

**WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007 – 7.00p.m.**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Orpen Memorial Hall**

**In the Chair:** Mr Gili-Ross

**Parish Councillors:** Mrs Bowden, Mr Colbron, Mr Johnson, Mr Savage, Mr Short, Mr Sleigh,  
Mr Stevenson, Mr Stone, Mr Tyrrell

**Clerk:** Mrs Walsom

**Present:** 10 members of the public  
Councillor Tod  
Councillor Willetts  
Dave Kingaby – Web master – arrived 8p.m.

**1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Mr Gili-Ross welcomed all those present. He also thanked Mrs Lampon for the clock she donated in memory of John Lampon. This had been hung in the John Lampon hall with a plaque. Mr Gili-Ross had hoped that a member of the local police would be present. However, no one arrived.

He explained that Dave Kingaby, designer of the village website would be arriving shortly to give a presentation. He stressed that the website is a community tool.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes were distributed to members of the public. They had been approved and signed at the Parish Council meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

**4. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

**5. Report from the Committees**

**i) Environment**

Mr Johnson gave the following report:

The Environment committee consists of Mr Johnson, Mr Colbron, Mr Sleigh, Mr Stevenson and Mr Stone.

**Village Caretaker** – The Parish appreciates the work carried out by Graham Broom over the past year and would like to thank him for his hard work including litter picking, grass cutting and quick response to repair work requests. In the year ahead he will carry out minor work in and around the Hall.

A new notice has been fixed to the front of the Orpen Hall advising that the recycling bin area has CCTV surveillance, in an effort to reduce fly-tipping.

Roads and footpaths in the village have been 'walked' with the ECC Highway Inspector, Malcolm Dade. A large number of surfaces requiring remedial work have been identified. A rolling programme will include the identified defects. A number of items of street furniture, including signs, have been reinstated after this inspection.

There is concern over the amount of vandalism being carried out by young people, particularly in the evenings and weekends. It is hoped the PCSO/police will patrol at these times.

A resident asked if the area around Newbridge could be tidied as it is a scruffy entrance to the village.

Mr Johnson said that this is an ECC Highways and landowners issue. He has had meetings about the bridge, but these are mainly about the structural state of it. Mr Johnson also advised that Mr Broom and some residents regularly pick up litter in this area. Landowners want to avoid clearing the ford to prevent 4 wheel drive vehicles from using it.

## **ii) Planning**

Mr Tyrrell gave the following report:

The roll of the Parish Council is one of consultation on applications, which can vary from a front porch to larger developments in the village. The Planning committee makes recommendations to Colchester Borough Council based on local knowledge. The committee tries to have a balanced view and acts in the best interests of the village.

In planning terms, this year has been very quiet. There have been no controversial applications except a recent application, similar to an application refused at appeal last year. This time the application has been made by De Burgh Developments on land to the rear of 26 New Church Road, and on part of the Lorkin Daniell Playing field. The Parish Council has made representation and this will be on going. An application has also just been received for a function venue at Armoury Farm, which is being looked into. CBC is concerned about the number of vehicles.

This year we have received 53 applications, about the same as last year. Of these the Parish Council made representations on 18, CBC approved 46, refused one and six are outstanding.

In the last 18 months no members of the public have attended any of the meetings which are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7.30p.m. in the John Lampon Hall. Residents are most welcome.

Mr Tyrrell thanked his fellow committee members, Mr Savage and Mr Stone.

Ms Cunningham asked about the relaxation on the covenant on the former Macnally's Yard. She feels the village is losing control of land.

Mr Gili-Ross responded that the land had been sold many years ago. There are, however, covenants on it which restrict building. These restrictions have very little benefit to the village. There is no access to this area. The current position is that the Parish Council is awaiting comments from the developer as to how they would like to move this issue forward. The covenant could be relaxed for financial gain to the village.

Representatives from Colchester Skip Hire advised that they have an application to erect a new building for recycling purposes. This would not mean more movement of vehicles.

