

**Draft Minutes of Langham Annual Parish Meeting/ Annual Assembly held on:
Thursday 1st June 2023 7:30pm at
Langham Community Centre**

Present: Cllr Bottwood, Cllr Armstrong, Cllr Thorpe, Cllr Brockman, Cllr Ogawa.
Colchester City Council - Cllr Tom Rowe
3 members of the public

23/38 Welcome by the Chairman and explanation of how the meeting would be conducted

This was started with a reminder that this was not a Parish Council meeting but an assembly of the village electorate and it is an opportunity for Langham residents to discuss and debate issues in an open forum.

The PC has a duty to facilitate this meeting on behalf of the electorate and provide a report. This would be done in two sections which is the Chairman's report and a report on our financial position. Following this the Chairman of the Langham Community Council will provide an update on the Community Centre activities during the past year.

This meeting also provides an opportunity for our County and City Councillors to provide us with an update.

23/39 Agree Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting in May 2022

These were agreed as an accurate account of proceedings

**23/40 Parish Council Chairman's Report
Looking back at the past year**

We started the year with a full complement of Councillors but John Palmer left us in February after a fairly short tenure. John had heavy work commitments and moved house at that point in time which meant he could not continue to commit his time to the Council. He was an active member of the Council whilst he was with us and we thank him for his valued contributions. Consequently, we are actively pursuing the recruitment of a new Councillor.

Looking back at Recreation Ground Projects

The Council has had another busy year and have continued to focus on delivering projects identified in the 2021 village facilities survey. A major extension to the children's play area was opened just prior to the King's coronation event and tenders are being prepared for a new multi-use sports court which could also provide an additional tennis court, thus allowing the expansion of the tennis club. We have two courts at the moment and an additional court would allow the tennis club to enter tournaments.

We are also continuing a dialogue with Essex cricket with a view to re-introducing cricket to the village. We are currently looking at a pitch design and a feasibility study to ensure that we have enough space for this and it can be introduced without compromising the safety of the existing facilities at the Recreation Ground. A junior cricket "All Stars" event is also taking place over the next few weeks at the Recreation Ground to introduce cricket to the younger generation.

There has also been a lot of recent interest in the use of the football pitch both for regular matches and training facilities.

Funding for new Recreation Ground facilities is a key challenge and to supplement the Parish Council Precept we have successfully obtained funding from Grants and developer contributions also referred to as S106 funding.

S106 funding is collected by the Local Planning Authority from developers for all new housing projects. Projects of 10 or more homes are covered by S106 contracts and smaller sites of up to 9 homes are still the subject of signed agreements but they are “Unilateral Undertakings” and not the subject of a detailed formal contract. Contributions are collected to cover Community Facilities and Parks & Recreation. This money should be earmarked to ensure that local bodies can make use of funding to enable new residents to have access to a reasonable range of facilities and so that they can integrate with the community without causing capacity issues.

More details about funding spend is covered in the Annual Finance report which follows.

Recreation Ground Events

- i) Bonfire Night returned to Langham last year after a 3-year break. It was a very successful event based on a revised format of online ticket sales, live entertainment, food trucks and a beer tent with craft ales and card payment facilities. Financial figures for this event are included in the finance report.

- ii) The Queen’s Jubilee Event

The Council allocated and managed a budget for this event which spanned three days and was supported and run by numerous volunteers. It was a spectacular weekend with live music, competitions, open gardens, children’s entertainment and was well attended by the village. The event culminated in the lighting of the Beacon which coincided with the national guidelines.

The next key area was traffic safety issues

Following the Langham traffic survey, we addressed traffic speeding issues in the village and several projects have been identified. A new Speed Indicator Device has been purchased with the help of Councillor Barber’s locality budget and work is currently being undertaken to complete the excavation for the socket that should enable the sign to be moved around the village.

We are still awaiting the report from Highways relating to the automatic traffic counts and speed checks for various locations around the village. A three parishes group including Langham, Dedham and Boxted has been set up to address key issues around the traffic “rat run” which is occurring as a result of vehicles taking alternative routes from Colchester to the A12 and beyond to Mistle and Manningtree. Key housing developments in those areas are contributing to this situation and traffic calming and re-routing is high on the parish agenda. The Parish Council also identified a number of projects for traffic calming that are on the list of projects being evaluated by the Colchester Local Highways Panel. Progress on this has been limited and the release of funding continues to be an issue.

Moving on to Planning and Housing Matters

Sewerage Issues

Housing development in Langham continues to be a major concern and the Parish Council have continued to engage with Anglian Water over worries about headroom capacity at

the Langham Water Recycling Centre and capacity issues relating to the local sewerage network. Residents are rightly concerned that housing stock should not be increased unless we have capacity to prevent overflows in the sewerage network, which have occurred in the past creating hygiene and pollution problems.

