

**THE 122<sup>nd</sup> VILLAGE CONFERENCE HELD AT THE  
BELL CENTRE, GREAT BADDOW ON THURSDAY 14<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016**

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

The Vice Chairman of the Council, Councillor Mrs Chris Shaw, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The business meeting of the Village Conference then started at 7.30 pm.

1. **PRESENT**

Councillor Mrs Chris Shaw (Vice Chairman of the Parish Council) presided over the meeting, which numbered 8 members of the public and 9 parish councillors. The members of the public included John Shaw (Chairman of the Great Baddow Parochial Charities), Dan Glading (Co-ordinator of the Neighbourhood Watch) and Lesley Graham (Chairman of the Great Baddow Community Association).

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Mrs J Sosin, A Sosin, Mrs V Chiswell and Mrs M Miller; also, Chelmsford City Councillor Gill Smith and David Saddington.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous Village Conference held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015, which had been circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Chris Shaw and seconded by Dan Glading.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

Chris Wright told the meeting that following intervention by Cllr Jenny Chandler, a blocked main drain in Galleywood Road had been cleared.

It was also noted that there is a problem with the bus shelter near Bells Chase. Due to the raising of the kerb and then the road surface, rain water hits the shelter. There was a suggestion that it could be moved but it was noted that the siting had been agreed by Essex County Council.

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

The Essex Police were not in attendance and there was no written report submitted. It was noted that the police no longer attend the NAP meetings, regular Parish Council meetings or Annual Parish meetings.

A member of the public raised the issue of an escalating youth nuisance problem late at night in the vicinity of Isaac Square. There has recently been a spate of burnt out vehicles in the area. During the day, school children and dog walkers are being threatened and hit. The matters have been reported to the police, who have not attended but have advised that the residents should take photographs. Many residents have not done this because they are fearful that they may be attacked.

A suggestion was made that the Neighbourhood Watch should be able to do something but Dan Glading confirmed to the meeting that this is beyond the remit of the Watch. He also expressed grave concerns that the police would not attend reported incidents. It was suggested that the Police and Crime Commissioner could be approached.

Various members of the public present spoke about the lack of any police presence and the fact that the police did not seem interested in dealing with the crime happening on the streets.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would be asked to make this an agenda item for its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and that the Council would consider inviting the new Police & Crime Commissioner to attend the meeting.

6. **REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

Mr Dan Glading, the Neighbourhood Watch Chairman and District Co-ordinator gave a report to the meeting. He once again spoke about his ability to carry out the activities of the Neighbourhood Watch, which have been further reduced this year due to his medical condition and age. This had increased his wish to resign as the Co-ordinator. Mr Glading said that he would not resign precipitately but would like to do so as soon as someone can be found to take over. He would continue to work alongside that person. He has made several attempts to find someone but without success.

Mr Glading said that there are still as many members of the Watch as ever and that he is optimistic that they all remember the basics that they have been told about in the past about securing their homes and not believing every doorstep salesman. Also, he said that people should beware of cyber-crime.

He told the meeting that he attends the regular meetings of the Neighbourhood Action Panel.

7. **REPORT FROM THE FIRE SERVICE**

The Essex Fire & Rescue Service was not present at the meeting and had not sent a report. It was noted that there is a consultation taking place and that the Parish Council will be considering making comments.

8. **PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

A detailed written report had been circulated to all those present providing details of the Council's activities during the 2015/2016 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 told the meeting that the past year had been one of exceptional challenge and sadness for the Council. With great regret, she announced the sudden and untimely death of the Grounds Manager in March 2016. Peter had worked for the Council for over 20 years and was well known and respected in the village. He is and will continue to be greatly missed by everyone.

In January 2016, Kevin Gentry had left his position as Deputy Grounds Manger after 20 years, as his health had seriously deteriorated and he was forced to take ill-health early retirement.

Don Hood, one of the Council's litter pickers, had also retired in March 2016 and the Council is in the process of recruiting.

The remaining team have worked hard to maintain the sports facilities and the cemetery to the high standards expected and they had been joined by an outside contractor, who had brought significant skills and expertise to the team.

Cllr Mrs Young reported that Chelmsford City Council has completed the work to the ponds in Noakes Place and because the ponds rely on rainfall and run-off water to fill them, it has been a slow process to recover the depths.

