

**Minutes of the meeting of the Chelmsford Garden Community Council held on
7th March 2024 at 7.30pm at the Beaulieu Community Centre, 17 Centenary
Way, Chelmsford, Essex**

Present:	Councillors	Derek Drew-Smith (Acting Chair) Tayo Udoh Daniel Jeffreys Kuldeep Golla Romilly Wakeling Brian Jeapes Neil Shah Joel Alderman Jeremy Stopher Suzanne Walker
	Executive Officer	Julie Birkumshaw
	Community Engagement Manager	Dan Clark
	City Councillors:	John Spence and Mike Mackrory
	County Councillors:	

16 members of the public were present.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Drew-Smith was the Acting chair for the meeting.

23.24/208: Apologies

Received from Councillors Wright, Williamson, Tron and Driver and City Councillors Fuller and Steel.

23.24/209: Declaration of interests

None.

23.24/210: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 1st February 2024 were **agreed** by all Councillors and signed by the Acting Chair.

23.24/211: Community question time

A member of the public asked if there are to be any parking restrictions for the Channels area and it was confirmed that the South Essex Parking Partnership intend to launch a consultation in May.

A number of residents complained in relation to the lack of maintenance of the Wedge area and stated that the grass reaches waist height and that it is a direct fire risk to the residents and a risk to life. Complaints included the fact that it is difficult for dog walkers to access the Wedge due to the tall grass and that there is also an issue with dog poo in the area and that other adjacent areas are mowed for example by the pond so there is inconsistencies. A number of the residents had witnessed a fire a few years ago and advised that the fire brigade had to ask residents to move their cars from Shardlow Avenue. A comment was made that residents are not

opposed to biodiversity and consider that long grass could be left around the trees as there are over 60 in the area which would still mean there is a pollinator corridor but the main concern relates to the fire hazard.

23.24/212: To receive the following Reports

23.24/212.1 Report from County Councillor

Councillor Spence advised that Essex County Council has approved its budget for the next financial year with a 2.9% general increase and an increase of 2% for social care. A scheme is to be introduced enabling County Councillor to direct maintenance teams to specific issues as opposed to nominating potholes. He attended the recent meeting of the station taskforce and will be keeping a close eye on parking provision as although modelling has been undertaken the number of users will not be clear until the station is open. Work continues in relation to the Chelmsford North East bypass with some disruption expected at Junction 19 of the A12.

Councillor Mackrory reported that work is due to start to construct the Pelican Crossing across White Hart Lane on 17th June 2024 which will result in night time closures for around 6 weeks. He also advised that he had discovered that there are so many roads to be adopted on Beaulieu and so many developers to negotiate with, that it may take some years for Essex County Council to adopt all of those roads.

He is also awaiting a response in relation to an issue he has raised in relation to the floodlights at Beaulieu Park School being so bright as to disrupt residents and it is understood that the wrong lantern were installed.

23.24/212.2 Report from City Councillor

Councillor Clark reported that the Local Plan review is progressing and will go out for consultation shortly. He also suggested that due to speeding problems in the Parish he wants to put forward an application to the Local Highway Panel for Speed indicator devices in the Parish and also spoke about speed watch. It was agreed to put this issue on the next agenda for a discussion in relation to traffic and speed issues generally.

23.24/212.3 Report from Councillors regarding attendance at external meetings

Four Councillors had attended the Railway Station Taskforce meeting last week. They had also been taken for a tour of the construction site. In particular it was noted that work will be carried out to widen an entrance point at White Hart Lane. Also, the contractors aim to finish the project by the end of 2025 so as to fit in with timetable changes at the end of the year.

23.24/212.4 Executive Officer report

The Executive Officer reported that she had attended the bike marking and community safety event, a meeting with Beaulieu Park School, a webinar in relation to the new 'Martyn's law' legislation, a Police Expo event and the Station Taskforce meeting. She had been liaising with the Council's insurers in relation to cover for the Dog event which had now been clarified and having seen the licence document and an exchange of emails with the Land Trust, Councillors **agreed** that she may sign the licence document on behalf of the Council and confirmed that neither the cabin nor the toilets would be required for the short drop in event. It was noted that Boreham Parish Council is due to discuss the situation in relation to the War Memorial at a Committee meeting. It was also noted that Halley Development has requested a meeting and a number of Councillors can make themselves available for the meeting so the Executive Officer will liaise with Councillors to arrange a convenient date.

23.24/213: Committee Reports

Councillors **noted** the Communication committee minutes of 1st February 2024, the planning committee minutes of 8th February 2024 and the Personnel Committee minutes of 15th February 2024. In particular, as a result of the appointment made by the Personnel committee, the new Community Engagement Manager was welcomed by all Councillors.

23.24/214: Financial report

23.24/214.1 To receive the bank reconciliation statement

The bank reconciliation statement calculated to 29th February 2024 was **accepted**.

23.24/214.2 To receive report and approve money received and paid

The following receipts and payments were **approved**:

Receipts	£	VAT	Total
0.00			
Payments			
Payments made since last meeting in accordance with annual schedule			
23 rd Feb.	February salaries and expenses		2,413.18
	HMRC (PAYE Feb)		885.80
	Essex Pension Fund (Feb.)		977.07
Direct Debits			
29 th Feb.	EE (mobile phone)	14.00	2.80 16.80

Payments to be made

CGC Trust	2 meetings March	52.50	8.50	61.00
CGC Trust	1 meeting March	26.67	5.33	32.00
CGC Trust	ICB meeting March	31.25	4.25	35.50
Andrew Wright	Laptop for new employee	332.50	66.50	399.00
Clear Insurance	Council insurance	672.31	0.00	672.31
EALC	Training course	95.00	19.00	114.00
Zoho	licence subscription	94.58	18.92	113.50

In addition, the purchase of a Microsoft 365 subscription was authorised for the new employee.

23.24/214.3 To receive update regarding website accessibility

The Executive Officer reported that she had liaised with the website provider, Netwise to resolve a number of accessibility issues and has resolved the issues with photos on the site which is now compliant with the basic requirements for accessibility. However, the tool provided to check the site moving forward only checks one page at a time. Councillor Wakeling mentioned that she may be able to signpost another free tool to assist. It was noted that the Executive Officer will be working with the Community Engagement Manager to review the site so that an application can be made to apply for the Local Council Award scheme and make it generally easier for residents to use.

23.24/214.4 To consider and approve the Council's asset schedule

The asset schedule was considered by Councillors and **approved**.

23.24/214.5 To consider and approve report regarding the Council's internal financial control systems

The report on the Council's internal financial control systems was considered and **approved**.

23.24/214.6 To agree accounting basis and tolerance level for Council's accounts

Upon hearing from the Executive Officer, Councillors **agreed** that the accounts should be prepared on an income and expenditure basis and the tolerance level for accruals should be £30.00.

23.24/214.7 To consider the acquiring a corporate credit card for the Council.

It was noted that the cost per card is £3 a month and that there is a set up fee of £50.00. Councillors noted that the Council's financial regulations state that

employees and Councillors should not be required to use their personal credit cards for Council spending. For that reason and for administrative convenience, it was **agreed** to acquire a corporate credit card with Unity Trust and to set a spending cap of £1,000 a month. It was agreed to supply a card to the Executive Officer in the first instance.

23.24/214.8 To consider and agree to take out a credit account with Chelmsford Safety supplies

To assist with the acquisition of PPE it was **agreed** to take out a credit account with Chelmsford Safety supplies and it was noted that the terms and conditions require payment within 30 days of supply of the invoice.

23.24/214.9 To consider quotation for provision of food at Annual Assembly

Quotations had been obtained for the provision of food for around 50 people for the assembly including a quote from a local café and platters from local shops. Having considered the options, it was **agreed** to set a spending cap of £250.00 for refreshments for the event.

23.24/215: To consider and approve the 4 year strategy statement

The latest draft of the 4 year strategy statement was considered and **approved**. As to how to publicise the plan this will be considered by the Communications committee.

23.24/216: To receive Community Safety update

It was noted that the cost of obtaining the services of a PCSO for the Parish is far in excess of the Council's budget for Community Safety and as the PCSOs can only be directed by the Police and could be called away for operational reasons, it was **agreed** to take no further action in relation to this proposal for the time being. It was also noted that the Council does not have the legal power to engage any private security. It was therefore **agreed** to continue to work closely with the local Police. In addition, the Executive Officer had attended a recent Police Expo and obtained a wealth of information as to services available in relation to community safety and this will be considered by a working group in more detail.

23.24/217: Open Space issues

23.24/217.1 To receive update regarding Bridleway 18

Some more information had been supplied from Chelmsford City Council regarding the upgrade of the surface of the Bridleway to be a rolled gravel surface. It was noted that this is an important access route in the area and **agreed** to ask when the work will be carried out and whether lighting can be installed.

23.24/217.2 To consider any representations in relation to proposals to divert footpath 7

Councillors had **no comments** in relation to the proposals.

23/24/217.3 To receive report regarding engagement with Chelmsford City Council regarding biodiversity and The Wedge

Following considerable discussion during the Community Question time session, Councillor Jeapes also raised concerns as to how the area has been classified as if it is an amenity area he stated that the documentation provided by the Council suggests that it should be cut 13 times a year. Councillors were concerned by the suggestion that the original planning documents stated that the area should be more informal and no evidence has been supplied to support this. The pathway was stated to be a formal path from the start of the development. The following actions were **agreed**: that Councillors Stopher and Jeapes liaise with the Executive Officer in relation to the paperwork supplied so far setting out a response and to also see if any relevant planning information can be located. To then set up a meeting with Chelmsford City Council to include the relevant Councillors to try and resolve this issue.

23.24/217.4 To consider the issue of Wayfinding signs adjacent to Channels Park.

It was **agreed** to defer this item until the April meeting.

23.24/217.5 To consider requests for the ‘Love your Parish’ scheme and voluntary litter pick

It was **agreed** to request road sweeping around the entire adopted area of ‘Old Beaulieu’ plus around the roundabout of Essex Regiment Way by the Eagle Way commercial area, to request litter picking by the entrance to Domsey Lane and the removal of graffiti at Boleyn Gardens.

In relation to the proposal from the Chelmsford Garden Community Trust for a voluntary litter pick, it was **agreed** to decline to take part and to add an item to the next agenda to discuss the issue of litter in the Parish generally.

23.24/218: To consider representations in relation to the Essex County Council Minerals Plan consultation

Agreed no comments in relation to this consultation. It was noted that if a full planning application is brought forward to the sites then representations could be made in relation to any specific planning restrictions at that stage.

23.24/219: To consider Parking issues

23.24/219.1 To consider any representations in relation to the South Essex Parking Partnership parking restrictions consultation.

It was **agreed** to communicate to the South Essex Parking Partnership that the Council welcomes the consultation and trusts that any restrictions that accord with the view of the residents following the consultation can be put into effect prior to the opening of the station at the end of 2025.

23.24/219.2 To consider any actions in relation to contractor parking

It was noted that as a result of the building works at the Arbour development and specifically due to the fact that the compound is no longer available, there is a substantial amount of parking around the Channels area which is a substantial inconvenience to residents. It was **agreed** to check with Chelmsford City Council whether the construction management plan makes any reference to parking provision and to also look to engage with the 'considerate contractor' scheme as the particular developer claims to be a member of the scheme. Also it could be suggested to the Falcon that they may wish to consider if they could accommodate parking at a cost to assist.

23.24/220: To consider the following policies

23.24/220.1 Vexatious complainant policy

The draft vexatious complainant policy was considered and **approved**.

23.24/220.2 Protocol for the death of a public figure

The draft protocol was discussed and **agreed**.

23.24/221: To receive Health and Wellbeing update

It was noted that a meeting has been set up with representatives of the Neighbourhood team of the ICB and all Councillors are invited to attend.

Also a report was provided in relation to the Park Run online engagement event. It was noted that around 20 people logged onto the call although some were from outside the Parish. Whereas there was enthusiasm for the initiative from some participants it was noted that issues were raised as to adverse impacts upon residents including issues of parking and litter. There are also issues as to a suitable route in view of ongoing development and consents from Land owners. The resident had also raised the issue of residents in the Land Trust managed area facing an additional financial burden within management fees as a result of such an initiative.

It was noted that for a Park Run to progress there is a need to engage with a 'Park Run ambassador'. By chance the Executive Officer had met a gentleman at the Police Expo who is a Park Run ambassador and who has already carried out a substantial amount of investigative work as to the viability of a Park Run in this area and is willing to share his findings.

Councillors therefore **agreed** to progress with a scoping exercise which should include liaison with the Park Run ambassador so that all the advantages and disadvantages can be considered prior to deciding if to facilitate Park Run in this area.

23.24/222: To receive an update in relation to Stewardship issues

Councillors had received a report on a meeting between some Councillors and the development consortium and an advice note regarding the possible legal model for a Stewardship body. It was noted that the developers are due to provide a list of assets that need to be considered within the stewardship negotiations. Due to the

complexity of the issue and the importance of making sure that this Council can make the right decision to protect the needs of the community, it was **agreed** to obtain specialised legal advice on the most effective legal model and it was **agreed** to set a cap of up to £5,000 legal fees to obtain the advice.

At this point it was **agreed** to suspend Standing Orders to enable the meeting to be concluded beyond the two hour mark.

CONFIDENTIAL resolution

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was **agreed** that the public be excluded and instructed to withdraw for agenda item 23.24/223

23.24/223: To receive an update in relation to liaison with the Chelmsford Garden Community Trust regarding the operation of the Community Centre

The Executive Officer provided a detailed report on the meeting between herself, Councillor Driver and 3 Trustees from the Trust. It was accepted that more Councillors need to attend future update meetings. Councillors discussed the issues raised in the report in detail and **agreed** a response to the Trust.

23.24/224: Any matters for next agenda

None.

Meeting concluded at 9.52pm