

Danbury Parish Council
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11 September 2024 7.30pm at
Danbury Parish Council Office, The Old School House, Main Road, Danbury, CM3 4NQ

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

In Attendance: Mrs M Dyer - Assistant Clerk
Mr S Bird - Chairman of Chelmer Valley Landscape Group

24/25.44 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr M Hessing

24/25.45 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.

24/25.46 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.

Mr Bird, Chairman of the Chelmer Valley Landscape Group (CVLG), gave Members an update on the group's activities and advised that the group now has a web site: www.cvl.org.uk and that in order to progress the aims and work of the group it has been agreed that the group applies to become a formally established body, namely a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The application would be reviewed by Natural England. The CIO would be governed by a group of individual Trustees. A question was raised regarding the legal implications and obligations for the Parish Council if the Council became a Trustee and it was acknowledged that this would need to be discussed with the Council's legal advisor if applicable. However, at this stage Mr Bird advised that the CVLG was merely seeking the Parish Council's approval to apply for CIO status. See Minute No.24/25.56

Mr Bird also reported to Members his concern regarding the felling of a c300 year old tree the previous week by Essex Country Council (ECC) on Little Baddow Road, north of St John's School. Mr Bird advised that he has put in a request to Place Services at ECC regarding this and clarification re whose land this is (it is not registered to either ECC Highways or National Trust [NT]); it is definitely within the Danbury Parish

boundary). Mr Bird then advised Members about the ‘Ancient Tree Inventory’, which is operated by Woodland Trust’ – essentially just a list of trees, but does not provide protection.

Mr Bird reminded Members of the upcoming Sustainable Danbury Event on Saturday 5th October 2024 in the Leisure Centre; posters will be provided when available.

24/25.47 Minutes of the Environment Committee dated 17 July 2024

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 17 July 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

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

24/26.48 Actions

Actions from the minutes were noted.

24/25.49 P3 Group

Members noted that a response regarding proposed works had been received back from ECC PRoW Officer, but that only two of the seven proposed works had been approved to be carried out by the P3 Group due to closeness to services; response also included advice regarding tool request, claim form for expenses; no first aid courses are available at the moment. Cllr G Chapman advised that he proposed to ‘challenge’ some of the decisions as no digging is involved. Regarding the proposed new gate behind the Church, whilst the PRoW Officer had advised in 2022 that, as historically there had been a gate at this spot, a new gate could be installed, searches had revealed that there is a water main in the close vicinity, therefore the P3 Group cannot undertake this work.

Members noted that P3 Group Members had removed vegetation that was blocking FP50 (small footpath at bottom of Fitzwalter Lane connecting to Sporhams Lane).

24/25.50 Community Woodland

Members noted that The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) had spent three days at the end of August on site in the southern section of the woodland removing weeds around the whips/trees, plus removal of blackthorn and rubbish.

Member noted that Cllr G Chapman will now survey this area to ascertain how many and variety of trees are required to be planted between November and March. Sources of FOC trees and grants will then be followed up. Assistant Clerk to obtain quote to install trees (i.e. labour, mulch and sleeves etc).

Members discussed possible locations for nine bird boxes (NB not 6 as previously advised and 6” screws will be needed) and were all in agreement that along the bridleway at Pedlars Path would be suitable. Assistant Clerk to ascertain from Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) ideal conditions/locations (height, direction etc) for these bird boxes that are suitable for Blue Tits and to talk to suitable contractors.

24/25.51 Highways Matters

Members noted that there were no updates for matters reported to Essex County Council (ECC) Highways. Members noted that the Assistant Clerk will be following up with St John’s School the SEPP initiative 3PR. Members noted that works to be undertaken during Cllr Spence’s next allocated week of ‘Members Highways Initiative’ in October have already been agreed and that for the foreseeable future works undertaken during these ‘special’ weeks will be decided with ECC Officers from issues already registered on the system.

Cllr Berlyn reported that the chevrons on the double bend on the A414 need to be cleaned and vegetation removed for road safety issues.

24/25.52 A414 Review

Members noted that the Assistant Clerk will progress the various issues through the Local Highways Panel (LHP) or Highway Maintenance as clarified by Cllr Spence, including the support of the School Governors regarding the potential new light-controlled crossing on the A414 near The Bell.

24/25.53 Allotments

Members noted that one plot is still available, viewings to be arranged and meeting with plot holders scheduled for Tuesday 17th September 2024.

24/25.54 Ponds

Members noted that two days' work had been undertaken at Eves Corner Pond and two days' work at Runsell Green are scheduled for 11th September and 18th September 2024.

24/25.55 Trees

Members noted that further quotes are awaited for works (except at Lingwood) and that an additional tree is to be added to works at Lingwood for removal due to fungus.

Members noted that regarding a tree overhanging Tennis Club fencing, the application is in hand with Tree Officer at Chelmsford City Council (CCC) as this area is in the Conservation Area.

24/25.56 Chelmer Valley Landscape Group (CVLG)

Members noted minutes from the meeting held on 30th July 2024.

It was noted that no Members were available to attend the 3rd September 2024 meeting and that the next meeting is scheduled for 8th October 2024.

Following the discussion during Public Question Time (Minute No.24/25.46 applies) Members considered the request to support the CVLG's Charitable Status application as also outlined in Minutes from the CVLG meeting held on 30th July 2024. Cllr A Chapman proposed that the Environment Committee support the CVLG's application for Charitable Status; Cllr Keeler seconded the proposal, all Members were in agreement.

RESOLVED: that the Environment Committee support the CVLG's application for Charitable Status.

24/25.57 Transport

Members noted and discussed the Transport Strategy for Essex consultation (close date 22 September 2024). It was agreed that the link to the consultation be forwarded to Members to complete and return to the Assistant Clerk by 17th September 2024; Cllr A Chapman and the Assistant Clerk will then complete a Parish Council response based on Members comments.

24/25.58 Lithium Batteries

Members noted that support from Parish Council had been conveyed to Lord Foster regarding his proposed Bill to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal of lithium batteries.

24/25.59 Recycling of Blister Packs

Members noted that the receptacle to hold 7,500 blister packs was now installed in the Leisure Centre Bar and that as at 11th September 2024 it was three quarters full; communication to residents in hand and that usage would be monitored to gauge number of boxes required in 2025/26; sponsors would be investigated.

24/25.60 Projects

Members considered projects to be put forward for an allocation of the monies received in respect of the community benefit fund and a donation expected to be received by the Parish Council. Members agreed to put forward the following projects for consideration:

1. Ancient Trees in Danbury: to research and produce list (and if applicable put forward applications for TPOs).
2. Installation of a gate on FP16 (rear of St John’s Church).
3. Eves Corner Pond: to undertake more intense clearance works
4. Supply and installation of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) at potentially three locations on A414 near Well Lane/mini roundabout/Zebra Crossing.

24/25.61 Budget 2025/26

Members noted that the budget for 2025/26 will be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee and any suggestions need to be submitted to the Clerk by the end of October

24/25.62 Matters for Report (for information only)

No matters were raised.

24/25.63 Matters for Communication

Matters from this meeting identified for communication to residents: ongoing work at the Community Woodland and the recycling box for blister packs at the Leisure Centre.

24/25.64 Last meeting in 2024

Wednesday 13 November

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm

Signed: Chairman..... Date: