

Little Baddow Parish Council

Annual Assembly 2022

The Annual Assembly of the Parish Council was in The Memorial Hall, North Hill, Little Baddow on Wednesday 11th May 2022 commencing at 7.30pm. The following members of the Council were present:

Chairman: Cllr P Irvine

Councillors: Mrs. B. Teal; Ms. D. Ginn; Mr. S Scott; Mr. A Roche, Mr. K Sheldrake, and Mrs. Stephanie Scott

Chairman Councillor Irvine welcomed Essex County Councillor John Spence and Chelmsford City Councillor Ian Wright and thanked them both for their support over the past year.

Total attendance was approximately 50 people.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Parish Councillors approved the minutes of the last meeting held on 28th April 2021 as a true and fair record of the meeting.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman started his report by drawing residents' attention to the recently distributed Village Newsletter that included many interesting articles on the village and the activities of the Council.

In particular the Chairman spoke to the following points that are of village interest and reflect issues raised by residents:

- **The Neighbourhood Plan** – the draft of the Plan and a Design Guide has been completed. The next step is to get formal endorsement from Chelmsford City Planning to continue to the Public Consultation phase and then onto the final requirement for a Referendum to adopt the Plan, hopefully in the autumn.
- **Speeding** – a perennial issue in the village. Council would welcome more volunteers for the Speedwatch Group to assist in the gathering of evidence to support possible traffic calming measures
- **Mushroom Farm** – the Fairfax Gospel Hall Trust and the Parish Council will shortly exchange contracts on the Parish acquiring approximately 2.5 acres of the existing Mushroom Farm site off Holybread Lane to add to the existing Holybred Wood.
- **Memorial Hall & Sport Pavilion** – the upgrading of the hall and pavilion continues with many improvements completed and planned. The hall is the focus of a three-year plan to reduce its energy requirements through insulation and more efficient heating systems, saving both money and the environment.
- **Paper Mill Lock Bridge** – the Chairman attended the February meeting of Essex County Council to present the village petition to the Council. ECC and Essex Highways are now looking at the option to repair the existing bridge and a meeting is planned for late May when they will present their findings and recommendations.

- **Ride London** – Assembly was advised about the road closures in the village on Friday 27th May to accommodate the Ride London cycling event. The Chairman acknowledged the presence of representatives from Ride London who were available to answer resident questions.
- **Councillor Vacancy** – there is a vacancy for a councillor on the Parish Council and residents are encouraged to get involved in the management of the village.
- **Queen's Jubilee Picnic** – in recognition of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee a picnic is being organised on the Sports Field for Thursday 2nd June to coincide with the part of the planned Queen's Official Flypast to divert over Little Baddow. Details are on the village website.

In closing the Chairman reiterated that as the Parish Council has limited powers residents were encouraged to report any issues to the appropriate authorities (typically Essex Highways, Essex Police and Chelmsford City Council via their websites) as this supplements action taken by the Council and helps the authorities in prioritising matters. Also, any assistance in watering the Planters around the village would be much appreciated.

Reports (Inc Charities)

Written reports including the financial overview were in the Spring Newsletter with copies having been distributed to all households in the village at the beginning of the month. The reports from Charities are available on the Little Baddow website when published each year.

Introduction to Parish Councillors

Chairman Cllr Peter Irvine introduced the Councillors and the Parish Clerk, thanking them for their work and support.

Guest Speaker

Councillor John Spence covered a number of local topics especially acknowledging the importance of retaining the existing bridge and road layout at Paper Mill Lock. He fully supports the village in its desire to have the existing bridge repaired and added that he felt that Essex Highways had not managed the matter particularly well.

He also recognised the valuable work of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and the need to protect Little Baddow as a unique village. The issue of ever-increasing traffic through the village remains another major concern and he supports the need for a relief road from Maldon to the A12, suggesting a route from Maldon to Hatfield Peverel would be most suitable.

Councillor Spence then gave the assembly an insight into his work on Essex County Council as Cabinet Member for Health & Welfare and the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. He is keen for the future Public Enquiry to shed light on lessons that were learnt to ensure a smoother reaction to any future crisis.

Presentation of Community Awards

The Chairman was very pleased to recognise the work of the following residents in making the village a better place to live:

- Mr & Mrs Atkinson
- Mrs Jane Rigler
- Mr Keith Ferguson

The Chairman presented a bouquet of flowers to Mrs Yvonne Spence as consort to the guest speaker.

Public Question Time

Residents raised the following issues:

- **Bradwell Power Station** – is it still planned to be built? Cllr John Spence advised that there had not been any recent communication on this matter, but he presumed that as Nuclear Power is part of Central Government Policy then he felt it is likely to proceed.
- **Planning and Affordable Housing** – points were raised about the need for affordable homes especially for younger residents and those ‘Downsizing’. The Chairman reminded the Assembly that the Council had researched the potential for building social housing in the village with the Chelmsford Housing Partnership (CHP) before the Neighbourhood Plan work commenced. The response from CHP and other private developers is that there are no feasible sites to build an economic number of dwellings.
- **The issue of ‘over development’** of existing single sites was discussed and while the Parish Council has no power to intervene the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan will assist in our ability to influence outcomes at Chelmsford City Council Planning Dept.
- **Light Pollution** – the increase in the number of external house lights and driveway lights creates significant light pollution. The Chairman was sympathetic to the concerns, but it remains predominantly a planning and Highways matter. However, Assembly was advised if any resident had a specific issue, then it should be reported to Environmental Health at Chelmsford City Council.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm

Chairman

May 2023