The new bollards around the car parks and entrance road at the Recreation Ground have protected the grassed areas and the Council is speaking to the City Council about installing new barriers at the Rothmans Place entrance.

The Council would like to see more residents making use of the sports facilities in the Recreation Ground, although there have been concerns for some time about the surfaces of the All Weather Sports Courts. The Council is awaiting the outcome of an application for a grant to help with the re-surfacing of one of the courts. If the application is successful, it is hoped that the re-surfacing will see an increase in demand for the courts.

Demand for allotments has waned slightly and there are currently vacancies on both sites. The allotment tenants continue to demonstrate their excellent skills and the annual competition is always fiercely fought.

The voluntary Allotment Representatives, Terry Hull and Michael Harris do an excellent job representing the tenants on the subcommittee. Terry has now been doing this role for over 20 years – an amazing record.

#### Parishioners' Questions and Comments

- 9.1 A member of the public asked about the pile of cuttings on Luxfield. Cllr Mrs Young said that they help to look after the area but with last winter's staffing situation, the arisings were not removed. The Clerk said that she would investigate.

### 10. **HIGHWAYS AND AMENITIES**

Cllr Keith Liley addressed the meeting and reported another frustrating year with only a few highways improvements taking place. The Council continues to keep the pressure on Essex County Highways regarding the re-surfacing of Jeffrey Road and Crescent Road and the County Councillor, Jenny Chandler is helping to achieve a solution as quickly as possible. Some improvements have taken place, mainly to defective kerbstones and footway re-surfacing.

The Parish Council has installed two new bus shelters and a number of litter and dog waste bins. These appear to be well used but litter is still a major problem in the parish and thanks go to the Parish Council litter pickers who keep the parish cleaner than it would otherwise be.

The Parish Council will continue to monitor for potholes, defective street lights and overhanging vegetation. Parishioners are encouraged to report any problems they find to the Parish Council or direct to Essex Highways through their website.

Cllr Keith Liley thanked the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and the members of the Highways & Amenities committee for their support in his first year as Chairman.

#### Parishioners' Questions and Comments

- 10.1 Residents told the meeting that there is still a problem with the kerbstones in Spalding Way because not all of them were replaced and the footways along Galleywood Road are not in a good state and old people are at risk.
- 10.2 Cllr Mrs Chris Shaw told the meeting that there is some work being done in New Road but nothing in Jeffrey Road or Crescent Road
- 10.3 A resident reported that the road markings from the A12 on the bypass to come into Great Baddow are non-existent and that the bollard has been knocked flat. This will be passed on to County Cllr Jenny Chandler.

10.4 Cllr Mrs Veronica Sadowsky suggested that a link to the Essex Highways website could be placed on the Parish Council's website and in the Great Baddow Times.

## 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 viewed on the website or from hard copies displayed at the meetings and are discussed and comments are sent to Chelmsford City Council. During the past year 131 applications have been discussed. Many of these are for extensions to existing dwellings and some for infill development.

Many residents will know that Marrable House was empty for many years and has now been demolished leaving a large gap, which is soon to be filled with two apartment blocks.

There has been a small development of two houses in the High Street, which has vehicular access from Bell Street. The Council was concerned about the development of three large houses on the Bringey Cottage site and objected to the application on the grounds of safety for those who use the footpath, especially local school children. Despite the objection, the Planning Authority, Chelmsford City Council, passed the plans but cars are restricted at school times.

There has also been an application for the development of a care home in Molrams Lane, which has been passed, and an application for a much larger Gospel Hall on the corner of Woodhall Road, which has been refused.

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

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

Parishioners' Questions and Comments

11.1 A resident told the meeting that the situation with parking has deteriorated and that when the flats on the site of Marrable House are finished, this will be even worse.

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

Cllr Mrs Veronica Sadowsky reported that the Parish Hall regular hirers are still booking. Work was carried out during the year, when the outside decoration was undertaken and new flooring was laid in the entrance foyer and corridor. She thanked the staff, Lynn Alderson, Nicky Whipp, Michael Fisk and Elaine Bryan for their hard work during the year. The Council is currently advertising for a weekend caretaker, so that Sundays hires can be accepted.

