



Toppesfield Parish Council



Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 1st November 2012 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 8.00pm

12/66. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Peter Moore – Chairman
Shaun Sheldrake
David Bagnall
Clare Condie
Alan Collard

Also in attendance:

Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council
4 Members of the public

Apologies were received from

Councillor John Levick
Councillor Andrew Bull

12/67. Declaration of Members Interest on Agenda items

No declarations of interest were made.

12/68. Open Session for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council

A parishioner questioned why Gainsford End has not received the 30mph restriction as Toppesfield has now. Peter explained that the criteria meant that only Toppesfield qualified when the application was made but the qualifying criteria has changed for villages and will go back to Essex County Council to ask about including Gainsford End into the restriction zone. Peter Moore reported that he has received requests if the speed limit could be reduced to 20mph in certain areas of Toppesfield. A parishioner also mentioned the size of the hedges opposite Mallows Lane as they cause a 'blind spot'. Peter Moore will ask Essex County Council to visit the area and have a look at the hedges as it is a safety concern also to meet with residents from Gainsford End regarding speed restrictions.

Another parishioner asked if the mud on the Toppesfield Road could be addressed as it is a skip risk. Councillor Collard reported that this has already been reported to Braintree District Council who have been out once but were unable to clear the area so they will be asking Essex County Council to come with a larger machine. Peter Moore will speak to the landowner responsible regarding this.

A parishioner reported that there is a village pump in Gainsford End, situated next to the Mission Hall, and whether this could go into a village improvement scheme. Peter explained that this will be discussed later in the meeting as it would need to be budgeted for.

A parishioner asked if the minutes of each meeting could be available prior to them being signed off, if non councillors could be present during the whole meeting and comment as the meeting progressed. Peter Moore explained that an open forum cannot be held throughout the meeting and any questions arising from the agenda or otherwise need to be brought up during the open session. The question of publishing draft minutes was raised but it was felt not to do this as councillors should have the opportunity to challenge the minutes, (if required) before publication.

12/69. Village Plan Reports

Broadband – is moving forward, the transmitters are not yet in place but works are scheduled with the next three months. A village meeting will be arranged to promote the service. Discussions are still in progress with the Diocese if the Church tower could be used for a transmitter. Peter Moore has a meeting scheduled with County Broadband shortly.

Report from Richard Evers - Transport update - 30mph Speed Limit signs and repeater signs have now been erected in the village. Community Transport and Car Sharing schemes continue to be available on an on-going basis. Groundwork to determine the viability of a Car Club, and Minibus acquisition, remains to be undertaken, to date there is no team in place to start this work. I have however received expressions of interest from a few people, and I hope to be in a position to report further in due course.

N.B. The imminent purchase of the Green Man freehold by T.C.P. Ltd (hopefully!) may lead to further transport challenges/opportunities as part of a broadened pub offering.

Report from Ann Read – please see Appendix B.

12/70. Minutes of the last meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2012 reported that it was an Annual Meeting – this was not correct as it was a normal monthly meeting. The minutes were then approved and signed by the chair as being correct.

12/71. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Councillor Bagnall questioned if the parish council were happy with the reasons why Braintree District Council had turned down a recent planning application for a parishioner. Councillor Moore explained that the District Council do not report back to the Parish Council with their reasons for turning down or accepting applications. If anyone wishes to know what the reasons they can view them online on the District Councils website and any disagreement needs to be through the appeals procedure.

12/72. Actions from Previous Meeting:

- 12/72.1 Peter Moore to speak to Malcolm regarding quarterly updates from the village plan working groups. No plan is set down yet but Peter will organise a meeting with group leaders to find out how to drive momentum on with the village plan and also ask of any obstacles preventing progression.
- 12/72.2 Andrew Bull to prepare a programme management spread sheet for the next parish council meeting regarding the progress of the village plan - not available.
- 12/72.3 Kaaren Berry to contact Essex County Council regarding the railings near the culvert by the new road – report has been placed but not response yet.
- 12/72.4 Peter Moore to contact Mr Mason regarding the area of tarmacking that still needs to be Completed – the tarmacking will be done by Mr Mason.
- 12/72.5 Kaaren Berry to contact Braintree District Council for Community Amenity Asset Register forms – forms received and to arrange a meeting with Jo Beavis at Braintree District council regarding this.
- 12/72.6 Andrew Bull to talk to the local schools regarding the promotion of Democracy and Citizenship – information was supplied to David Bagnall and is on-going.
- 12/72.7 David Bagnall to follow up with the Electoral Reform Society and local political organisations to supply of appropriate material for the promotion of democracy and citizenship. Some approaches have been made and on-going.
- 12/72.8 Kaaren Berry to arrange advertising of the surgeries and costs for a Parish Council Office sign – advertising of surgeries still to be arranged and costs of sign looked into. A budget of £15 was agreed.

