

MEETING NOTES

Meeting: Annual Meeting of the Parish

Date: 18th May 2021

Time: 7.15 PM

Venue: Moreton Village Hall

PRESENT:

Councillors (14): Cllr John Collins (Chairman), Cllr Busch, Cllr Cooper, Cllr Crosbie, Cllr Dawson, Cllr Doble, Cllr Foulser, Cllr Hall, Cllr Kessock-Philip, Cllr Leverich, Cllr Martin, Cllr Padfield, Cllr Radbourne, Cllr Stuart

Also in Attendance (1): Julia Milovanovic – Parish Clerk

Members of the Public: (3) - inc Cllr Hadley

Members of the Press (0)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. OTHER ABSENCES

None.

3. PARISHIONERS FORUM

There were no questions from members of the public.

4. CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

The Chairman provided details of his Annual Report for 2020/2021, copies of which were made available to all who were present. This included a summary of the activities for the 2020/2021 municipal year, during which the country had to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. A copy of this report is appended to these meeting notes.

5. ACCOUNTS 2020/2021

A copy of the unapproved Accounts for 2020/2021 were made available to all present. It was **NOTED** that these accounts were due to be considered for approval at the Annual Parish Council meeting which would be held immediately following this meeting.

6. ANNUAL RETURN 2020/2021

Those present **NOTED** that the annual external audit was an agenda item on the Annual Parish Council meeting that would be held immediately following this meeting. It was confirmed that the notice period for the exercise of public rights was expected to be 1st July through to the 12th August 2021, and that notices and Audit information will be displayed on the notice boards and website in accordance with the relevant regulations.

7. PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2021

The meeting dates for 2021 were provided as follows:

- 18th May 2021 – 7.30pm Annual Parish Council meeting
- 13th July 2021 – 7.30pm Parish Council meeting
- 14th September 2021 – 7.30pm Parish Council meeting
- 9th November 2021 – 7.30pm Parish Council meeting
- 7th December 2021 – 7.15pm Christmas Tree light switch on
- 7th December 2021 – 7.30pm – Open Parish Meeting

Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council Chairman's Report – 2020/21

When I became Chairman in May last year, during the first lockdown, we had no idea of how much our lives would be affected as a result of the pandemic. This year has demonstrated how important it is to have a community that works together to support each other, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank residents who have helped other members of our Parish with everyday tasks we take for granted, such as going to the shops and for also keeping an eye out for each other. I would also like to thank the various groups who have helped organise and provide support from the small local whats app groups to larger groups such as Community Spirit. The Parish Council has adapted very well to having virtual meetings and in fact has had 10 formal meetings this year rather than the usual six as well as seven informal meetings. The first MS Teams meeting that we had as a Parish Council seemed very alien but now we are quite accomplished at using Zoom and MS Teams. This is the first time ever that there have been no face-to-face meetings during the whole financial year for the Parish Council. We look forward to resuming meetings in our two village halls as soon as we are allowed but also hope to continue having some virtual meetings.

There is no doubt that, as we emerge from what we hope will be the last lockdown, it is a time for change and at a local level we will take the opportunity to engage with our residents to find how we can all work together to build upon those community values which emerged during the last year. Local elections were held on the 6th May when 8 of our existing Councillors decided not to stand for re-election. However, nominations were received from 8 new candidates who have now been confirmed as members of the Parish Council. For the first time for many years, we now have a full complement of Councillors following the election without having to advertise to fill vacancies. This is very encouraging for the Parish. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank those Councillors who are standing down, namely Jim Collins, John Devereux, Tom Schwier, Mark Baines, Paul Dackombe , Paul Stevens and David Silk for the contribution which they have made. Please find below my report for Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council.

THE DOG AND PICKLE, MORETON (PREVIOUSLY THE NAGS HEAD)

The Nags Head was finally sold to its new owners at the end of 2020 and the use of the car park for the school has now been secured by way of an easement. However, the sale process was not without its difficulties and nearly did not come to fruition as Essex County Council wanted to be part of the Easement and were delaying matters as they were somewhat confused about access to the school playing fields. The Parish Council stepped in and following liaison with Essex County Council, the School and the now owners' solicitors, Essex County Council agreed to withdraw, and that the Easement should be between the School and the new owners. Despite the lockdowns work started shortly before Christmas and it is due to open during May.

STOP STANSTED EXPANSION

Uttlesford District Council voted to oppose the application for the expansion of the airport to 43 million passengers per annum in January 2020. Manchester Airport Group appealed against the decision and it was called in by the Secretary of State. A Public Enquiry commenced in January and the Parish Council made a written submission and our Parish Clerk gave verbal evidence on behalf of the Parish Council. A decision from the Secretary of State is now awaited.

TELEPHONE BOXES AND DEFIBRILLATORS

The Parish Council was successful in obtaining a grant of £1522 from Essex County Council to repaint the phone boxes in Moreton and Bobbingworth, move the defibrillator from behind the White Hart and purchase a further defibrillator for the Bobbingworth phone box. This project is nearing completion A local resident kindly offered to repaint the phone box in the Lavers free of charge for which the Parish Council is extremely grateful.

SALT BINS

The new salt bins were put to good use during the cold snap during the winter and I would like to thank Cllr Padfield for storing the salt for the Parish Council. An additional salt bin has been purchased for residents who live south of the A414.

GRANTS

The Parish Council has continued to support the 5 local churches with a grant totalling £3,000 being awarded for the upkeep and maintenance of their respective cemeteries. In addition, a grant for the annual maintenance of the Bobbingworth Clock was agreed in the sum of £200.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Our Neighbourhood Plan has unfortunately had its first challenge, in that EFDC do not agree the legal position of the plan relating to a planning application in Moreton. The Parish Council has used the formal complaints process with EFDC who disagree with the legal opinion obtained by the Parish Council. The Parish Council has engaged the services of an expert Barrister who specialises in planning and the matter has now been referred to the Secretary of State for consideration. The Parish Council is concerned that a lot of time and effort by residents and Parish Councillors was put into producing the plan in order to have some influence on future planning decisions within our Parish but at the first opportunity this is being ignored. The Parish Council has also approved a new housing needs survey, which will help to establish if there is still a need for rural social housing in the Parish. If there is a need it will then try to pursue a community led housing project. The housing needs survey will be delivered to all residents in June, subject to Covid restrictions. We encourage all residents to complete and return the survey.

BOBBINGWORTH NATURE RESERVE

The Parish Council continues to work closely with EFDC Countrycare on the Bobbingworth Nature Reserve. Last summer two "Play in the Park" events were held, which were free of charge to all children attending took place. Unfortunately, there was a further problem with adders at one of the sessions. Community Spirit arranged litter picking and bramble clearing at the Reserve for which the Parish Council is grateful. An Open Day which was due to be held in March has had to be cancelled due to Coronavirus restrictions but will be rearranged for later in the year.

COMMUNICATION

The Parish Council's new website (www.mblparishcouncil.com) has remained active and was updated regularly, with copies of Agendas, Minutes, and general news of interest to the Parish. On average the website is visited 59 times per week. Any residents who wish to receive copies of agendas, minutes, and news of general interest to the Parish, should contact the clerk and ask to be added to the email information list. A welcome pack is available for new residents. This is available to download via the Parish Council's website or a hard copy can be obtained by contacting the Clerk.

COUNCILLORS

Last year saw the departure of Richard Chiverrell, Robert Schwier and Dee Hannis and I would like to thank them for their contribution. Mark Baines and Paul Dackombe were co-opted and have become valuable members of the Council.

HIGHWAYS

Temporary yellow lines have now been painted on the corner of Gould Close. The long awaited Church Road footpath is now in place outside the school. The traffic, parking and congestion survey was due to be undertaken in Moreton last April has had to be deferred due to Covid. There was a purge on potholes in the Parish last summer thanks to our County Councillor, Maggie McEwen. The Parish Council has requested signage for drivers to slow down because of horses around the Wood Farm area as well as flood alert signs for Watery Lane. We have been advised that the budget for all signage has been allocated by Essex Highways until 2022/23.

COMMUNITY POLICING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Our new Community Police Officer is Warren Sheppard, and he can be contacted by dialling 101. We now have regular updates from Essex Police regarding crime in the area and it is hoped to set up a regular meeting with our new Community Police Officer when restrictions ease. Although the Neighbourhood Watch has not been very active within the Parish during the year it was in part replaced by the local WhatsApp groups which came into existence due to the pandemic.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING/OPEN PARISH MEETING

Due to Covid restrictions the Open Parish Meeting had to be cancelled. However, we were able to have a socially distanced meeting at the lighting of the tree where hot mulled wine was served. This was well attended in the circumstances.

REPRESENTATION

The Parish Council has reviewed and commented on 43 Planning applications within the Parish. The Parish Council continues to work closely with Epping Forest District Council, the Essex Association of Local Councils and Essex County Council on all matters concerning the Parish.

Accounts

We started the year with £22,907. 20 in the bank. The precept for the 2020/21 year was £16,285. The total expenditure for 2020/21 was £20,920 (including £1114 VAT). The bank balance at 31st March 2021 was £20,968.

A Note from the Chairman

I would like to thank Maggie McEwen our County Councillor for her support during the year. She did not stand for re-election and so we look forward to working with her successor. As a Parish Council we have endeavoured to engender a close working relationship with our District Councillor Ian Hadley and hope we can continue to do so in the year ahead. I would like to thank all members of the Parish Council for the support they have given me during the past year and in particular my Vice Chairman Paul Stevens. Finally, a big thank you to Julia Milovanovic our Parish Clerk for the excellent work she has done for the Council and Councillors. I would personally like to thank her for the support and assistance she has given to me throughout the past year. Our job as Councillors can at times be very time consuming when we have to read and comprehend the vast amount of information which is sent to us. Julia makes this job that much easier by the enthusiasm and energy which she brings to her job as Clerk coupled with her comprehensive knowledge of local government. We are all very grateful for the time she puts in and the extra hours she is prepared to undertake when necessary

**Cllr John Collins
Chairman 2020/2021**