

BROOMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of Broomfield Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 25th September 2019 in the Village Hall**

19/198.	<p>Members attending Chairman Cllr Barnes Councillors Blake, Daden, Faulds, Howell, Hubble, Mercer, Thomson. Also present The Clerk, eight members of the public. City Councillor Knight, County Councillor Aldridge</p> <p>Resolved. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Steed, and noted for City Councillor Steel. Proposed Cllr Barnes and carried unanimously.</p>
19/199.	<p>Motion. The meeting will be recorded. Proposed Cllr Barnes seconded Cllr Daden. With five against, the motion failed.</p>
19/200.	<p>To approve the minutes of Broomfield Parish Council's Meeting 21st August 2019. Resolved: The minutes of Full Council Meeting are accepted as a true record. Proposed Cllr Barnes seconded Cllr Mercer and carried with three abstentions from Councillors who were not at the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Daden requested clarification about the Neighbourhood Plan timetable.</p> <p>Cllr Daden requested clarification about the discussion concerning the provision of a surgery.</p>
19/201.	<p>There were no Declarations of Interest from Councillors.</p>
19/202.	<p>Publication of casual vacancies. The Electoral Officer at the City Council did confirm that the Parish Council is free to Co-opt, but the guidance was not received in time to include the names of the potential co-optees in the agenda. The two candidates will be considered at the next council meeting and there will be an opportunity to advertise the vacancies throughout the parish.</p> <p>Resolved. The council approves the publication of a notice declaring casual vacancies in the parish. Proposed Cllr Barnes and carried unanimously.</p>
19/203.	<p>Public Question Time for general matters. A member of the public expressed an interest in co-option and would contact the Clerk after the meeting.</p> <p>A resident from north end of village was concerned about the weight of traffic along main road and requested that an additional speed indication device was purchased for the spare pole at the north end of the village. It was noted that purchase of a second device was agreed at a previous meeting. It was also noted that by applying the Essex Highways Design criteria, that stretch of road should be 30 MPH and the Local Highway Panel had been informed.</p> <p>Action. The Clerk will submit a request to the Highways Panel to purchase an additional indication device using Parish Council money.</p>

19/204.	<p>Receive report from City Councillors for items not on the agenda.</p> <p>City Cllr Daden reported that the City Council’s Homeless strategy has been introduced, bringing all the charities together to provide an integrated service. The health and wellbeing service is being restructured and now reports that adults are more active than children. The parking restrictions on Church Rd and Jubilee Avenue are being reviewed.</p> <p>City Cllr Daden also expressed her disappointment about not being included in discussions with a Doctor’s General Practice that was considering relocating their surgery. She was particularly disappointed that she was not allowed to propose alternative sites in the Parish and was not permitted to speak to the GPs.</p> <p>County Cllr Aldridge reported that as part of their work in the area, Bloor Homes could identify a potential site for GP surgery but their main concern is with roads and infrastructure.</p> <p>It has been confirmed that the cycleway route will emerge in Patching Hall lane – beyond that a hybrid cycle path to parkway will be developed in 2021. This path will conflict with the buses that park on the Broomfield Road to collect pupils, so they may need to be relocated to purpose-made bus-drop islands. The cycleway will not be designed specifically for children to commute to school, it will be a general route for all.</p> <p>The Army and Navy flyover has been permanently closed and will be removed shortly. Interim measures are being developed to accommodate the increased traffic flow. Requests are being made to Government to fund an alternative structure.</p> <p>City Cllr Knight reported that the City Council’s new administration has formed. Part of the new administration’s new strategy involves an inclusion programme which will encourage Developers to consider Wellness and wellbeing as part of their design.</p> <p>Chelmsford Garden Village Liaison Group meeting to be held on Thursday 26th September.</p> <p>There is a Vacancy in Marconi Ward following a political dispute among the City Councillors.</p> <p>The new local plan is under consultation and should be passed by the end of the year</p> <p>City Cllr Steel wrote to the Clerk on two matters:</p> <p>19/208 Letter about antisocial behaviour on Angel Field from the Local Policing Support Unit. <i>“We have also had some ASB in GW and discussed it 2 meetings ago. There isn’t a lot we thought we could do other than broadcast the relevant reporting channels with an article in our Parish News. I would be interested to hear what you might think you can do.”</i></p> <p>19/211 To consider commemorative events for VE day in May 2020 working with Broomfield British Legion.</p> <p><i>“I am arranging the VE event in Great Waltham, so would be very interested to understand what you are doing. If there is a sub-meeting, let me know. I would like to observe if possible.”</i></p>
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19/205.	<p>Public Question time for matters related to the Public Library</p> <p>The meeting was suspended to hear comments from the public on the future of Broomfield Public Library.</p> <p>A resident volunteer who runs the Home Library Service in Broomfield operating out of Broomfield Library made the following statement. <i>“My colleague and I are both volunteers and I have personally been providing this service to our village for the past 12 years. Home Library service is for housebound people who cannot get to the library. Every 3 weeks we select 40-50 books (or audio books for those with failing sight) and take these to our 20 housebound clients in the various residential homes and sheltered accommodation in the village.</i></p> <p><i>As well as providing books we are something of a lifeline for some, as when we arrive it may be the first time that they have spoken to anyone that day. And this gives them an opportunity to maintain some level of contact and to catch up with what’s happening in the village. Some of our library clients have already expressed their worries to us about what might happen if (or when) the library closes. This afternoon I attended the funeral of one of our clients – Laurence aged 99. I had visited him in Ayletts for the past 7 years and during this time I had supplied him with a total of 1,100 books. At the funeral his family said how grateful they were, as living some distance away they were not able to do this themselves – and reading had meant so much to him.</i></p> <p><i>I am very passionate about this service for the housebound in our community continuing in the future. I am glad to have been given this opportunity to ensure the Parish Council is made aware of the importance of the Home Library Service in the village and would like to urge them to ensure this provision is safeguarded in any future library arrangements. Finally, at the other end of the scale, I am very worried that the Children’s Summer Reading Scheme will not continue if our library closes, as the cost of travelling further afield to access the scheme may be impossible for some local families.</i></p> <p><i>Resident reported that the library is a valuable resource for those who wish to sit and read or those who receive support from the staff. Especially valuable for people who have difficulty coping with noisy environment.</i></p> <p>There were some general principles agreed: all want to see the library service grow and prosper but the existing library is housed in an old building that is not fit for purpose. It was also agreed that community services and book lending are not the same thing. The Library service only counts books withdrawn and does not measure other activities; mother and toddler club, children’s games, and other activities are valued, so footfall is an important indicator of activity. Cllr Daden asked for general footfall figures to establish usage.</p> <p>Essex County Council have been reminded that they have a statutory duty to provide a library service, but there is considerable flexibility in how this is done. Maintaining an effective service does not necessarily involve leaving things as they are. The Library service must adapt to changing demographics and technology. Cllr Aldridge reaffirmed the fact that no library would be closed for five years, but there needs to be a community-wide response in that time to ensure that the needs of the community are met.</p>
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As the library is only open sixteen hours a week, there is a need to find a way to allow the community library to remain open for longer – possibly by sharing facilities with other activities and considering opening in the evenings as well. The Parish Council should increase the advertising and support for the library through social media

