

Danbury Parish Council
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 13 November 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
and Cllr B Hallett (Vice Chairman)

In Attendance: Ms M Harper Clerk (part)
Mrs M Dyer Assistant Clerk

24/25.65 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Hessing and Keeler.

24/25.66 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.

24/25.67 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.

24/25.68 Minutes of the Environment Committee dated 11 September 2024

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 11 September 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

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

24/26.69 Actions

Actions from the minutes were noted.

24/25.70 Environment Committee Strategic Plan

Members discussed the second stage of the task to '*Engage with residents and schools to promote the local natural environments and encourage planting of trees and hedges*' i.e. encourage planting of trees and hedges. It was acknowledged that this task overlaps with elements of the Neighbourhood Plan and objectives of the Community Woodland and also that due to high maintenance costs for trees, residents are unlikely to want to install trees, therefore a possible way considered included writing an article for the local magazines to encourage residents to install hedges instead of fences, which would not only achieve

this objective, but also provide natural corridors for hedgehogs and other wildlife. Involving the local school children in the upcoming planting of more whips in the Community Woodland was also discussed; Assistant Clerk to make initial enquiries with the three primary schools.

Members then considered if there were any actions to be undertaken for other items included in the Environment Committee Strategic Plan:

- Bulb Planting on Parish Owned Land: following bulb planting already undertaken, there would not appear to be any other suitable areas
- Consider rewilding where appropriate: completed, no other suitable sites
- Review environmental practices at Parish Council (& Leisure Centre) and lead by example: LED lights installed, 'green' recycling and recycling of medicinal blister packs
- Work with local organisations to ensure, where possible, initiatives can be shared: as well as working with Sustainable Danbury the Parish Council is now working with the Chelmer Valley Landscape Group (CVLG)

This plan will be reviewed at the April and October 2025 meetings (per minute No.23/24.82 November 2023 review at May and November meetings, but meeting months in 2025 altered)

24/25.71 2025/2026 Environment Committee Budget

Members discussed draft. Cllr G Chapman proposed that a request for £14,605 for 2025/26 be put forward to Resources, Cllr Hallett seconded the proposal; three Members were in agreement with the proposal, one Member abstained.

RESOLVED: that a request for £14,605 for 2025/26 be put forward to Resources.

24/25.72 P3 Group

Members noted that following discussion with the PRow Officer, as no digging is required the P3 Group has now been authorised to undertake four of the seven proposed tasks and waymarker posts have been supplied by the PRow Officer; work days to now be arranged with the P3 Group in 2024/25. Decision for funding for the proposed new gate behind the Church from the Community Benefit Fund is awaited. Members noted that following reports to ECC Highways a new waymarker post had been installed on FP11 and that a site inspection is scheduled for later this week regarding a garden fence encroaching onto FP15.

24/25.73 Community Woodland

Members noted that Cllr G Chapman had now surveyed the area and an order has now been placed for some sapling trees and the TCV will be providing a mix of smaller (60cm whips) traditional woodland trees. Costs to install trees (labour, mulch and sleeves etc.) being obtained. Members discussed some recommendations from phase 2 of woodland management plan i.e.: a survey of wood diversity and the construction of habitat piles, bat boxes and possible additional bird boxes. Members were in agreement that the survey of the wood's diversity be considered at a future point; costs etc. to be obtained from suitably qualified contractor. It was agreed that it was too soon in the woodland's 'life' to install bat boxes, more bird boxes or construct habitat piles.

24/25.74 Highways Matters

Assistant Clerk advised that in relation to reported highway and footpath issues reported to ECC most of the numbers were no longer live, so therefore it is assumed works completed (those on the sheets were from some time ago); residents contacting the Parish Office with highways issues are directed to the ECC Report It Site. Verbal updates were given for the few issues/numbers that are still 'live'. Cllr Berlyn advised that the condition of the road in Mayes Lane in the vicinity of the bus stop was deteriorating further.

