

ARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Meeting of Ardleigh Parish Council held on Monday 13 January 2025 at 7.30pm at Ardleigh Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllrs Tim Barrott (Chair), James Blyth, Helen Fontaine, Jayne Marshall, Carolyn Mason, Richard Talbot (from 8pm), Emma Thrower and Martin Whiteley. Cllr Zoe Fairley (Tendring District Council) was also present.

Officers: Clerk, Rachel Fletcher and Deputy Clerk, Rachel Edwards (Minutes)

ALSO IN Three members of the public were present.

ATTENDANCE:

25.001	Chair's Welcome
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
25.002	Apologies and reasons for absence
	Apologies were received from Cllr Waters and Cllr Guglielmi (Essex County Council).
25.003	Public participation session relating to items on the agenda
	Three members of the public were present. Two members raised points relating to a planning application. (See Minute 25.006b for full details).
25.004	Declaration and Register of Interests and Dispensations
	Interests were declared by Cllr Fontaine as a Trustee of the Millennium Green Trust and Cllr Blyth in respect of Planning Application 25.006c. It was noted that dispensations remained in place (See Minute 23.122 for full details).
25.005	Minutes of meeting held on 9 December 2024
	The Minutes of the meeting were approved as a true and accurate record. Delegated decisions were noted/reconfirmed.
25.006	Planning
	Applications published, received, validated and/or decided since the last meeting were noted. Comments on new applications and appeals were agreed as outlined below. It was noted that, where appropriate, reference would be made to the Neighbourhood Plan policies/Village Design Statement when commenting on planning applications. See https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications for current applications. It was noted that weekly lists provided by Tendring District Council (TDC) were sent to Councillors.
Applications	<p>a) 24/01929/COUNOT Prior Approval, Part 3, Class Q. Change of use/conversion of 1 existing agricultural building into 2 C3 dwellings. Gods House Farm, Harts Lane, Ardleigh CO7 7QQ Council resolved to object. Application does not comply with policies of the Ardleigh Neighbourhood Plan, Harts Lane not suitable for increased traffic movements.</p> <p>b) 25/00002/FULHH Rear extension and additional first floor. Willowdene, Fox Street, Ardleigh CO7 7PP During Public Participation, two members of the public requested Ardleigh Parish Council object to this application to support them in ensuring the applicant must submit corrected plans to Tendring District Council planning department. Copies of Land Registry documentation evidenced the block plan submitted by the applicant was incorrect. Council resolved to object. Proper plans must be submitted. Received after publication of the Agenda Cllr Blyth left the meeting (See Minute 25.004 for full details)</p> <p>c) 24/01724/FUL Proposed continuation of temporary change of use to outdoor storage with fencing/ hardstanding for further 2 years to 20th January 2028. Land at Crown Quarry, Old Ipswich Road, Ardleigh</p>

	<p>It was understood that the land would ultimately be part of the planned country park and that some commercial activity, unrelated to quarrying, was taking place on the site.</p> <p>Council resolved to make an informal site visit. A delegated decision would be made and comments submitted before comments closed on 29 January 2025.</p> <p>Cllr Blyth re-joined the meeting.</p>
Other	To note or consider any other applications, appeals or updates including enforcement issues.
25.007	Other Planning and Infrastructure issues
	<p>a) <i>Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community (and related issues)</i> To note/ consider updates since the last meeting including meeting with Latimer.</p> <p>Meeting held with Latimer on 16 December 2024. Comments submitted in response to public engagement request concerning governance and democracy, Link Road, other infrastructure and issues relating to Crockleford including traffic and road safety.</p> <p>b) <i>Pylons, Substations, Windfarms and related</i> To note/ consider updates since the last meeting including forthcoming hearings.</p> <p>i. Third and final Five Estuaries hearing week commencing 20 January 2025. Agenda was published online and hearings could be joined online or in person; Cllr Fairley would send a link.</p> <p>North Falls hearing follows later from 28 January 2025.</p> <p>Representation at the Five Estuaries and the North Falls hearings would be useful. Cllr Blyth may be available to attend online.</p> <p>ii. National Grid (Norwich to Tilbury) were reported to be making some localised changes – they would consult in Little Bromley and Ardeigh about the temporary access roads/ permanent access road. Residents would receive letters shortly. Consultation would begin on 21 January 2025 for 28 days.</p> <p>There would be a National Grid Webinar on 21 January 2025 about the future network of East Anglia.</p> <p>iii. Energy System Operator looking to consult with community groups. Cllr Whiteley was liaising with them.</p> <p>c) <i>Follow-up meeting with Tendring District Council</i> To note a further meeting with Gary Guiver, Tendring District Council's Director of Planning and Community would be arranged.</p> <p>Dates would be confirmed by the Clerks and a meeting arranged.</p>
25.008	Community Projects, events and assets
	<p>a) <i>Community Projects and Initiatives</i> To receive updates on any developments including reports received (eg Litter Pickers, Community Speedwatch, Ardeigh Practical Actions for Climate and Environment (APACE), Police reports) (See attachment).</p> <p>Community Speedwatch would resume bi-weekly checks as weather/light conditions improve.</p> <p>b) To consider a proposal from Cllr Fontaine for the Council to apply to the Love Your Bus Grant Fund to help with funding for the school bus. Applications close 14/2/25 (See attachment).</p> <p>Following a discussion about school/public bus availability/cost for students, Council resolved that Cllr Fontaine would contact First Bus company to gain more information about the possibility of an additional service at a more convenient time for students on the existing routes.</p> <p>c) To consider the formal adoption of the phone box due to be de-commissioned by British Telecom. Response needed by 14/2/25 (See attachment). Suggestion from residents on social media to house a second defibrillator. Council to consider and confirm next steps.</p> <p>Council resolved to contact Tendring District Council to log interest in adopting the phone box. A working group would be needed to move the defibrillator proposal forward.</p>
25.009	Highways, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and related issues
	<p>a) To consider Station Road parking following the letter sent to residents last year. Responses from residents favoured restrictions if actions taken did not resolve the situation (See attachments).</p> <p>Clerks to pass residents feedback to Cllr Guglielmi and Andy Nepean, Tendring District Council.</p>

