



Ingatestone and Fryerning Parish Council

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ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD: 1st June 2017
VENUE: Parish Rooms, Stock Lane, Ingatestone

Present:	Cllrs	P Jeater (Chair) R Lee K Sutton	L Day D Abrey J Fowkes	T Blunsten J Winter	D Jelley L Boyce
Absent	Cllrs	D Frost	P Lackford	P Davey	P Poston
Also present:		A Wood (Clerk and RFO)	14 Parishioners	Cllr Cloke and Hones	Cllr Wagland

- FC17/097 Chairman to welcome Councillors and Parishioners and to introduce the speaker**
Cllr Paul Jeater welcomed the assembly and introduced Cllr David Abrey
- FC17/098 Visual talk on "Ingatestone through the Ages" by Cllr David Abrey**
An informative and entertaining talk with slides was given by Cllr Abrey
- FC17/099 Chairman to open formal meeting**
After a short break, Cllr Jeater called the formal meeting to order
- FC17/100 Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Poston and Davey (holiday)
- FC17/101 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations received
- FC17/102 Approval of minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 8th May 2017**
The minutes were approved and duly signed by Cllr Jeater
- FC17/103 Annual return for the year ending 31st March 2017**
- **Council to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2016/17 (Section 1)**
Proposed: Cllr Fowkes
Seconded: Cllr Jelley
Unanimously agreed
 - **Council to approve the Accounting Statements 2016/17 (Section 2)**
Proposed: Cllr Blunsten
Seconded: Cllr Winter
Unanimously agreed
 - **To receive the report of the Internal Auditor – Heelis & Lodge**
The report was received and reviewed by the Councillors
- FC17/104 Local Council Award**
The Clerk apologised as the paperwork for this item had been circulated by email but not in the meeting paperwork and therefore it was agreed that this item be carried over to the next Full Council meeting
- FC17/105 Chairman's report and Accounts**
- Cllr Jeater gave his report, a copy of which is attached in the Appendices

- The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2017 were presented, a copy of which is available on the Parish Council website
- **To approve the transfer of £10,000 into each of the two savings accounts to reflect the new 2017 FSCS levels of £85,000 (P&R)**
The Clerk advised that the FSCS limit had been increased and therefore it was prudent to transfer further funds into the two savings accounts to reflect this.
Proposed: Cllr Jeater
Seconded: Cllr Lee
Unanimously agreed
- To receive any questions on the Parish Council accounts -
No questions were asked

FC17/106

Committee Reports**Planning**

- Cllr Sutton read the report

Churchyards and Environments

- Cllr Blunsten read the report

Policy and Resources

- Cllr Jeater had already reported and had nothing further to add

Personnel Committee

- Cllr Winter read the report

Communications and IT

- Cllr Jelley read the report

Charles Cox Trust

- Cllr Jeater read the report and presented the accounts

FC17/107

Village matters – public participation session

- Cllr Winter spoke about the progress made with the Neighbourhood Plan. She advised that no formal decision had been made to create a plan but that groundwork is being done with regards to mapping village assets, using the 2011 census data and meeting with the Rural Community Council of Essex.
- A general discussion was held regarding the possible threat of the closure of the Ingatestone railway ticket office and it was agreed that further publicity about this would be welcome in the village and that parishioners should use the ticket office as often as possible. The Clerk was asked to add this to the next Full Council agenda.

FC17/108

Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm and invited everyone for refreshments

Date of Next Council Meeting: Thursday 6th July at 7.30pm

Venue: Ingatestone Library, High Street

Appendix**Chairman's Report****Looking back on 2016 / 2017**

It has been a year of change for Ingatestone and Fryerning Parish Council. Firstly, we moved office in September 2016 from 118 High Street to Suite 1, 4 The Limes. The office has extended its opening times to 9-5 Tuesday to Thursday. The move resulted in a great deal of additional work and hours and great thanks are due to the staff of the Parish Council for their effort and commitment. Thanks are also due to Cllr Peter Davey who acted on behalf of the council in negotiating a new lease on premises that both cut Parish Council costs and has improved the working environment for the staff. Finally thanks should also go to the Essex County Council CIF Award for furnishing the new office and updating our IT equipment.