Several meetings took place last year including:

A second open meeting with Anglian Water (AW) on 18th November 2022, which was facilitated by the Parish Council and was attended by Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, representatives from Anglian Water, Colchester City Council and about 50 local residents. The current status of the Anglian Water's expansion plans was discussed including network monitoring. Sir Bernard Jenkin made a pointed criticism of Anglian Water's lack of progress and stated that he would be writing to Peter Simpson, the CEO of Anglian Water, to request his support in lobbying government for a stronger regulatory regime and for his support to help resolve the Langham issues.

A follow up Teams call between Anglian Water and the Parish Council also took place on 21st February this year when the current status of network monitoring activities was discussed. Since that meeting Anglian Water have also provided a further update report that does not seem to indicate any flow issues in the sewerage network but there are still no concrete plans to upgrade the Water Recycling Centre (WRC) infrastructure before the end of their 5-year investment cycle which runs until 2025. AW seem to be confident that enough headroom exists at the WRC to cater for the current Vistry/Linden Homes expansion. However, the build out of the Vistry/Linden Homes site is still limited by the Local Planning Authority to 23 homes (50% of the conditional planning approval) until it can be demonstrated by Anglian Water and supported by the Environment Agency that flow capacity exists at the WRC and in the sewerage network. In fact, any increase beyond the initial build of 5 homes is subject to scrutiny by the Local Planning Authority so that phased growth can be monitored.

A review of the current status of the other planning applications which were accepted by the Colchester Emerging Local Plan procedure

i) Williamsons Developments' Planning Application 220595

This application which is for outline planning permission for 30 houses on the site immediately east of the Community Centre Car Park. This application is in keeping with the housing numbers that appear in the Colchester City Council Emerging Local Plan. The application received outline approval at an LPA planning meeting subject to reserved matters and the successful completion of a s106 contract. Some recent plans for the footway upgrades in School Road were submitted on 15th May, these mainly cover the road crossing points where there is no pavement on the south side.

The formal approval of this application with any associated conditions or reserved matters has still not been posted on the planning portal and it will not appear until the s106 contract has been agreed.

ii) Guy Williamson's Planning Application 22150

Outline planning application for 12 homes in Wick Road at the boundary with Park Lane. This application exceeds the number in the Colchester City Council Emerging Local Plan which states 10. There was a re-submission of this application on 16th May following comments received at a June 2022 outline application. Although some of the points have been improved there are still issues that surround surface water treatment, access to the

footway on the western side of Wick Road and visitor parking. The Parish Council has until 30th June to submit a response to this application.

It is expected that all of three these applications will be affected by the Anglian Water capacity issues and appropriate building conditions should be applied.

National Grid's Plans for an East Anglia Pylons network

National Grid is consulting on the 'East Anglia Green' project which are proposals to reinforce the high voltage electricity transmission network from Norwich Main substation in Norfolk to Bramford substation in Suffolk, on to Tilbury substation in Essex, as well as proposed connection substations to connect new offshore Wind Farms. Part of the project route is across the North of Colchester and adjacent to Langham. The PC are concerned about the impact of 50m high Pylons on the rural landscape and the affects this is likely to have on all of the local villages particularly those adjacent to, or in, the Dedham Vale AONB. It is not just an issue with the Pylons themselves but the devastation this will cause at the interconnection sites for offshore cable connectivity and the massive connection sites for linking the Pylons network to the underground section at the Dedham Vale AONB.

An offshore network is the preferred alternative solution and the PC were instrumental in trying to get this message out to residents of Langham, Dedham and Boxted. The PC facilitated an open meeting at the Langham Community Centre on 29th April which enabled the Pylons East Anglia lobbying Group to make a presentation on the alternative solutions available to the National Grid and central government. The various consultancy phases of the Pylons project are extremely important as decisions on the planned routing can be made before the statutory consultation takes place next year. The importance of responding to the Five Estuaries and North Shore Wind Farm consultations cannot be over emphasised if residents are prepared to support the offshore alternative. These consultations will influence the mainland connectivity locations and will directly affect the final network solution. The Langham presentation was attended by about 80 residents, mainly from Langham, with some from Dedham and Boxted. Residents have been submitting responses to the Five Estuaries and North Falls Wind Farm consultations, as a result of this presentation, which can be regarded as a success. It was disappointing, however, that most of the attendees were middle aged and older when it is the younger generation that will inherit any devastation that could occur as a result of the proposed Pylons network.

The Parish Council Website

Last year we (Paul Armstrong) introduced a new, more reliable, website platform and a Facebook page so that that the local community are more aware of what the PC are doing. We are confident that the new website is more user friendly and it will encourage residents to use the website as a first port of call for all local issues.

Volunteers

The Chair concluded this report by thanking all of the following volunteers whose contributions and unwavering support make it possible to deliver projects and to support residents in order to make Langham such a great place to live and work.

