



## Little Braxted Parish Council

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### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Little Braxted held in The Braxted Bakery, Witham Lane, Little Braxted on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 at 7.00 p.m.**

Present: Thirty members of the public.

In the absence of the Parish Council Chairman James Barke was elected as Chair of the meeting.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Kit Speakman.

#### **2. To Agree and Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018**

Those present agreed and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 as a true record, which were duly signed.

#### **3. Chairman's Report**

The Clerk read a report which had been provided by the Chairman of the Parish Council:-

“Once again it is my pleasure to recap the events of the past year.

From a Parish Council point of view it has again been a busy exciting year, and one in which we have attracted significant external funding to try and deliver positive projects for the village, and start some new projects.

We have campaigned and fought hard to get Essex County Council to address the highways issues raised in the Parish Plan. This time last year I asked if you had noticed the “spotters” counting vehicles and pedestrians passing the Green Man; part of our campaign to make Lea Lane safer for pedestrians and we continue to pursue this with vigour.

Although Essex County Council would not support our request for additional HGV signage at the newly constructed farm access road in Witham Road, the Essex Community Foundation granted us a considerable sum of money to enhance the bridge between Little Braxted and Rivenhall. Constant scrutiny by the Parish Council has meant that the quarry has had significantly less an impact that would otherwise have been the case.

Two years ago we had just circulated our Housing Needs Survey. Last year I was announcing the appointment of Hastoe Housing to investigate a small-scale development open to residents and those with a documented local association. Hastoe are still currently at the site identification and suitability stage, although this in itself has generated considerable local opposition. As a Council we do our best to keep you informed but with the exception of the last 2 PC meetings, only 1 member of the public has attended any other meeting, although they are open to all. Hopefully, the Rural Community Council of Essex and Hastoe can help clarify any concerns this evening.

We remain grateful to the Essex Community Foundation grant funding to enable us to continue to employ a part-time litter picker – with increased hours (well, from 12 hour/week to 1.25 hours/week). Even just this short time each week has made a difference to the volume of litter in the verges and hedgerows, and we hope this will continue.

It is good to see the Green Man prospering again after a period of uncertainty, and we remain grateful to them for enabling our external defibrillator to be placed on their outbuilding wall. We continue to be grateful to the Braxted Bakery for hosting our Parish Council meetings. Between these two businesses and the farm, we now have a number of residents who actually live AND work in the Parish.

The announcement of the final route of the A12 has been delayed still further leaving us all in the dark – as soon as we know we will let you know. Only when that is announced will consultations commence on the junctions on the new road.

As a Parish Council we rely on our residents who put so much of themselves into helping us. I would particularly like to thank Mandy Chapman for organising Neighbourhood Watch, the coffee mornings and for many years with Victoria, the Remembrance Day Service. However there is now an opportunity for anyone wishing to volunteer with the Remembrance Day Service to get involved in what is an important day in village life.

I am deeply indebted to my fellow Councillors who, this year in particular, have spent many hours of their free time on PC business and also to Gordon, our Parish Clerk, who goes above and beyond to help us drive the Parish forward. He is a professional Town Clerk and we are very lucky to have him. His knowledge and attention to detail are invaluable.”

#### **4. To Ask Questions of the Rural Community Council of Essex and Hastoe Housing related to the Housing Needs Survey, Exception Site Selection Process, and Future Lettings Policy**

Laura Atkinson of the Rural Community Council of Essex gave a short presentation on Housing Needs Surveys, indicating that the questionnaire used in Little Braxted was common across Essex and that the response rate was above the Essex average. She drew the attention to the six respondents who had indicated they would like to be able to continue to live in the Parish, and pointed out that whilst none had indicated a preference for rented accommodation, from the financial information they had provided, their aspiration of purchasing, even on a shared ownership basis, was not achievable. Therefore they had a housing need which could only be met by affordable rented accommodation. It was the RCCE's experience that whilst none of those responding had indicated they were on the District Council's Housing Waiting List this was not uncommon as they potentially did not qualify for housing under the current points-based system, but would do on a "locality" basis if a rural exception site development were to take place.

Hastoe Housing gave a short presentation on their involvement to date which had been around site and landowner identification. Only one landowner had offered potential sites, and those were in a limited area of their landholding.

Residents asked that the Parish Council:-

- a) Consider re-running the Housing Needs Survey (it was pointed out that a changed response rate was unlikely to affect the identified housing need)
- b) Consider forming a small Working Party to review the Housing Needs Survey questionnaire (it was further pointed out that the bulk of the questions were required to satisfy Maldon District Council's acceptance of the findings)

The Chairman confirmed with the Parish Clerk that these would be agenda items for the Parish Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> June.

**5. Closure**

The meeting was closed at 8.34 p.m.