As yet, the Parish Council has not received this application.

Mr Gili-Ross concluded that West Bergholt is one of the busiest villages in Essex for planning changes.

## **iii) Parish Plan**

Mr Stevenson (Chair of the Parish Plan Committee) gave the following report:

A Parish Plan is a snap shot of a community and what it would like to achieve. It gives advice on forward planning and is a voice for the village. It is not statutory. The Plan is not owned by the Parish Council but helps to inform it of priorities in the village.

The Rural Community Council of Essex has awarded a grant of £1700 and is also available to give advice.

Evidence was sourced by surveys to:

- 60 local businesses – 25% responded

- 47 organisations – 30% responded with a range of good/bad points and suggestions
- Younger people aged 11 to 16 – 42 responded
- Householders – 12% responded

General comments were concerns about transport, maintenance of footpaths, dog fouling and planning concerns. Issues for the Parish Council were traffic, teenagers' anti-social behaviour, over development, character and appearance of the village.

The overall conclusion was that the village is appreciated and has a good range of facilities.

There will be a stall at the Village Fayre and reports will be available on the website.

The final Plan will be submitted to RCCE and the PC at the end of the year.

Mr Stevenson thanked all those who have contributed.

Mr Gili-Ross concluded that this is an important document for the village.

### iii) Village Bulletin

Mr Colbron gave the following report:

There are 1500 copies distributed quarterly. It is also available on the website. Advertising is very popular and successful.

Mrs Lucking retired from the team in March after working on 110 issues. There are currently four people on the editorial team.

Thirteen teams entered the recent village quiz and £250 was raised for the East Anglia Children's Hospice.

Mr Gili-Ross gave his thanks to Mr Colbron and said that the Village Bulletin pays for itself.

### iv) Finance

Mr Savage gave the following report:

Lubbock Fine, the External Auditor, has signed off the 2005/2006 accounts. He thanked Mrs Walsom and Mrs Hallam, Internal Auditor for the work undertaken.

The accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 are currently being prepared and the pre-audited figures can be summed up as follows:

The General Account shows an income of nearly £30,000 as against an expenditure of just over £29,000. These figures are pleasing particularly as the auditors had billed the Parish Council £2,500 for 2 years work this year.

The Orpen Hall account shows an income of £32,000 which is around £5,000 more than last year. This is due to an increase in hall lettings. Unfortunately, the need for a new heating system blew the expenditure budget by around £9,500.

Mr Savage thanked Mrs Mayhew for her work as Hall Administrator.

Following the successful receipt of grants from ECC, CBC and the verbal confirmation of a grant from the East Essex Area Forum, a total of over £16,500 will be spent on installing a Mountain Climber for the older children in the play area.

The problems with the heating system in the hall have had a significant impact on the finances of the Parish Council. In previous years the precept had significantly reduced when there had been no need for additional income. Last year, due to the Borough Council increasing its grant to us, the precept was not raised at all. This year, however, it was agreed by the Parish Council that the Orpen Memorial Hall should receive financial assistance for renovation work. The hall benefits many village residents. Despite raising around £4,000 towards necessary work from the precept, the increase to band D householders is still only £2.84 for the year, the actual figure being £16.05. The figure for residents of Eight Ash Green is £39.44.

Mr Gili-Ross thanked Mr Savage and concluded by saying that only 1% of Council Tax goes to the Parish Council.

## 6. Report From the Charities

### i) Orpen Memorial Hall

Mr Tyrrell gave the following report:

Mr Tyrrell has been Chair of the Hall committee for 7 months since Mr Colbron stood down.

The Orpen Memorial Hall is one of the village's greatest assets and will be 70 years old next year. It is becoming apparent that, although it has been well maintained, some major improvements were necessary to make the main hall fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The heating system started to fail at the end of last year and it was decided the most economic way forward was to replace the old system with two completely new systems, one serving the Orpen Hall and the other the Social Club. This work was completed in April this year. The loft area will be insulated shortly to meet current Building Regulation Standards and the possibility of cavity wall insulation is being looked into.

