



CRESSING PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council meeting
held on 12th June 2024 at 7.00pm at
St Barnabas, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing.

Present: Cllr John Lawton – Chairman
Cllr Colin Haines
Cllr Christine Ives
Cllr Eileen Mottershead
Cllr Harvey Porrett
Cllr Tony Sim

In attendance:

Mrs Christine Marshall (Parish Clerk/RFO and Proper Officer)
Nine members of the public for items 47 to 49 and item 56, then five members of the public for the remaining items.

24-5/047 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman declared the meeting open and welcomed those present and spoke as follows:

A motion was proposed for an amendment to the Agenda by bringing forward item 24-5/056 Cressing Community Magazine to enable those attending for that item only to leave the meeting before all agenda business had been completed. **Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded: Cllr Lawton, all in favour. Motion carried.**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, it had not been possible for the grass for which the Parish Council is responsible to be cut. However, an alternative temporary arrangement had been made at short notice and the grass around the parish was attended to. The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Parish Council is not responsible for all the grassed areas in the Parish, many of these fall under the responsibility of Braintree District Council, Essex Highways and Eastlight.

The Chairman was very disappointed by comments that had been posted on Facebook, that were false and defamatory the Parish Council looks forward to seeing apologies posted on Facebook to protect the reputation and integrity of Members and Officers.

Issues continue with Essex Highways scheduling conflicting road closures and repairs. The County and District Councillors are also chasing for answers and action.

Eastlight – following numerous contacts made by the Clerk on behalf of residents to request Eastlight to cut their grassed areas (including Claud Ince Avenue), this was finally undertaken. They have also been requested to cut back hedges and overgrowth along Mill Lane which caused visibility issues for motorists.

Public Rights of Way are badly overgrown and requests have been made to Essex Highways to clear the footpaths for walkers to enjoy safely.

Avondale – Essex Highways are now responsible for roads on that development including the walkway between Crozier Drive and The Westerings. Having chased Bellways for over a year to repair the bollard, which they did not do, this has now been reported to Essex Highways for action.

24-5/048 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies to be recorded, but it was reported that County and District Councillors were not attending this meeting due to being in the re-election period prior to the General Election in July.

24-5/049 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the council are subject to the Local Authorities Code of Conduct Order 2007 (SI 2007/1159) (The Revised Code) with the additional, non-mandatory, section 12(2).

There were no pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests to be recorded in relation to items on the agenda.

24-5/056 CRESSING COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

The Chairman opened the item by addressing the statements printed in the June edition and on-line copy that the Parish Council (PC) had withdrawn funding. This was completely incorrect and at no time had the PC said funding would be withdrawn. The grant requested was much larger than the previous year and having been received so close to the beginning of the financial year, the Parish Council needed to re-work the budget to accommodate this request. At a meeting on 16th May the PC explained this situation and agreed to provide an initial £500 to ensure printing costs could be covered. The Parish Council had proposed that magazines could be issued bi-monthly or hard copies made available only to those who could not access the on-line version. It also proposed to reduce the amount of space used by the PC by printing bullet points only of meetings with full minutes being on the website only. The PC definitely wishes the magazine to continue.

This incorrect message caused a lot of Facebook activity that was unnecessary and unjust in its criticism of the PC.

On behalf of the Magazine Committee Mr Tilbury advised that advertising rates had increased in 2023 and had hoped the PC would provide the full grant requested. He re-iterated the £500 first payment and stated a "potential of another £500". In 2022 the Magazine undertook a survey with 890 copies of the magazine being distributed and they received 84 responses from residents who wished to continue receiving a printed copy. The number now printed is 990 which will rise further as the new developments are populated. The magazine provides a source of information of what is happening within the parish as well as a useful reference for local business contacts.

Cllr Sim was concerned that the figures provided in Mr Tilbury's letter provided to the PC, and the figures quoted in the grant application did not add up and did not answer the request for further information.

After a further, short discussion it was agreed that Councillors would consider the re-worked budget later in the meeting and respond to the Magazine Committee as soon as possible thereafter. In the meantime, the Clerk will request the additional information required to enable the timetable for the grant to be advised.

24-5/050 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Clerk confirmed that no requests to speak at the meeting had been received.

24-5/051 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 8th May 2024 were confirmed as a correct record. **Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded: Cllr Haines**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8th May 2024 were confirmed as a correct record. **Proposed: Cllr Sim, seconded: Cllr Porrett, all in favour.**

The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

24-5/052 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024-2025

The Clerk advised that the Internal Audit had now been received, consequently the AGAR could not be completed. The IA has promised this within the week and once received the Clerk will arrange an additional meeting of Councillors. **Action: Clerk**

24-5/053 POLICIES

The Clerk referred to the revised and new policies previously provided to Councillors. There were no queries and **it was resolved** that the policies to be adopted as follows:

Reviewed policies:

- i. Code of Conduct – **Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded: Cllr Sim, all in favour**
- ii. Standing Orders – **Proposed: Cllr Sim, seconded: Cllr Haines, all in favour**
- iii. Financial Regulations – **Proposed: Cllr Sim, seconded: Cllr Mottershead, all in favour**

New policy:

- iv. Scheme of Delegation – **Proposed: Cllr Lawton, seconded: Cllr Porrett, all in favour**
Action: Clerk to publish

24-5/054 FINANCE

- i. **Financial statements:** The Clerk/RFO referred to the May reports issued to Cllrs. Cllr Sim requested clarification of abbreviation RCCE (Rural Community Council of Essex) and Ernest Doe & Sons, there were no other queries, and **it was resolved** to accept the reports. **Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded: Cllr Haines, all in favour**
- ii. **A motion to approve bank reconciliation to 31st May 2024:** It was resolved that the bank reconciliation statement be approved. **Proposed: Cllr Lawton, seconded: Cllr Porrett, all in favour**
- iii. **A motion to approve payments for May 2024:** **Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded Cllr Haines, all in favour.** Cllrs signed the cheques.