Essex County Council have asked for expressions of interest, of which the parish council has made three. Essex County Council will encourage groups to work together rather than seeing this as a tendering job. There is no money for developing the existing service but £3M is available for community libraries. Number of book borrowings are dropping nationwide, and the service must adapt to meet current needs. Confirm that the existing IT will be replaced, and would remain should the library be taken-over by another organisation. Direct access to the book catalogue will also be maintained. Cllr Aldridge reminded the Council that the consultation was intended to find out what the residents wanted and its findings will be the main driver of how the programme develops. The need is to encourage people to use the libraries more is an important point. If more people used the general libraries then devolved community libraries might not be needed.

Cllr Thomson has extensive knowledge of libraries and confirms that many volunteers are needed to replace one member of staff as volunteers are not under any compunction to attend and management has no sanction over what they do. The Council is aware that Springfield Library works closely with the Parish Council and shares the building, but this is run as a professionally managed service supported by volunteers. Furthermore, volunteer libraries also require funding which can be time consuming to identify and obtain.

The purpose of libraries has always been to educate, inform and provide alternative activities to the disadvantaged. Although libraries are there to provide books, the core service is to provide the support as well. To summarise – the library is the statutory responsibility of the County Council, and the Parish should not take responsibility for adopting it.

Cllr Hubble considered the possibility of extending the existing building by opening a café to support the service and make the building more attractive and accessible.

Cllr Blake recognises the library is about the service it provides, not the building and wants to understand the relationship between the service and the competence of professional staff. At a material level, the building is difficult to maintain and the service would be better delivered elsewhere. From a planning perspective, it would be better to relocate the library in Broomfield Place as part of any wider development that is under consideration. This proposal requires an understanding of Essex County Council's intention and requests that the Parish Council asks formally if the land would be made available. Without a clear indication about the land then alternative proposals must be considered.

Cllr Mercer notes the parallels between the current state of Broomfield Library and the previous state of Chelmsford Museum. The Museum has employed a marketing manager to improve the services. The current library building is noted as a good example of an early 60s library, and could benefit from modernisation.

Cllr Faulds supports Save Our Libraries Essex and is encouraged by the way that Essex County Council has improved its offer to potential libraries. The chosen course of action should be to hand the libraries back to Essex County Council. It should discourage vehicle use, and encourage local services.

	<p>Cllr Daden pointed-out that although the usage has dropped, so has the service level and there is a link between the two. There is clear need for somewhere for children to study and an extended opening is necessary. The new library service should offer better technology and a place for teenagers to study as well as electric charging points for cars. Cllr Daden specifically requested that she is invited to attend any meeting with Essex County Council concerning Libraries.</p> <p>Cllr Aldridge summarised by reminding the councillors that the County approach is flexible and will be tailored to the needs of communities. Cllr Barnes closed the discussion by noting that Essex County Council is committed to maintain the libraries, but that would be subject to changes in the politics of the County Council over the years.</p>
19/206.	<p>To consider options for provision of library services in the Parish.</p> <p>There are three expressions of interest current from the Parish Council and it is understood that others are interested in providing their own variations on the service. The Council agreed to continue with the three expressions of interest. With reference to the proposal to relocate to Broomfield Place, it was agreed that the Council would seek an understanding from Essex County Council about their willingness to sell the land. It was confirmed that the vision for Broomfield Place has been given to the portfolio holder and asset management team for consideration.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 9.32 with the remaining items carried forward to the next full council.</p>
19/207.	<p>Items for next agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-option of councillors Financial reports Initial review of Budget Proposals Special Constables Play streets VE Day commemoration Feedback from Broomfield Place consultations