	<p>b) Note that updates on highways, public rights of way and related issues usually take place outside the meeting and should be reported direct www.essexhighways.org/tell-us.</p> <p>Cllr Blyth stated the drain outside the Doctors' surgery had been reported to Cllr Guglielmi to feedback to Essex Highways. The drain was failing to remove rainwater from The Street despite recent works by Essex Highways.</p>																												
25.010	<p>Reports and Correspondence</p> <p>a) District and County Councillor reports To receive verbal updates from those present. Any written reports received from District and County Councillors are emailed to members.</p> <p>Cllr Fairley – Tendring District Council Local Plan meeting would be held in February. She would chase Five Estuaries as no response following the joint meeting with other councils held last year.</p> <p>b) Councillors' reports including reports of training or meetings.</p> <p>c) Clerk's report - To receive a report on key tasks undertaken since the last meeting including delegated decisions and key correspondence (See attachment).</p> <p>Delegated decision taken to arrange service of the church clock. Having been actioned, notice given there may be a second call-out charge following replacement of a bell; this had not been agreed the Clerk would seek clarification. Increasing cost of street lighting (Npower) may be incorrect billing. Tendring District Council would recommence the Resilience Forum – first meeting in March. Clerks would request it be held online at Councillors' request.</p>																												
25.011	<p>Parish Council Finance (brought forward to follow 25.007)</p> <p>a) To receive financial reports to 31 December 2024 (See attachment). Council noted the reports.</p> <p>b) To confirm the bills for payment for Parish Council and Village Hall including payments made using delegated authority.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>Royal Mail</td><td>£424.20</td></tr> <tr><td>SLCC</td><td>£190.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Adobe (Clerk expenses)</td><td>£19.97</td></tr> <tr><td>LED Electrical Group Ltd</td><td>£292.24</td></tr> <tr><td>Deputy Clerk expenses</td><td>£11.21</td></tr> <tr><td>CloudyIT</td><td>£165.36</td></tr> <tr><td>Harward Horological Ltd</td><td>£420.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Superfine Fencing</td><td>£45.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Brooks Leney</td><td>£780.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Clerk expenses</td><td>£4.05</td></tr> <tr><td>SLCC enterprises</td><td>£36.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Superfine Fencing</td><td>£540.12</td></tr> <tr><td>NPOWER</td><td>£355.92</td></tr> <tr><td>RCCE</td><td>£138.00</td></tr> </table> <p>c) To consider and agree the budget for 2025-26 (See attachment).</p> <p>Cllr Talbot joined the meeting at 8.12pm</p> <p>Council considered budget options drawn up by the Clerk. The 2024-25 budget had been optimistic and a deficit was now expected at the end of the year. An increase in the Precept or in other income was needed to meet predicted rising costs. Contracts were due to be renewed in April 2025 and were expected to rise compared with 2022 prices. Legal and other professional fees needed to be accounted for and burial income was forecast to stop within a few years unless more burial land could be provided. If not then the Council would need to absorb the cost to maintain the churchyard and cemetery without any income; it was suggested to reduce budgeted burial income by a third over the next three years to prepare for this eventuality.</p> <p>An increase in contract costs was included in the budget, some reduction in frequency of cuts etc might be needed to enable this budget to be met. Fundraising plus sharing costs with other Councils could support legal fees. Councillors/Officers could attend infrastructure hearings rather</p>	Royal Mail	£424.20	SLCC	£190.00	Adobe (Clerk expenses)	£19.97	LED Electrical Group Ltd	£292.24	Deputy Clerk expenses	£11.21	CloudyIT	£165.36	Harward Horological Ltd	£420.00	Superfine Fencing	£45.00	Brooks Leney	£780.00	Clerk expenses	£4.05	SLCC enterprises	£36.00	Superfine Fencing	£540.12	NPOWER	£355.92	RCCE	£138.00
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	<p>than appointing legal representation. Other professional fees still need to be budgeted for. Contribution to Village Hall safety and infrastructure was set at £3000.</p> <p>The intention would be to maintain reserves and cover Council expenses with the precept demand. If the this results in a deficit, reserves would need to be drawn on for the second year running.</p> <p>After a full discussion and some adjustments to the budget lines mentioned above Councillors resolved to agree a budget with a Precept of £97,309 at a cost of £80.43 for each Band D household. Future savings should be sought and income from better interest rates and grant funding accessed.</p> <p>Cllr Thrower left the meeting at 8.32pm due to work commitments.</p> <p>d) To confirm precept requirement for 2025-26 (See attachment). Council resolved to confirm the precept at £97,309. Proposed Cllr Whiteley. Seconded Cllr Mason. All in favour.</p> <p>e) To confirm completion of internal financial checks by Councillor Blyth and any issues. Council noted completion of financial checks and thanked Cllr Blyth for his continued involvement.</p> <p>f) To note an interim internal audit would be taking place in January. Council noted the interim audit would take place on 15 January 2025.</p>
25.012	Amenities and Contracts
	<p>To receive updates and take decisions on Parish Council amenities and contracts including:</p> <p>a) Council contracts and contractors To consider and agree draft contract details drawn up by the Contracts Working Group (See attachment).</p> <p>Discussions had been held with the Clerk, Cllrs Barrott, Marshall and Mason; contract specifications agreed. Tenders would be sought with a closing date of 21 February to allow for decisions to be taken at the March 2025 meeting.</p> <p>Council resolved to accept draft contract specifications and timetable.</p> <p>b) Play and Exercise equipment To note report from Deputy Clerk (See attachment). Council noted report; quotes would be obtained to replace the fence around the Millennium Green Children's Play Area. This may become a Millennium Green Trust project, to be discussed at the upcoming meeting. The existing bench at Colchester Road would be repaired. A future project would be to visit all benches in the Parish to note repair/removal/replacement.</p> <p>c) The Ardleigh Recreation Ground No update.</p> <p>d) Cemetery/churchyard matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Christmas tributes would be removed on 5 February, meeting at 2pm. Cllrs would assist; a notice would be put up at the churchyard. ii. Headstones laid down would be identified to Cottage Landscapes to ensure vegetation round them is removed to increase visibility. Families of the deceased are responsible for stones to be re-positioned but cannot always be contracted. Social media could be used to raise the issue. <p>e) Millennium Green Upcoming meeting with Millennium Green Trust on 27 January 2025.</p> <p>f) Village Hall matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To note December safety inspection checklist attached. Cllr Barrott to update Council. New and boxed fire extinguishers in Village Hall Committee Room are not required. ii. To note fire system inspection completed 3 January 2025. Cllr Talbot to update Council. New inspector supplied by Community Halls in Partnership. Logbook would be kept in a plastic folder; copy documents would be sent to the Clerks. Smoke tests would be actioned in future. Cllr Talbot would run a fire-awareness session with pre-school. iii. It was reported that a user group had been leaving fire doors open each week. This was only reported recently to the Clerks who contacted Community Halls in Partnership to liaise. Cllrs would like further action taken if the doors continue to be left open. The Clerks would contact Community Halls in Partnership again. iv. Village Hall Utility Contracts due for renewal Spring 2025. Broker to be appointed.

