

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Great Burstead and South Green Parish Council,
held at South Green Memorial Hall, Southend Road, Billericay,
on Wednesday 7 January 2009, starting at 7.30 pm.**

Present: Councillor Aly Khan (Chair)

Councillors Kelly, Cundy, Marie Dear, Cllr. McConnell, Cllr. Saunderson and Cllr. Wakelin.

In Attendance: Essex County Councillor Twitchen

Mrs. Kim Barford, Clerk to the Council

One member of the public

8/169 Chairman's welcome.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting. Cllr. Twitchen suggested that in future, she not be formally invited to attend meetings and therefore not have to send apologies when not available. Cllr. Twitchen said she would attend at the request of the Parish Council on individual occasions, if she is able, when certain issues may require her attention and would like continue to receive copies by email of agendas and minutes for her information, which members were in agreement with.

8/170 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. John Dear.

8/171 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

The meeting was adjourned for public participation.

8/172 Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.

Cllr. Aly Khan welcomed Essex County Cllr. Kay Twitchen to the meeting. Cllr. Twitchen said that she was keen to assist the Parish Council regarding possible improvements at the South Green shopping area as identified by members and following her conversations and meeting with the Clerk. The area is she felt in urgent need of updating to ensure the shops continue to thrive. It would need to be a joint project with the County, District and the Parish Council. Her colleague Essex County Cllr. Hedley was actively trying to arrange a meeting of the Parish Council with himself, Cllr. Twitchen and District Cllr. Turner to identify the main issues. Cllr. Saunderson asked that she be included on any meetings that take place.

Accessibility and safety issues were a major concern regarding the slope access to a number of the shops, but the access was on private land that is not the responsibility of either the District or County Council. Cllr. Kelly said the County Council had attended an assessment meeting in the past and stated that it was vital that access improvements are made with charges being passed to the freeholder. Cllr. Twitchen and members said it was not legally enforceable and debate ensued. Cllr. Cundy said that the Parish Council needed to consider that the cost of any improvements which could, if eventually passed to the shopkeepers by the freeholders, place them under a considerable burden and actually make it difficult for them to continue trading.

Cllr. Wakelin asked that enquiries be made to see if the Parish Council can take responsibility for the shrub bed between the parking bays and Southend Road, the clerk will enquire. Cllr. Kelly said that she had spoken with residents regarding the possible installation of a toilet facility on the site. Cllr. Twitchen said she thought the toilet facility recently installed in the High Street car park cost circa of £80,000. Cllr. Cundy and the clerk advised that the matter had not previously been brought to the Parish Council, consideration and probably full consultation would need to take place. Cllr. Twitchen stated it could be factored in, but the connection of services and associated land works plus ongoing maintenance would be extremely expensive.

Cllr. Dear enquired if the recycling bins outside Southwood Court could be removed as they take up valuable parking space. Local residents already have their recycling collected fortnightly and she felt they were used by people who were not residents of the Parish. Cllr. Twitchen advised that she will consult

with Basildon District Council.

Cllr. Aly Khan asked if Cllr. Twitchen could enquire why the gates or a fence had never been erected at Langham Hall as previously advised to the Parish Council. Cllr. Saunderson advised that cars are driving on the grassed recreational area causing damage and noise disturbance late at night.

The chair thanked Cllr. Twitchen for attending the meeting.

The meeting then reconvened.

8/173 Minutes

Members considered the minutes of the December meetings:

Parish Council meeting of 3 December 2008 - Cllr. Kelly requested that at item 8/162 BDSA the wording be changed to 'Parish' instead of Parish Council, members agreed to the amendment. Cllr. Kelly also wished to confirm that draft minutes are circulated earlier than the meeting papers, which was noted at the 3 December meeting. The minutes were approved by members and duly signed by the Chair.

Extraordinary General meeting of 29 December 2008 - Cllr. Cundy queried the inclusion of the word insufficient at point 8/168, and felt the word inaccurate should also be added, members agreed to the amendment. The minutes were then approved by members and duly signed by the Chair.

Cllr. Dear was pleased with new arrangement whereby minutes and meeting papers are emailed to members and copies then distributed at the meeting. Cllr. McConnell asked that any query regarding the minutes be raised with the Clerk prior to the meeting, she stated it was good practice, as informed at the recent Councillors training day.

8/174 Committee minutes

Members received the minutes of the following Planning Committee meeting minutes:

1 October 2008

5 November 2008

3 December 2008

Members will in future receive the minutes monthly.

Cllr. Kelly asked if any further correspondence had been received regarding the development of the Billericay School farm site. The clerk advised there had been nothing received since the public inquiry, she will notify any communication received to members.

8/175 Clerk and members report

Community Worker - The clerk updated members regarding the progress of the recruitment process for the post. No applications actually received to date, members resolved that the closing date be extended to 31 January 2009.

South Green shopping area - Members felt the item had been covered earlier and fully discussed at item 4.

