) **Next meeting dates**

Tuesday 27th May