- 12/72.9 Kaaren Berry to organise and display posters for volunteers for this year's winter gritting team – posters have been put into the shop and pub for volunteers to sign up.
- 12/72.10 Kaaren Berry to forward a PDF copy of the complaints procedure for the website – this has not yet been forwarded.
- 12/72.11 Andrew Bull to list for and against's and costings for a senior citizens lunch and to speak to Dave Dyson re a joint venture with the village hall committee. No report available.
- 12/72.12 Andrew Bull to report back re community group meeting / activities list for newsletter –
No report available.
- 12/72.13 Alan Collard and Kaaren Berry to circulate last year's budget to all Councillors. Alan Collard circulated this to all Councillors.
- 12/72.14 All Councillors to review budget and bring forward projects for next year which need consideration and budgeting. To be discussed in 12/75.

12/73. Financial Accounts

- 12/73.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval. Payments were approved – see Appendix A.
- 12/73.2 Grant Application from St Margaret of Antioch Parish Church. This application was approved and will be set for payment at the next Parish Council meeting.

12/74. Training:

Peter Moore expressed an interest in the Chairman's Day courses – Kaaren to enquire about cost of this and to ask about overview evening courses for councillors.

12/75. Budget / Precept:

Lengthy discussions were held over the budget and precept for next year and before any decisions are made Kaaren Berry is to provide a full breakdown of the maintenance costs and Andrew Bull to supply costs for the Christmas Lunch for this year and next. Also Andrew Bull to supply costs of grass cutting following his meeting with Braintree District Council. Kaaren Berry to check adverts in the parish magazine against invoices and to chase Essex County Council regarding grass cutting payment. Peter Moore to obtain an advertising figure from Andrew Bull and to verify maintenance figures.

Once this information is known the budget and precept will be discussed again at the next month's Parish Council meeting.

12/76. Transport / Highways Issues

The 30mph signs have been erected in Toppesfield after many years campaigning, however complaints have been received regarding this. Thanks to Peter Moore were expressed for all his hard work in obtaining the restriction. The Causeway Footpath will be the next project – it was suggested that the footpath could be moved back off the road slightly.

12/77. Village Hall Update report

Nothing to report as the village hall committee have not held a meeting since the last Parish Council meeting.

12/78. Broadband

Peter Moore declared he has an interest in this. Jonathon Birchall did the groundwork on this project and he recommended County Broadband. Peter Moore to circulate Jonathan's report on broadband. The next step for this project is to hold a village meeting with County Broadband.

12/79. Community Amenity Asset Register

Kaaren Berry to arrange a meeting with Jo Beavis of Braintree district Council regarding this.

12/80. Quality Council Status

Report by Councillor Bagnall is attached – see Appendix C. Kaaren Berry to design a poster and put in the notice boards with all councillors contact information. First surgery will be on the 8th December 2012.

12/81. Senior Citizens Lunch

Peter Moore to speak to Andrew Bull regarding this – unless a proper plan is in place quickly this will be cancelled.

12/82. Christmas Tree Lighting and Celebrations

It was agreed that a budget of £350 would be available for this event. This will be on the 1st December, Shaun to organise the event as well as a flyer to advertise it. Peter Moore will enquire about the donation of the Christmas tree, Kaaren Berry to chase the insurance company regarding the damages Christmas lights and to ask the school if they would attend the event to lead/sing carols.

12/83. Events and Communication Update / Feedback

Feedback unavailable – bring forward to next month.

A suggestion was made that where reports are due, they are sent to all Councillors and the clerk prior to the meetings so that everyone can read through and have any questions prepared and decisions/discussions can be held in the event councillors not being able to attend meetings. This was agreed by those present.

12/84. Recreational Areas / Open spaces

12/84.1 Progression on works – Councillor Bull to report – information unavailable.

12/84.2 Gainsford End swings – once monies are available this can be progressed.

12/85. Planning

Application No: 12/01449/LBC Location : Berwick Hall Farm, Park Lane, Toppesfield

No comments or objections were made at this meeting.

12/86. Community Issues Meeting

Kaaren Berry reported that the meeting went well and representatives are required for some joint projects – minutes of this meeting will be circulated shortly.