South Green sign - The clerk updated members on the renovation of the sign. The contractor, Alpha signs have encountered problems with the renovation but anticipate that the sign will be re-installed week commencing 19 January 2009.

Billericay parking schemes - The clerk advised that she had spoken with Peter Handscombe, Highways officer regarding the meeting that had taken place today, which had been notified to the Parish Council. The schemes for discussion were outside of the Parish and focused on the problem of commuter parking in residential areas close to the High Street and station. Cllr. Twitchen advised that of the 6 schemes just 2 schemes were progressing at present, with a 1 hour parking ban each day. They are further consulting with the Chamber of Commerce on other schemes, regarding obtaining information on the actual number of people requiring parking facilities who have up till now parked on the neighbouring highway and hope that other schemes will progress later in the year.

Cllr. Kelly asked about the start of parking / waiting restrictions around Billericay School. Cllr. Twitchen

3.

advised implementation of the scheme is in progress, the clerk will make further enquiries.

Code of Conduct training session 28 January 2009 - Members were reminded of the training session, the clerk and all members except Cllr. Wakelin are planning to attend.

Essex County Council Tree Planting Scheme 2008/2009 - Cllr. Aly Khan advised members of the positive effect of fruit tree planting, a point echoed by Cllr. Saunderson and Cllr. McConnell. Debate ensued regarding tree species. No fruit trees are available on this years scheme, however members were keen to plant fruit trees and Cllr. Kelly identified a possible site on a small green opposite South Green Junior School. Cllr. Wakelin advised members of 2 possible sites for the planting of the hedging plants being offered in current scheme, which were:

1. South Green - Approx. 32metres, alongside the first property in Grange Road to screen a concrete post/wood panel fence had been erected in recent years.
2. Hickstars Lane - To partially screen the back wall of a garage block.

Cllr. Cundy proposed acceptance of the identified sites, which was seconded by Cllr. Marie Dear. The clerk to make enquiries about planting, and ongoing maintenance and submit an application to the Rural Community Council of Essex.

Cllr. Saunderson questioned responsibility of ongoing maintenance, Cllr. Wakelin stated it is the responsibility of the land owner. Cllr. Cundy requested that any further discussion regarding the planting of fruit trees takes place at a future meeting. Cllr. McConnell agreed

8/176 Financial Report

Members approved the following payments:

Piggotts - Christmas decorations, final instalment

Kim Barford - January salary and allowances

Essex CC - Payment of superannuation, December 2008 and January 2009.

HM Revenue & Customs - PAYE October - December 2008

b. Members received a copy of the cash book and Bank accounts reconciliation, for the 9 months to 31 December 2008.

c. A financial report detailing the progress against budget, 9 months to 31 December 2008 to follow, it was not available at the meeting.

8/177 Training

Members noted the upcoming training sessions available at the Essex Association of Local Councils:

Raising the profile of your Parish Council, 14 January 2009. Members requested that the clerk attend the ½ day course.

Councillor Training Day '2' - 29 January 2009. The Chair requested that members who had not been on the course, attend. The majority of members are already attending the Code of Conduct training session, the previous evening. Certain members were not available and others would rather attend the next time the training day occurs, which the clerk will advise to members, when notified.

8/178 Basildon District Council Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence.

Cabinet Agenda 11 December 2008

Development Control and Traffic Management Agenda 9 December 2008

Development Control and Traffic Management Agenda 16 December 2008

Housing & Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee Agenda 10 December 2008

Housing & Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee Minutes 26 November 2008

Leisure, Arts & Customer Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee Agenda 17 December 2008

Leisure, Arts & Customer Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee Minutes 19 November 2008

Overview & Scrutiny Commission Agenda 18 December 2008

Overview & Scrutiny Commission Minutes 18 November 2008

8/179 Other correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence.

Essex Association of Local Councils - Nov/Dec 2008 County update

Essex Community Foundation - Annual review 2008

Essex Jiangsu Festival - Nov 2008/March 2009

Communities and Local Government - Code of Conduct on local authority publicity

8/180 Urgent Business

Further to Mr. Kelly's (a member of the public) report, of an incident regarding disabled access at South Green shops at the previous meeting, Cllr. Saunderson advised members of her research of the Disability Discrimination Act, which states that traders are just required to make reasonable adjustment, to provide access.

Cllr. Saunderson had consulted with the traders and she advised members that traders were most helpful, do provide access and if it was still difficult for certain customers to enter the shops they were happy to come to the front of the shop to assist. Cllr. Kelly advised members that it was still difficult at certain shops to draw attention, and said that it would be beneficial, if, at such shops, a doorbell was available. Cllr. Saunderson said that she would speak again with those shopkeepers. Cllr. Marie Dear stated that she found the shop keepers to be most helpful and Cllr. Aly Khan thanked Cllr. Saunderson for her research.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Signed.....

Date.....