

Danbury Parish Council
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 17 July 2024 7.30pm at
Danbury Parish Council Office, The Old School House, Main Road, Danbury, CM3 4NQ

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

In Attendance: Mrs M Dyer (Assistant Clerk)

24/25.23 Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr A Chapman nominated Cllr Hallett to serve as Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee for the current municipal year, seconded by Cllr G Chapman. There were no further nominations and Cllr Hallett was elected unopposed.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Hallett be elected to serve as Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee for the municipal year 2024-25.

24/25.24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Berlyn

24/25.25 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 at this point.

24/25.26 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.

24/25.27 Minutes of the Environment Committee dated 15 May 2024

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 15 May 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

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

24/26.28 Actions

Actions from the minutes were noted.

24/25.29 P3 Group

Members noted that proposed works had been submitted to the ECC PRow Officer together with tool request, first aid course request and approval of expenses.

Cllr G Chapman advised that proposed works that are approved by the ECC PRow Officer would not be undertaken until September.

24/25.30 Community Woodland

Members noted that the following tasks had been completed as part of Year 1 Programme of Works: weed clearance, whips located and sleeved, mulch applied, fencing repaired and strengthened, bins installed, picnic and accessible benches both fixed to ground.

Members noted that the seat from the Community Woodland which has been renovated following vandalism, is to be relocated to the new children's play area.

Cllr G Chapman gave a report to Members regarding the condition of the woodland and tasks recommended as part of Year 1 Programme of Works: ongoing weeding, review of blackthorn, additional planting (FOC trees being researched), survey of woods biodiversity. Following discussion, it was agreed that further work sessions are required in the southern part of the woodland (i.e. area nearest to the leisure centre) to remove weeds around the whips and removal of Blackthorn and that no further whips be planted in this area only more mature trees. Assistant Clerk to ascertain availability of The Conservation Trust (TCV) to undertake some weeding sessions. Cllr G Chapman will 'survey' variety of trees in this area and calculate number and varieties required for planting during the period November to March.

The siting of a water trough or bowser in the woodland was discussed; revised quote to be obtained.

Members were reminded that grants for the woodland e.g., Rural Communities Grant, Awards for All etc. will be applied for as applicable/if required.

Members were advised that three of the nine birdboxes had been installed. Members then considered possible locations for the remaining six bird boxes, namely: Pedlars Path, Dial Common, Lingwood and behind The Old Pavilion.

24/25.31 Highways Matters

Members noted that there were no updates for matters reported to Essex County Council (ECC) Highways. Members noted that the new highway maintenance issues advised by Cllr Hallett had been reported to Cllr Spence/ECC Highways and that the issue from the previous report that had not been actioned had been resubmitted.

Members noted that St John's School Head Teacher had confirmed that the school frequently reminds parents regarding parking in Little Baddow Road, but advised that parking issues also being caused by other groups in that vicinity as detailed by the Assistant Clerk at the meeting.

Assistant Clerk had outlined the SEPP initiative 3PR to the Head Teacher and will follow up.

Members discussed a resident's concern with speeding cars at Runsell Green, the request for the installation of a speed camera and the difficulty of crossing the road at this point. It was noted that there could not be a crossing at this point due to the bend in the road, but that 30 mph is being considered at this point. Assistant Clerk to research if there are any 'rules' regarding going from national speed limit down to 30mph.

24/25.32 A414 Review

Members noted that due to changes to the Local Highway Panel (LHP) and new system re Highways Maintenance issues, Cllr Spence had clarified where the potential Danbury Parish Council schemes now "sit" as detailed within the Action Plan supplied to Members.

Members noted that written confirmation had been received from the Head Teacher regarding release of land to facilitate installation of junction box for the potential new light-controlled crossing on the A414 near The Bell Public House, but as requested by Cllr Spence confirmation is required from the School Governors; Assistant Clerk organising.

24/25.33 Allotments

Members noted that two plots have now been rented, but one plot is still available; this is being advertised as those on waiting list are not able to take up plots at this time; meeting with plot holders still to be arranged.

24/25.34 Ponds

Members noted that a meeting has been arranged with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) for 24th July 2024 to ascertain works for both ponds this summer.

24/25.35 Trees

Members noted that further quotes are awaited for works (except at Lingwood)

Members noted that the Tennis Club had advised that a tree on Dawson Memorial Field is overhanging the fencing to the courts (NB not identified in recent tree survey) and that a Planning Application is in hand with the Tree Officer at Chelmsford City Council (CCC) as this is within the Conservation Area.

Members noted that the Diocese of Chelmsford had appointed contractors to carry out tree surveys and any necessary works at Griffin Meadow.

24/25/36 Chelmer Valley Landscape Group (CVLG)

Members noted receipt of agendas and minutes for the meetings held on 28th May and 25th June 2024.

Members noted that the next meeting of the CVLG will be held on Tuesday 30th July 2024 at 11.15am on ZOOM – Assistant Clerk to forward joining details to Committee Members.

Members noted receipt of the CVLG draft response to CCC Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation.

24/25/37 Rewilding

Members noted areas within Dawson Memorial Field not to be mowed as detailed on map supplied.

Members noted current situation re Hoynors and rewilding.

24/25/38 Transport

Members noted outcome of bus tenders.

Members noted dates of upcoming Passenger Transport meetings; link to online meetings to be forwarded to Committee Members.

24/25/39 Lithium Batteries

Members considered a request from Lord Foster on the safety of Lithium batteries, e-bikes and scooters and were all in agreement to support the UK Charity, Electrical Safety First, and Lord Foster's Proposed Bill to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal of lithium batteries. Assistant Clerk to write to Lord Foster to advise Danbury Parish Council support for this Bill.

24/25/40 Engagement with Schools

Members noted that the visit to the third school will be arranged in new school year. In future this item will be covered by the Community Engagement Committee.

24/25.41 Matters for Report (for information only)

Assistant Clerk presented samples of formats for seeds for the potential 'Bee Squared' 2025 project.

Cllr Hessing reported that near the new Solar Farm/Hulls Lane the left hand (northern) verge had been cleared and was questioning why it had been cleared and if due care had been taken to check for any nesting birds prior to clearance works. Assistant Clerk to contact ECC Highways.

Cllr Hallett raised the subject of litter picking generally on the A414/Maldon Road up to Runsell Green – and whether this is undertaken by CCC. Assistant Clerk to contact CCC.

24/25.42 Matters for Communication

There were no matters from the meeting for communication to residents

24/25.43 Meetings in 2024

Wednesdays: 11 September and 13 November

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.57pm

Signed: Chairman..... Date: