

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 pm. THIS MEETING WAS HELD ‘REMOTELY’ IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020.**

**Present: - Town Mayor, Councillor Ron Pratt C.C.**

**Councillors: – Vanessa Bell, Bob Calver, Jennie Donnelly, Neil Pudney and Wendy Stamp.**

**In Attendance: - Town Clerk, Sarah Grimes and RFO, Kevin Money (remote administrator).**

The Town Mayor explained the procedures for speaking and voting at the meeting. A roll-call of Members was taken.

**305 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**306 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**307 TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Ron Pratt C.C., the Town Mayor, reported the death of former Town Clerk, David McNeill. He paid tribute to Mr McNeill’s outstanding service to the town and described him as a stalwart of the council and a real gentleman of Burnham. Sarah Grimes, the Town Clerk, said that her memories of working with Mr McNeill were filled with love and laughter. A minutes silence was held to his memory.

Councillor Pratt also reported the resignation of Councillor Jane English.

**308 CO-OPTION**

The Town Clerk outlined the procedure for this Agenda Item and the Town Mayor welcomed the four candidates, Elizabeth Armstead, Kelvin Coles, Kirsty Cooper and Mary-Ann Munford, to the Meeting. They were each invited to speak for a maximum of five minutes to give a resume of their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a Member of the Council. Candidates were asked a number of pertinent questions and following this the Council proceeded to a vote. It was

**RESOLVED: - that Mary-Ann Munford be co-opted to fill the vacant seat in the north ward of the town.**

The Clerk confirmed that Ms Munford would complete her Declaration of Acceptance of Office prior to the next Town Council Meeting.

Councillor Pratt thanked all the candidates for their applications and encouraged them to apply for future vacant seats on the Town Council.

**309 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED: - that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 18 February 2020, the Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Friday 20 March 2020, the Statutory Meeting of the Town Council held on 23 July 2020 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Friday 24 July 2020, be confirmed and signed.**

**310 PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** - that the confirmed Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on Tuesdays 18 February and 3 March 2020, the notes of applications considered during delegated authority (in accordance with Minute 272 of 20 March 2020) on 17 March, 31 March, 14 April, 5 May, 19 May, 2 June, 30 June, 14 July, 28 July 2020 and the notes of the meetings held on 11 and 25 August 2020, between the Town Clerk, Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Planning Clerk, during the Town Council's summer recess (in accordance with Minute 293 of 24 July 2020), be duly received.

**311 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No written questions from the public and press (in accordance with Minute 292 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Friday 24 July 2020) had been received.

**312 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

This was noted as follows:

**The Essex County Council (Maldon District) (Prohibition of Waiting, Loading and Stopping) and (On-Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement Area) (Amendment No.6) Order 2020**

Essex County Council has made the above Order. The effect of the order is to revoke 'No Waiting at Any Time' restrictions on the east side of Station Road, Burnham-on-Crouch in the District of Maldon, from a point approximately 4.2 metres south east from the point in line with the southern kerb line of Alexandra Road, south east for a distance of approximately 10.7 metres to allow for the installation of a Zebra Crossing and associated zig zags markings. This Order will be incorporated into The Essex County Council (Maldon District) (Prohibition of Waiting, Loading and Stopping) and (On-Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement Area) Consolidation Order 2019 by substituting tile number TQ945 962 revision 0 to revision 1. The Order came into operation on 31 August.

**Promenade Park Garden Play Site – Consultation**

A six-week consultation has been launched to find out what residents and visitors think of the design proposals for the play area at the top of Promenade Park (sometimes known as the Sensory Garden). Improvements are planned with the aim of making better use of the green space and creating a more natural inclusive play area. The project has been commissioned as a result of developer contributions via a Section 106 agreement and capital funding from the Council. MDC would like to encourage members of the public to share their thoughts and suggestions on the proposals. This scheme is particularly designed for younger children who are beginning to play independently, including primary school age and will include accessible play elements. Concept drawings and feedback form can be viewed via

[www.visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/GardenPlayArea](http://www.visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/GardenPlayArea) the consultation is open until 25 September 2020.

**The government had issued three new planning consultations:**

1. Changes to the current planning system: Consultation on changes to planning policy and regulations,
2. White Paper: Planning for the Future and,
3. Transparency and Competition: A call for evidence on data on land control.

**313 DIARY DATES**

There were none to report.

