

TERLING AND FAIRSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th February 2009, at 7.00pm, in the Committee Room,
at Terling Village Hall**

Present:

Mrs S McNamara (Chairman)
Mr I Smith
Mrs A Anderson
Mrs P Bird
Mr T Lewis
Mr C Cutler
Mrs S Alder
Mrs J Cockburn
Mr D White
Mrs J Halfhide (Clerk)
Mr C Marshall (Handyman)
PC Jason Corrigan
3 members of the public

ACTION

09.103 Meeting Open to the Public

Health and Safety concerns were expressed by a parishioner about the gate installed last March onto the road leading onto the cross-field footpath behind the cricket field (footpath 21) which had been installed following a complaint to Essex County Council that there was no entry from the road onto the footpath. It was agreed the Clerk would establish who would be liable if an accident should occur at the site.

JH

Following the recent extreme weather the state of the roads in the Parish had deteriorated with more pot holes needing attention. The Clerk agreed to contact ECC Highways to request repairs.

JH

The poor state of the path leading from the road to the church gate was discussed. PB agreed to contact Lord Rayleigh in this regard.

PB

PC Corrigan reported a low incidence of crime in the Parish; there had been one theft from a vehicle in the Braintree Road. He requested dates for forthcoming village events which might require the Police to be present, perhaps in an information vehicle. The Clerk agreed to forward any published dates. The continuing problem of vehicles driving through the Ford was discussed. PC Corrigan suggested in such eventuality the Police should be called and they would attend the site. He also gave details of the number to be used for the public to use to give information which could help the Police.

JH

Speed guns would soon be used on the Braintree Road to catch and deter speeding motorists. Ranks Green and other areas in the Parish would also be monitored. The Neighbourhood Action Panel (NAP) would be meeting on 16th March at Black Notley.

09.104 Apologies for Absence

Mr R Dixon
Mrs M. Galione (District Councillor)

09.105 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th January 2009

These were unanimously approved. TL proposed and AA seconded that the

Chairman should sign a copy of the minutes as a true and accurate record.

09.106 **Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting's minutes.

09.107 **Declaration of Interests**

None.

09.108 **District Councillors' Report**

Councillor Margaret Galione sent a report in her absence:

The budget had been debated at Full Council. There will not be a green waste collection from December 2009 to February 2010. There will be a charge for vermin treatment but if there is a need for more than one visit the charge covers the whole treatment. Travel tokens will continue as not everyone has a bus in their area to be able to make use of a bus pass. The buses are being monitored for usage. All swimming is free until the end of March for all ages in the three pools in the District. Witham is to have a new swimming pool.

The Parishes meeting is at Causeway House, Braintree at 4pm on 19th March.

09.109 **Chairman's Report**

Nothing to report.

09.110 **Sub Committee Reports:**

Finance:

Copies of Receipts and Payments for this financial year as per the cash book had been e-mailed to all Councillors. All invoices had been checked against cheques by the signatories. The expenditure was approved. Proposed by IS and seconded by AA. The Chairman signed as approved. IS distributed his Receipts and Payment, Budget and Forecast sheet and graph, which he explained.

CC queried how safe the money on deposit with Barclays Bank is in these uncertain financial times, and whether the Government's guarantee would include accounts such as the Parish Council's or whether it just covered private accounts. IS agreed to look into this. IS

The revised draft of the Clerk's contract had been distributed to all Councillors and was approved. The Chairman would sign.

IS had investigated various Payroll Bureaus to handle the Clerk's payroll. Acumen had been highly recommended, charging a fee of approximately £20 per month and it was unanimously agreed their services should be employed. IS and the Clerk should expedite. IS, JH

The Clerk reported that she and Mrs Stewart had met with the internal auditor on 14th January. A copy of the notes from the meeting had been sent to the Finance Committee.

There is still some salary owing to Mrs Stewart as well as sorting out the issue of backdated Employer's National Insurance Contributions due. The Clerk would meet with Mrs Stewart to finalise this. JH

The Clerk reported that Allianz have confirmed the increased Fidelity Insurance Guarantee of £30,000 with effect from 21st January.

The bank mandates are now in place and all the formalities are complete.

