



Broomfield Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Broomfield Parish Council
held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 17th November 2022 at 7.30 p.m.

22/111	Members attending Chairman: Cllr Bleet Other members: Cllrs Thomson, Perry, Faulds, Steed, Spiller, Daden, Bowman, Mercer, Scott and Barnes. Also present: Clerk, Mark Hembury, and two members of the public. Resolved. Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Howell and Blake Proposed by Cllr Steed and seconded by Cllr Barnes. Unanimously approved. An apology was also received from County Councillor Mike Steel.
22/112	Declarations of interests None received.
22/113	To approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19th October 2022. Resolved. Subject to the change of 58 85 (Item 22/94) and ward to award (Item 22/99) the minutes of the Full Council meeting are accepted as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Mercer and seconded by Cllr Barnes. Three abstentions, all others in agreement.
22/114	Public Question Time. Two members of the public were present. Chris Gardener explained that he had resigned from the Speedwatch initiative due to a number of issues. Councillors thanked him for his service over many years as a volunteer co-ordinating Speedwatch locally.
22/115	To receive a report from our County Councillor for items not on agenda The following report was received – Essex County Council consultation on 2023/24 Budget Essex County Council has launched a consultation inviting all county residents and businesses how to spend its 2023/24 budget. The consultation is now open, closing on Monday 28 November. You can take part in the consultation here: https://survey.euro.confirmit.com/wix/7/p350931054797.aspx?ebrm=1&l=9 Next year the County Council plans to spend over £2bn, more than half of which will be spent on adult and children's social care alone. This includes funding for essential services such as social care, investment in the county's roads, infrastructure, libraries, school buildings and future growth. While £2bn is a significant amount, like other local authorities across the country, the Council will need to make difficult decisions about where to invest and where to make savings. You can help shape how we respond to the current uncertainty and to the pressures we face. It's Everyone's Essex, we are very keen to hear from you. Against this difficult fiscal backdrop, Essex County Council is in the process of setting its own budget and is inviting businesses and residents to give their feedback on how public money should be spent in the coming financial year. This is due to overlapping factors, including the significant impacts of inflation at a 40-year high, an unprecedented increase in the cost of living, the lasting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and increasing numbers of Essex residents needing different council services.

How much funding ECC will receive from the Government and what ministers might decide regarding limits on council tax increases is also unclear. The financial outlook for Essex is uncertain and forecasting for coming and future years, continues to be extremely challenging.

The County Council has a track record of strong financial management, having achieved £258m in savings over the past five years.

Last year the County Council announced 'Everyone's Essex' an ongoing plan for levelling up the county. It contains 20 commitments to help Essex recover from the pandemic and to face the challenges of the future.

ECC needs to mitigate these pressures now, but also continue to plan for the future. We want Essex to be the best local authority in the country – as judged by the residents, the businesses, and the communities we support and serve.

To achieve this, we need to be honest and open.

We need the honesty to admit that we don't have all the answers when it comes to tackling complex problems. And we need to be open to new ideas and approaches – ensuring the services we provide and the investments we make are developed with our communities.”

The growing UK financial crisis is impacting every household and business budget and Essex County Council is no exception. The cost of materials and services in highways and social care alone have soared.

Hollowgate

Not actually in the Broomfield ward, but affecting some of the residents:

As you know, the lock has been vandalised several times and has been replaced around 6 times. Now the gate has been cut off its hinges.

Background

As part of planning permission granted by Chelmsford City Council to develop land north of Copperfield Road, under planning reference 14/01672/OUT & 17/00189/RM, a number of highway improvements were identified under the S106 Agreement appended to the planning permission including: Prohibition of motor vehicles (closure) on Hollow Lane, Broomfield/Chignal which was consulted on the 2nd January 2020 under Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) TRAF/7178

Looking at the drawing associated with the Planning Application, it says - “*The ECC proposed gate to restrict access for emergency vehicles agricultural vehicles and cycles only*”. i.e., it is a condition that the closure can be overcome by such vehicles and an FB lock is fitted, whereby emergency vehicles have a key. Also, there are signs showing that motorised vehicles are prohibited.

Currently, the area still belongs to Persimmons. I assume that, strictly speaking, the gate has to be in place at the point at which the road is adopted by ECC Highways, which will be when the site is completed, and probably after 2025. Until that time, Persimmons are responsible for any assets. After adoption, they become the responsibility of ECC Highways. Persimmons have kindly responded to requests from myself, ECC Highways and Chignal PC, and put in the gate.

The Gate

The FB lock has been cut several times and, replaced with someone's own lock. Persimmons have reinstated the FB padlock several times. Now the gate has been totally removed. Persimmons installed a camera and we have footage of the person who removed the gate. The police have been informed and are adding extra patrols. The prohibition signs remain in place, so anyone using the road, unless for access, could be prosecuted. Originally the gate fitted was below the regulation 3m width and as a result of pressure from me, has recently been replaced by Persimmons.

Options

The 3 options are:

1. Keep replacing the lock/gate
2. Permanent closure
3. Remove closure altogether

Option 1: Keep replacing the lock/gate

The gate still belongs to Persimmons, so is their responsibility to maintain. The road won't be adopted until after 2025, so Persimmons may not be obliged to keep repairing the gate until ready for handover. Advancing Highways adoption of the road is unlikely to be met with enthusiasm by ECC whilst this problem exists.

Option 2 Permanent Closure

I think this would need both an amendment to the Planning Consent and a new TRO.

Persimmons would need to submit such an application and Highways, the TRO.

Both would be subject to public consultation. Although it should be noted that if such an application failed, it would revert to the gate option – i.e., opposing the application would not remove the closure. There is also the added complication that Hollow Lane features on emergency services sat navs, so they could oppose this option. Getting sat navs changed is a long process. I have already initiated the questions.

Option 3 Remove closure altogether

It would be a pity to give in to unlawful coercion!

As with Option 2, removing the restriction would require a Planning amendment and TRO, both being subject to public consultation.

It would also have the added expense of all the signage being removed.

Most people who have contacted me are in favour of the closure. Obviously, some are not!

School Lane Traffic

I received a long list of issues captured in a LHP request form for School Lane. I am in the process of refining this into a format that can be submitted to the LHP. In my view, the issues split into 3 problems:

- 1. Concerns about safety due to congestion around the school** - and what Highways can do
- 2. Concerns about safety due to congestion around the school** - and what the school can do
- 3. Speed at non school times**

1. Concerns about safety due to congestion around the school - and what Highways can do
A number of solutions were suggested – widening the path on the corner, one-way around the island (not feasible because of the turning circle requirements and a clearer carriageway would speed up traffic), - railings, path widening, maybe 20mph past the school (variable or permanent). I am writing

the LHP request on this basis, outlining the congestion concerns and making some acceptable suggestions.

2. Concerns about safety due to congestion around the school - and what the school can do
Sustainable Travel Planning Officer has offered to support any Essex school to develop their School Travel Plan. He sent me a short factsheet about this which I forwarded

On 24th Oct I emailed the School Lane traffic Committee to say that that we (ECC Highways) are in the process of implementing a “School Street” in Chelmsford. This doesn’t always have to be a total block of the road and in this case, on Trinity Road, Queen’s Road and Hill Road, these include; ‘20’s Plenty’ signs, a ‘Children’ warning sign and ‘School Street’ gateway signs. Temporary street art will also be implemented on the road surface outside Trinity Road Primary School, and permanent road marking signs on the carriageway opposite property nos. 20/22 Trinity Road and outside nos. 121/123 Trinity Road. The existing bollards outside the school will be replaced by ‘pencil’ shaped bollards. We will also be refreshing the existing road markings in the vicinity of Trinity Road Primary School.

This work is all part of Essex County Council’s ambitious aim to make the transport network safer, greener and healthier. Rather than automatically jumping into cars, we are introducing measures to encourage as many of our residents as possible to cycle and walk, especially for shorter trips, helping us to achieve our carbon zero commitments. This will mean ultimately fewer vehicles on the road and ease congestion for those who have no alternative but to drive, making their journeys more reliable and efficient

I have been in touch with the Sustainable Transport Planning officer, Nick Hill, and he tells me that he has been trying to engage with Broomfield School. The Sustainable Transport Planning officer is compiling a shortlist of schools who’ve shown interest in the School Streets idea, although being on the list doesn’t guarantee anything. He needs to hear from Broomfield themselves if they’re interested in being added to that list. I have now managed to put Nick and the school in contact.

Getting a School Crossing Patrol sanctioned was a step forward, but it is disappointing that no one has applied for the job!

3. Speed at non school times

Previous speed surveys have shown there not to be a speed problem on School Lane
Past the school: 2015 Avg 27mph 85th decile 30mph, 2018 Avg 27mph 85th decile 31mph
On the 60mph zone on the mid part of the straight approaching the chicane: 2019 Avg 33mph 85th decile 38mph. Highways will not consider these to be sufficiently high to recommend action.

There may be higher speeds recorded, but this is a police issue. I have tried extremely hard to get the police to attend. They said they would (I had to escalate to the DCCI and to the Commissioner). I am still waiting for feedback on any attendance.

On 18th Oct I wrote to the committee and said I can arrange another speed survey – in a couple of places, and could they tell me where you want them. But they will be required a few 10s of metres from any traffic calming or change of limit. If they show higher speeds, there may be a case for action. I have not had a response.

In term of the statement that cars speed up for the chicane – the point of the chicane is to cause vehicles to wait. Some drivers may accelerate to get through, but that is a common problem with chicanes. But it would be worse without it. (I have informed the police on this). I don’t know what else you would do about this.

We will not be able to have 30mph or 40mph along the current derestricted length – it doesn’t meet policy on housing density – if you want more detail, check the guides on the LHP website.

