



**Minutes of the meeting of Dedham Parish Council (DPC) held on
Monday 3rd March 2025 at 6:30pm at the Duchy Barn**

Attendees: Cllr Bourn, Cllr Sneddon, Cllr McLaughlin, Cllr Andrews, Cllr Halsall, Cllr Beeton
Cllr Main.,

Present: Clerk - Carol Harbach
Cllr Rowe Colchester City Council (CCC) councillor
26 Members of the public

24/188 Welcome and apologies

Cllr Bourn welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were sent by Cllr Martlew and Cllr Harrison.

24/189 Declaration of Members interests

Cllr Main declared and Interest in the Tennis Club item, Cllr Halsall had an interest in Petalo Lodge and Cllr Beeton declared an interest in the hedging quote.

24/190 Public Open Forum (Maximum 15 minutes)

Cllr Bourn reminded everyone that there was a separate section for the Munnings and Tennis Club planning application and comments can be brought up there, he then invited any other questions from the public.

A question was raised if the footpath cutting out contract is out for tender? There were some issues last year in this area and there is not time this year to review for the intention is to look at the cutting quality and carry out an evaluation for this year and quotes will be undertaken for next year – Jan, Feb time

A resident gave feedback re Ardleigh surgery online services and at the moment 50% have not yet registered. They are aware that people need help. The Ardleigh surgery are running courses, on 4th March and one on 6th March to help with this. There is a meeting at the Duchy Barn to help people with North East Essex Support Team and they will help people individually. Morning session 10:30a, on 20th March. **This item will be kept on the agenda.**

Petalog Lodge –the parish council had a meeting with CCC and raised two issues These do not seem to have been answered regarding the (1) caravan – this should have been removed within 3 months and is still there (2) bollards on road - farm machinery cannot get through. The bollards are still there and this will be raised with the owner by the parish council. The enforcement officer has also been contacted by the council and the parish council will aim to attend the enforcements officer’s next visit.

Highways have been informed regarding the bollards.

A resident asked if the parish council was working with Langham regarding the planned 900 houses in the village. It was noted that surface water from Langham comes into the village. It was noted that these proposed housing developments

could have a major impact upon Dedham in terms of discharge of water and traffic through the village. Cllr Bourn is in contact with the planning department and the traffic usage that will take place.

Bus route – this company seems to be aware of the work in Brook Street and have not informed the customers of the bus route. A customer was waiting for a bus at the heath and was very distressed as the bus did not turn up today. Cllr Bourn has been in contact with the bus company and will try and see if we can have a conversation regarding the service generally. **Action Cllr Bourn**

24/191 To approve the minutes of the last meeting (3rd Feb 2025)

These had already been circulated to the council and were taken as a true and accurate account of events. Proposed Cllr McLaughlin seconded Cllr Andrews. All agreed.

24/192 Matters arising from the last meeting

To support residents IT skills for the new requirement at the Doctors surgery – Cllr Beerton, Cllr Bourn see above

Field on the corner of Castle House on the junction of Coopers Lane – This has been looked at by Cllr Bourn and the state of the site generally. This will be checked again by Cllr Bour. during his meeting with Munnings **Action Cllr Bourn**

The poor condition of the pavement on top of Crown Street – Clerk. This was reported on the Highways website by the Clerk. Discharged

Playground clearance to be given to Village Warden for next couple of months – Clerk to contact Groundcare team. This was completed by the Clerk. Discharged

Water fountain – This was raised by the village warden and suggested that this be taken out. later on, agenda.

Bench – Has arrived and been placed in situ shortly, Cllr Beeton was to contact family regarding plaque – **Action Cllr Beeton**

Cllr training sessions – the calendar has been circulated to them by the Clerk.

Accessibility statement updated – to be formally agreed at next meeting.

Agenda item

This has been circulated previously and was proposed by Cllr Andrews and seconded by Cllr Sneddon All agreed after confirmation by cllrs. John Goldborough will update the website with this statement. It was noted that the contact address is wrong and some spelling mistakes need amending but will be on the site within the next 10 days. **Action all Councillors to confirm happy with statement.**

Rest of items on the agenda.

24/193 PCSO 71502 Emma Wright report

Emma informed the meeting that PCSOs will be around for at least another year following recent debates about their future. PCSOs have a large area to cover and she encouraged residents to use the online chat and forms facility. Using such a process if reporting a crime will result in you having a crime number. The police are conscious of the traffic and speeding problems in the village. It was noted by residents that the traffic had got worse and a resident was hit by a car on Bargate

Lane last week. Emma encouraged residents to report all incidents. With regard to liaison with Dedham businesses Emma said she had spoken to the co-op in the past and encouraged them to report all incidents. She agreed to write a piece for the parish magazine every three months.

Emma also reported that she has some special constables supporting her but as she had a large area to cover the amount of time she can give to Dedham is limited. It was suggested to her that there is a need for greater police presence in the summer and also whether she was aware of liaison with Suffolk Police. At present there is no direct liaison

Emma finally noted that there is now a greater emphasis on neighbourhood policing and this should have an impact upon Dedham. There are some special officers that are supporting her as well.

Cllr Bourn thanked Emma for coming in.

How to report to the police leaflet will be on line on the website shortly.

24/194

Visitors Report (CCC Thomas Rowe/ECC Lewis Barber)

Cllr Rowe reported that he is the representative for CCC and explained who were the other ward councillors for the area. The budget for the forthcoming year is now available. The local plan for the Colchester area includes 11 thousand more houses.

At the last planning meeting there was no agreement on how to proceed. There is a call from some of the councillors for more consideration too be given to infrastructure.

Proposal for wheelie bins – Cllr Rowe had received the letter Cllr McLaughlin has sent him and this is now coming up on the meetings schedule. The thoughts of the residents have been put forward and Cllr Rowe will represent the views of the village when reported. Cllr Bourn thanked Cllr Rowe for his report.

24/195

Munnings update

The Trustees of Munnings Museum have suggested a dog field exercise area. A meeting was held in December with local residents at which the concerns about the dog exercise area were raised. A What App group exists to share information. Cllr Rowe and Cllr Bourn are working together looking at other bodies to help with the funding in the future of Munnings. There is now a provisional date booked for this meeting with their trustees that will include discussion of options for funding. Cllr Bourn has also spoke to the planning team and asked them directly how common are dog exercising areas, over the last year there have been 6 applications and 4 have been rejected.

A question was asked if the National Landscapes are involved in the consultation. Cllr Bourn replied to date no. Cllr Bourn thanked the local residents for the work so far and to keep us up to date. The PC are trying to resolve this for the best interest in the village.

24/196

Tennis Club Planning Application 250230

Cllr Bourn explained that he would be taking comments from residents first and then the councillors. Cllr Bourn reminded the meeting that the PC has no power to make and decisions on this are made by CCC. There were around 60 comments on proposal on the CCC planning pages at the moment.

The representatives from the Tennis Club explained that they had completed a survey of their members and they would like to have lights to play by, the club were here to listen to residents' concerns and questions. It was noted that the club are

keen to find an approach that has the support of local residents. A representative from Dedham Vale Society raised some of the concerns they had. A resident suggested that the height of the lights may need to be looked (8m) and the timing in the evenings as to when they were being used. As Dedham is in the National Landscapes (NL), area and there is a policy of Dark Skies this needs to be taken account of.

The Club have spoken to NL regarding the lighting and as a result their plans mean there will be a minimum amount of light spread. A resident currently has lights that go in the kitchen from the football lights and requested that someone from the Club and the Parish Council look and see the impact of their use

The tennis club reported that the desire to have lighting is to ensure the club is sustainable in the long-term as other local clubs have them. The tennis club is very popular with young people with special sessions for them at weekends.

A suggestion was made was that could only 2 of the courts be lit up in the evenings and could there also be set times for their use.

There was also concern about the impact of the lights on local residents and there would be a need to replace the hedging and minimise the impact of lighting on nearby residents.

Cllr Beeton was conscious of the setting and the natural area and how the look of lights and perspective of the area would change, Do the lights need to be as high was also commented.

Representatives from the Tennis Club noted that without the lighting the club could slowly die.

