

LITTLE CLACTON PARISH COUNCIL  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE  
YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY,  
11th APRIL 2016 AT 8.20 PM**

**PRESENT**

**Councillor John Cutting in the Chair**

**Councillors Mrs M Balbirnie, P De Vaux Balbirnie, J Smith-Daye, Mrs J Rowland, S Rowland, M Reed, Mrs H Smith, R Smith, and Mr B Ward,  
District Councillor Brown**

And 2 residents.

**Apologies : Councillors Mrs J Lovell, Mrs D Reed, and Miss L Gray, District Councillor Bray, County Councillor A Erskine.**

**1. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

This year has seen the formation of a newly elected Parish Council, with a New Chairman New Clerk and and 6 new councillors, following on from the retirement of time served councillors. What a challenging year it has been. We have also seen the election of two new district councillors Jeff Bray and Mike Brown with Andy Erskine our county councillor.

I must say how refreshing it is to see those representative councillors in attendance at our meetings, when in the past we had to depend on Peter Balbirnie our then district councillor to fight our corner, whilst the others shy-ed away.

This year as others has been dominated by Planning, along with other village problems, but planning due to the lack of a credible Local Plan by the District Council. It has let the flood gates open to opportunist developers, hanging on to the presumption in favour of developer as deemed by the National Planning Framework to force their applications through.

We have had our share of these applications before us, with the Street in the centre of our village starting at some 165 properties, and the now with drawn Hayes Garage application of some 20 plus properties although I do believe we have not seen the last of this one. and that's without the surrounding applications of Oakwood Pk and London Rd.

The Street application is still on going, but reduced in size This was an application that this new council inherited and it was already in process before the start of this councils term.

I feel proud of this council to arrange a Village Exhibition in tandem with the proposed developer for villagers to view and give their opinions.

Planning has, and always will be, an emotive issue especially to those directly affected, but we as a Council will make our judgement now, and as in the past, on merit and in the interest of the Village. This coming year will be in my view the most demanding to the future look of our Village and the Village way of life.

We have seen in the last year the a new replacement Bus shelter at Medowview Pk provided by ECC on the Parish Councils request with the bonus of an extra one being installed opposite Medowview Pk, thus making a total of 2 new shelters.

We have seen the Village Hall continue to upgrade their play area along with big improvements to the Village Hall and Harold Lilley Playing Field. All done through the hard work of their Chairman Peter Balbernie and Committee with the full support of the Parish Council.

We continue to see success at Parish Fields with the third phase of the ongoing upgrade of Pavillon and changing rooms, and villagers should be grateful to Ray Bellamy and the Committee of the playing fields for the organisation of grants, hall rentals and car boot revenues that bring in much needed funds to off set the cost to the parishioners.

What a transformation we have seen at Millennium Green. The Village should be thankful to the Chairman Mavis Balbernie and the Committee and volunteers of the newly formed Millennium Green, under the umbrella of the Parish Council for their outstanding work and the effort that they have put in, which is still ongoing, to make this area the jewel in the crown of Little Clacton for all to enjoy, young and old. The outstanding effort that Mavis Balbernie has put in by obtaining grants and so saving the Parishioners costs. This project again has been fully supported by the Parish Council.

I need to mention the reinstatement of the village gateway and 30mph signs in Weeley Rd, for those who are unaware the original signs were stolen some 24 months ago so we have replaced like for like from the insurance money, the only change being the sign Approaching Little Clacton Village and they have been replaced at the designated position as authorised by ECC.

In conclusion it has been a challenging year, my first<sup>t</sup> as Chairman. I have to say that after being thrown in at the deep end we are all now swimming in the right direction and that is the right direction for the residents of Little Clacton.

I thank all the councillors for their support and team effort.

I thank the District Councillors Jeff Bray and Mike Brown and County Councillor Andy Erskine for giving up their time for the residents of Little Clacton.

I can't thank enough my Vice Chair Mavis Balbernie who has supported me through thick and thin, and Ginette our Clerk, who like myself is in her first full year as Clerk for the outstanding work contribution that she has made.

So Challenging Year it has been – but we have rose to that Challenge -head on and overcome and solved those challenges.

There are still many battles and wars on planning to address. We may not win all those battles, but I am sure we will try to win what is right for Little Clacton.

Residents of Little Clacton should be proud of the team that serves them because I certainly am.

## **2.REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

### **(a) LITTLE CLACTON VILLAGE HALL**

I am pleased to report that we have had another very busy year with the Hall being hired out most days and evenings of the week which has provided financial support. for the maintenance of the building and playing field.

We have been fortunate in obtaining Grants for various works including the refurbishment and re-surfacing of the play area so that children can use the area all through the year whatever the weather. On this area, a roundabout has been installed for wheelchair access so that all can enjoy the facility.

New fencing and gate have been installed at the far end of the playing field securing this area so that children and dogs do not have direct access onto the roadway. We have also had a hieght barrier erected to ensure no vehicles over 6'6" can gain access to the car park area such as in the case of travellers who have unfortunately caused problems for Tendring District Council over the last few years.

The Hall floor was re-sealed at Christmas and the cost was kindly met by the Parish Council towards this. As the Hall is used on a regular basis it does have excessive wear and tear and the Caretaker has been given instructions to ensure this is polished once a week so that the surface is maintained.

The updated CCTV system has proved its worth ensuring the site is kept safe and secure for hirers and, furthermore, I am pleased to report that we have not been the target of vandalism since the system has been in situ.

Although the whips and bulbs round the edge of the field are doing well, unfortunately, due to excessive rain over many months, the playing field is very boggy and footballers

have not been able to use the pitch. Hopefully the weather will improve and the football pitch can be used again soon.

Fundraising has been very successful with a number of table top sales being held together with a barn dance as well as a carnival held over the last year. We also run a bonus ball quarterly in conjunction with the Saturday night lottery and by giving out 50% of the takings, the Hall receives the balancing 50% and it is therefore a win win situation and the more people who contribute the higher the winnings.

A new Village Hall and Playing Field sign is now displayed on the front of the building as there has been confusion in the past over which buildings are the Village Hall and Plough Corner Resource Centre.

As we had not increased hire charges over 3 years and have had new facilities installed including the meeting room, and the additional toilet and storage facilities for people hiring the playing field etc. increases were agreed and were applied as from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. I understand our charges are still very reasonable compared with other venues.

Although a carnival was held in 2015, we understand the Carnival Committee has now disbanded and there will be no carnival this year. However, we are planning a celebration for the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday and this will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> May at the Village Hall and Playing Field commencing at 13:00. A buffet and refreshments will be provided. There will be a magician and bouncy castles for the childrens enjoyment, and all preschool children will be donated with a commemorative medal to mark the occasion. On approaching the Engaines School with regard to our event, I was advised by the Headteacher that they were organising their own event, a tea party at the school at which the primary school children would receive medals.

As Chairman of the Little Clacton Village Hall and Harold Lilley Playing Field Trust I would like to thank Little Clacton Parish Council for the help and support that has been given and look forward to another successful year.

## **2(b) MEADOW MILLENNIUM GREEN**

Following the change of Trust to Little Clacton Parish Council early in 2015, the first official meeting of the Little Clacton Meadow Millennium Green Trust was held on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015, to elect and install the Committee from those who were interested in joining:

Election took place and those voted onto the Committee were as follows:  
Mavis De-Vaux Balbirnie – Chairman and Secretary

Brian Ward – Treasurer  
Sue Dass – Committee Member  
Shirley Thatcher – Committee Member  
Lynn Gray – Committee Member  
Jean Quartermaine – co-opted member  
Alan Quartermaine – co-opted member

Following on from this a further meeting was held in May and three new members were appointed to the Committee – Jacqui Lovell, and Martyn and Diane Reed bringing the total Committee members to 10.

At the time of the March 2015 meeting, the Financial Statement showed a credit balance in the Bank of £990.84, which had been brought forward from the previous Trust. Four members of the Committee were appointed as signatories (with two out of the four to sign at any one time) and Bank Mandate forms were lodged with the NatWest Bank. Unfortunately, the Bank's delay as a result of mislaying the forms and then in the processing of the forms meant that we could not move on with applying for a Grant etc. until this was sorted out which eventually took place in October 2015.

Various tasks were discussed at the meetings including the replacing of the Elm Road boundary fencing, which was disintegrating, and also the pond fencing, as well as erecting nest boxes in the spinney, etc. Various types of fund raising, including BBQ, boot sales, raffles, tombola's etc, were also discussed to support the cost of carrying out the tasks.

During the summer months boot sales were held at Plough Corner and a total of £357.84 was raised and, together with wayleave income, the total in the bank was increased to £1350.98, and a Grant for £5481.40 to renew the Elm Road and pond fencing was applied for which, later in the year, we were advised had been successful and was certainly welcome news. This meant that the fencing work could be carried out before bird nesting season started.

It became obvious when work was being carried out in the area of the pond that the pond itself needed refurbishment, including a new liner, and the LCPC was advised of the situation and kindly agreed to include an amount in the budget for the work to be done. We were very grateful for this gesture and it meant that the work could be completed.

150 whips had been obtained free of charge from the Woodland Trust, together with buckthorn bushes to attract the brimstone butterflies, and these have now all been planted on the MG.

Advice was taken from David Wilkin, the local owl man, with regard to the installation of a replacement owl box as the present one, which had been erected 15 years ago, was falling apart and had been taken over by doves/pigeons. The present box was partially removed to deter the birds presently using it and a pole has been installed in a new position ready for a new owl box to go up once the pigeons and doves locate to another area.

Six nest boxes for the spinney were originally kindly donated by a local businessman to the then District Councillor Peter Balbirnie for the Millennium Green. Pre-School children attended the spinney with parents and teachers to advise which trees they wanted these to be assembled on. As a result, the children chose more than six trees, and therefore a donation of another six boxes was made, and Peter kindly erected these and it is hoped that this will encourage the children to visit and enjoy the wildlife.

Following a recent meeting this last February it was agreed to apply for a further Grant to purchase picnic tables, seats and bins so that all people visiting can enjoy the area.

We have been fortunate to be donated with £200 from the Carnival Committee as a result of the help given at the 2014 Carnival and this money will go towards supporting the expenses of the MG.

We are investigating the cost of an educational board displaying the various types of flora, fauna, birds and mammals which frequent the area and it is hoped that events can be held on the MG, once the work has been completed, not only for fund raising but for people to enjoy the area.

Our first AGM since the LCPC took over as Trust was held last month on 14<sup>th</sup> March and the elected members were returned as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer together with the Committee members who all offered their support.

As soon as work has been completed on the MG, the website will be updated with photos and text so that residents can appreciate the work that has been done. It is good to report that comments from residents have been positive and, in fact, families in Elm Road and The Street have been helping with the work.

It has been a pleasure to see the MG being refurbished and thanks must go to the LCPC and all of the MG Committee members as well as Peter for the support given - it has certainly been worth all the hard work and, once finished, we will all be able to enjoy this area of natural beauty.

## **2(c) PARISH FIELDS**

Another busy year at Plough Corner, with all facilities being used on a regular basis. Income from use of the playing field and Youth and Community Hall enables Parish Fields to be self financing regarding day to day maintenance.

The development and upgrading of the pavillion has continued and should be completed during the next few months. This will then make it possible to attract teams from more senior leagues.

The tennis court and all weather playing surface continue to be available free of charge to local residents.

Two Classic Car shows were held, organised by Clacton Classic Car Club and these are a highlight of the years activities.

Following the poor results from the 2014 Car Boot season, changes to the financial format were introduced and we are pleased to report that these had the desired effect with an increase in the number of sellers, and the season made a useful contribution to our income.

The Youth and Community Hall has seen a further increase in the number of users which now include two camera clubs, two art groups, yoga, bridge, choir and band practise, ante-natal and post natal groups and commercial driver training.

The hall is also used for Coin and stamp fairs as well as other organisations for seasonal fairs and quiz nights.

## **2(d)TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL**

No annual report left.

## **2(e) ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

Essex County Councillor Erskine did not leave a report.

## **3.REPORTS ON WORKING PARTIES**

### **(1) Maintenance and services**

Councillor S Rowland reported that grass cutting seems to be being carried out satisfactorily, and we will be keeping a close eye on it to ensure it remains so. The general maintenance of the village Bus shelters, benches and other items has been a cause for concern. The working party and Chairman inspected each item and it was obvious that much of the work had not been carried out, not only this year, but previous years too.

