



CRESSING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Cressing Parish Council held on Wednesday 30th May 2018 at 7.00pm at St Barnabas, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing



Present

Cllr John Lawton - Chairman
Cllr. Colin Haines
Cllr. Keith Morland
Cllr. Steve Watts

In attendance

Mrs Christine Marshall (interim Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer)
County Councillor Robert Mitchell
District Councillor James Abbott
Four members of the public

APA18/01 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND REPORT

The Chairman welcomed those present and expressed his disappointment that few residents attended each Parish Council meeting, especially as a presentation was to be given at this Assembly about the role of a Parish Council and its Councillors. Unfortunately, it appeared that social media was being used to report or discuss matters relating to the village rather than holding informed discussions at Parish Council meetings. Should any residents have things they would like discussed at a Parish Council meeting, they are asked to contact any Councillor or the Parish Clerk with all relevant information and if appropriate the item will be added to a meeting Agenda. The Chairman expressed a particular welcome to two new residents who had come along to see how the Parish Council works.

APA18/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Aston and Goundry. **It was resolved** to accept these apologies. **Proposed: Cllr Haines, seconded: Cllr Morland**

APA18/03 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported on the follow events that had taken place during the year:

- a. A lot of time had been put in by the Clerk and Councillors over the year, all of whom have individual responsibilities. It has to be remembered that Cressing Parish includes the villages of Cressing and Tye Green, both of which have individual needs but are treated as one by the Parish Council.
- b. Planning applications to Braintree District Council:

16/02144 Land between Braintree Road and Mill Lane – The Parish Council submitted a strong objection to this application by Countryside and the Chairman attended the Planning Committee meeting to make an objection statement at that meeting. Despite this and the objection of so many residents and the District Councillors, the Planning Committee approved outline permission by one vote. The Parish Council will monitor progress on this and take action if any of the conditions are not seen to be met.

17/01671 Land East of Mill Lane – Since the beginning of work at this site, the Parish Council has been receiving complaints from residents. Each one of these is looked into and representation made to Bellway. Regular meetings are being held by

the Parish Clerk with the Site Manager to address any ongoing concerns. Where appropriate these concerns are also reported to BDC Planning Enforcement. The Site Manager is keen for a good relationship with the village and endeavours to ensure all conditions applied to the planning permission are adhered to. Unfortunately, with other works taking place in the area by service suppliers and highways, there can be confusion over trucks and HGVs that use Mill Lane for access. The Parish council will continue to monitor.

18/00549 Land between Long Green and Braintree Road – This is another development where the Parish Council has lodged an objection and made it clear to BDC that it supports objection comments submitted by residents. The Parish Council thanked residents for taking the time to put together such strong cases against this development.

Appletree Farm, Polecat Road – The Parish Council is aware of another application that will be submitted shortly for between 65 and 80 dwellings. Early plans were presented to the Parish at a public consultation in February. The application is being validated by BDC prior to publishing and seeking comments. The Parish Council will comment in the best interests of the parish at the appropriate time.

- c. **Roads** – The Chairman expressed the thanks of everyone present to County Cllr Mitchell and District Cllr Abbott for their continued efforts to have the repairs to the bends on the B1018 finally repaired.

An application was made to the Local Highways Panel to seek a lowering of the speed limit through the parish. Unfortunately, the criteria for this to be considered were not met so the Parish Council is now looking at alternative methods that might affect driver behavior and discussing with other Parish Councils in Essex that have successfully implemented other schemes.

Traffic calming measures such as vehicle activated speed signs at various locations, roundels into village, white gates and planting. These would be situated at each entrance to the Parish and funded through grants.

- d. **A120** – Councillors have attended liaison meetings and information events and have maintained a watching brief on developments. Nominated Councillors and the Clerk will be attending the announcement of Essex Highways' preferred option on 8th June.
- e. **Christmas lights** – the Parish Council erected festive lights for the first time in 2017. Complimentary comments were received and this will be continued going forward.
- f. **Defibrillators** – two defibrillators have been purchase (through grant funding) to be situated at the Evangelical Church in The Street and outside St Barnabas Church Hall. Once these are operational training and awareness sessions will be organized that can be attended by any resident of the parish over the age of 16. Dates will be announced in the Parish Magazine, on the website and on the noticeboards.
- g. **2017-2018 Budget** – Through carefully monitoring spend and applying for grant funding where possible, the Parish Council spent less than its budget during the year even though income was reduced. It remains in a healthy financial position, but careful spending will continue to ensure best value for money of the precept. Next year (2019-2020) the income from BDC will reduce as the Localism Fund and the

distribution of BDC budget surplus will cease. This support has been reducing over the last three years from £5,950 to £5,000 to £3,750 to £2,145 for 2018-19).

- h. **Integrated Waste Management Facility, Rivenhall** – Although this is outside the parish boundary, Councillors are aware of the impact this, both visually and environmentally, could affect residents. It is therefore liaising with District Cllr Abbott to remain up to date on progress of this application and will take action when appropriate. The volume of documents on ECC's Minerals Waste website (which is where the planning details are available) is huge, but through his involvement from Day 1, Cllr Abbott is extremely knowledgeable and keeps us informed at Parish Council Meetings.
- i. **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations)** – The Clerk has ensured that she kept up to date on developments for the introduction of these new rules on 25th May this year. Whilst it initially looked as though there would be a large increase in work to ensure ongoing compliance, as well as the need to engage a Data Protection Officer, developments moved so fast that the legislation was changing almost daily with a last-minute change that stated parish councils did not need to engage a DPO. This was particularly good news as the engagement would have been another cost to the Parish Council without any balancing income.
- j. **Braintree Local Plan** – We are still waiting to hear whether the Inspector approves BDC's local plan. This sets out the objectives in terms of planning and growth in the district - as well as sites identified for development. It is thought that an announcement on this should be forthcoming within the next month or so.

APA18/04 REPORTS BY DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

- i. **Braintree District Cllr James Abbott** reported that BDC and ECC had increased their Council Tax this year and will probably do so for some years whilst central government continues to reduce the amount they allow for local councils. He re-iterated the comment by the Chairman of the reduction in additional from BDC.

Planning remains an issue for all parishes in the Braintree area and it is unlikely to cease for some time to come as the National Planning Policy Framework puts forward restrictions and imposes penalties on district councils who do not deliver the required number of houses. Braintree continues to be below its five-year supply target (c.2,000 built in district in last year). BDC's Local Plan originally showed 600 houses in this Ward (Silver End, Cressing and Rivenhall), but the current applications well exceed that figure. As the Chairman mentioned, a decision from the Inspector is awaited and his decision will have a major impact on planning and particularly the submission of speculative development applications.

Highways England have announced that improvements to the A12 are put on hold until a decision has been made about the Local Plan and the West Tey development as this will impact on the positioning of junctions.

IWMF has been postponed for a decision to enable a review to be undertaken as to whether it is actually needed. This postponement may be for a couple of months.

Litter in the district is a problem, particularly being thrown from vehicles who have visited the fast food outlets near Galleys Corner. BDC are doing what they can to change attitudes, but it is difficult.

Councillor Community Grants are available again this year and any application will be favourably looked at.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Abbott on behalf of the Parish Council and residents for the very hard work he does in representing the parish.

- ii. **County Cllr Robert Mitchell** reported on progressing his plan for further development of the on-line highways reporting tool and was pleased to confirm that the system now generates an automatic response quoting report number to make it easier to track repairs. His next aim in this respect is to improve the reporting progress information.

The Essex Highways team won the “Highways Team of the Year 2016-17” and whilst this may not appear to reflect the action on the ground, it was a huge achievement for them. For example, this last winter saw gritting crews active over more than 2,000 miles of road, many of which had repeat visits due to the thawing and re-freezing of road surface, which in turn causes damage to the road surface.

Essex has obtained £9m in grants to help improve roads around the county and has been able to allocate additional funds to address some of the potholes.

ECC has been set a savings target of £120m over the next year, and this will have consequences on such things as support grants.

Cllr Mitchell advised that the main items in his mail box concern just four topics: potholes, A120, A12 and the waste site at Rivenhall.

At a recent meeting with Anglian Railways and others, the Cressing loop was still being discussed – rail and bus services are critical to the sustainability of the Local Plan.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Mitchell on behalf of Councillors for his attendance at meetings and for his efforts in assisting the council on matters related to county.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Although a formal PPS was not scheduled for this meeting, Cllr Abbott responded to a question concerning the new DIY store. He confirmed that the land had been gifted to them and that a traffic light scheme was being looked at for Galleys Corner roundabout. Cllr Mitchell advised that efforts were taking place to “dovetail” the proposals for the A120, the A12 and Galleys corner.

APA18/05 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10th MAY 2017

There were no matters brought forward from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held in 2017.

APA18/06 CRESSING PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman gave a presentation that explained the difference between the duties and the powers of a parish council, starting with an illustration of how it is the first tier of local government through District Council, County Council and up to Central Government. The presentation also explained the role of a Parish Councillor, showing that councillors give their time freely to help the parish. Cllr Mitchell endorse the amount of work and information that a parish councillor has to absorb and how resources within the council are very limited.

The presentation included a short list of misconceptions about what a parish council can do in terms of planning, highways, street lighting and other things.

A copy of the presentation will be available on the website in due course.

A member of the public thanked the Chairman for the informative presentation and the work undertaken by the Councillors on behalf of residents.

APA18/07 **NEXT PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING** will be held on Wednesday 8th May 2019 at St Barnabas, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing. Commencing at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm