

**THE 119th VILLAGE CONFERENCE HELD AT THE  
BELL CENTRE, GREAT BADDOW ON THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2013**

Prior to the official meeting, a reception had been arranged from 7.00 p.m. for parishioners to meet with Parish Councillors, Borough Councillors and the Essex County Councillor for informal talks.

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Mrs Christine Shaw, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She particularly welcomed Cllr Tim Hatcher, who had been involved in a road traffic collision earlier in the year but is making a good recovery and had only missed one council meeting as a result. The business meeting of the Village Conference then started at 7.30pm.

1. **PRESENT**

Councillor Mrs Christine Shaw (Chairman of the Parish Council) presided over the meeting, which numbered 10 members of the public and 11 parish councillors. The members of the public included Acting Police Sargeant Paul Austin, Station Commander Simon Dedman, John Shaw (Chairman of the Great Baddow Parochial Charities), Glenn Finch (Clerk of the Great Baddow Parochial Charities) and Dan Glading Co-Ordinator of the Neighbourhood Watch.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Keith Liley and David Saddington.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous Village Conference held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012, which had been circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Christine Shaw and seconded by Cllr Tim Hatcher.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

5. **REPORT FROM THE FIRE SERVICE**

Station Commander Simon Dedman circulated a paper, which contained a breakdown of callouts. He spoke about these incidents and also about the community fire safety and work place fire safety work that the fire service undertakes. He told the meeting that Great Baddow station covers a large area and that there had been a lot of problems with flooding. He also circulated a copy of the Safety Campaign Calendar for 2013 and said that there will be an open day in July. He also spoke about the plans to use retained fire service personnel in the evenings and at weekends.

Parishioner's Questions and Comments

5.1 What is an RTC?

This is a Road Traffic Collision and replaces the RTA acronym.

5.2 Where will the retained fire service personnel come from?

The retained service personnel will come from the local community. The houses that are currently used by the fire service will not be in future.

5.3 Do retained fire fighters have other jobs? Yes.

5.4 Will the retained fire fighters have to live within 4 minutes from the station as the current staff do? Yes.

5.5 Clarification was requested about the non-attendance at industrial premises.

Mr Dedman confirmed that the fire service will attend fires but no longer attend incidents where alarms have gone off accidentally at industrial premises.

6. **PRESENTATION AND REPORT FROM THE POLICE**

Acting Police Sargeant Paul Austin told the meeting that the response team has gone back to Chelmsford and the building in Moulsham Lodge has been sold as a community building. There is a dedicated police constable for each area but a lot of PCSOs have been lost. There is currently no recruitment of replacement PCSOs but this will be reviewed.

He told the meeting about the crime figures for Great Baddow, which were 7.1% lower than the previous year. Burglary and vehicle crime had risen but criminal damage and theft had fallen. Burglary is a number one priority but it is a force wide problem. He expressed the wish that going forward to the next year will continue to be positive.

Parishioner's Questions and Comments

- 6.1 Does Essex Police have specials?  
Yes. They give help but are not given responsibility for an area because it cannot be guaranteed that they will be in any given place at any given time.
- 6.2 A member of the public stated that he had been burgled and that the officers who had attended had been very quick and very good. Giving cautions to burglars is being investigated.
- 6.3 Is it known how burglars are getting into property and how is the information being disseminated?  
Information is disseminated through the NAP meetings and the Neighbourhood Watch. There is information on the website, on twitter and in the local newspapers. Timer switches on lights during the winter can help
- 6.4 A member of the public spoke about number plate theft and said that the diligence of the police in dealing with this was impressive
- 6.5 Speeding traffic in Bell Street had been raised last year with Chief Inspector Steve Ditchburn but is still ongoing. The Parish Council has passed on comments about this and A/Ps Austin said that he would take this forward with the residents.
- 6.6 Chelmsford has a large night time economy. Does this sap resource?  
A lot is being done to mitigate this in Chelmsford and many bars and clubs are paying for the policing that is provided. The Neighbourhood Policing Team is not affected by this.

7. **REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

Mr Dan Glading, the Neighbourhood District Co-ordinator gave a report to the meeting. His ability to carry out the activities of the Neighbourhood Watch has been further reduced this year due to his medical condition. This has increased his wish to resign as the Co-ordinator but he does not wish to do so precipitately and would continue to work alongside the person who takes over. Attempts to find someone have not been successful and an article is to appear in the Great Baddow Times. Mr Glading said that there are still many members of the Watch and that he is optimistic that they all remember the basics about securing their homes and not believing every doorstep salesman.

8. **PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

A detailed written report had been circulated to all those present providing details of the Council's activities during the 2012/2013 financial year. The Chairmen of the Committees then proceeded to expand verbally and answer questions on the report.