Environmental:

DW distributed a spreadsheet detailing the schedule of work for the cutting of Parish Paths which should generate a revenue of £8643.60 for the year ending March 2010 which was yet to be approved.

DW explained that a recent email from Essex County Council about the size of bridges that a P3 group can safely construct did not really apply as the Parish's tractor was large enough. It was agreed to conduct a local risk assessment rather than follow their generic one. ECC would like to view our tractor this coming season.

TL reported on the Best Green Village Competition. It was felt this was perhaps something the Parish could work towards in the future, but that it was not feasible to enter this year. TL agreed to précis the information and distribute to the Councillors.

TL

DW and SA reported on the recent flooding in Fuller Street. The size of the pipe prevented the water escaping and the conduits under the road simply were inadequate.

Estate Liaison:

Nothing to report.

Health and Welfare:

The Health and Welfare Sub-Committee had met to discuss equipment for the 12 plus age group and adults in the playground or an adjoining area. Grants could be available from Greenfields or Essex Community Association and discussion ensued as to whether the Parish Council would agree to part-funding this project. The Clerk agreed to send a letter to Anglian Water regarding a possible site in front of the existing Pump House. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee would consult with other Parishes about their experiences and would focus on public opinion either in the form of a questionnaire or survey. Alternatives were discussed for this age group, including the building of a covered seating area.

JH

AA, JC

SA

SA reported that she had attended a NHS Mid-Essex Primary Care Trust Health Service Review meeting which looked at accessibility, gaps in service provision, awareness and community-value for all main medical providers. SA reported that although she found the meeting very interesting she had concerns about the accuracy of data used. SA will contact them to check their sources.

SA

The hinge on the playground gate still needs adjusting. The Handyman agreed to attend to this.

CM

The Clerk reported that Eastern Counties Pest Control had been called in to deal with the mole problem in the playground and had caught five, the cost was £140. The Clerk has booked a ROSPA Playground Inspection for May. Their report and invoice will follow in June. This will cost £63 + VAT.

IT and Publicity

CC reported that the group pages on the website had been edited. The website had been down for approximately half a day due to provider problems.

A summary of the questionnaire on the Post Office and Stores with parishioners' suggestions would be given to the new owners when they took over and a copy of this would be distributed to the Parish Councillors in the first instance.

TL

Some Councillors had been unable to download Word attachments sent by email from the Clerk. CC agreed to investigate.

CC

The Clerk reported that Linda Hadley at Braintree District Council is updating the Parish information pages on the BDC website and is trying to have individual pages for all Parish Councils with links to website, census information, Ward information and photos. Permission was given for her to use the photos currently on the website. CC was not aware of any copyright issues.

JH

The Clerk reported that the computer course had been fully booked, everyone had paid and the last lesson would be held on 26th February. One person has dropped

out after the first lesson but her place had been filled. She will be refunded £7.50 for the unused lessons. It was agreed to buy the Tutor a £50 gift voucher from “The Square and Compasses” as a token of gratitude. The Clerk would be writing to thank him. JH
JH

Planning and Highways:

08/02185/FUL. Rosemead, Fairstead Road. Erection of two storey extension.

Granted on 20th January at Committee.

Blixes Farm 09/00001/LBC Erection of two story extension Refused 10th February

09/00079/FUL Merryweather, Hull Lane, Terling. Erection of rear conservatory. No comments.

A letter has been sent to the Planning Enforcement Department about two projects which appear to be under way without a planning application having been brought to the Parish Council’s attention:

- 1) 3 Oakfield Lane - A large scaffolding fan has been erected over an outbuilding to the rear of the property and major works of adaption and enlargement appear to be under way. These works are very close to the village envelope.
- 2) Rayleigh Arms - A new concrete post and timber panel fence has been erected without planning permission within the conservation area. Works to the car park entrance have also been undertaken.