### 314 CO-ORDINATORS' REPORTS

- General Purposes – Councillor Wendy Stamp reported as follows:
  - i) A new laptop computer had been purchased for use by Councillors and the new Website Co-ordinator, and,
  - ii) Repairs to the council chamber roof had been completed.
- Highways – Councillor Bob Calver had submitted a written report. He further reported as follows:
  - i) following a complaint by a resident as to the poor condition of the seawall, Councillor Calver had received a response from the Environment Agency and he is satisfied that the seawall maintenance regime is robust, the seawall is perfectly intact and not compromised in any way, and,
  - ii) South Woodham Ferrers bypass – there are plans by Chelmsford City Council to install a flow of roundabouts between the Asda and Sainsbury's roundabouts which may have a detrimental effect on people driving from Burnham to various locations. Councillor Calver would report further as more information becomes available.

Councillor Vanessa Bell reported that residents are undertaking works to trees in Remembrance Avenue that are impeding telephone lines and, two trees are completely blocking the footway. Councillor Calver responded that Essex County Council is aware of the two issues. However, nothing could have been progressed prior to September.
- Conservation Area – No report.
- Website – No report.

*Councillor Neil Pudney left the Meeting at 8.30 pm.*

### 315 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Bell gave a brief environment report. Activities had been limited due to Covid-19 restrictions. She outlined a new initiative whereby people would 'adopt' and take responsibility for individual streets and areas. Both the Rotary Club and the Cadets had already shown interest. Equipment was available and a launch would be arranged. Councillor Bell commended the Council's grass cutting contractor and Maldon District Council's parks' department officer and she thanked Councillor Donnelly for her support.

Councillor Bell proposed the disbandment of the Environment Committee and it was **RESOLVED: - that i) the Environment Committee be disbanded, ii) Councillor Vanessa Bell be appointed as the Town Council's Environment Co-ordinator and iii) the Council consider contracting out the maintenance of town beds etc. at the 2020 Budget Meeting.**

Councillor Calver stated that the Council should provide Councillor Bell with as much support as it can in order for her to fulfil the role.

### 316 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillors Bell and Stamp stated that there was nothing pertinent to Burnham to report.

### 317 TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

RP – both the Carnival and Festive Fayre are cancelled due to Covid-19. There is a facebook fundraising page for the 2021 events.

WS – Devonshire Road. Councillor Stamp was contacted by a resident who was liaising with Councillor Pratt. Councillor Pratt to ask for progress.

WS – correspondence had been received on a proposed Burnham Business Board. This would come to a future Meeting for discussion.

### 318 ACCOUNTS AND TRANSFER OF FUNDS

- a) **RESOLVED: - that the payment of Accounts for September 2020 be approved and signed.**
- b) **Members noted the comparison of actual to budgeted payments and receipts to September 2020.**
- c) **RESOLVED: - that the payment of Accounts for March, April, May, June, July and August 2020, made in accordance with Minute 272 of 20 March 2020 and Minute 293 of 24 July 2020, be approved and signed.**
- d) **The bank reconciliation was approved.**

### 319 GRANTS AND DONATIONS

No requests had been received for the Meeting.

### 320 ALLOTMENTS

Councillor Stamp reported that the lease negotiation amendments would be discussed under Agenda Item 26 (Minute 330). The allotment 'mini-show' had been a great success. The Council had donated a trophy. Councillor Stamp commended the Allotment Association committee. The Town Clerk and the Allotment Association Secretary were still awaiting contact from the Council's solicitor to make a sworn declaration for submission to the barrister. Councillor Stamp had pursued this on numerous occasions.

### 321 REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS/BODIES

**Members were requested to consider the appointment of Members to represent the Town Council on external organizations/bodies in order to fill vacant positions:**

Village Hall Committee (1)

Aylett's Charity (1)

Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils (1)

Bradwell Local Community Liaison Council (1)

River Crouch Coastal Community Team (1)

River Crouch Coastal Community Team Steering Group (1)

**RESOLVED: - that this Item be deferred until the Council is at full membership.**

### 322 INTERNAL OFFICES

**Members were requested to consider the appointment of Members to internal offices in order to fill vacant positions:**

Conservation Area Inspection (1)

**RESOLVED: - that this Item be deferred until the Council is operating at full membership.**

Website – It was

**RESOLVED: - that i) Councillor Jennie Donnelly be appointed to undertake day to day operations of the Town Council's website, ii) a training budget of up to £500 be approved and iii) Councillor Donnelly attend the SLCC website accessibility webinars on 9 and 11 September 2020.**

The Town Clerk reported that The Public Sector Bodies (Websites & Mobile Applications No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 came into force in late 2018. Its aim is to ensure public sector websites and mobile apps are accessible to all users, especially those with disabilities.

By September 2020, all Parish, Town & Borough Councils must have a website that complies with Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA rating so that it meets Accessibility Guidelines as set in the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility regulations. WCAG 2.1 AA compliance covers many areas of a website and include how it's constructed, how the user navigates around it, how the information is presented & displayed.

**322 INTERNAL OFFICES (continued)**

In addition, the public body must be aware of all the website's content and what may not be compliant and publish an Accessibility Statement.

As a simple guide, to comply with these accessibility guidelines, a public body must have:

- A WCAG 2.1 AA rated compliant website by September 2020.
- An Accessibility Policy Statement following a standard format by September 2020.
- An Accessible Documents statement, following a standard format by September 2020.
- A process to regularly monitor & review the website.
- A process to provide requests for content that is not in a compliant format.

It was agreed that discussion of the options for long term maintenance of the website be considered at a future Meeting when the Council is operating at full membership.

**323 TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS**

**Members were requested to consider the appointment of Members to Town Council Committees and Working Groups in order to fill vacant positions:**

Neighbourhood Development Plan Strategy Group (1)

Haul Road Working Group (3)

Observatory Working Group (3)

Tourism Working Group (1)

**RESOLVED: - that this Item be deferred until the Council is operating at full membership.**

**324 CCTV**

All Members had received a copy of the proposal which had been commissioned, at no cost to the Town Council, as a result of a rise in anti-social behaviour. Councillor Stamp and Spencer Clarke, Community Safety Officer for Chelmsford and Maldon, had walked around the town identifying areas suitable for CCTV. Richard Holmes had stated that Maldon District Council is willing to support the proposal and contribute to the cost. Councillor Stamp confirmed that she would circulate the structural engineers' report to Members. It was agreed to look at this in detail at future Budget Meetings.

**RESOLVED: - that this Item be deferred to a future Meeting.**

**325 WAR MEMORIAL**

Councillor Stamp had requested that Members discuss the improper use of the environs of the war memorial and consider options to resolve this. Councillor Pratt stated that the local branch of the Royal British Legion had been opposed to previous proposals to fence off the war memorial area.

**RESOLVED: - that this Item be deferred to a future Meeting.**

**326 CASUAL VACANCIES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH WARDS OF THE TOWN**

The Town Clerk reported that 3 casual vacancies had arisen, 2 in the north ward and 1 in the south ward of the town, following the resignations of Councillors Fiona Clegg, Jane English and Nick Skeens. The public notices of casual vacancy (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 LOCAL ELECTIONS (PARISHES AND COMMUNITIES) RULES 1986) would now be posted. An election to fill the vacancies would be held if, within fourteen days from the date of the notice, ten local government electors for the ward of the town make written requests to the Returning Officer at Maldon District Council, asking for such an election to be held. However, the May 2020 local elections, and all by-elections due to take place from 15 March 2020, have been postponed until 6 May 2021. The requirement in legislation for a notice of casual vacancy to be posted remains, thereby announcing that such a vacancy exists. Therefore, the vacant seat would remain until an election can be held in May 2021. If a by-election is not requested, the Council can fill the seat by co-option in accordance with the Council's co-option policy.

**326 CASUAL VACANCIES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH WARDS OF THE TOWN  
(continued)**

Councillor Calver asked if co-option application notices could be publicised more widely in future and also, whether the Council intended to publish the resignation notices of the former Mayor and Deputy Mayor, because of public interest.

The Town Mayor responded that the Council's role was only to accept the resignations and any further explanation would be a matter for the individuals concerned. Members agreed.

The Town Clerk responded that the co-option notice had been published on the Council's website and notice boards for a period of twenty-eight days (as Resolved, Minute 282 of 23.7.20 refers). The Mayor stated that it had also been posted on facebook.

**327 PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no questions.

**328 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next Town Council Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 13 October 2020 at 7.30 pm. This would be a remote meeting in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

**329 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Councillors Resolved that by virtue of the provisions of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded during discussion of the following business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

**330 ALLOTMENTS**

Councillor Calver raised several points of concern and Members agreed to ask for legal advice before agreeing any amendments. It was

**RESOLVED: - that the proposals for amendments to the new lease be put forward to the Council's solicitor.**

**331 STAFF MATTERS**

Members received a verbal report prior to a Meeting of the Staffing Committee on Thursday 10 September 2020.

**332 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

Having considered and determined all items of business, the Meeting was closed at 9.36 pm.

Chairman .....

Date 13 October 2020