24/25.75 A414 Review

Members noted that the Assistant Clerk is progressing the various issues through the Local Highways Panel (LHP) or Highway Maintenance as clarified by Cllr Spence. However, one of these issues is the installation of Speed Indicator Devices on the A414, no further action will be now be required as part of the earlier budget discussions it was agreed that these would be reviewed as part of 2026/27 budget discussions. Cllr Spence advised that funding has been approved for the feasibility study and design stage for the proposed traffic light controlled crossing on A414 near The Bell to replace the Zebra crossing. School Governors have written to Cllr Spence giving approval for release of school land for the junction box that will be required for a traffic light-controlled crossing; approval from School Landlord (i.e. ECC) awaited. Letter of support for this new crossing also received from MP Sir John Whittingdale.

24/25.76 Allotments

Members noted meeting with plot holders took place on Tuesday 17th September 2024, notes and actions from the meeting had been supplied to Members. Assistant Clerk advised local plumber had been consulted re tap and water issues and recommendations outlined to Members.

24/25.77 Ponds

Members noted that two days' work by the TCV were undertaken at Runsell Green on 11th September and 18th September 2024, photos supplied.

Members noted in relation to one of the Environment Committee projects put forward for consideration of funds from the Community Benefit Fund/Donation to Parish Council, a survey of both ponds had been undertaken at a cost of £180 to ascertain extent and costs of works required. At the meeting the Clerk advised that the report had been received just before this meeting; Clerk gave a brief outline of its contents/costs, which will be considered at the next meeting of Members considering the use of Community Benefit Funds.

24/25.78 Trees

Members considered quotes for works identified in the Tree Survey (except at Lingwood). Cllr G Chapman proposed that JCM Services be appointed to carry out the works at a cost of £1,530.00; this was seconded by Cllr Hallett; three Members were in support of the proposal, there was one abstention.

RESOLVED: that JCM Services be appointed to carry out the tree works at a cost of £1,530.00;

Members noted that regarding the tree overhanging Tennis Club fencing, the application for the works were approved by CCC as this area is in the Conservation Area and works were carried out on 5th November 2024.

Members noted that information in regards to the Oak Tree felled in Little Baddow Road had now been received and would be forwarded to Members.

24/25.79 Chelmer Valley Landscape Group (CVLG)

Members noted minutes from meeting held on 8th October 2024.

Cllr A Chapman attended the CVLG meeting on 5th November 2024 (via ZOOM) and gave a short report to Members advising that in the new year a working group of four CVLG members will prepare an application for charitable status, namely Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO); CVLG will have a representative at the Parish Council Christmas Fair and the CVLG will be able to provide a speaker at the Parish Council 2025 Annual Parish Meeting (APM).

24/25.80 Recycling of Blister Packs

Members noted that the two paid for units, one funded by Parish Council and one very kindly sponsored by Heathcote School, had filled up extremely quickly; which would make it too expensive to continue with this system. Members were advised that this was therefore discussed with Green Recycling, who have the

contract to remove all waste/recycling from the Leisure Centre, and they advised that the blister packs may be put in the general waste hopper but in separate bags. A dedicated bin has now been installed in the reception area in the Leisure Centre for use by all residents.

24/25.81 Simpler Recycling

Members noted details of upcoming changes to recycling in businesses/non household premises, but that as the Parish Council does not employ 10 or more full time members of staff, the changes do not impact on the Parish Council, however the Parish Office and the Leisure Centre already separated certain waste products.

24/25.82 Matters for Report (for information only)

Cllr A Chapman reminded Members that the Hedgerow Management Consultation closes on 10th December 2024. Link to consultation: [Consultation on the regulatory approach and use of civil sanctions for hedgerow management - Introduction - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

Cllr Hallett cautioned Members to take care as that there is a new, quite deep, ditch near Hopping Jacks Lane/Runsell Green.

24/25.83 Matters for Communication

Matters from this meeting identified for communication to residents: planting of hedges (possible article in village publications, before March – Cllr A Chapman) and blister pack recycling at the Leisure Centre.

24/25.84 Meetings in 2025

Wednesdays 19 February, 16 April, 18 June, 22 October and 10 December

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm

Signed: Chairman..... Date: