

Danbury Parish Council
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 22 April 2024 at 8pm at Danbury Leisure Centre,
Main Road, Danbury, CM3 4NQ**

- Present:** Cllrs: J Armstrong, S Berlyn, A Chapman (Chair), G Chapman, P Churchouse, B Hallett, M Hessing, L Naggs, N Orange, U Rasiule, P Sutton
- In Attendance:** Ms M Harper (Clerk), Mrs M Dyer (Assistant Clerk), Mrs L Mitchelmore (Assistant Clerk), Chelmsford City Cllrs: J Armstrong, J Jeapes, S Scott
Essex County Cllr J Spence and 10 members of the public
- Apologies:** Cllr A Keeler

1. Welcome and Introduction:

Cllr A Chapman welcomed members of the public to the meeting, drawing attention to documents that had been circulated – Danbury Times (including Committee and Parish Council Annual Reports), Essex County Councillor Spence’s Annual Report, Minutes from the APM held on 22 May 2023 and the Agenda for the meeting.

2. Approval of Annual Parish Meeting Minutes 22 May 2023

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023 were approved and signed as being a true record.

Proposed: Cllr S Berlyn; Seconded: Cllr M Hessing, and agreed.

3. Danbury Neighbourhood Plan Update:

Mrs S Dobson, the Chair of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group informed the meeting that the Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) had been submitted to Chelmsford City Council for the next Public Consultation, after which arrangements would be made for it to undergo examination by an Independent Planning Inspector and subsequent Public Referendum. Mrs Dobson thanked all members of the Steering Group for their hard work and contributions to the Plan since the first meeting held in December 2016, with particular regard to Mr Holland and thanks to the Neighbourhood Plan Co-ordinator, Mrs Mitchelmore, and Officers at Chelmsford City Council for their support. The Plan was the result of significant research, study and consultation with residents and it was hoped that it reflected the values that residents had communicated.

Questions were invited from attendees, but none were forthcoming.

4. Guest Speaker: Cllr J Armstrong; Chelmer Valley Landscape Group

Cllr Armstrong began his talk with a quote from Charles Hurst’s 1911 book ‘The Book of The English Oak’ and advised that an application, supported by various people and groups, had been submitted to Natural England for Danbury Ridge and the Chelmer Valley to be given Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Status. As there was a backlog of applications at Natural England, it was likely to be up to 10 years before a decision as to whether to grant the designation would be received. Cllr Armstrong concluded his talk by encouraging a visit to the J A Baker exhibition currently on in Chelmsford Museum.

Questions to the guest speaker were then invited:

Question: can the 10 year expected wait for a decision be speeded up?

Response: The group will do what it can to make people and Natural England aware of the importance of this application, but can't say if this will be reduced. Sir John Whittingdale MP has written a letter of support.

Comment: Mark Scofield from the Danbury Society advised that The Danbury Society would be hosting a talk in September by the Curator from Chelmsford Museum in the Leisure Centre about J A Baker and his trips on his bicycle.

Question: is the AONB Document on the new Parish Council website?

Response: not at the moment, but Cllr Armstrong will forward.

Cllr John Spence then thanked Mrs Dobson and the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan Team and Cllr Armstrong and the AONB Group for all their hard work, pointing out that Pride of Place is one of Essex County Council's Five Key Goals.

5. Questions for the Parish Council & Public Participation Session

This session majored on the proposed Hammond Farm Development which will have an effect on four Parish Councils, either by location, or the effect of additional traffic that will result from the development.

The four Parish Councils have formed a working party and attendees were advised that the next meeting of this working party was scheduled for 10th May 2024 and that there will shortly be a dedicated website for this Hammond Farm PC Working Group (PC Group). There were various comments and queries raised in relation to this proposed development, including 'Would AONB be accepted as a reason why this development should not proceed?' The answer to this was not known.

Everyone present was encouraged to visit Chelmsford City Council's (CCC) website to view the Local Plan Review including the 900 page impact assessment report and advised that it is important for residents to read this report and comment on the CCC Consultation of the Local Plan Review during 8 May to 19 June 2024, and not solely rely on the PC Group. A comment was made that CCC may not oppose this development as it could help towards fulfilling the large number of homes that CCC is required to provide. However, questions were raised regarding why CCC may be considering Hammonds Farm and discounting previous options.

6. Chairman's Concluding Remarks

Cllr A Chapman drew attention to the Health and Wellbeing Fair that would be held on 27th April at the Leisure Centre and had been advertised in the Danbury Times. Residents were asked to take away any messages from this meeting and spread the word. Parish Council Committee meetings are open to the public, who were very welcome to attend. Agendas are posted on the Parish Council Noticeboard and the list of dates published in the Danbury Times.

Residents were thanked for attending the meeting and there being no more business to transact, the meeting was closed at 8.38pm.

Signed(Chairman) Date.....