Under Health and Safety Regulations we now need a scaffold tower to change the fluorescent tubes in the hall. Therefore, installing a new low level lighting system is being explored.

Once all the refurbishment work is completed the hall will be decorated.

New front doors were installed to both the hall and the Social Club as part of the ongoing external maintenance programme.

The CCTV system has been extended to cover the outside of the building and the Multi Use Game Area. Cameras are linked to a hard drive so that pictures can be recorded of any incidents which may occur.

Subject to funds being available it is planned to improve the hall entrances and resurface the car park.

Mr Tyrrell thanked Mrs Bowden, Mr Colbron, Mr Short and Mr Sleigh for their assistance on the committee.

A resident commented that hall users have not been given instructions on how to use the loop system.

It was suggested that a users' manual would be drawn up and Mrs Mayhew will be asked to show users how to use it.

Mr Gili-Ross stated that indications are that approximately £30,000 needs to be spent on the hall.

## **ii) Poor's Land**

Mr Johnson gave the following report:

Several meetings have taken place with Atkins, representing ECC, regarding renovation work on the land recently handed back to the Trustees by the school. This includes 2 barriers and a hedge across the old school access. He is currently awaiting a report.

The wooden gate at the Colchester Road entrance is to be replaced with a moss green galvanised steel gate. This has a self-closing, two-way system and will be suitable for disabled access.

The horizontal barrier at the School Lane entrance has been vandalised on several occasions. Mr Broom has carried out professional repairs each time.

## **iii) Allotments**

Mr Johnson gave the following report:

Following a complaint from a resident in Albany Close about an oak tree on the allotments which may have contributed to subsidence on his property, the Trustees reluctantly agreed to have the tree felled in order to minimise any future liability.

Regular meetings have been held with representatives of the allotment holders. Mr Stone has chaired the meetings and reported back issues that have arisen.

Bonfire weeks have been successfully implemented with no further complaints regarding smoke nuisance.

There have been a few incidents of unauthorised access and these are dealt with as they arise. New notices have been erected at both entrances to advise the site is for allotment holders only.

Due to high demand there are no available plots and a waiting list is now in operation.

Treatment of overgrown plots with an herbicide was authorised.

Various rule changes have been introduced which clarify allotment holders' responsibilities. Additional water standpipes have been produced.

**iv) The Lorkin Daniell Playing Field**

Mr Johnson gave the following report:

Following complaints from a number of residents in Mumford Close, two elm trees were deemed dangerous and were felled by a tree surgeon. An oak tree has also been brought to the Trustees attention by residents and safety work will be carried out shortly.

There have been a number of incidents resulting in a great deal of smashed glass and beer cans on both the children's play area and the football pitch. It is believed this has been caused by a group of young people. Mr Broom and members of the football club have cleared the debris.

A grant towards Phase 3 of the play area has been awarded. It is planned to install a mountain climbing frame suitable for older children. Phases 1 and 2, which were completed last year, were aimed at younger children. The play area is very well used.

**Village Green**

Mr Johnson gave the following report:

The high level barrier at the entrance to the school access road is the subject of an insurance claim following damage.

It is hoped that a schedule of conservation work will be agreed with the new River Colne Project Officer, once he or she is in post.

Mr Gili-Ross thanked Mr Johnson and the committees for all the work done this year.

**Presentation About the New Village Website by Dave Kingaby**

Dave Kingaby, designer of the village website gave a presentation of its features and explained how residents, organisations and clubs would be able to access and input information onto the site.

John Gili-Ross concluded the evening by welcoming Susanne Bowden, David Short, Chris Stevenson and Harry Stone to the Parish Council following the resignations of Lois De'ath and Catherine Bailey during the year. He thanked the Neighbourhood Watch team, in particular John Ford. He also thanked Val Walsom June Mayhew and Graham Broom for their work over the year.

The meeting closed at 8.55p.m.

Signed.....

Date .....