



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**HELD ON TUESDAY 22ND APRIL 2025
AT BISHOP WILLIAM WARD PRIMARY SCHOOL AT 7.00PM**

Those present:

Cllr C Arnold (Chairman)
Essex County Cllr L Barber
Colchester City Cllr D Laws
+ 57 members of the public (including 5 parish councillors)

1. Welcome from the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Cllr Barber and Cllr Laws (Cllr Laws did not participate in the discussion of the planning application).

2. Minutes from the meeting held on 21st May 2024

The minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held last year were agreed by three members of the public (everyone else abstained), signed and can be viewed on the Parish Council website.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

4. Village forum

The Chairman updated residents on Parish Council matters, including:

- The quarterly village newsletter is now available online.
- The Chairman has been attending meetings with Anglian Water to sort flooding issues across the village.
- Steps have been made to tackle the excessive speeding in Ivy Lodge Road, and the Council has agreed to pay for two more traffic surveys to be undertaken in other areas of concern.
- More Committees have been appointed, to cover subjects such as taking on ownership of the village green (which is even more important with the impending devolution of local government).
- Seeking capital investment for more solar panels to go on the Village Hall roof.

The Chairman briefly explained that Parish Councillors met Bloor Homes after their public consultation at the Village Hall last year, to discuss the proposed development that is now outline Planning Application 250545. If the application is rejected by Colchester City Council (CCC), Bloor Homes may take it to appeal. One resident asked who would defend the decision to reject the application if it went to appeal, and the Chairman confirmed that it would be the Local Planning Authority, CCC, that would defend their decision.

Cllr Laws spoke to residents to say that he would not be giving an opinion on Planning Application 250545 this evening, as it would prejudice his position on the Planning Committee. Cllr Laws listed things that CCC look after and their statutory responsibilities within the City. When asked by a resident about potholes, he explained that this was an Essex County Council (ECC) responsibility because that council is the Highway Authority.

Cllr Barber gave an update on the revision of the Local Plan, explaining that the CCC Local Plan Committee will be asked at a meeting on 7th May to revisit their decision to prevent the draft going to public consultation. A majority of councillors previously rejected the draft as they felt not enough work had been done to show that there would be enough infrastructure to support the identified sites. Cllr Arnold asked Cllr Barber if he knew the reasoning for the unusual wording “up to” 400 homes, which he did not.

A resident stated how narrow Coach Road is and that there are already a lot of parking issues on the road, particularly during school drop off and pick up time. Cllr Barber said that the Highway Authority will assess the planning application in detail, by going through the enormous amount of data that Bloor Homes has included in the application. Another resident shared that when they attended the public consultation, Bloor Homes stated that Essex Highways had recommended that specific location for the junction onto the new development. Cllr Barber was unaware of this and will look into it. The single junction access could be challenged, however as junctions are the places where most accidents happen, Highways Authority policy is to keep the number of access points as low as possible. Cllr Arnold suggested that one possible solution to offset the new traffic would be to close the road and make it a no-through road, making it impossible for non-local traffic to use it as a cut-through.

A resident questioned whether the development would be on contaminated land, and Cllr Arnold explained that CCC would make it a requirement that the land be tested if necessary.

A resident asked if CCC could be persuaded to support a development elsewhere in the village. Cllr Barber said there is the prospect of sites in the draft Local Plan being changed, however the vote in a couple of weeks could give the current draft more weight.

When asked about the school capacity and whether a new primary school would be needed, Cllr Barber answered that ECC has a formula for calculating the number of places needed in local schools. When a planning application is put forward, ECC will work out the extra capacity required and ask the developers for a contribution towards extending the school.

One resident pointed out that there was an objection on the planning portal from the NHS, due to a lack of capacity at local GP surgeries and hospitals.

Cllr Arnold suggested that there may be a big impact on the village having two major developments going on at the same time, as there is already outline consent granted for the Manor Land development. This is likely to cause a bulge in school numbers. It may be pertinent to suggest that if CCC is minded to grant consent to this application, they ensure that Bloor Homes must wait until X number of years after the Manor Land development is finished, before they start to build.

One resident reiterated a point that had been raised on Facebook, whereby the date given for the deadline to object to the proposals on the planning portal, was different to the date shown on the yellow posters that had been put up around the village. Cllr Arnold said that CCC generally still consider objections given in after the deadline, so would recommend if anyone is still yet to respond to the application, that they do so as soon as possible.

An Ivy Lodge Road resident asked if it would be the same people at Essex Highways commenting on this application, as it was that suggested moving the 30mph boundary on Ivy Lodge Road. Cllr Barber explained to everyone that in recent weeks, Essex Highways had suggested that the 30mph boundary on Ivy Lodge Road be moved approximately 200m west to where the residential area begins, to help solve the problem of people speeding on that section of road as confirmed by the recent traffic survey carried out there. Residents stated that this had given them no confidence in Essex Highways. Cllr Barber replied that the ECC team working on planning applications were not part of Essex Highways.

One resident asked about the shop on the original suggested plans, and Cllr Arnold confirmed that in the current plans the shop has been replaced with a car park to mainly serve the primary school. The resident went on to ask if Bloor Homes should be made to ensure that solar panels are included on all the houses in the development, however Cllr Barber said that it was not government policy so could not be enforced. If CCC tried to make it a requirement, a developer was likely to argue that the cost would make the development unviable.

A number of residents had strong concerns about the traffic outside of the primary school currently, and one asked if anyone from ECC has come out and seen the issues in person. Parking issues on Keelers Way and Malvern Way were also mentioned, and it was said that families and those with buggies often have to walk out into the road due to cars being parked on pavements. Cllr Barber said that when residents were consulted on putting parking restrictions on Keelers Way previously, the overwhelming response was that it was not wanted, however he would be happy to consult with residents again. Residents also complained about the speed of vehicles in Keelers Way and the condition of the road surface; one major pothole had taken literally many years to be repaired.

One resident questioned the settlement boundary. Cllr Arnold said that the Parish Council previously reviewed and approved a settlement boundary review, which was sent back to the planning authority. In the document it had stated that the planning authority did not want to push the boundary out to the west of the village. However, in the emerging Draft Local Plan, the two-page settlement boundary review had been reduced to just one paragraph, which GHPC had not agreed, and the site identified was the very one the previous settlement boundary review had rejected.

Another resident asked if it was normal for Anglian Water to object to a development like this. Cllr Barber said that sewage and drainage capacity is increasingly becoming an issue in the Colchester area, and it is significant that they have objected to this application. In Langham, they have stopped building houses at the moment, because of the sewage capacity issue.

When asked whether the Parish Council could fund a traffic survey further north along Coach Road, Cllr Arnold replied that Bloor Homes had carried out a number of traffic surveys in the

area already, and the results of which should be visible in the documents provided as part of the Planning Application. GHPC had recently paid for its own survey of Coach Road traffic; the results should indicate whether Bloor Homes' figures should be trusted.

5. Chairman's closing comments

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, especially Cllr Barber and Cllr Laws, who said that if anyone had any further questions or issues to discuss, they could be contacted directly.

The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council will be discussing their response to the Planning Application at an extraordinary meeting of the Council the next day and closed the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 9.23pm.

These minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed
(Parish Council Chairman)

Date