

Little Oakley Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th January 2022
In the Millennium Room, St Michael's Church, Ramsey starting at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs Attrill (Chairman), Griggs (Vice Chairman), Coates and Lane

Also Present: Jeanette Sands (Clerk/RFO)

Members of the Public: One member of the public attended

21/139 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Bush and County Cllr Land and accepted by all.

21/140 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No interests were declared.

21/141 Signing of the Minutes

The Minutes from the October meeting were accepted as a true record and duly signed.

21/142 Public Speaking

This was moved to allow public speaking to follow the Planning agenda item and allow for comments regarding the Parish Councils reply to the Hamford Water planning application.

21/143 Report from District Councillor Bush

District Council Bush had sent his apologies therefore no report was given.

21/144 Report from County Councillor Land

County Cllr Land had sent his apologies but had also submitted a report. It was reported that the Highways Panel Scheme is in to reduce the speed of traffic at Two Village School to 20mph. Also reported was that Mayes Lane near Two Village School and the junction opposite St Michaels church is to be resurfaced.

21/145 Planning

The Chairman thanked Cllr Coates for her very comprehensive report which will be submitted to Tendring District Council (TDC). After reading the report it was RESOLVED that this will be submitted and Little Oakley Parish Council will OBJECT to the planning application from Hutchisons Ports reference number 21/02144/FUL. See Appendix C for full report.

Proposed Cllr Attrill

Seconded Cllr Lane

It was RESOLVED a petition will be organised via Change.org and Cllr Griggs will arrange this. The petition is to be posted onto the Facebook page, website and also placed on the notice boards. There will also be a link to the planning page at TDC. There will also be a statement issued to The Harwich and Manningtree Standard.

21/02165TPO Trees at St Marys Church yard. It was RESOLVED to send a Neutral decision to TDC for this application.

21/00003/DISCON Barn opposite the White House, Rectory Road. Discharge of drainage and landscaping. Includes a new native hedge and fence – it was RESOLVED to send in a decision of Neutral for this application.

There were no Determinations.

21/146 Clerks Report

This has been previously circulated. Please see Appendix A. It was also noted that the ploughed up footpath across the field needs details sending to Essex County Council to look into and that a follow up is required regarding the broken wooden post at Bay View Crescent which once held a rubbish bin. It is hoped this will be removed.

21/147 Lone Worker Policy

The requirement of a lone worker policy was discussed and it was RESOLVED that the Governance and Policy Group would bring one forward to the next meeting for adoption.

21/148 Finance Report

Previously Circulated. Please see Appendix B. Two expense claims were received for training courses and black bags for the litter pick, these are added to the January payments list due to there being no December meeting. It was RESOLVED to accept the payments and expenses after these were duly checked and signed by two Councillors as being correct, to accept the increase for grounds maintenance due to the rise in inflation costs. It was also RESOLVED that the Ready Reckoner will be submitted with the increase costs to cover the legal and other playground costs given as an explanation for this. At present only the Clerk is able to post payments to the bank which are then authorised by another Councillor. It was RESOLVED that Cllr Attrill be appointed as a second person to post payments in the absence of the Clerk/RFO. The Clerk will contact the bank to advise of this. It was noted that the VAT reclaim of £192.70 had been received.

21/149 Financial Regulations

The Financial Regulations have been reviewed and details were sent to Councillors to review and approve. It was RESOLVED to accept the Financial Regulations
Proposed Cllr Attrill
Seconded Cllr Coates

21/150 Recreation Ground

Essex County Council (ECC) had emailed the plans for the recreation ground and advised the lease would be £505 per year. However the area shown was incorrect and after further contact with ECC new details were sent. The land for lease is on the right hand side and at present has many brambles covering it. Rent is £570 per year but it has been agreed that the cost of clearing the brambles can be deducted for the first years rent. Cllr Attrill will make enquires regarding the clearing and removal of the brambles.

21/151 Footpaths

It was RESOLVED to defer this item until the next meeting.

21/152 Drainage ditches around the village

A list of landowners for the fields either side of Rectory Road has been obtained. It was RESOLVED to make contact to enquire as to if they are able to clear the ditches along the roadside. Councillors were also made aware that recently clay from a garden on Rectory Road had been taken by the excavating digger and deposited on the field opposite, this was seen to be falling into the ditch possibly causing future problems.

21/153 Working Groups Reports – The Big Lunch

The Scouts have been contacted and are willing to help. It was noted that The Harwich Festival is also organizing events over the weekend but this should not have any impact on the village Big Lunch. It was decided to hold another meeting before the February Parish Council meeting where an update will be given.

