



## Minutes of the Meeting of Dedham Parish Council on Monday 4 October 2021 at 6.30pm

Present: Cllrs Beeton, Fletcher, Harrison, James, Mole, Neville, Smith, Williams

### 1. Welcome by the Chairman

Cllr Smith welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting. It was noted that Nicola Baker was in attendance as a voluntary Clerk.

### 2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Haines and ECC Cllr Barber

### 3. Declarations of Interest

None

### 4. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 09.08.2021 were accepted as a true record. It was noted that Councillors had not seen details of the Council's Annual Return.

### 5. Have your say

Points raised by members of the public related to the following issues: Community Speedwatch (to be raised under agenda item 6.3); Royal Square improvement plans, especially concerns about 'neat' boundaries; intemperate language on the football pitch on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays (to be referred to the Chair of the Football Club in the first instance).

CBC Cllr Chapman reported on police efforts attempts to stop dangerous jumping from the bridge. A grant has been applied for to finance toilets in the Mill Lane car park.

Clacton Kayakers highlighted safety concerns shared by DPC Councillors about an unlicensed trader offering kayak hire from the Mill Pond car park. Any trader should have both a street trader's licence and a license from the Canal and River Trust. Clacton Kayakers operate from Harwich, Clacton, Mersea and Stratford St Mary.

Cllr Smith thanked Clacton Kayakers for attending and stated that the appropriate working group would look into the feasibility and merits of licensing boat services on the river and would present proposals if appropriate to a future full council meeting.

### 6. Working Group summary reports

Reports were noted from the following working groups as appended and posted on the DPC website. Additional points are noted below:

- 6.1 Finance Standards and Procedures – Paul Harrison. Cllr Harrison wished to thank Sheila Beeton, Jonathan Smith and Nicola Baker for their efforts in dealing with the aftermath of the

sudden resignation of the Clerk. It was noted that systems will need to be reviewed to avoid a single point of failure.

- 6.2 Infrastructure and Asset Management – Steve Mole

It was resolved to seek costings for a new bike rack and to seek suggestions from residents for potential uses for the redundant BT phone box. Proposed; Cllr Mole; seconded; Cllr Williams. All in favour.

It was also resolved to create a new post of Village Caretaker, with details to be brought to a future meeting. Proposed; Cllr Mole; seconded; Cllr Williams. All in favour.

- 6.3 Traffic and Planning – Gill Neville/ Jonathan Smith

6.3.1 Traffic. Local Highways plan has been sent to Cllr Lewis Barber. Essex Highways has agreed to fund Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) on the main routes into Dedham to collect data. It was proposed to fund additional ATCs on Grove Hill/ Long Road West/ Bargate Lane/ Castle Hill at a cost of £900 per week. Proposed; Cllr Neville; seconded; Cllr Mole. All in favour. To be delayed until the current petrol shortage has eased.

It was agreed to fund a children's poster competition to highlight the dangers of speeding to a total of £200. Proposed; Cllr Neville; seconded; Cllr Harrison. All in favour.

6.3.2 Planning (see Planning review report dated 1/10/21). The Planning Working Group had previously reviewed applications in early September which had been received since the last meeting in August to satisfy imminent consultation expiry dates. All have been listed on the agenda. Proposed comments are as the attached report. Only one application, namely 212191 Newfoundland Lodge, Boxhouse Lane - stables and ménage was deemed to require an objection for the reasons stated which was agreed by all Councillors prior to the meeting. This was provided to CBC within the necessary timescale by the clerk. All comments were formally agreed. The following additional comments on planning applications were agreed: 212496/212497 Hill House, Birchwood Road. Conversion of former stable block to form ancillary residential accommodation. No objection.

212425 Gothic Cottage, Grove Hill, parking space and new access. Although Essex Highways have lodged an objection it was felt that the proposed alternative access onto Monks Lane would improve safety.

