



**THE 124th VILLAGE CONFERENCE HELD AT THE
BELL CENTRE, GREAT BADDOW ON THURSDAY 26th APRIL 2018**

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 Chairman of the Council, Councillor Mrs Jannetta Sosin, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said that a precis of the report will be published in the Great Baddow Times.

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

1. **PRESENT**

Councillor Mrs Jannetta Sosin (Chairman of the Parish Council) presided over the meeting, which numbered 4 members of the public, 11 parish councillors and 3 City councillors. The members of the public included John Shaw (Chairman of the Great Baddow Parochial Charities) and Dan Glading (Chairman and District Co-ordinator of the Neighbourhood Watch). The parish councillors present were Cllrs Mrs J Sosin, Mrs C Shaw, Mrs S Young, K Liley, T Miller, Mrs M Miller, K Ronaldson, Mrs D Ronaldson, G Jarvis, Mrs V Sadowsky and Mrs V Chiswell. The city councillors present were Cllrs J Chandler, G Smith and L Ahmed.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence from Cllr A Sosin, Cllr J Fuller (who would be late) Cllr S Scott, Cllr R Villa and D Saddington.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous Village Conference held on 27th 2017, which had been circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Jannetta Sosin and seconded by Cllr Mrs Maureen Miller.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

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

The Essex Police were not in attendance and there was no written report submitted. It was again noted that it is no longer Essex police policy to attend NAP meetings or annual parish meetings.

6. **REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

Mr Dan Glading, the Neighbourhood Watch Chairman and District Co-ordinator gave a report to the meeting. Neighbourhood Watch is still active in Great Baddow, but only just hanging on by the skin of its teeth! Newsletters are still being distributed to some areas and another two people have recently contacted Mr Glading about organising Neighbourhood Watch in their roads.

However, there remain as many members of the Watch as there ever have been, even if they are not receiving up-to-date information. Mr Glading said that he is optimistic that many of them remember what they have been told in the past, e.g. regarding not believing every doorstep salesman, and securing their homes against intruders, and there is some evidence of this.

Mr Glading still hopes to hand over to someone else to act as District Co-ordinator. Mr Glading regularly attends meetings of the NAP (Neighbourhood Action Panel) to represent Neighbourhood Watch and to contribute to its discussions.

7. **REPORT FROM THE FIRE SERVICE**

The Essex Fire & Rescue Service was not present at the meeting and had not sent a report.

8. **PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

A detailed written report had been circulated to all those present providing details of the Council's activities during the 2017/2018 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 addressed the meeting and reflected on a few key matters.

Firstly, recognition of the work and commitment of all the Parish staff that ensure that our facilities, praised by many visitors, are kept clean, safe and appealing. The significant changes to our grounds team over the past two years have brought both challenges and opportunity and I am grateful to our grounds supervisor Michele Dixon and her team for their continued endeavours.

The grant from ECC Community Initiative Fund was very welcome and we are already seeing the benefit from the new 3G five a side football pitch. We have two other courts that would benefit from new surfaces as well as our hard tennis courts. We will continue to look for funding to contribute towards further improvements which are very costly. New surfaces for tennis and netball will be considered along with any other ideas parishioners may have for expanding our sports facilities.

A second grant from ECC, this time the Local Services Fund, will enable us to carry out some long-awaited repairs to bus shelters and benches along with general maintenance of street furniture etc. Next year we will report on the impact of this new role.

Applying for grants takes time and perseverance. Our thanks must go to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their success.

The Lawns Cemetery continues to regularly receive compliments and working with our contractor, the area will continue to provide an attractive and reflective facility for both Great Baddow and Galleywood.

We have struggled over the past year to attract new tenants to our allotment sites. Although the size of our allotments is about half the size of a traditional allotment, we still hear comments that they are too big. In this busy time we live in, few seem to have time to devote several hours a week to this healthy hobby. At a recent committee meeting we agreed to trial the offer of a small number of half plots on the Towerfield site. We will carefully manage and monitor this over the next year to see if this could attract new active tenants. Water is available on both our sites, unlike some allotments around Chelmsford. We continue to work with Great Baddow Horticultural Society to offer our Allotment competitions and awards evening.

7.45pm – Cllr Jonathan Fuller entered the meeting

10. **HIGHWAYS AND AMENITIES**

Cllr Keith Liley addressed the meeting and reported a year that had been dominated by the Busgate Proposal and had been a year of mixed fortunes.

Three schemes put forward by the committee have reached the validation stage of the Local Highways Panel, namely pedestrian crossing improvements at the junction of Pertwee Drive and Galleywood Road, dropped kerb improvements in Church Street, the High Street and Vicarage Lane and footway improvements in Bell Street. A pedestrian crossing in Church Street to allow school children to cross the road safely after the withdrawal of the school crossing facility, has also been submitted to the Highways Panel for consideration.

A number of bus shelters have been replaced in the parish as the existing ones have been found to be beyond repair. A register has been compiled by the Parish Council office of all the bus shelters, so that a record of their condition and maintenance details.

Cllr Keith Liley thanked the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and the members of the Highways & Amenities committee for their support this year.

11. **PLANNING**

In the absence of Cllr Andrew Sosin, Cllr Gordon Jarvis addressed the meeting and said that the Planning Committee meets every two weeks generally.

Planning applications can be viewed on the city council's website and are projected on a screen at the planning committee meetings. There were 185 applications discussed and commented on during the year. Most were for residential house extensions and tree works (to protected trees or trees in the conservation area). There were few new house applications and other types of applications. The comments are considered by the City Council who will make the final decision, subject to an appeal to the planning inspectorate. Councillors have attended city council planning meeting to present the parish council's objections in contentious applications.

Councillors have attended meetings of the city council on various stages of the local plan and prospective changes to planning law.

The City Council held an Exhibition in September 2017 of the proposals for the Local Plan, highlighting how it effects Great Baddow & neighbouring parishes. The Parish Council's responses on the Local Plan are set out in the report before you.

Mel Linwood served as Administrative Assistant until late in 2017. This year the post is shared between Roger Harman and Donna Tristram. I propose thanks to these people and Ann Wood for their assistance to the committee in preparing agendas, presenting the design drawings, and liaising with officers of the city council.

12. **PARISH HALL AND BELL CENTRE**

Cllr Mrs Val Chiswell reported that the Parish Hall is still busy with regular hirers. The problem with the automatic main doors appears to have been solved. The wall and access ramp suffered damage in August 2017 as the result of an RTA. The work has finally been completed to rebuild it and it looks very nice. Michael Fisk, the Parish hall Handyman, who provided cover for the caretaker and cleaner has retired and the Council's thanks go to him for his work over the last seven years.

At the Bell Centre, the discussions about the lease have finally been resolved with the Council reluctantly deciding to hand back the building to the owners, Essex County Council. This will take place on 30th September 2018 and hires will cease at the end of August. Talks are being held with the YMCA, to find another venue for the Youth Club and the Drop In Centre.

She thanked the staff, Lynn Alderson, Nicky Whipp, Michael Fisk and Elaine Bryan for their hard work during the year.

13. **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Cllr Mrs Christine Shaw addressed the meeting.

As you will see in the main Council report, there has been again been a change in the office staff. Last year we reported that Mrs Mylène Linwood had joined us as our Administrative Assistant in the office when Michele Dixon moved to become our Grounds Supervisor; however you will have seen in our main report that she left the Council's employment last December and we are grateful for all the

assistance she gave us during that time. The job title has now been changed to Administrative Officer, rather than assistant, reflecting the fact that this post carries its own responsibilities, which are not just to 'assist'! We have been very pleased to welcome Roger Harman and Donna Tristram as job sharers for this post. Councillors are grateful to all the staff for their hard work on our behalf.

There have been no changes in the composition of the Parish Council as far as councillors are concerned since the last elections. Further elections are not due until May 2019.

Continued thanks to Mike Humphrey, other YMCA staff and volunteers, who do such a good job in running the youth facilities at the Bell Centre. Unfortunately, as you will have seen in our main report, our youth provision will no longer be able to take place in the Bell Centre after this summer, as we will no longer have the use of the building. However, we are working with the YMCA to find ways of continuing youth provision; we have not changed our view that the sessions have been making a valuable contribution to supporting often vulnerable young people in Great Baddow, sometimes from difficult backgrounds. It gives them a safe place to go where they can relax for a while and have the opportunity to talk to trusted adults about any problems they have

We have been very grateful to Lisa Silk, our magazine editor who replaced the previous long-standing editor, John Emery. However, personal circumstances led to her having to relinquish this role and we are again looking for a new editor, although the Clerk and Chairman have been ably looking after the magazine in the interim.

Other things relating to the Great Baddow Times have also changed. For a long time we have battled to achieve satisfactory delivery coverage and we reported a change of delivery company last year. Sadly, that company has since gone into liquidation and after researching other possible companies, we decided to go for a more radical change, along with reverting to producing four issues a year rather than three. We decided to engage with Community Ad, a firm who already produce magazines for many other parish councils, and the first issue they produced in March appears to have been very well received. This firm handles advertising, printing and delivery and produces a very professional product.

For many years some councillors and other members of the public have taken part in NAP meetings with the police and benefited from a mutual exchange of information. I reported last year on the demise of police involvement in NAP meetings and indeed reductions in police numbers also resulted in the police no longer being willing to attend any parish council annual meetings. However, we continue to meet and are determined to keep going. Minutes of these meetings are available on the Parish Council website. If you have any problems that you want us to discuss and bring to the attention of the police, please contact us through the Parish Council office or contact me or one of the other councillors who attend NAP meetings directly.

Ideas and comments are always welcome – we always want to try and maintain and enhance local facilities and make Great Baddow a place where people want to live.

14. **PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES**

The Clerk reported that the accounts close on 31st 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 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 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 and make copies of the annual return and the relevant paperwork at the Parish Council office at 19 Maldon Road, Great Baddow. This will be between Monday 4th June 2018 and Friday 13th July 2018.

The date appointed for the audit is 4th June 2018. This notice will be formally advertised on the notice boards and on the website from 9th May 2018.

It should be noted that the balances shown in the Current, Imprest and Deposit Accounts as at 31st March 2018, include ring fenced S106 and CIL monies (£62,450.00), earmarked Local Services Fund money to cover three years of the new Community Handyperson position (£15,000.00), earmarked reserves for the creation for new roads in the Lawn Cemetery (£25,000.00) and ring-fenced project monies.

In the last year, due to further staffing changes, a number of projects were not carried out and the monies are still in the bank accounts, pending the completion of those projects. The Council has already agreed to use part of the CIL monies towards the new roads in the Cemetery and is considering and costing other projects for the benefit of the community.

15. **GREAT BADDOW PAROCHIAL CHARITIES**

The Chairman of the Parochial Charities John Shaw gave the report for the year ending 31st December 2016. The Trustees had met on 6 occasions during the year for the routine administration of the Charities' business, including the upkeep of ten almshouses.

There was one almshouse vacancy during the year, which was advertised and one almsperson was appointed to a bungalow at St Mary's 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 bathroom was refurbished at St Mary's Court, courtesy of a S106 grant from

Chelmsford City Council, which means that all the kitchens and bathrooms across the ten properties are now complete. During the vacancy of the bungalow, it was completely re-decorated and new mains wired fire alarms were installed.

Boundary fences were replaced at both properties, in consultation with neighbours with shared costs. A quinquennial report on the condition of the properties showed that there are no major issues but that minor repairs and redecoration should be considered.

In June, the Chairman and Clerk attended a national Almshouse Association course in Hull, for update in legislation and good practice.

In January, a review of the investments took place and a budget was set for 2017, with a view that reserves should be set at £15000.00 per property in case of urgent or emergency repairs.

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.

During the preceding year, the Centre has continued to provide a service to smaller organisations within the parish but the significant difference this year is that at long last, the Centre is on the way to increasing the space available to our users. It had been hoped that the completion of the small extension to the rear of the hall could be reported but as is often the case, contractors have their own ideas about priorities.

The extension will mainly provide much needed storage space which should leave the main hall entirely clear for use. It will also enable additional equipment to be housed, which will increase the potential use of the hall.

Due to the nature of the sloping site, the project has proved to be more expensive than might normally be the case but the Centre has been fortunate in receiving support from a number of sources, including backing from the Parish, for which we are extremely grateful.

17. **GREAT BADDOW COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

The Great Baddow Community Association was not represented and no report had been submitted.

Cllr Mrs Jannetta Sosin told the meeting that the Parish Council meets regularly with the Community Association. The Association has undertaken several works over the last year and the next large project is to re-furbish the ladies toilets.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr Mrs Chris Shaw told the meeting that further to the meeting about the Baddow Busgate, arranged by the Great Baddow East Neighbourhood Association on 19th April 2018, Essex County Council will be holding two meetings on 31st May 2018 and 5th June 2018. The meetings will be ticketed and further details about the venue/s and

obtaining tickets will be found on
www.essex.gov.uk/baddowroadbusgate

Cllr Mrs Jannetta Sosin thanked 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. Cllr Mrs Sosin also reminded those present that this would be the last Village Conference to be held in the Bell Centre.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.19 pm, with the Chairman thanking those in attendance for coming.

Signed: 

Dated: *25th April 2019*

Chairman of the Parish Council