During the year, the Parish Council lost the services of former Councillors, Dave Whittaker and Mary Bryant. I would like to record the thanks of the Parish Council to Dave and Mary for their many years of dedicated service. I am delighted to have welcomed Cllr Dawn Jelley who joined the Parish Council in February and has already made significant contributions based on her professional journalism skills. At the time of writing, we have one vacancy which we hope to fill over the coming weeks.

In the past twelve months, the Parish Council has initiated and, in some cases completed a number of major projects to maintain and improve the facilities of the parish. In Fryerning Cemetery, a new path was laid which has made the site more accessible to all. We now hope to increase seating at the cemetery through a bench sponsorship programme to enable quiet reflection and rest for visitors.

The nearby Lychgate has undergone the first phase of major renovation – the roof has been renewed and brickwork secured and over the next few months, the remaining flint work will be reset. All this work was essential to prevent the building falling into disrepair and was long overdue.

In September, we embarked upon what has been our most ambitious project this year with the overall aim of allowing parishioners full access to Fairfield Pond and to turn the area into a destination. The pond was dredged; the banks were smoothed and a revetment installed to prevent a reoccurrence of flooding near the skate park. Work is still underway on the landscaping and planting of the site and should be completed by the end of 2017. Significant funding was acquired for this project from ECC CIF award, furthermore a new interpretation panel, additional seating and bins have been installed thanks to a grant from the Essex Heritage Fund. The Parish Council would like to acknowledge their appreciation to these bodies for their support.

The other major challenge that the Parish Council has faced is to secure the future of Seymour Field and Pavilion. Progress has been painfully slow and negotiations with Brentwood Borough Council have dragged on for over a year. However, there is a growing sense of optimism that an agreement is within reach so that the Parish Council may acquire a 25-year lease. This will enable us to ensure that the field remains for recreational use by all residents and will also allow us to seek grant aid to modernise and refurbish the pavilion so that it becomes a real community asset.

During the past year, the Parish Council has made considerable effort to improve communication with parishioners. Last summer a Parish Questionnaire was circulated and we would like to thank those residents who responded. The findings (available on our website) have given us a deeper understanding as to the priorities of the people of Ingatestone and Fryerning. In the last 6 months, we have relaunched our Parish Newsletter which will now be distributed 3 times a year which we hope will become a 'go to' publication for community news. Our Facebook page has been resurrected and we are currently investigating a Twitter feed and mobile phone app.

Although we have been successful in securing financial support for many projects this year, we face uncertain times with the loss of grants from Brentwood Borough Council. With the expectation that we will secure Seymour Field and Pavilion during the forthcoming year, it was a difficult but necessary decision to raise the precept for 2017/18.

In summary, 2016/17 has been a busy but fruitful year for the Parish Council. I would like to thank all Councillors for their involvement, support and dedication over this past year. I look forward to serving the community in 2017/18.

Cllr Paul Jeater

Churchyards and Environment Annual Committee Report 2017

This year has been an active one for the committee, with a number of longstanding projects seeing their completion.

The works to the Lychgate are coming to their conclusion, following a long investigation to determine whether there were any bats in residence. However, we are now within the final stages of the works, with only the remainder of the flint to be completed.

Moreover, the works to the Fairfield pond are also in their final stages. The grant aid provided by the Essex County Council CIF and Essex Heritage Fund has allowed us to improve the facilities available to the residents of the parish, and I thank them both once again for their generous contribution. The benches, bins and information board are now in place, and I would also like to thank Cllr Abrey on his contribution to the historical information detailed. It is currently planned that the flowers will be planted in autumn, providing the flowers with a chance to take root in milder weather.

As a council we have taken further steps with our contractor Greenscapes to ensure all materials, namely pesticides and herbicides, used within the parish are environmentally friendly. In addition to this, we are collating information collected by Brentwood Borough Council on the air quality of the village, and will be posting this upon the Parish Council's website on a quarterly basis.

The survey conducted by the Parish Council made evident that as a community we value the villages environment and it is imperative we do all that we can to preserve it. Fly tipping has been a consistent issue not only within this parish but also across the borough. In the period from October 2015 to October 2016 fly tipping cost the Borough circa. £54,000,000. Brentwood Borough Council have now invested in a dedicated fly tipping team to dispose of this waste and I hope that the coming year will see greater efforts to educate people on the impact of fly tipping.