- 6.4 Community Liaison- Sheila Beeton. appended report dated 29/09/21) A meeting has been held with churchwardens to discuss the vacant vicar post, the church wall and the continuation of the helpline. Cllr Williams has met with the Ardleigh Medical Practice Manager. Suggestions for celebrations on the occasion of HM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 are requested.

- 6.5 Business, Tourism and Media - Jonathan Smith (appended report dated 26/08/21)

NEPP to be contacted about the Remembrance Sunday 'no parking' arrangements in Royal Square.

There was no great support for the idea of trying to develop a tourist information facility in the village. Cllr Haines is establishing links with Essex Police in particular to try to secure a Special Constable for Dedham. It was agreed that the 'new' field being used for parking by the river did not impact on parking income. The success or otherwise of the new yellow line parking restrictions needs to be evaluated. Cllr Neville will take responsibility for Communications, including the Parish Magazine. Cllr Williams will liaise with local businesses and explore the idea of street markets.

NEPP meeting – car park income has held up well. There has been a number of thefts from cash machines and an increase in contactless payments. Maintenance issues are being addressed. It was noted that it is costly to take illegal traders to court.

It was proposed that the installation of a height restrictor barrier be explored with NEPP. .Proposed; Cllr Smith; seconded; Cllr Neville. All in favour. It was also felt that trailers should

not be allowed into the Mill Pond Car Park except by prior arrangement and that 'no trading' signs are needed.

A discussion is ongoing with NEPP about an increase to the parking fees. It was felt that the daily rate should be increased from £4 to £5 and that there may be value in reducing the amount of free on-street parking. Formal proposals to be brought to a future meeting.

The Drift project is almost complete although the gate lock remains to be completed. An upgrade to the lighting around the Sports Club is needed and formal proposals will be brought to a future meeting.

Royal Square – a meeting of the working group to be held soon.

## **7. Personnel Committee**

- a. The following Councillors were nominated to form the Personnel Committee; Cllrs Smith, Neville, Mole, Harrison and Haines (Chair). Proposed, Cllr James; seconded, Cllr Fletcher. All in favour.
- b. The resignation of the Clerk at short notice was formally noted.
- c. It was resolved to appoint a temporary clerk. Proposed, Cllr Smith; seconded; Cllr Neville.

## **8. Licensing**

This matter was discussed at item 5 above.

## **9. Expenditure**

The following payments were approved:

1. Easyspace internet support services = £285.84
  2. BHIB Insurance brokers annual premium = £1346.73
  3. Reimbursing Dedham football club for grass cutting during Drift Works = £180
  4. Reimbursing Dedham football club for pitch hire at Philip Morant School in July due to lack of grass cutting = £150
  5. Essex Playing Fields Association = £40
  6. PKF Littlejohn – external audit = £408.00
  7. EALC planning course (S Mole) = £84
  8. Dedham PC Duchy Barn hire = £100
  9. Watering - A O'Reilly = £130
- Total for October meeting = £2724.57  
CBC election expenses £998 – this invoice to be queried.

## **10. Annual Return**

The queries from the external auditor have been resolved and an interim approval has been granted. This will be ratified once the formal period for public inspection of the Council's records has expired.

## **11. Exclusion of press and public**

It was resolved to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the following agenda item contains items of a commercially sensitive nature and personnel matters. Proposed, Cllr Smith; seconded, Cllr Fletcher. All in favour.

### **11.1 Grass cutting contract**

Following evaluation of tender returns received, it was resolved to appoint Daniel Freeman to undertake the Council's footpath cutting contract to take effect from the spring but with an additional one off cut where required this year. Proposed, Cllr Mole; seconded, Cllr Smith. All in favour.

### **11.2 Appointment of temporary clerk**

It was resolved to appoint to the post of Parish Clerk on a six-month temporary contract for eight hours per week. Proposed, Cllr Neville; seconded, Cllr Mole. All in favour.