9. **GROUNDS AND ALLOTMENTS**

Cllr Mrs Sue Young thanked Peter Jeffrey and the team for the excellent work that they do throughout the year maintaining the various green spaces and sports facilities. The weather during the last year has made this task even more difficult than usual. The Council was awarded a gold award in the Best Kept Playing Field competition by the Essex Playing Field Association.

Both allotment sites are now fully tenanted and the waiting list has reduced. The Council is still trying to source more land for allotments. Terry Hull continues to do an excellent job as the representative on the Towerfield site and after a long period with no representative, the Council welcomes Clive Arben as the representative at the Vicarage Lane site. The Council also thanks Michele Dixon, who has worked with the Grounds Team and Mr Hull to make certain that the sites are well managed and maintained.

The hiring of the sports facilities has suffered as a consequence of the bad weather and the Council intends to promote the facilities through the Great Baddow Times. Any group looking for a new home is encouraged to contact the office. The Council continues to update and improve play equipment and ensure that safety is the main priority. The gym equipment is still proving to be popular with people of all ages.

The resurfacing of the footway in the Recreation Ground and repairs to the car park took place during the year, as well as the re-surfacing of the footway to the bowling green. Chelmsford City Council has carried out repairs in Noakes Place and is continuing to review the condition of the ponds.

The Great Baddow and Galleywood Environmental Group are now working with the Grounds Team to manage Luxfield, a management plan having been agreed with the Council in September 2012. The group is scheduling regular working parties and are seeking volunteers to join them.

10. **HIGHWAYS AND AMENITIES**

Cllr Andrew Sosin addressed the meeting and reported that the main concerns of the year had been with following up on the lack of progress on several items by Essex County Council Highways. A new Local Highways Panel has been set up by the County Council. The Parish Council has 31 Highways Schemes outstanding with the panel. The Council was consulted about new speed limits and parking restrictions on new developments, new signage at the Army and Navy roundabout and the night time switch off of street lights. The Council is considering a replacement of the village sign and has considered requests for new dog waste bins.

A number of developer funded highways improvements were expected during the year, but very few of these have happened. Essex County Council has deferred several items including the reconstruction and drainage work in Jeffrey Road and Crescent Road, the replacement of verges in Loftin Way/Gloucester Avenue and the implementation of a new speed limit in Galleywood Road/Watchouse Road.

The new South Essex Parking Partnership led by Chelmsford City Council, will begin looking at schemes in 2013.

The Parish Council has limited powers to act and a very limited budget but will continue to report and monitor potholes, defective street lights and overhanging vegetation. Parishioners are encouraged to report any problems they find to the Parish Council or the Mid Essex Area Highways Office at Essex County Council. Thanks were given to the Parish Council litter pickers,

Don Hood and Mike Passfield, who keep the parish cleaner than it would otherwise be.

#### Parishioner's Questions and Comments

10.1 Can anything be done about Essex County Council not undertaking work?

Issues are followed up with Essex County Council but representations are very often ignored. It is possible that the Local Highways Panel may be able to help take forward schemes.

10.2 Can residents e.mail Essex County Council to support schemes?  
Residents should e.mail Cllr A Sosin or Essex Highways directly.

### 11. **PLANNING**

Cllr Mrs Diana Ronaldson addressed the meeting and said that the Planning Committee meets every two weeks and residents are welcome to attend the meetings. Planning applications are discussed and comments are sent to Chelmsford City Council. During the past year 140 applications have been discussed. Many of these are for extensions to existing dwellings and some for infill development.

Pitt Place has been sensitively restored after many years of being in disrepair and is now an enhancement to the village entrance. There is also a small new development in Church Street, which fits in very well with the character of the area.

Applications for work on trees with Tree Preservation Orders also come under the Planning Committee and it is important to protect these trees by managing them correctly. The committee will often ask for the Arboriculturalist to give advice.

The Village Design Statement can be viewed on both the Parish Council and City Council websites.

Thanks were given to Michele Stafford and Ann Wood, who prepare the agendas and material, attend the meetings and liaise with the officers at the City Council.

#### Parishioner's Questions and Comments

11.1 With regard to the development in Bell Street, there are concerns about the access onto the street. Is this more of a risk?

The Parish Council did ask for the entrance to be made wider to improve the sight line. The Essex County Council Highways did not recommend any conditions and so none were made.

### 12. **PARISH HALL AND BELL CENTRE**

Cllr Mrs Veronica Sadowsky addressed the meeting. The committees meet twice a year and monitor hires and recommend maintenance issues and improvements.

Private function hires of the Parish Hall started the year strongly but have fallen off during the year. The redecoration has been completed and the vent tower has been replaced. There has been no Essex on Tour or Essex Book Festival events this year.