Moreover, we have also seen repeated instances of anti-social behaviour throughout the year. The committee has taken proactive steps to try to mitigate these instances, including working with the police and trimming the hedge obstructing the view of the rear section of Fairfield. It is hoped that greater visibility will minimise potential anti-social behaviour and open up the area to younger children who may wish to use the zip wire and other facilities located there.

Other instances of anti-social behaviour have come from the return of moles, however, this time to Fairfield. We will be working closely with Ingatestone and Fryerning Cricket Club to devise a humane and ethical way of dealing with these animals, which are unfortunately in the wrong place.

Moving forward we look to complete a cyclical replacement programme of the High Street Planters, this will spread expenditure for the parish across a longer period of time. Due to unforeseen clashes with other events in the parish a litter pick day was unable to be held as previously, however, we will be holding a litter pick day on Saturday 14th October and I hope to see many of you there.

I would like to thank my fellow members of the Committee who have served this parish dutifully and have given their personal time in service to the community.

Toby Blunsten
Chair of Churchyards and Environment Committee 2016-17

Planning Committee Report.

Statistics

The 2016/17 Planning Committee consisted of 7 members, one co-opted member and met every 2 weeks in the Library. These meetings are open to members of the public and anyone affected by a planning application is encouraged to attend and express their views to the committee.

As a Statutory Consultee the PC receives electronic copies of all applications affecting the parish and the committee has delegated powers to decide on minor applications such as extensions and conversions. All new builds or more contentious issues are referred to Full Council where all Councillors have the opportunity to comment and vote on these more major items.

The Parish Council can only make recommendations and register an "objection" or "no objection" but it is Brentwood who make the final decision. The PC informs BBC of its views on all application and provides the reasons for their views. The reasons need to be based on material planning considerations and comprehensively worded. Most decisions are made by the Planning Officers at Brentwood but occasionally these are referred to Brentwood's Planning Committee for a decision. On these occasions the Parish Council can speak to the committee but do not have a vote.

In the last 12 months 115 applications were received and this is just 1 less than last year when 116 applications were received.

They can be broken down as follows with last year's figures in brackets:-

- 58 Extensions and conversions (57)
 - 7 New Builds. (13)
 - 13 Tree Work. (12)
 - 9 Work on Listed Buildings. (8)
 - 1 Conservatory. (1)
 - 12 Miscellaneous applications. (16). They include garages, windows, change of use, and non- material amendments.
 - 2 Change of condition.(6)
 - 9 Unable to comment
 - 2 Adverts
 - 2 Retrospective applications
- The Parish Council objected to 36 of these applications which is 31% compared to 34% the previous year.
- 39 Applications were in the Green Belt the same number as last year.

Areas of activity and concern

A comprehensive response has been sent to BBC on the 2nd consultation of the BBC Local Development Plan for 2015 -2030. The views we have put forward on various proposed development sites in the Green Belt within the Parish point out our resident's views on the need to protect the Green Belt surrounding Ingatstone. This land will come under increasing pressure by developers in future. Concerns were expressed about the lack of suitable infrastructure to support various development proposals in the surrounding areas. Recent applications for the construction of housing on Green Belt agricultural land at the North of the village is a cause for concern.

Work on the Bell Mead site has now been started. A planning application for 16 homes to be built there has been approved by BBC. The plans include the provision of 12 additional resident parking bays and a footpath leading to the Railway Station.

The PC continues to push BBC for the introduction of a procedure for Local Listing. 25 properties in the 2 Ingatestone Conservation areas and others in Fryerning are recommended by ECC Heritage Department for Local Listing. Following meetings with the BBC heritage officer Photos of additional properties have been provided.

An application to develop the Grade 2 Listed Crown and develop within the curtilage has been approved by BBC. After long delays the work on the site is nearing completion. The Parish Council have written to BBC objecting to the use of Astro Turf within the curtilage of the Grade 2 listed building and Conservation Area which is considered to be totally inappropriate.

Parking and speeding problems continue to occupy the minds of members of the committee, further discussion and correspondence on these issues will take place as issues are raised.

Thanks must go to the Clerk and Rosemary for their help and support in producing agendas, minutes and their day to day support throughout the year which has helped the committee to run smoothly.