CC outlined the rules for Parish Council representatives speaking at Planning Meetings which is at the discretion of the Chairman at the meeting. Case officers pre-judging planning applications prior to receipt of the Parish Council’s comments, recommendations being made before closing dates and a seemingly general disregard for the Parish Council’s opinions were all discussed. The Planning Sub-Committee will write a report which will be circulated to all Parish Councillors prior to sending. CC

The Clerk had asked BDC for clarification as to the routes and frequency of gritting lorries and had sent a copy of their response the sub-committee. It was suggested that the bus route should be gritted and the Clerk agreed to contact ECC Highways in this regard. Fuller Street and by Sandypits were badly affected areas during the recent severe weather. JH

The Parking problems on School green are continuing. The Handyman reported that he had been unsuccessful in finding large stones which would be suitable. ECC Highways had pointed out possible liability issues that could arise if there were to be an accident involving the stones and suggested reflective posts or bollards. A chain-linked fence was also suggested. PB agreed to contact Lord Rayleigh’s Farms to see if they have any suitable materials which Lord Rayleigh would find acceptable. PB
JH

TL requested a salt bin for Ranks Green. The Clerk already has this in hand and will be contacting ECC Highways. It was agreed that the salt bin at Norrells be moved to the green near the hair-pin bend. JH/CM

The Clerk had reported blocked drains in Crow Pond Road which had now been dealt with.

The Clerk had received a letter from Brooks Newmark MP about the problems at the Ford. He has written to the Environment Agency about his concerns, requesting a formal evaluation and urging necessary repairs to be undertaken. The Parish Council has not received a reply to their letter to the Environment Agency of 19th December and the Clerk agreed to follow this up. JH

The Clerk reported she had checked the grit/salt boxes, all are running low and she had asked for them to be filled.

A letter had been received from a parishioner asking if warning signs could be erected on the Hatfield Road at Warner's Corner. ECC Highways had looked at the area but as there has only been one accident there in the last 5 years and their strict criteria could not be met they would not be able to install any advance warning signs.

Notification has been received that Braintree Road will be closed from its junction with Fairstead Hall Road for a distance of 180 metres in a generally westerly direction between 9:30am and 3:30pm from 21st April until 24th April. This is for essential BT Open Reach work on poles and cables. The Clerk will advertise this. PB reported severe parking issues by Bramley Cottages. Residents' cars are eroding the bank and the sheer number of vehicles means emergency access there could be difficult. PB suggested whether it might be possible to use part of the green in front of Bramley Cottages as a parking area. The Clerk agreed to contact the Highways department to ask for advice.

JH

JH

The barrier protecting the culvert on the Braintree Road had been damaged in an accident and needed replacing. The Clerk would contact the relevant Highways department.

JH

09.111 **Councillors' Reports**

It had been noticed that some residents were leaving their wheelie bins out for collection on the wrong day and then leaving them there all week. The Clerk would contact them to ask if they could be moved.

JH

Concerns were raised about the general inefficiency of the refuse collectors. Many bins were being left in the road after being emptied rather than being put back into driveways or gardens; a considerable amount of rubbish had fallen out of the bins and was left strewn over the road and there were reports of some bins only being half emptied. The Clerk agreed to mention these points to the relevant department.

JH

A dog bin is needed at Flack's Green. The Clerk would look into this.

JH

The unpleasant smells were continuing in Fuller Street. It was suggested that Environmental Health Officers should be contacted. This will be reviewed at the next meeting.

It had been noted that the racecourse at Great Leighs, now placed in administration, had lodged a planning application with Chelmsford Borough Council for four new floodlights. It was felt this was a retrospective application but nonetheless in view of the light pollution generated and the complaints received from parishioners in this regard the Parish Council should write to oppose the application.

JH

09.112 **Clerk's Report**

Hours worked in handover period : 26½

Hours worked since last meeting : 59

The circulation envelope was handed to PB.

A new dedicated Parish Council line had been installed at the Clerk's home on 30th January. Prior to that CC had tested to see if it would be possible to use a BT Home Hub to get a virtual 2nd line on the Clerk's existing broadband line but the signal was too weak and it was not a viable option.

The Childrens' Activity Day arranged by BDC during the school holidays will not be taking place in the village this summer as all the places have been allocated, if there are any cancellations they will contact the Clerk.

The Spring Litter Pick was arranged for Saturday 25th April. The Clerk will be advertising this.

JH

The Handyman will obtain a new padlock for the bin outside the village hall that was reported missing at the last meeting. The refuse collectors had obviously failed to lock and replace it. The Clerk had contacted Braintree District Council to

complain and they are putting in a new system of checklists to ensure this does not occur in the future.