The Parish Hall is maintained to a high standard and thanks are given to Elaine Bryan who takes the bookings, Lynn Alderson, the caretaker, Nicky Whipp, the cleaner and Michael Fisk, the handyman.

The Bell Centre has continued much as last year with the guides and the youth club as regular hirers and a number of smaller groups who use it for meetings. There have been some private function hires but this has also fallen off. Lynn Alderson, the caretaker/cleaner at the Bell Centre was thanked for her work and Michael Fisk, who provides cover.

Parishioner's Questions and Comments

12.1 What is happening about the lease on the Bell Centre?

The negotiations are still ongoing. Essex County Council is not engaging very well with the Parish Council. The County Council would not need to issue further notice if it wanted the Parish Council to vacate the premises because a S25 notice has been served.

13. **PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES**

The Clerk reported that the accounts close on 31<sup>st</sup> March each year and are audited by an external auditor. The audited accounts are then made available for public inspection. The date set for audit is 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013 and anyone who is interested has the right to inspect the accounts between 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013 and 7<sup>th</sup> June 2013. The un-audited Receipts and Payment figures were circulated to those present. It was noted that the balances include ring fenced S106 monies and ring fenced project monies and therefore, the general reserve available is less than the figure shown.

Parishioner's Questions and Comments

13.1 Why was there no money in the Treasury Reserve Account at the end of the year?

The Parish Council was not able to invest the reserves because the bank was not offering any accounts.

14. **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Cllr Mrs Christine Shaw addressed the meeting. There has been a settled year and thanks are given to the office staff for their hard work, Ann Wood, Elaine Bryan and Michele Dixon. Congratulations were expressed to Mrs Dixon on her recent wedding.

The last year saw the resignation of Bryan Heelis, due to personal commitments. The Council is very grateful to him for his work. The Council is pleased to welcome Peter Charman, who has been co-opted to fill the vacancy.

The Essex On Tour scheme is still a casualty of the austerity measures and there was no performance this year.

The Thursday sessions at the Youth drop-in facility in the Vineyards have re-started with the help of money from a neighbourhood engagement project that has now finished. Thanks go to Mike Humphrey, other YMCA staff and volunteers for helping to run the youth provision in the village. The youth provision is a vital local service but Essex County Council does not believe that further youth provision in Great Baddow is required.

John Emery, the Editor of the Great Baddow Times, was thanked for his hard work co-ordinating all the contributions received. The Council receives many comments from people who value receiving it every quarter and the magazine is one of the most popular of the Council's initiatives. Ideas and comments are always welcome.

The Council's aim is always to try and enhance facilities for the village and make Great Baddow a welcoming and enjoyable place to live.

There are public sessions at all meetings and residents can also approach the office and councillors.

Parishioner's Questions and Comments

14.1 A resident said that people are fortunate to live in Great Baddow due in large part to the Parish Council and its staff.

15. **GREAT BADDOW PAROCHIAL CHARITIES**

The Chairman, Mr John Shaw, gave the report. The Trustees have met on 5 occasions during the year to deal with the routine administration, including the upkeep of ten almshouses. There were no almshouse vacancies during the year.

In addition to the normal maintenance during the year, a new heating and boiler system was installed in one of the bungalows at St Mary's Court and the barge boards and soffits at the rear of the properties were painted. At Kinghams, a new stair lift was fitted and new fire extinguishers installed.

In May, the trustees received a legacy from the late Sir Henry Warner. In October, the Chairman and Clerk attended a national Almshouse Association course in Kingston upon Hull, for update in legislation and good practice.

Fire safety arrangements are under careful ongoing consideration and future co-operation with Essex Fire and Rescue Service is anticipated.

During the year, a review of the investments took place and a budget was set for 2013.

16. **GREAT BADDOW ARTS AND LEISURE CENTRE**

David Saddington was not present at the meeting but a report had been received. The Centre continues to prosper and the Reading Room is currently used by about 16 regular hirers, plus a substantial number of one off bookings. There are exhibitions from time to time and one of the two art groups that use the facilities have recently held a display of work, which will hopefully become a regular feature.

One new initiative is the introduction of Studio Productions by Theatre At Baddow, in which short plays are presented with a minimum of staging to a small audience. The most recent production featured two one act plays by local authors, which were receiving their first public performance. It is hoped that this trend will continue.

17. **GREAT BADDOW COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

Richard Beck, the Chairman of the Association was not present at the meeting and there was no report.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Parish Council expressed its thanks to Cllr Mrs Christine Shaw for twenty years service as the Chairman of the Parish Council, as she will be standing down from the role in May 2013.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.28 pm, with the Chairman thanking those in attendance for coming.

Signed: ..... Dated:.....  
Chairman of the Parish Council