She reported that the lease negotiations are still ongoing at the Bell Centre and that a Working Group has been looking further at the feasibility study for re-building/refurbishment. The Council did not wish to pursue the first proposal that was put forward and so this is being revisited. The Youth Groups in the Bell Centre are facilitated by the YMCA.

Parishioners' Questions and Comments

- 12.1 A resident commented that repairs to the outside of the Bell Centre will be a large job and had the Council thought about giving the building back to Essex County Council?
- 12.2 Cllr Mrs Chris Shaw told the meeting that the original renovation of the Bell Centre was undertaken in 1995 and that Essex County Council only allowing short term leases had not helped the Council's position. It is hoped that the new lease will be much longer, which will allow the Council to borrow and obtain grants.

13. **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Cllr Mrs Christine Shaw addressed the meeting. There has been a settled year in the office and the Council is particularly grateful to the office staff for the extra load they have carried due to periods of sickness within the grounds staff and the very sad and sudden death of Peter Jeffrey, the Grounds Manager.

The Parish Council seats were uncontested in last year's elections and so there were no elections for the Parish Council. There was one vacancy the Council was very glad to welcome Mrs Val Chiswell as a co-opted member. She has brought a wealth of prior experience from other sectors to her role as a councillor.

Despite the Council's best efforts, through Mrs Bryan, it has had to be reluctantly acknowledged that the Essex Book Festival does not regard Great Baddow as a desirable venue any more. It was also noted that 66 of the 72 events on this year's programme were outside the Chelmsford area and were mostly in Colchester.

The Council gives thanks to Mike Humphrey, the other YMCA staff and volunteers, who do such a good job in running the youth club for the younger group and the Drop-In centre, which was in Marrable House until the end of 2015, both of which are now at the Bell Centre. All the sessions are proving highly successful and are making a valuable contribution to supporting often vulnerable young people in Great Baddow. It gives them a safe place to go where they can relax and have the opportunity of talking to trusted adults. The Council is pleased that it has been able to accommodate the Drop-In facility at the Bell Centre.

Many thanks to John Emery, who is the editor of the Great Baddow Times, which appears to be one of the Council's most popular initiatives. The delivery company has been changed in an effort to solve the problems of non-delivery in some areas and the Council hopes that better coverage is now being achieved. Copies are available in the Parish Council office and the library and the magazine is also on the Council's website. The next issue is scheduled for July and if you do not receive a copy, please let the office know.

For many years, some councillors and other members of the public have taken part in NAP meetings with the police and have benefited from a mutual exchange of information. However, police reorganisation has resulted in no police attending the meetings, so communication with them is more distant than before. There are more drastic changes currently under way, particularly the severe reduction in PCSO numbers, which means that there will no longer be dedicated PCSOs for the area and the street meetings they used to hold are no longer taking place. However, the NAP stills meets and it is determined to keep going. The minutes of these meetings are available on the Council's website. If there are problems that residents want raised, the

NAP can be contacted through the Parish Council office or directly with the councillors Chris Shaw, Trevor Miller, Maureen Miller or Andrew Sosin.

Ideas and comments are always welcome and the Council's aim is always to try and maintain and enhance local facilities and make Great Baddow a place where people want to live.

#### Parishioners' Questions and Comments

13.1 A resident told the meeting that litter is a continual problem in the village, particularly around Baddow High School. It was agreed that the matter should be reported to Chelmsford City Council and a letter sent to the headmaster.

#### 14. **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.

These accounts are a record of the Receipts and Payments for the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and have not been adjusted to Income and Expenditure accounts and are also unaudited.

The Annual Return has been received for completion from the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP and anyone who is interested has the right to inspect the accounts at 19 Maldon Road, Great Baddow. Due to changes in the law, the dates set for this are likely to be between Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 and Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016 but this will be confirmed. The date appointed for audit is 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The timetable will be advertised on the notice boards from 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

It was noted that the balances shown include ring fenced S106/CIL monies, earmarked reserves and ring fenced project monies and therefore, the general reserve available is less than the figure shown.