A meeting was held with Tony Nash on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015, where our concerns were expressed to him. He agreed he had been neglecting the Parish but assured us that he would put the matter right with immediate effect. He requested that he be sent a copy of the works to be carried out, as he didn't have a copy. The Clerk emailed him a copy of the work which he ought to have had, as he tendered for it. That very week he took away a badly maintained bench, giving a turnaround timescale of between 7-10 days. The bench has still not been returned.

He has painted the fence around the Oak tree, but other than that little has been done. After several attempts to contact him via email and phone during March, an email was sent to him regarding the lack of work being carried out, and our recommendation to terminate the contract. He replied saying he had been involved with a welding contract which had taken up most of his time., but he would not be renewing that contract. He asked if he could be given a chance to start the works from April 4<sup>th</sup>, once again requesting a copy of the works to be carried out.

To date, nothing has been carried out. Due to his failure to carry out hardly any maintenance during the past year, and certainly years previous to this, the working party recommend his contract is terminated.

Bray's hardware shop in the centre of the Village seems an ideal place to put an advert requesting local businesses to tender for the contract.

As so much has been left over the years, many of the benches require replacement rather than maintenance. This will create additional cost for the parish which we cannot see as avoidable.

**3(2) STREET LIGHTS** – Councillor M Reed reported that the prime focus this year had been to understand the process and make necessary change for the financial benefit of the Parish and to decrease the carbon footprint. We are about to change our old lights from the current orange light source to LED lighting with a year on year saving in excess of £2,500 per annum. The LED lights also have a far greater life span reducing the potential of the light failing and decreasing the need to contact contractors to replace the unit, creating a further long term saving to the Parish Council.

**3(3) FOOTPATHS -no report**

**3(4) CRIME PREVENTION**

Crime figures have remained relatively low, and fairly consistent throughout the year, with the peaks being in September and November – casting no aspersions, but we did have a large number of travellers in the area at the time. A spreadsheet is available of all the



crimes, with the latest figures available. Unfortunately, the Essex Police site is well behind with current figures - the latest being January 2016.

The vast majority of offences are anti-social behaviour - which amounts to over 34% of the crime we experience.

As reported earlier, we have lost our PCCO – Bradley Haycraft, as have all other parishes in the Tendring area, with the exception of Frinton and Walton, as they pay for him themselves. I have spoken to Essex Police, who informed me that a new Community Policing Team will be operational from May. This involves the retained PCCO's all being based in Clacton, and they will respond as necessary to all parts of Tendring. Essex Police were unable to give me an exact number of retained PCCO's, but I will enquire once the scheme has started.

There is now a 'do-it-online' service for reporting non emergency crime to Essex Police. On their website there is also a 'knowledge bank' which contains answers to hundreds of often asked questions about policing. This can be accessed from the Police website [www.essex.police.uk/doitonline](http://www.essex.police.uk/doitonline)

Naturally, any emergency still dial 999.

### **3(5) Highways**

There is very little to report this year, on a local level.

District Councillor Andy Erskine has dealt with Essex County Council Highways Department on our behalf, as he has more direct contact with them, and occasionally obtains a response, whereas all that local Parish Councillors can do is send emails and obtain reference numbers, none of which receive attention.

The majority of complaints which have been received from our parishioners are in connection with damaged road signage, flooding, speeding and potholes. These have all been passed on to Councillor Erskine for his attention.

Peter Balbirnie and I have replaced the speed restriction signs at the entry to our village in Weeley Road, following the replacement of the previously unlawfully removed gates, but have nothing more to report.

## **4. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS**

Mr R Bellamy requested that the missing reports were added at a later date, rather than left out for the year. He stated that it would indicate in the future that nothing had happened.

## **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor R Smith reported that he had written, emailed, visited in person, but still had no response from Essex County Council. He thanked Essex County Councillor Erskine who was able to get a reponse immediately.

Following a report from the public about a speed trap , The Chairman reported that the police had not done a speeding exercise for years, but were now addressing the villages concerns.

There being no further business, The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:50pm

**Chairman**  
**9<sup>th</sup> May 2016**