12/87. Correspondence

12/87.1 Society of Local Council Clerks Membership pack has been received.

12/87.2 EALC county updates and training courses received.

12/87.3 EACH – Braintree Santa Run posters – put into notice boards.

12/87.4 Braintree District Council – Braintree Christmas Market posters – put into notice boards.

12/87.5 National Grid – have published its Connection Options Report – consultation feedback in response to the public consultation for the Bramford to Twinstead Tee Connection Project can be seen at www.natioanlgrid.com/bramford-twinstead.

12/87.6 Braintree District Council, Open Spaces Action Plan – received and review later in the Autumn.

12/87.7 The Playing Field – Autumn issue received.

Late items of correspondence were the Website analytic report.
Braintree District Council Police election notices – these will be placed in the noticeboards.

12/88. Any Other Business

To discuss any other business / items for the next agenda
No further items were raised.

12/89. Date of the next meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on the 6th December 2012 at 8pm at Toppesfield Village Hall.

12/90. Close

The meeting was closed at 11.00pm

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Chairman

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Date

Action Summary:

Peter Moore to contact Essex County Council regarding the hedges opposite Mallows Lane and arrange a meeting with representatives of Gainsford End regarding the speed limit.

Peter Moore to speak to Will Kettley regarding the mud on the Toppesfield Road.

Peter Moore to meet with Village Plan group leader regarding how to progress the areas identified.

Andrew Bull to prepare a programme management spread sheet for the next parish council meeting regarding the progress of the village plan.

Peter Moore to contact Sarah Burder at Braintree District Council regarding section 106 funds.

Kaaren Berry to forward a PDF copy of the complaints procedure for the website.

Andrew Bull to list for and against's and costings for a senior citizens lunch and to speak to Dave Dyson re a joint venture with the village hall committee.

Andrew Bull to report back re community group meeting / activities list for newsletter.

Kaaren Berry to contact EALC regarding courses and costs.

Kaaren Berry to provide a full breakdown of the maintenance costs.

Andrew Bull to supply costs for the Christmas Lunch for this year and next.

Andrew Bull to supply costs of grass cutting following his meeting with Braintree District Council.

Kaaren Berry to check adverts in the parish magazine against invoices and to speak to Essex County Council regarding grass cutting payment.

Peter Moore to obtain an advertising figure from Andrew Bull and to verify maintenance figures.

David Bagnall and Kaaren Berry to work on a proposed budget for next months meeting.

Kaaren Berry to contact Braintree District Council regarding how much the precept can be raised by and why some years it is higher than others.

Peter Moore to circulate Jonathan Birchall's report on broadband.

Kaaren Berry to design a poster and put in the notice boards with all councillors contact information.

Peter Moore to speak to Andrew Bull regarding the senior citizen's lunch.

Shaun Sheldrake to organise the Christmas tree lighting event as well as a flyer to advertise it.

Peter Moore to enquire about the donation of the Christmas tree.

Kaaren Berry to chase the insurance company regarding the damages Christmas lights and to ask the school if they would attend the event to lead/sing carols.

Appendix A

Accounts – 1st November 2012

National Savings Deposit Account:	£	£
Balance as at 5 March 2012	2508.27	
Community Account		
Statement Balance as at 28 September		15,488.33
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Subtotal:	2508.27	15,488.33

If all previously issued cheques cashed / receipts cleared balance should be;

Total	13,727.90
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Income Received

Advertising receipts totalling	255.00
Braintree District Council – Street Scene Partnership payment	1023.96

Payments to be approved:

Chq No:

101413	S. Amerio – Doctors Car Service	2.00
101414	D. Dyson – poppy wreath	18.50
101415	K. Berry – stationery, postage, ink	33.87
101416	Audit Commission – Audit Fee	192.00
101417	Paul Clark Printing – September/October issue	360.00
101412	K. Berry October's wages	198.47

		804.84

Bank Charges will be deducted on 5 th November 2012	5.00
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Balance	-----	-----
	2508.27	14,197.02
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Last bank statement received up to 28th September 2012.

Appendix B

Report on Parish Paths Partnership for Parish Council Meeting 1st November 2012

Firstly apologies for absence but I will be away at the time of this meeting. I would like to update you on the progress I have made. Unfortunately, Adam Jenkins, our P3 officer has been moved to a different job. At the moment there does not appear to be anyone taking his place.

The problems with the paths in Toppesfield fall into three categories.