#### 15. **GREAT BADDOW PAROCHIAL CHARITIES**

The Chairman of the Parochial Charities John Shaw, gave the report. The Trustees had met on 5 occasions during the year for the routine administration of the Charities' business, including the upkeep of ten almshouses. There were two almshouse vacancies during the year, which were advertised and one almsperson was appointed to a flat in Kinghams, in Maldon Road and one to a bungalow in St Marys Court, Vicarage Lane. Charitable donations derived from interest on investments, were made to the vicars of Great Baddow and Galleywood for the relief of the needy of the parishes and for the Sunday schools. Each resident had been presented with Christmas gifts.

In addition to the normal maintenance during the year, one new kitchen was installed at St Mary's Court, which means that all four kitchens are now completed. At Kinghams, two new kitchens were installed and a bathroom was refurbished and the residents are very pleased with the improvements. At Kinghams, all kitchens and bathrooms have been refurbished and at St Marys Court, the last bathroom was completed in February 2016. These improvements have been made possible because of 85% Section 106 grants from Chelmsford City Council.

In May, the door entry system at Kinghams was found to be not functioning correctly, so a new system was installed and two properties were completely redecorated throughout, during the vacancies.

In October, the Chairman and Clerk attended a national Almshouse Association course in Newark, for update in legislation and good practice. Water Risk Management Surveys are to be undertaken.

In March, a review of the investments took place and a budget was set for 2016.

During the year, Candy Cannon died. She was the oldest almsperson, who in the previous August, had celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. She will be sadly missed for her knowledge and good humour.

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

David Saddington had tendered his apologies to the meeting and had sent a report, which was read by the Clerk of the Council. The year's activities have remained much the same and although some hirers have been lost, others have come in to take their place. The most significant change has not been with the premises but at the rear of the building, where a previously wooded area is being developed and two houses are being built. This has meant a great deal of involvement and discussion with the developers.

There has been a relatively quiet spell on the maintenance front but as with all older buildings, there are always things to be done. The major work is due to be undertaken and there will be fairly heavy expenditure in the coming months. It is hoped that a small extension can be built at the rear of the premises to provide much needed storage space, so that the facilities that we can offer will be improved. Planning permission has been obtained and some backing has been received from a variety of sources.

There has been a good deal of behind the scenes activity to sustain what we like to believe is a valuable service to the parishioners of Great Baddow.

17. **GREAT BADDOW COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

Lesley Graham, the Chairman of the Association, gave a report on behalf of the Association. Richard Beck had stepped down in November 2015 as Chairman and she had been appointed.

The Association has 15 members of staff, which includes a Centre Manager, who started in February 2015. He manages a team of 7 permanent staff, as well as 7 regular bar staff. Contract staff are used for cleaning and maintenance.

There are currently over 1000 members, who attend for a variety of different events which includes our sport led activities, fortnightly bingo and those who come to enjoy the lunches and the new coffee mornings and breakfast fry-up. The restaurant continues to be busy, with the Christmas meals proving very popular. The Association has changed its brewery and now offers a better selection of drinks.

The committee continues the overseeing of setting of fees, membership, hall hire and bar prices and the Centre Manager reports to the committee. The minutes of the meetings are displayed on the noticeboard and a copy sent to the Parish Council. Financially, the Association is in good shape with turn-over at approximately £300,000 per annum.

The hall hires are flourishing with regular daily activities, as well as weddings and parties at the weekend. The Association also provides a good meeting place for village groups.

A subcommittee has been set up to look at entertainment and we are running our Beer Festival and Open Weekend for the third year. The Association also offers the centre as a venue for many village events including the Fun Run.

The new website is up and running at [www.greatbaddowmillenniumcentre.co.uk](http://www.greatbaddowmillenniumcentre.co.uk)

There are no major changes expected so far with the building, although maintenance costs are increasing. There have been no major issues with vandalism or nuisance, even though the neighbourhood policing has decreased. The Association is in the process of updating the CCTV system in order to provide a more protective environment.

The Association enjoys a good partnership with the Parish Council, with whom we are in constant communication concerning areas of mutual interest. The Association would like to thank the Parish Council for its support and hope that it continues in order for us to ensure we serve Great Baddow well.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

Dan Glading thanked Cllr Chris Shaw for chairing the meeting in the absence of the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Jannetta Sosin.

Cllr Mrs Chris Shaw thanked all the organisations for attending and giving their reports and the members of the public who had attended. She also told those present that everyone was most welcome to attend Parish Council meetings throughout the year.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.22 pm, with the Chairman thanking those in attendance for coming.

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