

# Minutes

## Council Meeting

21<sup>st</sup> September 2009



### Present:

<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Present</b>
J E Abbott	Yes	E R Lynch	Yes
M J Banthorpe	Yes	M Lynch	Apologies
Miss L Barlow	Apologies	D Mann	Yes
J Baugh	Yes	T McArdle	Yes
Mrs J C Beavis	Yes	N G McCrea	Apologies
D L Bebb	Yes	J McKee	Yes
E Bishop	Yes	H J Messenger	Yes
R J Bolton	Yes	A M Meyer	Yes
G Butland	Apologies	R G S Mitchell	Yes
G Cohen	Yes	Mrs J M Money	Yes
J C Collar	Yes	Lady Newton	Yes
M Dunn	Yes	J P O'Reilly-Cicconi	Apologies
Mrs E Edey	Yes	Mrs J A Pell	Yes
J G J Elliott	Yes	R Ramage	Yes
R Elliston	Yes	D M Reid	Yes
Dr R L Evans	Yes	D E A Rice	Yes
A V E Everard	Yes	Mrs C Sandbrook	Yes
J H G Finbow	Yes	Mrs W D Scattergood	Yes
Ms L B Flint	Apologies	Mrs J W Schmitt	Yes
T J W Foster	Yes	A F Shelton (Vice Chairman)	Yes
Mrs B A Gage	Yes	Mrs L Shepherd	Yes
M G Gage	Yes	C Siddall	Yes
Mrs M E Galione ( Chairman)	Yes	Mrs J A Smith	Yes
J E B Gyford	Yes	Mrs G A Spray	Yes
N R H O Harley	Apologies	F Swallow	Yes
Mrs S A Howell	Yes	Miss M Thorogood	Yes (until 8.00pm)
P J Hughes	Apologies	S M Walsh	Apologies
D L Hume	Apologies	R G Walters	Yes
M C M Lager	Yes	R N Wilkins	Yes
S J Lambourne	Yes	T S Wilkinson	Yes

The Chairman welcomed all Councillors to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to any public and press present at the meeting.

### Quality Parish Status Awards

At the commencement of the meeting and following an introduction by Councillor John Buchanan, the Chairman of the Essex Association of Local Councils, the Chairman, Councillor Mrs M E Galione, presented Quality Parish Status Awards to Councillor Mrs Helen Edwards (Chairman) and Mrs Jane Coleman (Clerk) of Feering Parish Council which had been accredited for the first time, and to Councillor Martyn Phillips (Chairman) and Mrs Pippa Potter

(Clerk) of Rayne Parish Council which had been re-accredited. The Chairman congratulated the two Parish Councils on their achievement.

### 31 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman referred to the following issues:-

- (1) **Chairman's Charity Golf Day.** The Chairman reported that the Charity Golf Day had taken place on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009. It had been a very successful day with 28 teams participating and just over £4,300 had been raised for the Chairman's two charities.
- (2) **APSE Awards – Best Private and Public Partnership.** Business Development Services and Braintree District Council had won the 'Association for Public Service Excellence' national award for their successful partnership.
- (3) **Anglia in Bloom Awards 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009.** The Chairman was pleased to announce the following awards:-

Halstead in Bloom had been awarded 'Winner and Gold Award' in the Town Category. This was wonderful news and followed success in the previous five years when Silver Gilt had been awarded. The colour theme this year had been red, white and blue with silver to celebrate 25 years of twinning with Haubourdin, France.

Kelvedon had won Silver Gilt in the Small Town category.

Adams Court, Halstead had been nominated in the Best Community Project.

The Women's Institute Dry Bed, Halstead had been nominated in the Best Sustainable/Drought Garden.

- (4) **Witham International Puppet Festival 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009.** This year had been the tenth anniversary of the popular Festival with performers from across the World taking part.
- (5) **School Visits.** The Chairman reported that during her term of office she would be visiting local primary schools, The Chairman's first visit had been to Notley Green Primary School which had included a tea party organised by Year 6 for members of the local community who had been evacuated during World War II. Future visits to Rayne Primary and Nursery School, Howbridge Junior School, Witham and Templars Infant and Nursery School, Witham had been arranged.

