

MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH AND THE LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Meeting: Annual Council Meeting

Date: 9 May 2023

Time: 7.30 PM

Venue: Moreton Village Hall

PRESENT:

Councillors (7): Cllr Crosbie (Chairman), Cllr Busch, Cllr Collins,
Cllr Leverich, Cllr Offord, Cllr Padfield, Cllr Stuart

Also in Attendance (2): Gurdip Paddan – Clerk
Cllr I Hadley – EFDC

Members of the Public: (2)

Members of the Press (0)

PC.278 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Ewen Crosbie was proposed Chairman by Cllr Stuart. This was seconded by Cllr Collins and following a vote, Cllr Crosbie was duly elected as Chairman for the current municipal year. Cllr Crosbie completed his declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Padfield was thanked for serving as Chairman for the past year.

PC.279 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Andy Stuart was proposed as Vice Chairman by Cllr Padfield. This was seconded by Cllr Offord and following a vote, Cllr Stuart was duly elected as Vice Chairman for the current municipal year.

PC.280 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Darken, Foulser, Hall and Martin.

PC.281 OTHER ABSENCES

None.

PC.282 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

PC.283 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of Council meeting held on 14 March 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Stuart and seconded by Cllr Offord. All agreed.

PC.284 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman's report for 2022/23 was noted.

PC. 285 PARISHIONERS' FORUM

Mr Bloxham and Mr Johnson attended the meeting and presented their proposal for affordable houses within the Parish. The proposed site is within the Green Belt. A brief summary was provided by Mr Bloxham on the design and locality. The site is near Deal Tree Cottage. He made reference to his previous presentation to the Council and the Council's Neighbourhood Plan. They welcome the outcome of the affordable housing report listed on the agenda tonight. Unfortunately, Cllr Darken was not present to report back on affordable housing. A brief discussion ensued on what is affordable housing and what is

possible for this Parish. A question was raised on when can Green Belt land be moved over to potential development land? Members noted that Green Belt land listed within the District's Local Plan can conceivably be transferred for development purposes. The Parish Council can only support affordable housing on rural exception sites. This is quite different to council housing. It was noted that only rural affordable housing can be supported and these homes would have to be ring fenced for the community i.e. cannot be purchased outright by an individual. It was further noted that a survey is carried out regularly by Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE); this establishes the number of affordable houses needed for the Parish. The starting point for such proposals would be the Planning Authority. It was suggested that Hastoe Housing Association would be able to provide guidance.

The RCCE has provided advice on rural affordable housing for this Parish. Unfortunately the Council has not been able to find a suitable site which meets the criteria and has a footpath/pavement as required. The gentlemen were thanks for their report.

PC.286 REPORTS

Cllr Hadley reported on the recent election results. There has been some change which will affect proportionality on Committees. He also provided information on the following:

- Number of Committees at EFDC were being reduced. There has been a number of planning meetings being cancelled due to lack of business to be transacted.
- Budgetary constraints – impact on waste collection.
- The Cabinet membership is being reduced to seven. This means the Portfolio holders will have additional work.
- Next year will be all out election; even the ones that have been voted in this May. Next year's elections will incorporate the new boundaries.
- Pothole maintenance will be reverted to Essex County Council from EFDC.
- EFDC has the lowest rate within the county.
- The Local Plan has been adopted and carries weight only in areas where it is conflicted.

PC.287 REPRESENTATIONS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The following representatives were agreed:

Magdalen Laver Village Hall	Cllr Carol Foulser
Moreton Village Hall	Cllr John Collins
Footpath representative	Cllr Ewen Crosbie
EFDC/ECC Transport	Agreed Clerk to attend if necessary
Epping Forest Country Care	Cllr Colin Offord
Bobbingworth Nature Reserve	Cllr Janet Leverich
Crime and related issues	Cllr Carol Foulser to manage emails
Joint Standards Committee	Cllr Rosemary Padfield
EF Branch of the EALC	Cllr Busch (on occasions) and the Clerk
Local Councils' Liaison Committee	Cllr Busch (on occasions) and the Clerk
Neighbourhood Plan Review Committee	Cllr Busch

PC.288 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was noted that Val Evans had been appointed as Internal Auditor for two years.

PC.289 INSURANCE

The Council's Insurance had been approved and it was noted that defibrillators had been included within the Policy Schedule. Reference was made to the increase and it was clarified that defibrillators had been included and also there had been a price increase. Members were advised that an alternative quote had been obtained and it was agreed to remain with Zurich.

PC.290 STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members reviewed the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and these were approved for 2023/24, unanimously agreed.

PC.291 COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Members reviewed and approved the following policies for 2023/24, unanimously agreed:

- a) GDPR Policy – Data Protection
- b) Grievance Procedure
- c) Disciplinary Policy
- d) Equality and Diversity
- e) Bullying and Harassment
- f) Complaints
- g) Planning
- h) Grants
- i) Risk Register

PC.292 ASSET REGISTER

The Asset Register was reviewed and agreed.

PC.293 POLICE – RURAL BURGLARY REDUCTION OPERATION

The following report was received from PC W Shepherd:

Firstly, I'd like to apologise for not being able to come into this meeting directly and deliver this report, especially seeing as I am asking for funding towards the operation previously mentioned.

As mentioned before, I have leaflet dropped the area that comes under your Parish Council and based on the up take of participants within your area, the cost to the council for this operation would be £312.57 this covers the cost of kits required for your area and includes VAT.

As I previously discussed EFDC are willing to put in the bulk order and separately bill yourselves as a Council, this allows all items required for the operation to be delivered to one location and collated rather than going to multiple different locations.

This operation will hopefully have a significant effect on the number of thefts/burglaries in the area and reduce crime in the area. If yourselves as a Council are willing to fund this, then it would be greatly appreciated and show commitments towards partnership working with Police and shows the Council taking the reduction of crime seriously and again shows a commitment to this as well.

If funding is agreed then I will be looking to get this operation and completed by end of June

Thanks again for your time and again apologies for not being able to make it in person

A brief discussion ensued on the use of the kits and the cost. It was felt that only certain parisheners would benefit, as the kits will be used for farm machinery/equipment marking. It was suggested that a financial contribution needs to be made by those parishioners wishing to participate in the scheme. A question was raised whether anyone would be interested within the Parish and also whether they would be prepared to pay for a kit? It was agreed to make a contribution up to the value of £150.00 to discourage crime within the Parish. Proposed by Cllr Stuart and seconded by Cllr Offord, all agreed.

PC.294 BIOGEN – COMPOSITING SITE

No updates.

PC.295 TREE PLANTING AND PLAQUE LOCATION(S)

Cllr Stuart advised that there has been very little progress on this matter as he is waiting to learn of the outcome of Mr Schwier's planning application for the site in question. There does not appear to be a time limit for acquiring the trees for planting. A site had been suggested by the bridge where the bench sits on the grassed area but unfortunately no one knows the landowner. Although there are a number of small green patches within the Parish but it is difficult to obtain permission.

PC.296 CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

- a) Clerk had written to EFDC to obtain permission to register the green at Moreton as a 'Moreton Village Green'. Waiting for a response.

- b) A response has been received from Damien Weller regarding the plastic guards on trees. A copy has been circulated. Cllr Leverich volunteered to work with Damien Weller to organise volunteers to help clear Bobbingworth Nature Reserve.
- c) The Clerk wrote to Councillor Hadley and Councillor McIvor. A response has been received from Councillor Hadley as follows: *Thank you for your email, the content of which has been noted and will be responded to in due course.* With the Chairman’s permission, Cllr Hadley responded to the recent letter he received from the Parish Council. He stated that he supported the Council and its residents with the 5G mast application, which had a positive outcome; application was refused. He agreed that 5G was not required and that 4G was sufficient. A mast in the right place would be acceptable for the Parish. In terms of representing the electorate he alluded to a February meeting at which he took into account the advice from planning officers, objections received and the representation from local residents before making a decision. As there were serious allegation being made the item was deferred and an investigation carried out and there was no substantive evidence for the allegations made and the application was approved at a future meeting. With regards to predetermination, he said there may have been some predetermination, as it works both ways – e.g. if he had just supported the Parish Council, that can be interpreted as predetermination. He advised the Council that Tilegate site developments had been ongoing since about 2010, way before he became a District Councillor. A Member stated that the duty of the District Councillor is to represent the electorate. He agreed that he has a duty to represent the parish councils and parishioners but he also has to look at the evidence presented before a decision is made. Finally he asked if the results of the investigation meeting held on 16 February 2023, which was mentioned at the last meeting had been communicated. The Clerk confirmed that the outcome of the investigation meeting had not been received. Cllr Hadley agreed to look into this by contacting Sarah Marsh and revert back. Further comments were made in respect of Cllr Hadley not putting forward the opinions of the residents and the Parish Council at planning meetings. Cllr Hadley’s response was that everyone has an opportunity to put forward their opinion at District Planning meetings. He further added that he takes into account the evidence put in front of Ward Councillors before making a decision. There was concern expressed in terms of parishioners’ views not being put forward by the District Councillor at EFDC Planning meetings.
- d) A letter was received from Mr Sullivan’s solicitor regarding the allegations made by the Council in respect of potential contaminated waste being imported onto the site. The solicitor has requested evidence. A response has been sent.
- e) ECC, EFDC, EALC and RCCE communications are emailed to Members on a regular basis.

PC.297 KING CHARLES III – CORONATION: DONATION TO HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

An email was circulated in respect of a request from the Horticultural Society who meet in Moreton. It was unanimously agreed to make a donation of £100 towards the replanting of ten tubs alongside the village green in celebration of the King’s coronation.

PC. 298 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Cllr Darken had tendered her apologies for this meeting and therefore no affordable housing report was available.

PC.299 FOOTPATH ORDER 32 – MORETON (DOG AND PICKLE PUB)

The Council had agreed not to support the Footpath Order 32 at the last meeting. Following the Council’s decision a response was received from ECC which was circulated for consideration. The request from ECC was for a copy of the approved minutes of 14 March 2023 meeting. It was agreed to send a copy of the minutes to ECC, as requested.

PC.300 RISK REGISTER

A copy of the Risk Register was reviewed and approved for 2023/24.

PC.301 PLANNING

a) Members noted the following planning applications below which have been responded to by way of the Clerk’s delegated powers following email consultation with Councillors:

EPF/0565/23	1 Petcheys Cottages, Bottle Road, High Laver, Ongar, CM5 0JQ	Grade II listed building application for replacement Crittal windows with double glazed powder coating aluminium replicating existing. https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning- application/a0h8d000001VftL
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No objection		
EPF/0516/23	Site adjacent to Great Notts Moreton Road Bobbingworth Ongar CM5 0LU	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 4 'Hard and Soft Landscaping', condition 6 'Contaminated Land', condition 7 'Electric Vehicle Charging' condition 8 'Foul and Surface Water', condition 9 'Super-Fast Broadband' and condition 11 'Waste/Recycling Storage' on planning permission EPF/2364/19 (Proposed conversion of an existing barn to form a single detached residential unit, retaining existing access & on-site car parking)
<p>The Council conditionally supports this application. The proposed conversion to residential occupation being conditional on the continued use of the site as a caravan park and that the barn cannot be sold separately from the business. Further, that if, at any future time the site ceased to be used as a caravan park then the barn would revert to agricultural use.</p> <p>Please note that there is a special area of conservation held in abeyance. The barn is in Green Belt and the proposal is to reuse the reuse the existing redundant barn.</p>		

b) Councillors noted the following Planning decisions by EFDC:

EPF/2883/22	Land Adjacent to Tilegate Farm, Tilegate Road, High Laver, Ongar, CM5 0EA	Construction of a natural pond together with new tree planting and associated landscaping	Approved with Conditions
EPF/2372/22	Maltings Farm, Maltings Hill, Moreton, Ongar, CM5 0JY	Application for Variation of Conditions 2 & 11 for EPF/1656/20. (Reserved matters application to EPF/0181/18 for removal of outbuildings and existing dwelling. Erection of three detached dwellings. Formation of new highway access and ancillary works).	Approved with Conditions
EPF/0226/23	Land opposite Moreton Lodge, Pedlars End, Ongar, Essex, CM5 0LR	Lawful Development Certificate for existing use of the land and the stable in connection with a thatching business as Class E(g)(iii) (formerly B1 c) use.	Lawful
EPF/0230/23	Barn Mead, Ashlyns Lane, Bobbingworth, Essex, CM5 0NB	Addition of first floor, internal re-configuration and external alterations (resubmission of planning application reference EPF/1508/22)	Refused

c) Members noted the following planning application(s) for which EFDC does not normally accept comment:

EPF/0708/23	Bushes, Wind Hill, Magdalen Laver, Ongar, CM5 0DS	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 'Foul and Surface Water', condition 5 'Mitigation Measures' and condition 6 'Contamination' on planning permission EPF/1787/21 (Proposed alterations to existing buildings; provision of pool within courtyard; partial demolition of existing built form and in-line addition to enlarge	Approval of details reserved by a condition
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		existing ancillary residential annex; change of use of adjacent field to horse grazing).	
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d) Members considered the following planning applications and agreed comments, the deadline for this Council's response being 27 March 2023 (these applications will be dealt with by the way of delegated powers to the Clerk).