21/154 Village Planters

After reviewing the details of costs and size for the first planter it was decided to change the size to 6 foot x 5 foot with a height of 2 foot. The planter is to be bottomless to help with drainage. It was RESOLVED the Clerk will request a quote for the larger size.

21/155 Dog Bins

After looking at photographs of metal and plastic bins it was decided the plastic bin option would be the better of the two for durability. As the bins are free standing they would need a base. It was RESOLVED the Clerk would contact Tendring District Council to enquire as to whether a base is provided in the costs. The Clerk will confirm the cost of the bins for relocation and the additional bin at Seaview if this is over the £1296.99 costing then this will be deferred until the next meeting. Little Oakley Memorial Club will also be contacted meantime to confirm they are still agreeable with the free standing bin being placed near to the field entrance.

21/156 Rectory Road Post Box

It was decided the Clerk would send one more letter by mail to be signed for for a reply as to the reinstatement of the post box

21/157 Bus Shelter Maintenance

It was RESOLVED that the bus shelter maintenance be added to the grounds maintenance and that the cost involved be accepted. It was RESOLVED that the maintenance will be carried out bi-annually in late spring and early autumn. The maintenance will include a tidy of the shelter, clearing of vegetation, a washdown of the shelter and the removal of any posters. It was RESOLVED to email Ramsey Parish Council to ask if they wish to have their two bus stops (one with a shelter) added to the list and to be invoiced from LOPC accordingly.

21/158 New Village Sign

This would be in the same style as the other village signs but would need to include posts. The sign is to be positioned at Saltwater Bridge (right hand side) but as the area the sign needs to be located is in Great Oakley Parish Councils area it was RESOLVED to contact Great Oakley Parish Council to ask permission to erect the sign.

21/159 Ye Olde Cherry Tree Public House

The pub has a Asset of Community Value attached to it at present but this is due to expire on 2nd March 2022, this had previously been nominated for this by CAMRA. This ensures that the owner must tell Tendring District Council (TDC) if the pub is placed on the market to sell. TDC will then notify CAMRA who will in turn notify residents of the sale. When this happens the community has 6 weeks to express an interest to buy and 6 month to make a formal offer. However it was noted that the owner does not have to accept this offer. It was RESOLVED to contact CAMRA to advise of the renewal date and enquire if they will renew. If CAMRA are not to renew LOPC will do this.

21/160 Trees at Church Yard

The Diocese have emailed stating that according to their records this churchyard is not a closed churchyard. This would result in Little Oakley Parish Council (LOPC) and Tendring District Council (TDC) not being responsible for any maintenance to the trees in the churchyard of St Marys. It was RESOLVED to contact the Diocese again to confirm this is the case and once confirmed to contact the owner of St Marys House to advise.

21/161 Overgrown Hedge

This has now been trimmed back so is no longer for discussion

21/162 Items for the next agenda.

Any ongoing items from the January meeting will go onto the agenda
Review of the Code of Conduct

Hamford Water Update

21/163 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

Wednesday February 9th 2022 in the Millennium Room, St. Michael's Church, Ramsey, starting at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

21/164 Confidential Item

Pursuant to sub-section 2 of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 this part of the meeting was closed to the press and public.

Signed Date

Appendix A
Little Oakley Parish Council
Clerks Report for January Meeting

Meeting Date	Agenda Number	Minute Number	Information and decision made	Action Taken and Outcome	Closed
10th March	4	20/164	Dog Waste Bins. To contact TDC and enquire about relocation.	TDC emailed awaiting reply after officer has looked at the site. Contact again for update Another contact made for update. Emailed again for update. Has been moved to Shelley Correia-Bird to look into	See agenda
9 th June	11	21/28	Rectory Road Post Box	Write to CEO and enclose emails. Send special delivery. Letter sent. Reply received. Quoted problem of not being outside the half mile from another post box therefore no need for reinstatement.	See agenda
9 th June	8	21/25	S106 for railings	To apply for S106 money to cover cost of repairs to railings at playground. Applied for.	
13 th October			Councillor Resignation	Following a recent resignation the Parish Council now has three vacancies. TDC have been notified and the Notice of Casual Vacancies sent.	See agenda
13 th October			Correspondence	A resident had concerns about vehicles blocking off the footpaths opposite the Memorial Club where houses are being built. This was forwarded to Ramsey PC and the resident advised. Further correspondence received as it was thought that the estate is in Little Oakley, once again advised this is in Ramsey. Ramsey have also answered the query.	Closed
10th November				All updates have been removed and placed on the Agenda. There are no new items at present	

12 th January 2022				As above – all items currently working on are agenda items	
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Appendix B

Little Oakley Parish Council

Finance Report

January 2022

Account Balances

1st January the accounts balances were

Current Acct £4547.98

Savings Acct £43744.38

These figures include the reserve values in the savings account.

VAT Reclaim

The VAT refund of £192.70 has been submitted, this covers October to December 2021.

Update – this has now been receiving into the bank account.

Grounds Maintenance

Details of a price increase of £25 per quarter has been received. The new cost is now £225 per quarter, this has been the first increase since 2018.

Confirmed Payments for December

Payment To	Details of Payment	Net	Vat	Gross
A & J Lighting	Monthly Maintenance	£34.38	£6.88	£41.26
SSE	Electricity Supply	£66.64	£3.32	£69.96
VCS	Website Hosting	£50.00	£0.00	£50.00
SLCC	Annual Membership	£80.00	£0.00	£80.00
Mrs J Sands	Clerks Salary	£260.64	£0.00	£260.64
Bank Charges		£18.00	£0.00	£18.00
	Totals	£509.66	£10.20	£519.86

January Expenditure Paid to Date and Expected

Payment To	Details of Payment	Net	Vat	Gross
Playground Inspect Co	Playground inspection	52.50	10.50	63.00
Ramsey Church	Donation for use of hall 5 th Jan	20.00	0.00	20.00
A & J Lighting	Monthly Maintenance	£34.38	£6.88	£41.26
SSE	Electricity Supply	£74.36	£3.71	£78.07

Ramsey Church	Donation for use of hall 12 th Jan	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00
Mr A Thomas	Grounds Maintenance	£225.00	£0.00	£225.00
Accent	Cartridges and paper	£53.74	£10.75	£64.49
Mrs J Sands	Clerks Salary	£260.64	£0.00	£260.64
	Totals	£740.62	£31.84	£772.46

February Proposed Payments

Payment To	Details of Payment	Net	Vat	Gross
A & J Lighting	Monthly Maintenance	£34.38	£6.88	£41.26
SSE	Electricity Supply	£68.57	£3.32	£71.99
Ramsey Church	Donation for use of hall	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00
Ramsey Church	Donation for use of hall - interviews	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00
Mrs J Sands	Clerks Salary (final week)	£65.16	£0.00	£65.16
	New Clerks Salary			
	Totals	£208.11	£10.20	£218.41

Appendix C

Planning Application 21/02144/FUL – Objection from Little Oakley Parish Council

Little Oakley Parish Council (LOPC) OBJECT to the planning application for the proposed Little Oakley Managed Realignment by Hutchison Ports (UK) Ltd.

Our objection is based on the following factors, each of which will be addressed in turn:

1. The loss of the footpath along the top of the existing sea wall
2. The loss of access from Little Oakley to Irlams Beach
3. The loss of existing habitat and landscape
4. The impact on the seal population

We would also like it noted that although the Planning Statement supporting this application refers to a meeting between LOPC and the Applicants, this comprised a brief discussion at short notice, between the Chair and Vice-chair of LOPC and Jane Albins Head of Planning at Hutchison Ports on 30.11.21 — a point by which the plans were already at a very late stage of development. LOPC consider reference to this brief discussion as "engagement" as disingenuous.

The loss of the footpath along the top of the existing sea wall

Para 5.3.10 at page 30 of the Planning Statement submitted in support of this application states: "the impact on footpath users is one of minor adverse significance". LOPC fundamentally disagree with this statement.

Fig FP3 in the Planning Statement shows the proposed footpath diversion. The existing footpath runs along the top of the sea wall on a wide grass path, affording the walker extensive views of Hamford Water, the coast, sea and countryside. The area viewed from this path has been described as the most unspoilt part of the Essex coast — our nearest thing to wilderness. It is stunningly beautiful.

Its proposed replacement will run at the base of the landward side of the new sea wall. There will be no view, no feeling of wilderness or space. The proposed viewing platforms are not in any sense an adequate alternative. The reason given at para 5.3.10 of the Planning Statement is that the "sea wall has been designed ...to screen waterfowl within the compensation site".

The existing footpath leads into the Essex Way and is an integral part of Natural England's proposed England Coast Path (ECP). In 2017 Natural England produced an "Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal" which records the conclusion of Natural England's research into any potential impact connected to their proposals. When considering the current route on top of the sea wall Natural England's report concluded at section 4.5 that: "No interaction is anticipated on the proposed line of the ECP where it follows the existing public footpath along the sea wall". Natural England therefore, did not consider that the placement of the existing path on top of the sea wall would adversely impact the natural environment.

In the light of this report, LOPC consider that there is no reason why the realigned footpath, as with the existing footpath, should not be on top of the sea wall, retaining the uninterrupted views of the surrounding environment.

LOPC have also referred to the Tendring District Local Plan 2007, Policy TR4 "Safeguarding and Improving Public Rights of Way" and referred to in passing at page 21 para 4.4.18 of the Planning Statement. That policy states: "Where development affects an existing public right of way, planning permission will be refused unless the development can accommodate definitive alignment of the path. A formal diversion providing a safe, attractive and convenient alternative may be considered where appropriate". LOPC consider that as this proposed development does not accommodate the definitive alignment of the existing path and as the alternative proposed is significantly less attractive, TDC cannot approve the current proposal in accordance with its own policy.

The loss of access from Little Oakley to Irlams Beach

The existing public footpath affords access directly from Little Oakley to Irlams (sometimes spelt Earlhams) Beach via an extension of the Essex Way called Long Bank. Under the proposed scheme this footpath, and therefore access to the beach, will be lost. At low tide it may be possible to access the beach from Little Oakley via a much longer route from the north by continuing along the Essex Way towards Dovercourt and then doubling back along the beach. However, this is potentially hazardous. At low tide it is possible to cross the creeks which cross the beach at Middle Beach but at high tide they are impassable, potentially stranding those who are unaware. At the moment the path provides both a means of access and escape.

Again LOPC have referred to Policy TR4 (see above) and note that in this case it is proposed that an existing right of way is extinguished but no alternative is provided. The application should be refused on this basis.

Little Oakley has very little public amenity. There is no village hall, no public playing field or public open space. What we do have is access to the beach which undoubtedly adds to the health, wellbeing and quality of life of the local population. This has of course been particularly important over the last two years and would be devastating if lost.

The loss of existing habitat and landscape

LOPC note that there is little consideration of the existing habitat and landscape within the Planning Statement. However, there is no doubt that the sea walls themselves have created habitats which are now of considerable significance. There are plant and animal species that are rarely found elsewhere. Natural England in its Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal (already referred to) notes at page 24 "...areas of wet grassland and fresh/brackish water to the landward side of the seawall are important to a number of species of non-breeding waterbirds". In this location records from 2013 have been kept by the British Trust for Ornithology which show that the following "red list" birds (those of the highest conservation priority) are present: skylark, lapwing, linnet, yellowhammer, corn bunting and cuckoo.

LOPC in particular note the concerns raised in the Royal Haskoning DHV Environmental Statement report at para 7.2 "likely significant effects cannot be ruled out for the Hamford Water SAC (specifically in relation to the Fishers Estuarine Moth)".

At page 30 para 5.3.10 the Planning Statement says that the change in landscape appearance will be "from the arable field with hedgerows to expanse of mud" which it concludes is of "negligible significance".

LOPC consider that this change would cause overriding harm to the character and appearance of the rural landscape and that it should be rejected in accordance with the Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Publication Draft Policy PPL 3 which states:

"The Council will protect the rural landscape and refuse planning permission for any proposed development which would cause overriding harm to its character or appearance including to ... estuaries, rivers and undeveloped coast; ...native hedgerows, trees and woodlands..."

The impact on the seal population

LOPC note the limited reference to the seal population in Hamford Water. This population has grown steadily over recent years and is now estimated to be in excess of 500. 90% of this population are common seals which pup from June-August and 10% are grey seals which pup from November-January.

The Royal Haskoning report (referred to above) confirms that the impact on the seals during the construction phase of the proposed development is likely to be "moderate adverse". It is hoped to mitigate this impact by scheduling work to avoid the pupping season and that this will reduce the impact to "minor adverse". However, bearing in mind that it is intended that the proposed work will be undertaken during spring, summer and autumn, but the majority of the seal population will pup in the summer, it appears that no account has been taken of the impact that this will have on the construction phase of the project which could potentially be extended by at least 6 months.

It is also noted that there will be an adverse impact on marine mammals in the operational phase of the project and a representative of the local British Divers Marine Life Rescue volunteer team has noted the close proximity of the realigned sea wall to a sewage treatment plant which poses an additional risk of contamination to the sea and the seals.

LOPC do not consider that sufficient weight has been attached to the disturbance of the seal population and the damage that this proposal will inflict.

The seals have also become a popular tourist attraction with regular boat trips taking visitors to view them from a safe distance. Any loss of the seal population would therefore not only impact on the seals themselves but also on the local economy.

Conclusion

LOPC are very concerned that an attempt to mitigate the loss of habitat as a result of the proposed development at Bathside Bay, will, if this proposal is allowed, inevitably involve the loss of a beautiful coastal walk, the loss of a well loved local amenity, the destruction of existing habitat and lead to many years of disruption for local residents and walkers. On balance, this cannot be acceptable.