The Vice-Chairman reported that he had attended the North Essex Cricket League Plate Cup Final between Bocking Cricket Club and Great Horkesley Cricket Club and he was pleased to report that Bocking had won the match. The Cricket Club had expressed their grateful thanks to the Council for a grant which had enabled them to purchase a new tractor for grass cutting

### 32 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

### 33 **MINUTES**

**DECISION:** That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20th July 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

35 **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERENCES (PUBLIC SESSION)**

Cabinet 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009

Braintree District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Strategic Assessment and Annual Partnership Plan

Councillor Mrs Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Communities, reminded the Council that Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) were required to undertake an annual Strategic Assessment of crime and disorder data and quality of life data. The publication of an Annual Partnership Plan was also required. This Plan was based on the findings of the Strategic Assessment and it highlighted key priorities and how the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership would deal with crime and other issues over the forthcoming year. Braintree CDRP's latest Strategic Assessment had not identified any new issues and the Annual Partnership Plan continued to incorporate youth offending and disorder; anti-social behaviour; substance related crime and disorder; hate crime; domestic abuse; and road safety as its priorities.

During their consideration of the item, Members of Cabinet had highlighted that crime on industrial estates and in rural areas, and theft from building sites, impacted on business and resources and it had been agreed that this should be included in the Annual Partnership Plan as a priority.

**DECISION:** That the decision of the Responsible Authority Group (CDRP) to approve the Annual Partnership Plan 2009 be supported, with the amendment (suggested to the CDRP) that business crime in both urban and rural areas be included as a priority.

36 **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS (PUBLIC SESSION)**

INFORMATION: No statements were made.

37 **QUESTION TIME (PUBLIC SESSION)**

(i) **Statements from the Leader and Cabinet Members**

INFORMATION: The Council received and noted written reports submitted by Cabinet Members. The Leader and Cabinet Members provided further updates.

**East of England Regional Assembly/East of England Development Agency.**

Councillor Siddall, Deputy Cabinet Member for the Leader's Portfolio, reported on a recent meeting of the East of England Regional Assembly. This was a regional partnership body representing 52 Councils. The main purpose of the meeting had been to discuss a proposed change to the structure of the Assembly which would bring together the Assembly and the East of England Development Agency and establish a Leaders' Board consisting of the Leaders of the 52 Councils. It had been suggested that there should be a Sub Panel of sixteen members representing the different areas of the region. The proposed changes had been agreed and they would come into effect in

September 2010. In noting this report, Councillor M Gage, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked the Leader to consider how the new body would be held to account and its decisions scrutinised.

**Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE).** Councillor Lady Newton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Well-Being, congratulated the Council's Housing Team on being nominated in the 'Best Housing and Regeneration Initiative' category of the APSE awards. This had been in recognition of the housing scheme at Baileybridge Road, Braintree.

**Green Flag Awards.** Councillor Walters, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, was pleased to report that Silver End Memorial Gardens, Halstead Public Gardens and Great Notley Country Park had been awarded the prestigious Green Flag. This reflected the effort and hard work of Officers and grounds staff in improving and maintaining the sites.

**Review of the Cultural Strategy.** Councillor Wilkinson, Deputy Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Culture, reported that the Council's Cultural Strategy was currently being reviewed and that all Councillors would soon be receiving a Questionnaire regarding the content of the Strategy. Members were asked to complete and return the Questionnaire promptly. The review of the Strategy would also be considered at forthcoming meetings of the Local Committees.

**The People's Panel.** Councillor Bebb, Deputy Cabinet Member for Customers and Communication, reported that the final stages of recruitment to the People's Panel were taking place and that the Panel's consultation process would go live with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009.

(ii) **Oral Questions**

INFORMATION: Members were invited to ask any questions of the Leader on non-operational matters and the following questions were asked: -

Councillor Gyford referred to the presentation by Mid Essex NHS Primary Care Trust to the Witham Local Committee meeting in August 2009. Councillor Gyford questioned whether the Trust had been consulted about proposed **changes to Bramston Sports Centre, Witham** and, in particular, the possible non-replacement of dry-side facilities, as the Trust's Director had indicated at the meeting that the Trust had not been consulted.

Councillor Lady Newton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Well-Being, stated that although it may not have been consulted specifically, she understood that the Trust was aware of the proposals for Bramston Sports Centre and she had asked the Council's Deputy Director – Head of District Development to ensure that the Trust was consulted on the planning application for the proposed leisure development at the new Maltings Academy before it was presented to the Planning Committee.

(Post Meeting Note: Councillor Lady Newton confirmed in writing to all Councillors that the Trust had been consulted on the planning application for Maltings Academy and it was anticipated that this application would be presented to the Planning Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009. The Trust would also be consulted on any application for the replacement of Bramston swimming pool).

Councillor Dr Evans referred to the provision of a **Church and community facility at Maltings Lane, Witham** and he asked why the Bethel Church had decided not to be involved in running the joint site.

Councillor Lager, Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Resources, stated that the Bethel Church had queried the amount of parking which would be available. However, parking provision was constrained by Government requirements and, despite a number of meetings, it had not been possible to reach an agreement with representatives of the Church. A report on future options would be presented to Witham Local Committee.

Councillor Everard asked whether Councillors were aware of the important work taking place at **Children's Centres** which were fulfilling a vital need of children and their parents, and he queried why Councillors did not make better use of the Centres to help people in their Wards.

Councillor Mrs Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Communities, agreed that the Centres were doing very good work and she stated that Councillors were encouraged to use them.

Councillor Mrs Pell asked if Councillors were aware of the hard work by Council staff which had helped **Halstead in Bloom** being awarded 'Winner and Gold Award' in Britain in Bloom's Town Category. Councillor Mrs Pell thanked staff for their help and contributions.

The Council concurred with Councillor Mrs Pell and congratulated Halstead in Bloom on its achievement.

Councillor Abbott referred to the report of the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Resources and, in particular, to the **review of community halls**, which was 'showing that several suffer from under use and signs of ageing'. Councillor Abbott queried the definition of 'under use and signs of ageing'.

Councillor Lager, Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Resources, stated that a report on this matter would be presented to a future Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Abbott made reference to the **pond at Forest Road, Witham** which was enjoyed by local people, but was currently in an appalling state. Councillor Abbott stated that the pond was apparently now the responsibility of Greenfields Community Housing, but they had indicated that it wasn't, as too had Braintree District Council and the Environment Agency. Councillor Abbott asked what the Council could do to restore the appearance of the pond.

Councillor Walters, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, stated that he would respond to Councillor Abbott's question in writing.

Councillor Wilkins made reference to **access to High Street, Braintree** which he considered discriminated against people with disabilities and he asked if access to the High Street for the disabled could be allowed.

Councillor Lager, Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Resources, agreed that people with disabilities should have the same opportunities as the able-bodied. Councillor Lager stated that the issue of access to Braintree High Street was a matter for Braintree Local Committee to discuss, in consultation with Essex County Council, and to put forward some options.

Councillor E Lynch referred to the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability in which an 83% satisfaction rate with the District Council's **Grounds Maintenance Service** to Essex County Council/schools in the Braintree District was quoted. Councillor Lynch queried why the same level of satisfaction had not been achieved by the recently lost estate maintenance service provided to Greenfields Community Housing (GCH), which was considered to be unsatisfactory and poor.

Councillor Walters, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, disagreed and stated that an 80% satisfaction rate had been achieved for the service provided to GCH. Councillor Walters stated that the contract with GCH had been lost on the grounds of price and that the Council had submitted its tender on the basis of providing a proper grounds maintenance service.

Councillor E Lynch referred to the report of the Cabinet Member for Customers and Communication, and he asked if the report on **The Place Survey** could be presented to full Council rather than the Cabinet.

Councillor Mrs Beavis, the Cabinet Member for Customers and Communication, stated that this should not be a problem.

(iii) **Chairmen's Statements**

INFORMATION: No statements were made.

(iv) **Meetings in Public Session**

INFORMATION: Members were invited to raise any matters arising from meetings that had been held in public session since the last Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009. No matters were raised.

38 **BUSINESS OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

INFORMATION: There were no reports received from Council representatives on external organisations.

As there were no items in private session, the Chairman closed the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.15pm.

Mrs M E Galione

(Chairman)

(i)

For further information regarding these minutes, please contact Eileen Self, Law & Governance, on 01376 551414 or e-mail [eileen.self@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:eileen.self@braintree.gov.uk)