Although not on the Agenda and in view of the earlier discussion concerning the magazine, **it was agreed** to consider the re-worked budget presented to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk outlined where savings could be applied and the reasons for so doing and stressed that it would result in some projects or purchases not being undertaken. Following discussion **it was agreed** to implement the revised budget which would provide additional budget for any community grants requested during the year.

24-5/055 FINANCE SOFTWARE

The Clerk referred to the proposal, documents and sample reports presented to Cllrs and the Clerk explained that Scribe software was specially developed for local authorities and was fully supported by experienced Clerks and Financial Officers. Recommendations from the Clerk's Network showed Scribe to be the most popular system. Cllrs discussed briefly and **it was resolved** to purchase the software. **Proposed: Cllr Sim, Seconded: Cllr Ives, all in favour.**
Action: Clerk to order

24-5/057 GRASS CUTTING

- i. Following the Chairman's report, item 24-5/047, details were provided of the interim contractor undertaking the work. It was acknowledged that as the growth had been so high the first cut would look untidy until the next one. The Clerk confirmed she had looked at the areas cut and some had been missed, so will follow up with the contractor.
- ii. The appointment of the interim contractor was agreed following previous email agreement by Cllrs
- iii. Cllr Sim asked if it would be possible to publish a list of the respective areas maintained by the Parish Council, Essex Highways, Braintree District Council and Eastlight, with contact details. **It was resolved** that this be done. **Proposed: Cllr Sim, seconded, Cllr Lawton, all in favour.**
Action: Clerk

Although not specifically related, there was a short discussion about glass recycling locations as having just one-off Claud Ince Avenue was not convenient for all residents. The Clerk was requested to approach BDC again and suggest they contact the proprietor of the garage on the B1018 and The Willows. The suggestion of the layby area near the school will not be progressed as a risk analysis of the danger to children would not be supportive.
Action: Clerk

24-5/058 WINTER SALT BAG SCHEME

The Clerk confirmed the Parish Council would be taking advantage of a free supply of salt for gritting roads within the Parish that are not treated by Highways. Mr Morland at

The Depot has kindly agreed to hold the supply. It was explained that the scheme would need a co-ordinator and the collection/spreading of the salt would be undertaken by volunteers. It was stressed that this could not be used on private driveways and paths, nor on pavements. It would only be used on roads. The potential for accidents occurring where it had been incorrectly applied could leave the individual liable for a personal injury claim. This is not covered by the Parish Council's insurance and clarification will be requested from BDC and Essex Highways on their position. **Action: Clerk**

24-5/059 PLAYING FIELD

- i. **It was agreed** that as a result of the revised budget no financial support could be made available to hold an event following the handover of the changing rooms to Cressing Sports & Social Club.
- ii. The Clerk referred to the summary of the RoSPA playground inspection and explained the action that would be taken when required. **Action: Clerk**
- iii. The new roundabout is expected for delivery 21st June but will be out of use for a few days whilst the surface "cures". It will be fenced off during this period.

24-5/060 PLANNING

Appeals –

No progress to be noted.

Applications determined:

None advised.

Applications received:

None advised.

Applications received by Braintree District Council and considered if comments should be made (Householder Application, General Permitted Development Order):

- i. 24/01103/HH | Proposed single-storey rear extension | 7 The Westerings Cressing Essex CM77 8HD
- ii. 24/01153/PLD | Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development - Erection of detached garage | Wayside Church Road Cressing Essex CM77 8PG
- iii. 24/01154/HH | Proposed detached garage | Wayside Church Road Cressing Essex CM77 8PG

No comments to be made.

Enforcement Enquiries: No updates available.

24-5/061 INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Agenda items:

Community Speedwatch – update

24-5/062 CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no more business to be discussed, the Chairman declared the open meeting closed at 8.55pm in order to re-convene the Parish Council in closed session.

24-5/063 PLAYING FIELD LEASE

As there was insufficient time to discuss this fully, it was agreed to postpone this item until the Extraordinary Meeting that would be convened to sign off the AGAR,

24-5/064 CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.05pm.

24-5/065 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Parish Council is Wednesday 10th July 2024, 7.00pm at St Barnabas, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing.

Items for inclusion on the Agenda to be sent to the Parish Clerk to be received no later than midday on Tuesday 2nd July 2024

ADDENDUM 21/06/2024: Since this meeting an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council has been called for Wednesday 26th June. This meeting will have a restricted Agenda to finalise the grant to Cressing Community Magazine and to approve and sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The meeting scheduled for 10th July has been cancelled.

2024				
AUGUST	14	OCTOBER	9	
SEPTEMBER	11	NOVEMBER	13	
SEPTEMBER	11	DECEMBER	11	
2025				
JANUARY	8		JULY	10
FEBRUARY	12		AUGUST	14
MARCH	12		SEPTEMBER	11
APRIL	7		OCTOBER	9
MAY	13	ANNUAL MEETINGS	NOVEMBER	14
JUNE	12		DECEMBER	11