



WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held in the John Lampon Hall Wednesday 28th April – 7.30p.m.

In the Chair: John Gili-Ross
Members Present: Sally Butcher, Jenny Church, Bernard Colbron, Sue Day, Andrew Savage, David Short, Peter Sleigh, Chris Stevenson, Harry Stone, Bob Tyrrell
Clerk: Val Walsom
Present: Sergeant Mike Lee, Councillor Willetts
14 members of the public

Reports from the committees and the minutes of last year's Annual Parish Meeting were distributed in a booklet.

Before the meeting started refreshments were served.

1. Welcome and introduction from the Chairman – Mr John Gili-Ross

John Gili-Ross welcomed all. He then introduced Sergeant Mike Lee who distributed the criminal activity statistics within the village over the last year.

Sergeant Lee spoke about the following issues:

- Burglary is West Bergholt's biggest problem. Access is being made through back windows. The Police would like to be informed if residents see anything they believe to be suspicious e.g. vehicles
- General trend for crimes within the village is down, including theft from motor vehicles
- Following a recent fatal accident, there will be a reassessment of Bures Road by Traffic Management. Given the speed along this road, there is a risk with doing speed checks. However, speed checks in the village will continue
- Following the theft of cables causing the breakdown of the telephone service in the village, manholes are to be welded down
- Parking around the New Church Road/Chapel Road junction will be looked at
- Statistics confirm that Vehicle Activating Signs (VAS) are affective as a reminder to drivers to slow down. It might be more affective to move them around. VAS numbers are on the increase
- Colchester Borough Council is looking into 20mph zoning within the Borough. Our Parish Plan is an acceptable consultation mechanism for CBC.

A resident complained about the number of HGVs in the village, particularly, that many use Argents Lane.

Sergeant Lee advised that many of these use Argents Lane and Newbridge legitimately. The weight restriction signs are not enforceable by the Police. The Parish Council would need to ask Highways to review the situation and possibly install red Highways signs.

2. Presentation of the Draft Village Design Statement

Bob Tyrrell presented the Draft Village Design Statement which will be available on the website shortly.

John Gili-Ross explained that the Parish Council gaining the Power of Wellbeing and Quality Status is important for putting power into the hands of the village. The village would need a Village Design Statement and Parish Plan to achieve these.

3. Quality Broadband - Update on a faster Broadband service for West Bergholt

Chris Stevenson, through the Parish Plan Steering Group, has been in communication with County Broadband to introduce a faster, quality Broadband service for the village. This would be a wireless system and to achieve this, a business case would need to be put forward, as well as obtaining a grant, hopefully from Essex County Council.

A survey was carried out, by willing volunteers, of 500 homes and 250 people expressed an interest in the scheme. A sub-committee has been formed to put together a business plan and a grant application has been submitted. West Bergholt is at the top of Essex County Council's funding line so it is hoped that the service could be available within a year.

County Broadband will create a database of interested residents from the survey.

The initial cost is likely to be between £90 and £130 and the monthly costs will be similar to current broadband services.

4. Any issues raised from the floor

Issue: Could the Parish Council make representation to First Bus about its unreliable service?

Response: Harry Stone, as the Parish Council's Transport representative, will put an item in the Village Bulletin to ask for evidence of the poor service. A resident who belongs to the Colchester Bus Users Group has sent numerous emails to First Bus about the poor service. All responses have been unhelpful.

Issue: Could a litter bin be sited at the Lexden Road end of the footpath across the Village Green?

Response: The Environment Committee will look into this.

Issue: Is the Parish Council responsible for the recycling bins at the Orpen Hall?

Response: No. This service is run by Colchester Borough Council. The cost of this is partly covered by selling the waste.

Issue: Could another VAS be installed at the bottom of Lexden Road?

Response: Essex County Council fund these through the Highways Panel and they are concerned about maintenance costs. Therefore, communities may be asked to pay for them in future years. The Parish Council will look into this.
It was suggested that residents park their cars on the road to slow down traffic.

Issue: Why has the Parish Council put its Precept up by 50% over the last 2 years?

Response: The increase for this year equates to an additional £1.17 on a Band D property. Part of this will be used to increase the village caretaking hours. The Parish Council has also made use of available grants to improve the fabric of the hall and the play area yet keep precept rises to a minimum. These grants are now not so readily available and it is likely future projects will need to be fully funded by the Parish Council.
West Bergholt precept value last year was 18th out of 29 Parish and Town Councils in the Borough.

5. Concluding Remarks

John Gili-Ross thanked all the Parish Councillors for their hard work and dedication during the year. The progress made by the Bergholt Youth Group (BYG) is a great example of community engagement with two BYG members winning a Colchester Youth Award.

This year the Parish Council will look at safer roads, liaising with Essex County Council for better facilities and plan to replace all the windows in the Orpen Hall.

He thanked the Parish Clerk, Hall Administrator and both Village Handymen for all their hard work. A second handyman was appointed during the year.

The meeting closed at 8.55p.m.