Cllr Bourn stated that there is a lot of sympathy to do this application and how we can support the group for this, there are concerns with the specific details we are looking for reassurance on and can you tell us the time scale on this and when would you like to have these in place, The representatives stated that they have the funds to progress and are look at Sports England etc for funding and a time line in an ideal situation before the winter arrives. The PC asked for some more information and we can start some conversation on this between the both sides and this will be passed on and will be followed up on. The PC are aware of Dark Skies and local groups in the village. More information is required. We can put on a holding quote to the planning department in the future until we have this information. The group was thanked for their time and report.

24/197

Priorities and proposed Group/committees

197.1 Election of Vice chair

The council would like to have a vice chair it was asked for nominations Cllr Sneddon was Proposed by Cllr McLaughlin and seconded by Cllr Andrews. All agreed

197.2 Following an informal meeting of Council members, three main areas were suggested as the basis for our priorities: ongoing areas of responsibility, communications and areas for development.

The **ongoing areas of responsibility** for the council to include:

Maintenance of areas for which the Council is responsible, monitoring and providing comments on planning proposals that affect Dedham residents, support community groups and ensure Council's finances are in order.

The **communication** areas to cover Effective communications through effective use of social media, review and develop website and continue to support the parish magazine.

Finally, the **development areas** to cover:

Development of a parish plan, address ongoing issues with parking, traffic and speeding in partnership with other local bodies, address anti-social behaviour in the village, support the pylons campaign, work with NEPP on development of car parks, improve personnel procedures and support the proposal to purchase the water meadows and create a nature reserve.

These areas would be seen as priorities for 2025/2026 and would feed into the Parish Plan.

Council members asked to consider these priorities in the development of the proposed working groups. The following groups were proposed and agreed:

- Finance and Standards
- Planning
- Infrastructure
- Community areas
- Communications

In addition, there would be a sub group for liaison with NEPP and a separate group for personnel. There may also need to a river group.

Councill members will be asked to identify which groups they wish to be involved with. It is anticipated that Council members should consider having involvement with 2 groups.

Following agreement at the next meeting as to their composition, members will be asked to prepare terms of reference that would be agreed at May meeting.

It was noted and agreed that these groups do not have any delegated authority and cannot approve financial expenditure and any decisions to the main council. Budgets will be agreed by the Council that will include the parameters within which the groups will be able to operate and suggest expenditure.

These groups can be revised and adapted following the annual meetings in May.

23/198

Group 1 - Finance, Standards and Procedures

Cllr Harrison was unable to attend tonight so he had sent a report to Cllr Bourn which was read out. The report sent is in Appendix I at the end of these minutes.

February Payments

Payments put forward this month for approval.

198.1 To approve payments in accordance with the Budget Payments for February 2025

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Cllr Main – reimbursement for no parking sign | £66.00 |
| Warden Salary and materials | £832.74 |
| Clerk Salary Feb 25 | 595.00 |
| HMRC Payments | 148.60 |
| Mileage | 41.60 |
| LMC Media Management – Dedham notes | 120.00 |
| DPCC – Barn hire Inv 62 | 50.00 |
| Contractor for playground checks | 200.00 |
| C. Harbach reimbursement for memorial bench for field | 350.00 |
| P. Harrison reimbursements for 50% of printer costs/ | |
| Christmas present to warden etc | 49.94 |
| Colchester City Council – By-election costs | 70.00 |
| | Total £2,523,88 |

Balance as at 28/2/25

Barclays Community Account 90343633 £ 1,000.00

Income £45,331.14

Expenditure £ 120,627.27

VAT Refund received from last years (23/24) return £7,607.85

End of year figures for audit purposes.

The accounts were circulated to all the council last week and the end of year figures will be these figures received by the council with the agreed payments above. Once payments have been made the final accounts will be circulated to the council. **Action Clerk**

Payments put forward for payment Proposed Cllr McLaughlin seconded Cllr Sneddon All agreed.

Thanks to go to Cllr Harrison for his work on this report.

198.2 Capital Expenditure

Covered above

198.3 Recommendation and approval of Internal Auditor'

Cllr McLaughlin was going to look at this item and details have been sent out to the councillors of the last auditor. The council then discussed this further and agreed to go with Internal Auditors quotes before agreement.