- Starting with members of the Parish Council. Who don't always get the credit they deserve in trying to resolve local issues, supporting residents and implementing change that benefits the local community. The Chair personally thanked them all.
- The Community Council play a really key role in keeping the Community Centre running and providing a home for the numerous club that we have in the village. Managing this facility is some challenge with the maintenance and security requirements, plus the facilities booking systems that they have in place.
- The Village Shop
These volunteers are always ready to step up to the plate and work so hard to help local residents particularly through difficult times that we have seen during the past year. They provided great help in supporting the Parish Council for events such as the Bonfire Night ticket sales and the Queens platinum Jubilee event.
- The litter picking team
That have regularly concentrated on litter picking around the village.
- The Local Heritage Group
That work to preserve and uncover knowledge on the history of the village.
- The many volunteers that helped with the Queens Jubilee celebration
- All volunteers that assisted the Bonfire committee in running a successful newly formatted event.

Moving on to individuals:

- Ian Hollands who lobbies for recognition of past Langham people and groups so that important events are not forgotten.
- Ken Hemmings who rightly engages with the PC over drainage and gully issues and continues to do his solo litter picking.
- Suzanne Dawson who provides her time and skills for the WI garden.
- Elizabeth Ellis who does the village tub planting.
- Peter Dawson who ensures that the Defibrillator is kept in top condition and of course for his services as a First Responder.
- Bob Schofield, Chris Graves and Tony Ellis who continue to provide their valuable services as PC committee members.

And finally

- All other volunteers that may be missing from this list to which apologies are conveyed.

23/41 Parish Council Finance Report

Finance report 22/23 as of 31st March 2023

Total Income for 2022/23	£ 50,776
Total Expenditure for 2022/23	£106,989
Reserves (Including £14,965 tennis club account)	£29,118

A Grant of £50,000 was obtained to contribute to the new play equipment.

The overall reduction in capital of £56,213 had been planned for by the council in order to pay for the new play equipment. The income at the start of the year was anticipated to be around £10k less than the final figure which was finalised at £50,776 – not including grants. The increase was mainly due to the increased income received from the bonfire event and some small hiring charges.

The expenditure was still at the expected levels for the year which included an initial payment towards the new play area equipment totalling £60,000. The council were able to obtain a grant of £50,000 towards this purchase in the 22/23 financial year with additional funding becoming available this year. The total cost of the play equipment was £123,054 spread over the two financial periods.

Maintenance of the recreation field, which is the biggest expenditure item the council has, totals £8,180 (Contractor - £1,636, Grounds Maintenance - £4,248 , Recreation ground field expenditure of £2,296)

A number of projects were identified as part of the village facilities survey and external funding streams have been forthcoming to allow for an increased expenditure. These include grants and developer contributions from increased housing stock. The children's play area upgrade was the first major project.

The PC are currently looking at the feasibility of introducing Cricket at the Recreation Ground in conjunction with Essex Cricket and are preparing tender documents for a new Multiuse games area (MUGA).

The resident's feedback from the traffic survey enabled the PC to concentrate on traffic calming measures resulting in a Speed Indicator Device (SID) being purchased for use at several sites in the village. The overall cost of the device was around £7,500 with £3K coming from Cllr Barber's Locality budget.

Last year saw the return of Bonfire night which was sponsored and managed by the PC and local volunteers. The PC provided a budget of £10,500 for this event and it produced a healthy profit of around £8,800. The introduction of additional sponsorship and advertising from local businesses provided a significant increase in the income. The event was well supported and a new format seemed to be appreciated by those present even though the weather was not kind to us. The council allocated and managed a budget of £3,000 for the Queens Platinum Jubilee event in June last year which was well supported and enjoyed by many local residents. The PC also continued to support the Remembrance Day services at the memorial in School Road and the monument in Park Lane.

A Christmas tree was also donated by the Parish Council and will be purchased again this year, when hopefully an outdoor Carol Concert will return.

23/42 Visitors reports from City and County Councils

Cllr Tom Rowe from CCC, who was recently elected following the Colchester North Ward election, introduced himself. He emphasised that he was looking forward to working with Langham on local issues.

There was no representative from Essex County Council in attendance.

23/43 Annual Report from Alan Cadman Chair of Langham Community Centre

23/44 Pylons update

Unfortunately, Luke Marshall was unable to attend the meeting

23/45 Public Open Forum with debate by those present

This section was the key purpose of the meeting.

LPC had posted an agenda for this event and also asked residents to provide any key agenda topics that they would like discussed. As the meeting belongs to the residents any key issues that they wished to discuss which had not been captured by the agenda could still be debated. If there were any items identified from this meeting that fall under the remit of the Parish Council, they would be added to the agenda for the next full meeting of the Council which was due to take place on 14th June. No questions were provided in advance of the meeting.

A resident stated that they did have a number of questions that they intended to raise but these were already covered under the Chairman's report

23/46 Date and Time of next APM

Proposed 22nd May 2024, still to be confirmed

23/47 Chairman's closure of the meeting

The meeting closed at approximately 9pm.