	<p>Three quotes received from a broker. Cllr Whiteley suggested waiting to renew utility contracts until March/April. Markets constantly fluctuate, there was no need to make a rushed decision.</p> <p>g) Other Amenities and Open Spaces issues To note the Clerk had arranged a valuation of the prospective land purchase as resolved at the December meeting. Noted by Council.</p> <p>S106 application for bins queried. Clerks advised this was being processed by Tendring District Council.</p> <p>h) Biodiversity issues and updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Cllr Mason would advise Clerks of suggested updates to the Biodiversity Policy in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and other changes. ii. Sir Bernard Jenkin's assistant, Caitlin sent an update on the Ardleigh Reservoir Committee with their address. Cllr Mason would forward the Clerks a letter to be sent to the committee about potential changes to the plans to increase biodiversity, aide wildlife and strengthen the design of the planned footpath.
25.013	Parish Council Governance and related items
	<p>a) Policies – To note policy reviews are under way and would be brought to future meetings. Noted by Council.</p> <p>b) To consider whether to hold a Community Showcase like the one held in 2023. The showcase could include the Annual Assembly Meeting if between 1 March and 1 June.</p> <p>Cllrs would discuss next month.</p>
25.014	Future meetings and meeting closure
	<p>a) To consider and agree further meeting dates in 2025. Meeting dates previously agreed for 2025 are 10 February, 10 March, 14 April and 12 May. Suggested dates for the rest of 2025 are 9 June, 14 July, 8 September, 13 October, 10 November and 8 December. All meetings would start at 7.30pm unless an earlier start is proposed.</p> <p>Council noted dates. Preference to reduce the agenda rather than change the meeting start time.</p> <p>b) To confirm the scheduled next meeting on Monday 10 February 2025, 7.30pm, Ardleigh Village Hall (with remote link) and to flag any proposed changes to format or issues for discussion.</p> <p>c) Meeting closed 9.35pm.</p>

Signed by Meeting Chair..... Date.....