Proposed Cllr Beeton seconded Cllr Halsall all agreed.

Clerk to contact above auditors for quotes tomorrow due to the time restraints.

24/199

Group 2 – Community Environment

199.1 Drinking fountain – recommendation from Village Warden

This had been raised earlier and it was suggested to remove the fountain completely due to constant maintenance and leakage. Proposal Cllr Beeton to remove this and seconded Cllr Halsall to get this cut off by CCC. **Action Cllr Beeton**

199.2 Tree Survey – to agree contractor to have H&S of trees we own. Council agreed with the quote provided. Cllr Main to let contractor know. **Action Cllr Main**

199.3 Contract award for Grass maintenance and footpath cutting 2025

Footpath concerns have been raised and it was agreed to carry on with contractor this year and monitor and review next year. Proposed Cllr Beeton seconded Cllr Halsall all agreed. **Action Cllr Beeton to contact contractor**

Grass contractor is now up for renewal in July and the PC will have time to obtain tenders for this.

Proposed to get tenders for contract to obtain quotes and bring back to council.

199.4 Quote for hedging and tree work at playing field £840 + VAT

This quote is approved for 'Hedging and T18 & T19 at £840 + VAT by DVTS'.

199.5 Car park plan

Cllr Bourn has a meeting with NEPP and there will be some remedial work undertaken in next couple of weeks. It was further noted that there is a need for an overall review of the state of the car park and this will be discussed further at the next meeting. It was felt there was potential for more car parking space. It was however noted that we need to work closely with NEPP on these matters.

Car park fees are going up and will be available on the website.

199.6 VE Day celebrations update

Cllr Andrews updated the council with what is going on locally in other villages in and around Dedham, The Royal British Legion (RBL) is going to have a stall on the 10th May on the Royal square with wares to sell and refreshments. Council would still welcome further ideas RBL will supply a wreath for the day

199.7 Litter/Dog bins progress

Update – the current locations are going to be emailed to other councillors and need to be completed next meeting.

Update – the current locations are going to be emailed to other councillors and need to be circulated by the next meeting.

199.8 Large pothole in Southfields

Highways have been notified regarding this and this should be raised with Cllr Barber. Cllr Beeton will talk to him regarding this. **Action Cllr Beeton**

24/200

Planning report recommendations on planning applications listed below:

200.1 Planning Applications – Observations conveyed under delegated authority since last meeting

250178 1 Threadneedle Street, Dedham Colchester CO7 6HH

Repair internal ground floor wall. Repair / replace plaster on water damaged wall, using a membrane to prevent further damp seepage and re plaster using restoration lime-based plaster. The integrity of the wall will not be altered.

PC Comment No comment

250230 Playing Field, Brook Street, Dedham Essex CO7 6AD

Installation of eight floodlights to outdoor tennis court – **earlier agenda item.**

250256 Meadow Cottage, Mill Lane, Dedham Essex CO7 6DH

Trim front leylandii hedge o last year's growth, reduce 6 white horn beams a 1 Rowan previous points. Reduce 3 Robinia to previous points. Reduce Blue Atlas cedar o contain growth. Prune and thin wheeping willows removing extended branches and deadwood cut.

PC Comment No comment

New application came into today – Cllr Sneddon will look at this and circulate to councillors. **Action Cllr Sneddon**

200.2 Planning Applications – Decisions received since last meeting

None at time of posting the agenda.

200.3 Colchester City Council recommendations for houses in Dedham as part of Local Plan

15 new houses have been put forward in the Local Plan for Dedham. Cllr Bourn had asked CCC what the rational was asked for and CCC will send the answer for the houses they want to build on Long Road West. It is believed that these will line up with Line up with Oakview at the moment. This was noted and will be watched and will be on the agendas. **Agenda item**

200.4 Appeal - 242163 Great House, High Street, Dedham, Essex, CO7 6HJ refusal of Second Floor Bathroom 3. Removal of bath and installation of shower; with associated modifications. This was noted.

24/201

Group 4 – Traffic & Parking (NEPP Sub Group) To discuss latest updates

201.1 Traffic Survey update

This is in place along from the school.

