

Danbury Parish Council
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 25 January 2024 7.30pm at
Danbury Parish Council Office, The Old School House, Main Road, Danbury, CM3 4NQ

Present: Cllr A Chapman (Chairman), Cllr B Hallett (Vice Chairman), Cllr S Berlyn,
Cllr G Chapman, Cllr M Hessing (ex officio) & Cllr A Keeler

In Attendance: Mrs M Dyer (Assistant Clerk)

23/24.95 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

23/24.96 Declarations of Interest

Members are required to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they know they may have in items of business on the meeting's agenda. They are reminded that they will need to repeat their declaration at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if the interest is a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time. Members have dispensation to discuss and vote in respect of matters relating to the Precept and the DCA.

There were no declarations of interest at this point.

23/24.97 Public Question Time

Members of the public are invited to address the Council, give their views and question the Council on issues on this agenda, or raise issues for future consideration (at the discretion of the Chairman). Members of the public may not take part in the Council meeting itself. At the close of this item members of the public will no longer be permitted to address the Council unless invited to do so by the Chairman. The session will last for a maximum of 15 minutes with any individual contribution lasting a maximum of 5 minutes. Members of the public should address their representation through the Chairman of the meeting.

There were no Members of the Public present.

23/24.98 Minutes of the Environment Committee dated 15 November 2023 and the Extraordinary Environment Committee dated 5 December 2023

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 15 November 2023 were approved and signed as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Hallett, seconded Cllr Berlyn and all agreed.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Extraordinary Environment Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023 were approved and signed as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr G Chapman, seconded Cllr Hallett and all agreed.

23/24.99 Actions

Actions from the minutes were noted.

23/24.100 P3 Group

Members noted that the PRoW will deliver more Public Footpath signs (single arrow only) to the Parish office this month

Members noted that the end of season debrief meeting was still to be arranged with P3 Members at which a new Footpath Officer will be appointed. Cllr Chapman to advise availability.

Cllr G Chapman gave a brief update and requested that a letter of thanks be sent to the outgoing Footpath Officer.

23/24.101 Community Woodland

Members noted that Resources had approved the request for £6,000 to cover capital expenditure for the first two tasks recommended in the Management Plan to be carried out by February 2024.

Members considered quotes submitted by three contractors for additional fencing, noting that as well as submitting a quote for the specification as briefed all three had submitted an alternative option. Following discussion, Cllr Chapman proposed that JCM Services be appointed to install single rails as proposed in the second option at a cost of £2,300.00 ex VAT, subject to clarification regarding the width of the proposed rail and additional rails/protection in the vicinity of the benches and the 'den'. This was seconded by Cllr Hallett, all Members were in agreement.

RESOLVED: that JCM Services be appointed to install single rails as proposed in the second option at a cost of £2,300.00 ex VAT, subject to clarification regarding the width of the proposed rail and additional rails/protection in the vicinity of the benches and the 'den'.

Members discussed the appointment of The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to undertake work to locate planted trees/shrubs, install planting tubes and mulch and the purchase of mulch, sleeves and stakes. Cllr G Chapman then proposed that The Conservation Volunteers be appointed for up to 5 days at £290.00 ex VAT per day to undertake work to locate planted trees/shrubs, install planting tubes and mulch and to the purchase of mulch, sleeves and stakes as required up to £850.00. This was seconded by Cllr Hessing. All Members were in agreement.

RESOLVED: that The Conservation Volunteers be appointed for up to 5 days at £290.00 ex VAT per day to undertake work to locate planted trees/shrubs, install planting tubes and mulch and to the purchase of mulch, sleeves and stakes as required up to £850.00.

Members noted that grants for the woodland e.g., Rural Communities Grant, Awards for All etc. will be applied for when costs for other works within the Management Plan have been received.

Members noted that locations for bird boxes were being investigated.

Cllr G Chapman gave a brief update on other matters relating to the woodlands advising that the missing half of the broken plaque had appeared, but that it cannot be repaired as it is made of slate.

23/24.102 Highways Matters

The Assistant Clerk gave an update on matters reported to Essex County Council (ECC) Highways.

Members noted details of boundary at Pedlar's Path (Bridleway) supplied by the ECC Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Officer for Danbury.

Members noted that a report from a resident re Hyde Lane safety concerns will be presented at the March meeting.

Members noted that salt received from ECC Highways had been delivered to Salt Team Members; remaining stock was being stored in compound

23/24.102.1 A414 Review

Members noted communication from Cllr Spence and the email sent to the Transportation Planning and Infrastructure Manager, which took into account the comments made by Cllr Spence. Members requested that the email sent to the Transportation Planning and Infrastructure Manager be forwarded to the three District Cllrs and Little Baddow Parish Cllrs.

In view of the request made by Cllr Spence to the ECC Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Sustainable Transport that works to the white lining at Well Lane and cleaning/or stronger lights re orange beacons are carried out from the highways maintenance budget, the Members did not discuss an application to the Local Highways Panel (LHP).

Members noted that Cllr Spence has requested that school crossing signs near Well Lane be added to the LHP scheme requests, therefore did not discuss the Parish Council submitting a request to LHP for these.

Members discussed Speed Indicator Device (SID), possible funding and submitting an application to LHP for validation; Assistant Clerk was requested to carry out research re SIDs for consideration at the next meeting.

23/24.103 Allotments

Members noted that the availability of two vacant plots will be advertised as those on waiting list are not able to take up plots at this time; meeting with plot holders still to be arranged.

23/24.104 Ponds

Members noted that Bakers of Danbury have repaired the Duck House.

23/24.105 Trees

Members noted details of works carried out as a result of storm damage.

Members noted nothing to report from resident regarding tree from Pedlars Path bridleway overhanging their property.

23/24/106 Chelmer Valley Landscape Group (CVLG).

Members noted that the next meeting of this group is on 29 January 2024 (agenda and support notes had been supplied to Members).

23/24.107 Hedgehogs

Members considered a request from 'Hedgehogs R Us' to install 'Hedgehog Crossing' road warning signs, but as Members were not aware of any areas where hedgehogs are crossing, it was agreed that if residents make the Parish Council aware of such areas, they will review the situation again.

23/24.108 Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Members noted that Cllr A Chapman and the Assistant Clerk had attended a webinar (link supplied) Cllr A Chapman gave a brief report on the webinar, highlighting certain points:

- Change in climate has affected bird migration etc
- All councils should bear 'nature' in mind when looking at developments
- Importance of wild life corridors
- Night light reduction
- Incorporate allowance for 'nature' into design guide

Cllr A Chapman encouraged all Members to view the webinar (link had been supplied).

23/24.109 Matters for Report (for information only)

Cllr Berlyn reported on the campaign to save 'Fir Tree Wood' in Little Baddow and advised that Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) had requested support from Danbury Parish Council to publicise the campaign; posters etc will be supplied.

Cllr Hessing advised that there is no longer anywhere for residents to recycle blister packs; Cllr Hessing will undertake research and bring to a future meeting for consideration.

Cllr Hessing raised a question regarding the exterior lights on The Old School House and if they are on a timer. Assistant Clerk will check with ECC.

Cllr Hessing brought up the subject of parking on Little Baddow Road at school times, concern re child safety and congestion issues. Members then discussed reminding parents to park responsibly perhaps in Mayes Lane Car Park and then walking to St Johns School, perhaps reinstating the 'Walking School Bus' and installation of no parking lines on Little Baddow Road.

Cllr Hallett reported that no screening (hedging) is in place yet by the Solar Farm – this is a planning condition. Assistant Clerk to liaise with the Assistant Clerk on Planning.

23/24.110 Matters for Communication

Matter from the meeting for communication to residents: EWT 'Save Fir Tree Wood' campaign

23/24.111 Meetings in 2024

Wednesdays: 13 March, 15 May, 17 July, 11 September and 13 November

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm

Signed: Chairman..... Date: