

**BOXTED PARISH COUNCIL**  
**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**JANUARY 2018**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at Boxted Village Hall, Cage Lane, Boxted Colchester, commencing at 7.00pm

		<u>Present</u>
<b>Chairman:</b>	Councillor Mrs C Damen	Yes
<b>Vice Chairman:</b>	Councillor Mrs L Carpenter	No
<b>Councillors:</b>		
	Councillor G Pugh	Yes
	Councillor Mrs A McLauchlan	Yes
	Councillor M Parratt	No
	Councillor J Collitt	Yes
	Councillor Mrs V Banwell	Yes
	Councillor W Petersen	Yes
	Councillor B Maxwell	Yes
<b>Staff:</b>	Clerk to the Council Denise Humphris	Yes

Essex County Councillor Anne Brown and Colchester Borough Councillor Nigel Chapman and one member of the public.

- 107/17**     **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: RESOLVED:** to accept apologies from Councillor Mrs L Carpenter
- 108/17**     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** None
- 109/17**     **CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR: RESOLVED:** to appoint Mr Bradley Maxwell to the vacant position. The Clerk received his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 110/17**     **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> November 2017**  
**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes (previously circulated) as a true record for signature by the Chairman.
- 111/17**     **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None present**
- 112/17**     **BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS**  
 Essex County Councillor Anne Brown advised that bus service SB39 is due to be stopped at the end of the month due to the costs of running the service. Limited use of the service means each passenger costs £22. In order to revert to Essex County Council, to try to add eight to an argument to keep this service, Councillor Brown advised that she would need some local support for the service as it would not look good if we created a fuss only to find that the service remains unused. It was agreed that Councillor Banwell would prepare a poster for the weekly Village Newsletter to see what support for this service exists. It was

suggested that Ros Freeland may have some further information to add to the campaign to re-instate this bus. Other issues around buses were discussed including potential issues for school children/student and the Chairman advised she would speak to Boxted school to see if any more information was available with regards transport to school issues.

At the last meeting Councillor Brown had requested that councillors survey signposts needing attention particularly along Straight Road to be reported to her for action for repairs. Councillor Collitt advised he would do a survey and report back to Councillor Brown.

Colchester Borough Councillor Nigel Chapman spoke about the proposed Northern Gateway Sports Hub and particularly about potential traffic issues relating to access from the North and asked the Council to ensure that its comments were submitted.

A report was provided with regards to a parking issue in Dedham Road with a car parking consistently on the grass verge. This matter has been reported to the North East Essex Parking Partnership who advised with just one complaint they were unable to act. It was agreed that Councillor Collitt may put forward a Local Highways Panel request for a layby to alleviate parking problems. Meanwhile Councillor Chapman continued to pursue matters re the Car Park owned by Colchester Borough Homes and will report back as further information is received.

113/17

#### **CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk reported that a resident who lives close to Boxted Mill was submitting an application to AONB for funding to re-furbish an old metal signpost and asked for a letter from this Council which was required to support the application. It was **RESOLVED:** to provide a letter supporting the application.

Further reports were noted as follows:

External Auditor appointed for 2017/2018 financial year and would once again be PFK Littlejohn

New Councillor Packs are available from EALC for £18 each but it was agreed that these were expensive as they mainly consisted of information that could be found in the Good Councillor's Guide which could be downloaded free online. The Issues and Options consultation on new Garden Cities is running to 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018.

Notification received of Stoke by Nayland Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation Notice.

Myland Community Council have three stain glass windows that they have rescued from a demolished church which they plan to use in a new community centre in 3-4 years' time. Meanwhile they need a safe storage place for the windows and as the storage container by the play area is empty it was **RESOLVED:** that the windows could be stored there, free of charge providing that Myland Community Council make their own arrangements for securing the

storage container and also ensure they have their own arrangements in place for insurance for damage or theft.

**114/17** **PLANNING**

Members considered the following planning application submitted to Colchester Borough Council and **RESOLVED:** to comment as follows:

180040 Cedar Quay Straight Road Boxted – Proposed 2 storey extension with single storey rear extension – NO OBJECTIONS.

170247 – Classic Pot Emporium 30a Straight Road Boxted – Demolition of existing buildings and the construction of a new business centre comprising retail office general industrial and warehousing units. **RECOMMEND REFUSAL** as issues with drainage have not been resolved and with regards to Highways matters there is insufficient turning space to provide proper access.

**115/17** **PARISH FOOTPATHS/PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY REPRESENTATIVE**

**RESOLVED:** to appoint Councillor Banwell to be footpaths representative so that she may take up complaints about footpaths needing attention and liaise with members of the public re progress/reporting of works.

Councillor J Collitt left the meeting at 7.55pm

**116/17** **PARISH SIGNPOST – BETTY POTTER’S DIP**

Signpost is missing and should be reported to Essex County Council for replacement. County Councillor Brown advised she would take this forwards to Highways.

**117/17** **EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> March 2017**

Members noted the following comments from the Auditor relating to an error on the notice displayed on the Public Noticeboard:

We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2017/2018 for the exercise of public rights since the approval date was after the start of the period for the exercise of public rights. As a result, the smaller authority must answer no to assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2018/2019: **ACTION POINT:** To ensure that the public notice date is later than the date that the Annual Return is signed off for the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

Members were pleased to note that there were no further qualifications relating to the accounts.

**118/17** **FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING**

**a) Financial report for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017**

The Clerk reported bank balances as follows

Current Account: £15416.30

Community Hub account: £1178.33

The budget analysis sheet circulated showed expenditure to date of £98k against budget of £36405. However, due to the issues with the Village Hall some of the Village Hall expenditure totalling £39k is included in this figure as is £24k of Community Hub expenditure (which includes £10k of costs relating to Cleaner, Handyman and Assistant Clerk) making total parish council expenditure for the year to date £35k against the £42k budget spending budget. All expenditure is running within previously set budgets. Income of £106k includes Village Hall income of £33k which had to be received and held in parish council accounts temporarily pending a new account being opened and Community Hub income of £24k, plus £6k grant funding relating to monies granted in 2016/2017 year making total parish council income on target at £43k.

Community Hub Income for Hub users was reported at £12494 to date with expenditure of £14122 plus Hub staff costs (excluding any contribution for the Clerk) at £10634 making total outgoings of £25k with the difference between income and outgoings funded by transferring funds totalling £5350 from the Parish Council current account. So far £1500 of this has been paid back and the Clerk advised that the Hub cash flow often necessitated some short-term cash flow assistance which was generally repaid by financial year end. This will need more detailed projections to ensure full repayment would be effected especially taking into account the fact that the Hub can no longer reclaim VAT as it has become a commercial operation.

b) Payment of Invoices received.

**RESOLVED:** to approve invoices received for payment for December and January totalling £8643.08 as per attached Appendix 'a'.

119/17

**ANNUAL BUDGETS/PRECEPT FOR THE YEAR APRIL 2018 -MARCH 2019**

The Clerk had prepared a basic budget estimate for the year highlighting that the figures presented had nothing built in for much needed investment in the Community Hub and/or play equipment which is now well past its prime and becoming more costly year on year in terms of repairs. There are currently no junior swings and other necessary jobs are building up such as fencing and signs and whilst grant funding can be sought for many items of capital expenditure generally this needs to be match funded meaning the Council would have to make an allowance to help fund such things. Additionally, the Council is still functioning with very low reserves and the Clerk warned that one major contingency expenditure could have serious consequences for the Council's financial health. Much discussion ensued and there was a consensus of opinion that the aim would be to keep any increases to Council tax payers as low as possible even if this meant that contingency reserves would be kept very low and that no funds would be built in to the budget for improvements to Village facilities or anything other than the most basic repairs to existing assets. The Clerk advised that in her role as RFO she felt bound to advise the Council that a plan to keep council tax down regardless of any budget needs whilst maintaining reserves at such a low level was a very short sighted plan which failed to take

into account the fact this this Council also run a Community Building open to the public 7 days a week and have responsibilities to maintain Village assets to a certain standard or risk losing things such as the children's playground. The Clerk had prepared a projection of year end reserves standing at £8650 (less than the planned £10k) if the Hub could not afford to pay back £3850 still owing in respect of cash flow monies provided. The Clerk advised that the Council should be prudent and assume the worst (i.e. that the monies would not be repaid) but they agreed to assume year end reserves of £12,000, with a full review of the rent of profit making tenants to be undertaken to ensure not only that this cost was covered but that moving forwards some of the Council's staff costs would also be charged back to the Hub, especially in view of the fact that costs relating to the Clerk had been increased to facilitate Hub responsibilities. It was accepted that this may necessitate a substantial increase to rents but it was agreed that although the Hub was a Community Facility it should not become a financial burden on local tax payers.