	Broomfield School Crossing Patrol  Still no applicants for the role. If you are interested or know someone who is, please contact us at schoolcrossingpatrol@essex.gov.uk or gillian.palmer@essex.gov.uk, stating Broomfield (or contact me). The role generally suits people with a positive and friendly attitude with good communication skills who are active and reliable. The school has broadcast this request to parents twice. LHP Village Gateway LCHE142002 I understand that the designs for the gateway are delayed. They are now looking to finalise the village gateway design by Christmas with the intention of implementing it in the New Year. Roadworks on Blasford Hill This severely affected people leaving Broomfield and affected the hospital and I received a few complaints. When the first traffic lights appeared a few weeks ago, I did go and speak to the site manager - the traffic lights detect queueing traffic but cannot differentiate between a short and long queue, so he agreed to man the lights in the morning and evening rush hours and bias the flow to the longer queue. I arranged for the traffic lights that were set up a couple of weeks later, to have a permit which only allowed 9.30 am to 3.30pm, and the works had to be cleared to one side for the rush hours. There was alter set of lights for 1 day with work being done on the verge. These were cleared late that evening. were actually still working on the verge, not the road. I have just driven that was on my way
22/116	To receive a report from City Councillors for items not on the agenda. No report received.
22/117	Correspondence Noe received
22/118	Consultations None received
22/119	Reports from Councillors on outside bodies Local Highways Panel – Councillor Daden reported that there had been no meeting since the last Council meeting Woollards Charity – No new meeting held. Schools and Shadow Council– Councillor Bowman provided the following report – School Report A response from the School Lane Primary School is still awaited. At Chelmsford Valley High School, Councillor Bowman explained that she is finding her feet as a trustee and has been allocated an area of responsibility that includes the Personnel Committee. Chelmsford Garden Community Shadow Council Councillor Bowman reported that she had met with the Broomfield Parish Clerk and assistance had been given to her in her task of preparing an advert and job specification for the new Parish Clerk. No support was being received from the City Council.

	Transport – Cllr Thomson reported that a revision of bus timetables had had an impact upon early morning and late evenings, but it was still unclear exactly what had changed. It was suggested that a letter be sent to First Bus regarding their poor promulgation of the changes to the timetable. Councillors Mercer and Thomson would prepare a draft. Licensed Premises – Cllr Perry stated that he had no update but would be visiting The Angel soon regarding their warm space provision. Police – Councillor Scott reported that the Clerk had held a meeting with the Special Constabulary coordinator and an advert for a vacancy for Bromfield Parish was now live. Hospital Liaison – Councillor Mercer would speak to Councillor Blake regarding efforts to establish communication with the hospital.
22/120	To note financial reports for October 2022. To approve the bank statement and reconciliation for October 2022. To note cashbook, income and expenditure for October 2022. To note salary payments for October 2022. Resolved: The Council approves the financial records for October 2022 noting the current account reconciliation figure of £17,801.96 Proposed by Cllr Barnes and seconded by Cllr Mercer. Approved unanimously.
22/121	To consider a grant request to Broomfield Village Hall Charity for a total of £15,000 for the remainder of the financial year to cover operating costs (payable in 5 x £3000 amounts) Motion: There being no proposer, this motion failed and will be reconsidered at a later date.
22/122	To consider the implications of the Parish and Town Precept information provided by the City Council for the financial year 2023/24 The Clerk presented Councillors with all relevant information regarding the precept considerations based upon information provided by the City Council.
22/123	Health and Wellbeing Plan The Chairman provided an update to members and asked for volunteers to help take the initiative forward. Councillors Scott, Bowman and Spiller offered their services.
22/124	To receive an update from the Clerk on matters arising from previous meetings. The Clerk updated members on the following – Speedwatch. Contact has been established with the new Essex Speedwatch coordinator and a Zoom meeting has been arranged to re-start the scheme locally. Speed signs – the foliage problem has been reported to Essex County Council who have provided a response such that the issue is noted and will be dealt with at some time in the future as it is not considered a priority. Parsonage Green pond – The contractors have attended and cleared the ditch as requested. The culvert does not appear to lead to the pond itself. CIL receipts – The sum of £19,365 has been received.
22/125	To approve the award of one additional day of annual leave to staff, effective from 1st April 2023, as one of the elements of the Local Government pay award recently agreed. Resolved: The Council approves of the award of one additional day of annual leave, such that the minimum paid annual leave entitlement is now 23 days (pro-rata for part time staff). Proposed by Cllr Steed and seconded by Cllr Barnes. Agreed unanimously.
22/126	To note minutes from the following Committees:
22/126.1	Finance and Personnel Committee – Draft minutes from 24th August previously noted.

22/126.2	Environment Committee – Draft minutes from 12 th October These were noted.
22/126.3	Property & Planning Committee – Draft minutes from 5 th October These were noted. A vote of thanks was given to Councillor Blake for preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan leaflet.
22/126.4	Communications Committee – No recent meeting
22/126.5	School Lane Working Group – The Chairman provided an update.
22/127	Matters for the next meeting None raised.
	The meeting finished at 8.47 p.m.