

**Minutes of virtual Birchanger Parish Council meeting
held on Tuesday 1st September 2020 at 7.30 pm.
via Zoom.**

Present: Angie Driscoll (AD) – Chair
Peter Sampson (PS)
George Taylor (GT)
Geof Driscoll (GD)
John Revell (JR)

Melvin Caton (district councillor) (MC)
Ayab Khan (district councillor) (AK)
Ray Gooding (county councillor) (RG)

1 member of the public

Keith Williams (Parish Clerk)

723. Chairman’s Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

724. Apologies for Absence

Linda Pocklington (LP) – family commitments.

725. Declarations of Interest

GT declared an interest as spouse of applicant for co-option of parish councillor under agenda item 4.

726. Co-option of parish councillor.

The applicant Mrs Sally Taylor [ST] made a presentation to the council and then excused herself from the meeting. ST was unanimously approved and co-opted as parish councillor following which ST was invited to re-join the meeting. The parish clerk will organise the relevant paperwork.

727. Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.

None.

728. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 4th August 2020 (previously circulated) were agreed as a true and accurate record, and will be duly signed by the Chairman.

729. Recreation Ground

LP had submitted her report which was circulated to councillors.

Recreation Ground. Friday August 28th. 4.p.m

The two cradle swing seats are in place, and being used.

The receding edges of the large black safety surface has been filled in and is no longer a tripping hazard. Minor damage to both picnic tables can be seen. A single plank on both table tops has a section of wood that needs attention. Both rubbish bins are being used. Both are being emptied regularly. Ace of Spades continue to do a good job regarding hedges and grass during such difficult times.

Two families were using the Rec' this afternoon. Both praised the choice of equipment and the Rec' in general. A concern about the Zip wire was raised. The Zip wire had been used by a number of youths at the same time. The person who had witnessed this behaviour suggested that a sign, as to number of persons (for example) should be displayed, as the equipment shouldn't have been used in this way.

GT advised that communication with HAGS had been poor, for which they have apologised. Having completed their scheduled work they will be submitting an invoice which is expected to be approximately £1850 plus VAT.

Further work needs to be carried out and HAGS will be asked to quote for this. Mechanically the equipment is now up to scratch.

Signs are needed for the Zip Wire making clear that this is single-person equipment. It was agreed to approve 10 signs at £10 each. It was also agreed to provide more covid-19 signs at a total cost of approximately £260.

730. Birchanger Lane

AD presented a report on certain issues with the Lane. These are the salient points.

Parking at A120 Roundabout

- Being used as a free parking area by taxis and other vehicles.
- There is evidence that some drivers are using the area as a toilet.
- It was necessary to establish ownership of the land. It appears to be Essex Highways, who have the power to restrict parking on this land.
- RG will investigate and see what can be done. (Please refer to minutes 732 for details of RG's actions thus far).

Flooding on Birchanger Lane

- After the recent heavy rain the "Birchanger Lake" has reappeared.
- RG has once again taken action to clear the blockage.
- The ditch is the responsibility of Birchanger Social Club and I have been in contact with the Club Chairman with request that action be taken.
- Ultimately the problem will only be solved by reinstating the connection to the ditch which appears to have been broken when a house was built bordering on the Club field.
- RG will meet with the Club Chairman to discuss the situation and will see if any finance is available from Essex County.

731. Finance

- a. Account Balances (already circulated) – noted.**
- b. Invoices and payments – approved.**

1. Account Balances b/f 31st July 2020

Unity Trust Bank	53643.77
Cancellation of VE Day donation	500.00
Balance at 31/07/20	54143.77

2. Payments due for July 2020

Ace of Spades	On line	249.60 (grass cutting July 2020)
e-on	DD	90.50 (electricity for July 2020)
Hundred Parishes Society	On line	10.00 (annual subscription)
TBS Hygiene	On line	129.60 (dog bin and rubbish bin emptying)
A&J Lighting	SO	45.90 (monthly maintenance)
Payroo	On line	6.00 (payroll expenses)
Angie Driscoll	On line	37.00 (gratuity to internal auditor)
Keith Williams	On line	421.30 (salary for August 2020)
HMRC (Keith Williams)	On line	105.20 (PAYE for August 2020)
Keith Williams	On line	20.00 (office rent August 2020)

Total payments for August 2020 1115.10

3. Account Balance c/f 31st August 2020

Unity Trust Bank a/c no 20419053	
Balance at 31/8/2020	53028.67

Note 1: The payment to HMRC was made by the parish clerk and is being reimbursed.

c. Confirmation of Exempt Status from external auditor

The external auditor has confirmed receipt and noted the Exempt Status of the Parish Council.

732. Reports from County and District Councillors

Report from District Councillor Melvin Caton (MC)

- A planning application had been submitted for a dog-grooming operation on green belt land in Forest Hall Road. Although this was within Stansted, he feels that the PC should be aware.
- The new Local Plan was being considered but as there are apparently plans to build 1200 homes a year in the area, the Plan is likely to be affected.
- There is a white paper for local council reorganisation.

Report from County Councillor Ray Gooding (RG)

- It had been reported that there had been a fatal shooting that day in Widdington.
- Regarding parking in Birchanger Lane, he confirmed that he has the necessary forms for completion. It is unlikely that bollards will be approved so he will be applying for "clearway" status.
- He is trying to arrange a meeting with the chairman of Birchanger Social Club. He is also putting in a request for funding to help alleviate the problem.
- Most children will be back at school by next Monday.
- In the Local Government Review, Essex County will be making clear what is considered necessary for the county.
- Cycle path maintenance. A budget is being proposed for the upkeep of all cycle paths in the county

733. Closure of meeting

There being no further matters to discuss the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 19.47.

[2020/167]