Further increases to income would be facilitated by charging the Village Hall for any Council staff time it had utilised during the year. It was further **RESOLVED:** that the three sports clubs using the Hub would have 5% increases to their annual payments with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. The profit-making users rent would be reviewed more fully at next months' meeting when exact staff costs to be charged back would be discussed, but it was expected that their rent increases could be substantially more than 5% especially considering that this tight budget would still result in an 8% increase for Boxted council tax payers. It was **RESOLVED:** to approve the budget for the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 as per attached Appendix 'B' resulting in a precept on Colchester Borough Council of £47837 equivalent to £81.44 per annum for a Band D taxpayer and an increase of 8%. This was achieved by:

- a) Earmarking unspent funds from 2017/2018 funds as follows: £700 election costs; £500 tree works
- b) ensuring that no funds are available for any major maintenance or improvement projects
- c) reducing the training budget from this year's level of £1500 to £1000
- d) reserves would only be budgeted to increase by £2k this year which could leave total reserves at year end March 2019 between £15k and £10k which the Clerk advised was very low and a potentially risky decision. The Council felt that with adequate insurance they did not need to consider keeping high reserves. The Clerk advised councillors that in her capacity as RFO she wished it to be minuted that she considered this to be a short-sighted, poorly planned and ill thought through budget which put the Council at risk of either running out of funds or being unable to maintain existing village services and amenities which was duly noted by councillors.

**120/17**      **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** to exclude the press and public from the following agenda items due to the possibility that confidential information could be disclosed.

**121/17**      **PERSONNEL MATTERS**

Village/Hub Handyman position fixed term contract 5 hours per week ends on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. The Clerk advised that the position was still needed but with the facility for the hours to be worked flexibly rather than on set day time hours as previously agreed as the current Handyman had his own business as well and could continue. **RESOLVED:** in order to save costs the contract will not be renewed. Clerk to investigate a zero hours contract. In the meantime, any urgent tasks would need to be contracted and the Clerk advised that this would have an impact on her workload as instructing an employee was quicker and easier than having to obtain a quote and then liaise for suitable dates/times for work to be done.

**122/17**      **COMMUNITY HUB MATTERS**

- a) The Clerk advised that she was liaising with all Hub user groups to ensure all rents paid up to date by the financial year end 31st March 2018.
- b) Some councillors suggested that the lease for the Coffee shop should be put up for tender when it is due for renewal this year, and that the offer should be for full use including afternoons in the hope that Rainbow Rangers would move to the Village Hall. The Clerk reminded members that this matter was not on the agenda for discussion and it was agreed to review this fully at the next meeting.

**123/17**      **TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at Boxted Village Hall Cage Lane Boxted. Councillor Mrs Damen gave her apologies for absence as she will be on holiday.

**APPENDIX 'A' BOXTED PARISH COUNCIL**

Staff Costs	2753.92		2753.92	December
Staff Costs	2753.92		2753.92	Jan-18
PFK Littlejohn	330	66	396	External audit fee
Sky	213.6		213.6	Hub ski and wifi
Denise Humphris	6		6	re Lone worker risk assessments templates
Denise Humphris	13.95		13.95	keys
d marvan	528	88	440	Jan grasscutting
D Marvan	528	88	440	Dec grasscutting
Goff Petroleum	1182.69		1182.69	Hub Oil
Pestforce	70		70	Pest Control

EALC	90	90	Cllr training day
ICO	35	35	Data Protection Regn
Future electrical	138	138	Electric works

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**APPENDIX 'B' BOXTED**  
**PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT**  
**2018/2019**

**EXPENDITURE**

	Earmar ks	Precept 2018/201 9	Budget for year 2018/201 9
<b><u>ADMINISTRATION</u></b>			
Audit Fees		600	600
Meeting Fees		360	360
Insurance		3200	3200
Stationery printing office admin postage		300	300
Subscriptions		600	600
Telephone		500	500
Training		1000	1000
Travel		100	100
Computer Software/Website		500	500
Election Costs	700	273	973
<b><u>GRANTS AND DONATIONS</u></b>			
Village Directory		50	50
Churchyard		800	800
Other grants		500	500
Employment costs (incl pension)		28500	28500
Working from home allowance		430	430
<b><u>VILLAGE MAINTENANCE</u></b>			
Trees	500	0	500
Hedges and grasscutting		6150	6150
Playgrounds repairs/parts and maintenance		1500	1500
Repairs and General Maintenance		2000	2000
COMMUNITY HUB		0	0
FOR ESSENTIAL RESERVES		2000	2000
<b><u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b><u>1300</u></b>	<b><u>49263</u></b>	<b><u>50563</u></b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Revenue Support Grant and LCTS Grant		1426	
Bank Interest		0	
<b><u>TOTAL INCOME</u></b>		<b><u>1426</u></b>	

	<b><u>PRECEPT 2018/2019</u></b>
50563	EXPENDITURE
1426	LESS INCOME
1300	Less Earmarks
47837	TOTAL PRECEPT REQUIREMENT
	TAX BASE 587.4
£81.44	ANNUAL COST TO BAND D TAXPAYER
8%	% INCREASE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

**CHAIRMAN SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

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