24/202 Group 5 - River Management and Impact on village

202.2 update no information

Nothing to report to date.

24/203 Social media and website development

Cllr Sneddon has been looking into this and thanked John Goldsbrough for his work in the past. It was agreed to invite some tenders from companies to develop the website. There will be 3 proposals obtained and a budget parameter set at £3000 plus ongoing maintenance.

Following this further consideration will be given to reviewing email systems. **Action Cllr Sneddon**

24/204 Immediate priorities for 2025

These were agreed as based on item discussed earlier.

24/205 Training/Events

205.1 Report on attended events

Some cllrs still need to go on training please look at before next meeting

205.2 Nominations for new events

Let the clerk know of requirements

205.3 Training Day for Council members

Please look at circulated suggestions and bring back to the next meeting **Action all councillors**

24/206 Clerks Report

Vandalism of Royal Square DPC Noticeboard – right hand lock was forced open and damaged. Village Warden has now replaced this.

The Clerk has received correspondence from the representative from the group that oversee the Fun Run and have asked permission to use the playing field again this year on Sunday 14th Sept. they would also like to have the gates open in case of emergency access needed if approved.

There has been fly tipping in Princl Lane and the Zone Warden has contacted the Clerk to say that she has been told that the waste is being left by a resident who lives not far from the litter bin. The Warden will organise the camera with CCC Enforcement team and will place CCTV signs onto the litter bin. 2 weeks later the camera will be installed. The Council agreed they wanted to keep the current litter bins and the warden to be asked to monitor how the bins are used and to encourage local businesses to provide their own bins.

There has been a request from another village as to the traffic signs that were completed by the school and to how these were completed. This will be forwarded to the Traffic group to report back on the project to the clerk who will then pass this on.

A Tree in East Lane was reported that looked close to falling down. The warden was informed and the tree has now been removed and is now not a danger. The resident thanked the council for dealing with this so quickly.

24/207

Immediate priorities for 2025

This has been discussed tonight and next meeting where it will be clear to the village what the priorities will be for next 25/26 year. May meeting will be on May 12th due to the bank holiday.

24/208

Items for next agenda

See above

24/209

To confirm date and time of next meeting

Date of next meeting: Monday 7th April 2025 at 6.30 p.m.

24/210

Chairmans closure of meeting.

Chairman closed the meeting at 20:45pm

Appendix I

Report from Cllr Harrison for Council Meeting 3rd March 2025

Accounting

Accounts to Feb 2025 balance and recent issues with Barclays incorrect Bank Statement balances have been resolved. Therefore, the Cashbook is fully up to date.

Income & Expenditure report is largely on course with a small number of Budget Variance exceptions as follows:

- a. Grants & Donations over budget by £21,184, due to more Grant Applications being agreed than expected.*
- b. Village Amenities/Village Maintenance overspent by 25%, appears to be more spent on Footpath/Tree maintenance than budgeted, Chair of relevant committee usually obtains the 3 quotes and sends recommendations back to the council to consider.*
- c. Legal & Professional Fees overspent by £3652, mainly due to agreement to Ecological Survey.*
- d. Capital Projects Budget not spent, hence large variance.*

Cllr McLaughlin has looked into this and the auditors should be also going back to Jan Stobart and Ann Wood for these. This will be requested

2023/24 Audit Report

There appears to be confusion over the circulation of the 2023/24 Audit Response Report, which has been sent out to Councillors in May 2024 & again in February 2025. Rather than the usual Development Plan Style report, (produced by Councillor Harrison as a pro-active way of tracking the Audit recommendations), due to work commitments in 2024 Councillor Harrison asked for the 'Original Audit Report' with priorities highlighted to be circulated as an alternative.

All relevant points for improvement will be actioned before the next Internal Audit if deemed appropriate to do so based on 'relevance/materiality/validity.'

Tender Processes for annual Contracts

Councillor Harrison has concerns that the annual round of Contract Renewals is not being adequately dealt with due to the resignation of a previous Councillor who handled these matters effectively each year. This needs to be urgently addressed and these priorities allocated to a specific Councillor to deal with in future. This will be followed up with in the groups