

public consultation by BDC. In general it appears to be a popular proposal to protect wildlife and endangered plant species. An autumn only cut enables endangered plants to thrive as long as the cuttings are raked away promptly. The Parish Council has been paying for an autumn cut of the protected verge at Edeys Lane, with the Heritage Society raking afterwards.

Action: The Chairman suggested that Cllr Johnson be asked to raise this issue with Braintree District Council, to ask that if they are to resume cutting the protected verge the Parish Council can be informed of the date for subsequent raking and removal of the cuttings. The clerk will contact Cllr Johnson.

6.2 Footpath 25 Pye Corner to Rosemary Lane: following contact from a landowner about re-routing of the path, the Parish Council has now received advice from Essex Highways about the process to be followed.

Action: With the agreement of Councillors, the clerk will forward the information to the landowner.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Police/PCSO/Neighbourhood Watch: A recent Police report will be forwarded to Councillors.

7.2 Essex CC report: Cllr D Finch ECC gave his report after item 9

- **Council tax:** A zero% increase has been approved, with a 1.5% increase in the Social Care precept, which is ringfenced for older vulnerable residents including those with learning disabilities. The zero% increase reflects the difficult economic circumstances for many residents due to Covid-19
- **Flooding** continues to be a problem and ECC are now working on getting an agreement with the Fire Brigades in the county to set up joint working practices to tackle urgent problems.
- **Green agenda** – UK Government aims to achieve zero carbon by 2050. In 2019 ECC allocated funding to the Essex Climate Action Commission, and is aiming for Essex County Council to be carbon neutral by 2030. This will include the ECC estate e.g schools, solar panels, new builds, street lights as well as the green environment such as flood schemes, sustainable drainage and tree planting. The Climate Action Commission is evaluating current policy and will be announcing 2030 targets
- **Domestic abuse** – UK Government has launched a consultation paper in recognition of the rise in cases of emotional and physical domestic abuse during lockdown. The aim in Essex is to marshal forces bringing together police, councils, voluntary sector & NHS for a more effective response.
- **Election** in answer to a question from the clerk, Cllr Finch confirmed that 6th May County Council elections are still going ahead by post and voting in person. He has lobbied the government to have them postponed due to democratic processes being hampered by the pandemic.

7.3 Braintree DC report: Cllr Johnson apologised for absence due to a conflicting meeting at Sible Hedingham. Cllr Beavis arrived at item 8 and gave her report before item 9. Cllr Beavis reported:

- **Parish Council Zoom meeting:** a video of a recent meeting in Cheshire has gone viral due to the poor behaviour of some Councillors. Cllr Beavis works closely with the National Association of Local Councils and can honestly say she has never come across a parish locally that has acted so badly.
- **National Grid:** Recent press reports indicate that National Grid may be revisiting their plans to upgrade the electricity network across the region. Councillors are advised to keep an eye on this issue. Previous proposals included pylons across the landscape to save costs of putting cables underground and a new local substation; two of the suggested three sites were in Castle Hedingham.
- **Budget:** BDC will be having their budget planning meeting next week. Cllr Beavis would be pleased to see a Council tax freeze on the basis that they have above average reserves.
- **Local Plan process:** The Planning Inspector advises that Braintree proceeds with Section 1 without the two Braintree Garden Communities, then move on to adopting Section 2 which could take another year. Councillors are welcome to contact her with questions. Two proposed speculative developments in Sible Hedingham are causing concern locally.
- **Vaccination centre in Halstead:** In answer to a question from Cllr Gransden, Cllr Beavis said that the District and County Councils are asking for this to be progressed urgently but with no result yet.
- **Parish Council meeting dates:** It was asked at the Sible Hedingham Parish Council meeting why Castle and Sible Hedingham have their meetings on the same Monday of the month, which means District and County Councillors find it difficult to attend both. The clerk confirmed that Castle Hedingham Parish Council had in recent years moved its meeting to the 4th Monday to accommodate,

but had changed back to the 2nd Monday of the month as it made it impossible to publish minutes promptly in the Parish Magazine and was causing a disadvantage to Castle Hedingham residents.

8. PLANNING

Applications received:

None

Applications determined:

20/00421/TPOCON Notice of intent to carry out works to tree in a Conservation Area - Willow (T1) Crown reduction, 5 metres off the height and 3 metres off the remainder of the crown.

3A Crown Street CO9 3DB

Application PERMITTED

20/01864/HH Replacement flue.

Doulton Lodge Pottery Lane CO9 3EU

Application PERMITTED

9. FINANCE

9.1 The monthly accounts were approved and payments agreed for authorisation. The bank reconciliation was checked and signed via email by Cllr Gransden.

Proposed: Cllr Jordan

Seconded: Cllr Veater

Agreed unanimously

Feb-21	Payments in Month	Details	Amount
DD	Eon	Electricity New Park	£31.23
DD	Bulb	Electricity Toilets	£18.36
DD	Invoco (GOCARDLESS)	Portable telephone number	£1.48
B/P	E C Waters	Home as Office February	£75.00
B/P	E C Waters	Clerk Expenses Jan 11th to Feb 8th	£28.89
B/P	A&J Lighting	Monthly Charge	£11.40
B/P	Abacus Accountancy	Payroll Oct, Nov, Dec 2020	£43.20
TOTAL in month			£209.56

Feb-21	Receipts in Month	Details	Amount
04-Feb	Jones A & M	Purchase Grave plot 248	£484.00
TOTAL in month			£484.00

Jan-21	Payments in Month	Details	Amount
DD	Eon	Electricity New Park	£31.23
DD	Bulb	Electricity Toilets	£14.66
DD	Invoco (GOCARDLESS)	Portable telephone number	£1.68
DD	B&CE Holdings	Peoples Pension	£67.80
B/P	Staff	Salaries	£1,501.49
B/P	HMRC	Tax/NI January	£84.62
B/P	E C Waters	Home as Office January	£75.00
B/P	E C Waters	Clerk Expenses Nov 9th to Jan 11th	£118.39
B/P	A&J Lighting	Monthly Charge	£11.40
B/P	Atwells Solicitor	Deed of Adherence, Village Hall lease	£720.00
TOTAL in month			£2,626.27

Jan-21	Receipts in Month	Details	Amount
08-Jan	Harvey Darke	Memorial Inscription Grave 254	£77.00
15-Jan	UK Power Networks	Wayleave	£10.31
TOTAL in month			£87.31