Approval was given for the Clerk to attend a New Clerk's Course on 6th May, costing £54. The Essex Clerk's Bursary Scheme may help towards the cost of courses and the Clerk will look into this.

The Clerk had received a letter from Anglian Water in response to concerns about recent water leaks at Ranks Green. They have no plans to re-lay this water main but will monitor the situation to see if the number of bursts warrants the mains being replaced.

The Clerk had received a letter from a parishioner involved in the local Neighbourhood Watch group suggesting signs be put at the entrance points into the Parish and asking if the Parish Council would consider funding them at a cost of £24 inc. VAT per sign. This was discussed, but it was decided that as crime rates are very low in the Parish and in an attempt to keep signage to a minimum in rural areas this was not desirable. Stickers for windows are available and the Clerk agreed to advertise this in the Parish Magazine.

JH

Approval was given for the Clerk to use the photocopier at the Essex Association of Local Councils if she had any large copying runs.

09.113 Village Design Statement

A meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 4th March.

09.114 Councillor Vacancy

The Chairman reported that as no valid requests were received by the closing date from local electors for the vacancy to be filled by the holding of an election the Parish Council must fill the vacancy by co-option as soon as possible.

09.115 Parish Council's Risk Assessments

TL circulated the Business and Financial Activities risk assessment which the Finance sub-committee should reconsider annually. The Clerk agreed to remind the sub-committee when this needs doing next year. The Business and Financial risk assessment was unanimously approved, proposed by DW and seconded by PB. TL circulated the Health and Safety Policy which was unanimously approved. Proposed by PB and seconded by DW.

The Clerk had carried out a self-assessment of her home working environment and TL would need to visit her home to check and approve.

JH/TL

09.116 Bus Shelter

The Clerk reported that the order for the new bus shelter had been placed. The cost would be £5180 plus delivery of £550 plus VAT £859.50 which is reclaimable. The groundworks are expected to cost approximately £1,000 and the Parish Council had already received a grant of £6,000, thus leaving a shortfall of approximately £1,000. It may be possible to apply for another grant in the new financial year to cover this shortfall. The Clerk would look into this.

JH

The ongoing issue of not knowing who owns this area of land is causing a problem as the landowner's consent is needed to build the new shelter. The Clerk reported that it has been suggested to ECC Highways that the Parish Council gives an undertaking that it has tried to establish ownership many times and perhaps agree to sign an affidavit or a suitable letter of indemnity. The Clerk will follow this up.

JH

09.117 Telephone Kiosks

The Fuller Street kiosk has now been decommissioned and the Clerk is waiting to hear that ownership has been transferred to the Parish Council. Posters have been erected in the three newly adopted phone boxes and giving the

Clerk's phone number for point of contact.

It was agreed to insure each kiosk for £1,000. The cost for insurance would be £14 per thousand £ insured. The Clerk agreed to check what the excess on the policy is. JH
They are covered under the Public Liability insurance free of charge, provided they are maintained correctly. The Clerk now holds the maintenance document. It was agreed that the Handyman should be asked to check them regularly.

They have been added to the Asset Register for £1,000 each.

A letter had been received from the Landlord at The Square & Compasses suggesting that the Fuller Street kiosk be used as a display/information point for walkers on The Essex Way. He kindly offered to maintain, clean and service the kiosk as well as help towards any financial cost. In addition, he offered to consider the outright purchase of the kiosk from the Parish Council. This was discussed but Councillors felt that the Parish Council should retain ownership and be responsible for the lighting bill. His kind offer of help with the maintenance was gratefully accepted and the idea of transforming the kiosk into an information point was welcomed.

09.118 Football Field

IS reported that it would cost in the region of £5,000 for two Portacabins for the football field, plus installation costs.

09.119 Correspondence

- Letter to Owls Hall asking them to cut back the overhanging branches which were causing concern alongside School Green, reply received confirming they will attend to it.
- Invitation to the Annual Civic Service at Chelmsford Cathedral on 26th March. IS expressed an interest in attending.

09.120 Any Other Business /Items for Next Agenda

No further business.

The meeting closed at 9:45pm.

Dates of next meetings, including sub-committees

21st April, The Committee Room, The Square and Compasses, Fuller Street

19th May, AGM, Terling Village Hall, 7pm

June 30th, Terling Village Hall, 7pm