Lastly I would like to thank my Vice Chair Kate Sutton and all the members of the committee for their help throughout the year and in particular Lyndon Day and Peter Davey for representing the PC at meetings in the Council Chamber at BBC and at BPCA meetings on planning issues

David Abrey

Report from the Personnel Committee

Last November saw the first meeting of the Personnel Committee. Like the Full Council, it exercises its authority as a collective body. The committee started with five members, three to actively deal with day to day matters and two to be called on if a dispute arises. It will meet quarterly but convene when necessary.

The Personnel Committee delegates the responsibility to the clerk to provide day to day oversight, direction, guidance and support for the work of the council staff.

In this first year, a suite of policies have been developed and agreed at Full Council and will be reviewed annually. These include Disciplinary, Grievance, Health and Safety for all employees, Sickness and Absence, Lone Working, Equal Opportunities and a Training Policy for employees and councillors.

Job Descriptions of employees have been revised and Contracts of Employment brought up to date.

Most members attended a training half-day with an external consultant to understand current codes of practice and employment law. During this training it was recommended that the Personnel Committee be increased to six members to provide for a three person reference group should a dispute arise. This was achieved at Full Council.

Cllr Jane Winter
Chair Personnel Committee

Communications and IT Committee Report

The Parish Council has many great opportunities to update and improve its communications, media and digital offerings and to raise awareness and engage with our parishioners.

We believe that social media is a crucial and cost effective way – if used properly – to increase our audience potential. To do this we have set up a new Communications and IT Committee, which held its first meeting on the 2 May 2017 and will meet quarterly. The committee will oversee the Parish Council's updates on social media, contact with the press/media and our current website and newsletter.

A new media policy

One of the first tasks will be to update the Parish Council Media Policy, which was created in 2015. This will underpin our communications strategy, allow us to operate in a compliant, legal and consistent manner and look at the overall Parish Council brand.

A robust media policy will include guidelines and templates for posting and writing on social media, a consistent tone of voice for the website, the newsletter and press releases, updated legal guidelines, risk management advice and tips for dealing with the press.

Communications subcommittee

Because of the immediacy required when updating social media posts, dealing with the press and posting on social media, we felt it is best practice to set up a communications subcommittee to react in a timely manner.

This new subcommittee will be led by myself (as vice chair of the committee) and include Cllrs Paul Jeater and Toby Blunsten. It will handle all immediate social media communications on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and any press releases that need to be sent out.

All of these communications must first be approved by the clerk, Abi Wood, and in her absence the chair of the Parish Council.

A first task will be to create terms of reference for the new subcommittee.

Task and finish groups

The groups will focus on key aspects of the Parish Council's communications. These include:

- Parish Council newsletter

In our next Communications and IT Committee meeting, scheduled in August, we will look at ways in which we can improve our newsletter processes and content to communicate to our audience.

Abi has already created a 'new look' newsletter which looks great and together we can build on this. Abi will remain the sole contact point for the newsletter and continue to be responsible for agreeing the content, while I hope to provide some editorial advice and help with developing the publication. It is hoped that eventually, while maintaining a hard copy version of the newsletter for parishioners that are not online, we'll adapt this into a cost effective and wide reaching electronic format.

- Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/apps

Toby and I will be the joint leads and Cllrs Rachel Lee and Paul Jeater will be the other members of this group, which will oversee social media posts and development of a Parish Council app.

We already have a Facebook account, so we will look at increasing our reach from the current 240 plus followers, as well as resurrecting our presence on Twitter and making a debut in Instagram, to appeal to our younger parishioners.

We will look into streamlining processes and updates and maximising damage limitation with a social media platform, such as Hootsuite (which is free and easy to use).

- The website: www.ingatestone-fryerningpc.gov.uk

We hope to build on the successful launch of the new PC website on the 3 October 2015 after eight months' hard work by Abi with Sue Lees Consultancy.

We will look to optimise website traffic and improve on its current content and images and make it work harder for the Parish Council.

Abi will remain the main contact with Sue Lees and we will continue working to develop and evolve the website, with the help of Cllr. Peter Davey after his key role in its redesign and launch.

- IT hardware, software and contracts initiatives

Cllr. Peter Davey will continue to lead on this group with Donald Frost, Phill Poston and Abi Wood who will liaise with IXCG, our hardware and software provider.

Cllrs. Peter Davey (chair) and Dawn Jelley (vice chair)