7. **Cross field paths**, which are the responsibility of the land owner, are not always clear. They may have been sprayed out early in the year to the minimum width but as the season progresses often surface growth gets quite high and the crops fall in so making access difficult.
8. **Field Edge paths**- The surface of these is the responsibility of highways but the actual area left which should be a minimum of metre and a half is the responsibility of the landowner as is the side growth. The problem we have is that many of the field edge paths are very narrow, if there at all and hedges grow across making access difficult.
9. In some cases access to the footpath has been obstructed or illegally diverted.

In September I attended a course for P3 officers on Enforcement legislation. This was given by Simon Taylor the enforcement officer for the county. I explained the problems we have in this parish and a few weeks ago he spent a day in Toppesfield walking the paths and noting problems. Jacquie Stafford-Baker also accompanied us.

From this we planned a course of action.

1. Situations such as waymarker posts not being in place and finger posts not in place are the responsibility of the highways maintenance team. I reported these to Highways maintenance team and the fingerposts have been put up again already. Also the surface of the paths is the responsibility of Highways and I reported the poor state of Scotneys Lane.

- Field edge paths- Simon was going to contact the landowners of the problem field edges and advise them on the work that needed to be carried out.
- Obstructed access and illegal diversion of footpath . Simon was going to contact the landowners concerned to try to resolve this issue which has been an on going problem for many years.
- The footpaths involved with the new farm road at Berwick Hall are not marked at the moment. There is an application in to divert the footpaths concerned and Simon thought this was due to be sorted out in the New Year so he advised leaving that until the diversion has official been passed.

I feel that once we have the basic problems sorted then we can really set about maintaining the paths and getting walks and maps sorted out. I have arranged to again lead a walk on New Years Day starting out from The Green Man at 10.00am. If anyone else would like to lead this walk , or indeed any walks I would be delighted to hear from you.

Ann Read

29/10/12

Appendix C

TITLE; QUALITY COUNCIL IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

This is the third report dealing with the above subject, and seeks agreement to implement changes necessary to comply with the content of the various Mandatory and Discretionary Requirements not yet considered by the Parish Council.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

There are three Mandatory Requirements remaining to be considered out of a total of ten. Two of these are shown below, and a final report will be produced for the December meeting.

4) Communication and Community engagement

Much of the content of this Requirement is already provided, either in the Newsletter or the Councils web site, however Councilor's contact details should be shown both for Email communication and telephone contact. This information should also be included on Parish Council notice boards and information points. The Annual Report should be available on the web site, and also sent to every householder in the Parish. This latter could be included within the Newsletter, possibly on a separate enclosure.

5) The Annual Report

The content and publication arrangements are prescribed the latter matter being shown in 4 above. Among the items to be included, are the Chairman's overview of the Councils achievements, a summary of the annual accounts, and a list of Members and Officers contact details. This does not preclude other content at the discretion of the Council.

Confirmation is also required that the report was published by the 30th June of the following year, and had been made available for inspection by any elector in the Parish Councils area. The Annual Report should have also been placed in the Parish Council Office (in our case the village shop might be more appropriate), and Principal Local Authorities Offices and Libraries.

DISCRETIONARY REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Annual Report sent to every household – see item 4 Mandatory Requirements.
- 2) Annual Report contains summary of years activities – see item 5 Mandatory Requirements.
- 4) Information or Access points need to be available. The following would be relevant in this regard – Notice boards in Toppesfield and Gainsford End, the gate to the Village Hall, the News Letter, Parish web site, and the Parish Council meetings. These locations would need to be maintained with current and relevant information, providing details of Parish Council activities and Local Government services, including contact points for say Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, Anglian Water Authority, local Schools and nurseries etc.
- 5) Information about Parish Council and Local Government activities distributed to every household – See item 4 Mandatory Requirements. The News Letter is the ideal document to satisfy this requirement with appropriate precis of Parish Council and Local Government items eg. Parish Council meeting items etc.
- 6) Links established with voluntary and community organisations. There are no formally appointed Parish Council representatives on Toppesfield Voluntary Organisations, although Members have contact with many of these organisations e.g. Village Hall Committee, the Pub Steering Group, Allotment Society, School, Church, and there is the Annual Parish Council meeting where all Voluntary Organisations are invited. The Village plan – item 7 Parish Youth Council, indicates activity by October 2012
- 7) Community engagement strategy. The Village plan partially answers this requirement but, “when” dates are slipping back.

The following items have either been agreed, or can be met by reference to other requirements. Items 9, 10, 12.