EPF/0788/23	Tilegate Farm Tilegate Road High Laver Ongar CM5 0EA	Construction of a tennis court together with perimeter fencing and landscaping Link: https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0h8d000001Vreo
<p>Members considered the above planning application. Cllr Busch provided the background and explained the proposal for consideration. The following response was agreed:</p> <p>We have no objection to the erection of a tennis in this position, providing it is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. retained as green belt land and not incorporated into the residential curtilage. b. no flood light are erected. <p>This application, as displayed on the planning authority's website is for the erection of a tennis court together with perimeter fencing and landscaping only.</p> <p>However, the letter from the applicant's agent, requests a change of residential boundary together with a change of entrance to the site.</p> <p>We have no fundamental objection to the exchange of pockets of green belt land as outlined on plan No 272/01 (02) 003I.</p> <p>We are not planning experts; however we believe, a potential closure of the existing entrance to the site of Tilegate Farm and the potential use of another entrance should be considered as a separate matter - probably as a different planning application. It is a highway safety consideration as to where the entrance is.</p> <p>Our Parish Council's view has consistently been that the position of the entrance on the South-Western side of the site* is dangerous, as it is too close to a blind bend. The existing entrance, which the applicant offers to close by a section 106 agreement, is in a far safer place for an entrance.</p> <p>* This entrance was closed in 2001 (EPF/0637/2001) "in the interest of highway safety" and the access road was re-routed. This proposed section 106 agreements would reverse this.</p>		

e) Members noted the reported breach/appeal:

Site Address Stone Cottage, Little Laver Road, Little Laver, Harlow, CM17 0RH

Description Detached cart lodge with room over.

Appeal Reference. APP/J1535/D/23/3314315

Start Date 17/04/2023

The above application had gone to appeal, as it was refused by EFDC.

PC.302 ACCOUNTS 2022/23

The accounts for 2022/23 were circulated with the agenda for approval. It was proposed by Cllr Padfield and seconded by Cllr Stuart to adopt these accounts and after a vote was taken, the accounts, as presented were unanimously agreed.

PC.303 ANNUAL RETURN 2022/2023

The Council's gross income and expenditure for 2022/23 was below £25,000 and therefore the Council met the qualifying criteria as part of the audit regime to be able to certify itself as exempt from a limited assurance review.

The Council APPROVED the following:

- Certificate of Exemption (page 3 of the Return)
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Part 2) which is made up of:
- Annual Internal Audit Report (page 4) to be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
- Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement (page 5) to be completed by the authority.
- Section 2 – Accounting Statements (page 6) to be completed by the authority.

Councillors were asked to note that the date on which the External Audit must be approved by the Parish Council was 1 July 2022. As there will not be Council meeting prior to this time, Council considered the following:

- a) Complete a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control
- b) Consider the findings of any such review
- c) Prepare and approve the Annual Governance Statement by way of resolution (Section 1)
- d) Consider and approve the Accounting Statements (section 2)
- e) Ensure the Accounting statements are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting

It was NOTED that the period of public rights and publication of the unaudited annual return was between 5 June and 14 July. In addition, smaller authorities must publish various documents on a public website, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.

The above Certificate of Exemption and the Annual Return were approved and it was proposed, Cllr Busch and seconded, Cllr Padfield and unanimously agreed.

PC.304 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a) The following payments were approved. Proposed by Cllr Stuart and Seconded by Cllr Offord. All agreed.

Payment	To	For	Total
BACS	G Paddan	Home office £520 + travel £5.85 + Wix inv £136.80	£662.65
BACS	G Paddan	March Salary	£749.85
BACS	HMRC	March Tax + NI	£319.24
BACS	A Rogers	March Payroll	£25.00
BACS	ML VH	Hire – 16 Feb and 14 Mar	£40.00
BACS	EALC	EALC and NALC affiliation sub	£402.11
BACS	G Paddan	April Salary	£832.00
BACS	A Rogers	April Payroll	£25.00
BACS	HMRC	April NI + Tax	£208.00
BACS	Zurich Ins	Council Ins – 2023/24	£441.21
BACS	EALC	Chairman's training – Cllr Crosbie	£285.00
BACS	C Davis	Flowers tubs – coronation (donation)	£100.00
BACS	G Paddan	Travel £5.85 + stationery (Paper & ink - £39)	£44.85

- b) To NOTE the Bank Balances as at 31 March 2023:

Deposit Account	£23,888.01
Current Account	<u>£. 833.31</u>
Total	<u>£24,721.32</u>

Cash book bank balance: to 30 April 2023:

Balance per bank statement as at 31 March 2023	£	£
Unity Deposit Account	23,888.01	
Unity Current Account	833.31	
		24,721.32
Less: Any unpresented cheques at 30 April March 2023	0.00	
Add: Any un-banked cash at 30 April 2023	0.00	
CASH BOOK		
Opening Balance 1 April 2022	24,721.32	
Add: Receipts in the year (precept + int)	24,800.00	
		49,521.32
Less: Payments to 30 April 2023	319.24	
Balance (receipts and payments book) as at 30 April 2023		£ 49,202.08
Deposit account £48688.01		
Current Account £514.07		

PC.305 DATES OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at Magdalen Laver Village Hall on 11 July 2023 at 7.30pm.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Chairman

Date