

**Minutes of Birchanger Parish Council meeting
held on Tuesday 1st March 2022 at 7.30 pm.
In Birchanger Village Hall**

Present: Angie Driscoll (AD) – Chair
George Taylor (GT) and Minutes
Linda Pocklington (LP)
John Revell (JR)
Sally Taylor (ST)
Geof Driscoll (GD)
Peter Sampson (PS)

District Councillor Melvin Caton (MC)
District Councillor Ayub Khan (AK)
County Councillor Ray Gooding (RG)

0 members of the public

903. Chairman’s Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

904. Apologies for Absence

Keith Williams (KW) Parish Clerk

905. Declarations of Interest

None.

906. Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.

None

907. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 1 February 2022 (previously circulated) were agreed as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

908. Finance

a. Accounts Balances (already circulated)

Noted

b. Invoices and payments for approval

Approved

1. Account Balances b/f 31st January 2022

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Unity Trust Bank | 31325.64 |
| Plus allotment rents | <u>127.50</u> |
| | 31453.14 |

2. Payments due for February 2022

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| A&J Lighting | SO | 45.90 (monthly maintenance) |
| Ace of Spades | On line | 249.60 (grass cutting January 2022) |
| G Driscoll | On line | 17.00 (wreath) |
| TBS Hygiene | On line | 129.60 (dog bin emptying) |
| Payroo | On line | 6.00 (payroll expenses) |
| SAW | On line | 10.00 (membership renewal) |
| ICO | On line | 35.00 (renewal of registration) |
| Mellisa Peters | On line | 50.00 (refund of allotment deposit) |
| Police and Crime Commissioner | On line | 125.00 (Period 01/10/21-31/12/21) |
| SLCC | On line | 134.00 (membership renewal) |
| AVG (Keith Williams) | On line | 74.99 (anti-virus software renewal) |
| Keith Williams | On line | 441.43 (salary for February 2022) |
| HMRC (Keith Williams) | On line | 110.20 (PAYE for February 2022) |
| Keith Williams | On line | 20.00 (office rent February 2022) |

Total payments for February 2022 1448.72

3. Account Balance c/f 28th February 2022

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| | 30004.42 |
| Allotment rents | <u>15.00</u> |
| Balance @ 28/02/2022 | 30019.42 |

Note 1: The payments to HMRC and AVG were made by the parish clerk and are being reimbursed. ICO is Information Commissioner's Office and relates to Data Protection.

909. Planning

There were no Birchanger planning applications for review.

AD informed the PC that the Secretary of State had imposed Section 62A on UDC Planning Department, which means that developers submitting plans for 10 houses or more or one hectare can apply either to UDC where, if planning was refused, they could appeal, or go direct to the Planning Inspectorate but then there would be no right of appeal. This system will remain in place for the foreseeable future. The decision was made because over 10% of appeals were upheld by the Planning Inspectorate over a period between April 2018 and March 2020. This period covered both the previous and present administrations at UDC. MC also indicated that this would not impact the workload of the Planning Department as most planning applications were for less than 10 properties.

910. Junction 8 Roundabout improvements

AD and RG had met with the Junction 8 project officer. Birchanger Lane is scheduled for closure at the Dunmow Road/A120 interchange for up to 90 days. We were originally informed that this would be from the end of March but it is now likely it will start from a date TBA in May 2022. 2 lanes on the A120 were scheduled to remain open during the works and the project officer agreed to improve communications with people in the local area. PS agreed to publish all updated information on the Junction 8 development in the Parish magazine.

911. Wig Wag signs

Installation work was due to start on 28 February 2022. PS indicated that at least one mounting pole had been installed. RG stated that the signs and solar panels had been delayed and that installation work would possibly recommence in w/c 7 March.

912. LED replacement streetlights

A&J Lighting had quoted £349 to replace individual streetlights with LED versions as the existing ones failed. Alternatively, A&J Lighting quoted an all-in cost (including call-out fees) of £5,742 to replace all 18 non LED lights – a saving of £540 over individual replacement. RG advised the downsides of replacing the lights piecemeal and that a complete replacement of all 18 would ensure up-to-date equipment from the outset. The council voted unanimously to replace all 18 at the quoted price.

913. Donation for winner of Christmas Light Up

Background: The annual Birchanger Christmas Light Up has been active for an estimated 8 years and latterly has been run on a competitive basis adjudicated by a small committee. The winner is awarded a cup for retention until the next competition. PS suggested that continuity and enhanced participation in future competitions might be improved by the introduction of a small cash prize.

The Council considered that direct funding of a prize from Council funds was inappropriate but that a donation to a suitable charity, of the prize winners choosing, would be suitable through the Council's grant application process. Alternatively, as the group organising the Christmas Light Up were hoping to make it a bigger event and collect for charity, a donation could be made towards the cost of organising this.

914. Queens Platinum Jubilee

In addition to the beacon lighting already discussed with the Birchanger Sports and Social Club, the outline Club events programme is planned as:

- Thursday 2 June – beacon lighting and a performance by the Jubilee Singers
- Friday 3 June - a 1950's style sports event
- Saturday 4 June - Cricket
- Sunday 5 June – a Jubilee picnic with musical accompaniment

In addition, it was agreed that the Council would purchase a pack of 50 Jubilee signs from RBLI at a cost of £212 for mounting on lamp posts, telegraph poles etc throughout the village. Installation to take place at the end of May and removal following the Jubilee events weekend.

915. Reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr Melvin Caton

- A contribution of approximately £700 for the Parish Magazine was available. PS to forward contribution proposal to MC
- MC reiterated that the UDC Planning Department's role would change very little under the section 62A responsibility amendments
- MC reiterated that the Local Plan is being progressed but that there would be no changes to the Green Belt around Birchanger. To confirm the road traffic data in the plan, Traffic Survey counters were being installed on several roads in the area including the A120 and B1383
- In addition to the increases in Council Tax mentioned at the February meeting, a rebate of £100 to low-income households on benefits will be given.

Cllr Ray Gooding

- RG reiterated the information on Wig Wag signs – installation started TBC w/c 7 March 2022 but positioning needs to be confirmed
- A revised application had been received for the Barn conversion in Harrisons to include light industrial use with access through Harrisons. However, the criteria around it's previous use would still need to be med. Brian Ross as chair of Harrisons Residents association is aware.
- RG reiterated that the extended (90 days) Birchanger Lane/A120 junction closure was necessary to ensure a clean removal of the Birchanger roundabout and associated works
- RG noted that despite recent drainage alleviation works, the playing field ditch was not draining effectively and was still causing flooding on Birchanger Lane. AD to check with KW regarding the ECC grant application regarding payment for the alleviation work

916. Closure of meeting

There being no further matters to discuss the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20:30