

# Wickham Bishops Parish Council

## Parish Councillors

Mrs A Mickelsen (Chairman)  
I D Wardrop (Vice-Chairman)  
H M Bass  
P J Bates  
I S F MacGregor  
R Mundell  
S J Nicholas  
J Williams



Winner Best Kept Village 2009, 2015  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place Essex Village of the Year 2015

[www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](http://www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org)

## Parish Clerk

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<b>MINUTES of Parish Council Meeting</b> <b>held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall Boardroom</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>
<b>18/001</b>	<b>Those Present and Apologies for Absence</b> In the chair: Cllr Mickelsen Present: Cllrs Bass, Bates, MacGregor, Mundell, Nicholas and Wardrop; D/Cllr Durham CC; the Clerk. Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Williams. One member of the public was present.
<b>18/002</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests and Compliance with the Ethical Framework</b> There were no Declarations of Interest.
<b>18/003</b>	<b>Approval of Minutes</b> <b>Resolved:</b> that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2017 be approved as a true record. Proposed Cllr MacGregor, seconded Cllr Mickelsen. <b>Resolved:</b> that the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2017 be approved as a true record. Proposed Cllr MacGregor, seconded Cllr Wardrop.
<b>18/004</b>	<b>Public Forum</b> There were no comments from the member of the public.
<b>18/005</b>	<b>Chairman's Report</b> The Chairman praised the well-attended 'Nine Lessons and Carols' service at St Bartholomew's on 17 <sup>th</sup> December, at which she had given a reading on behalf of the Parish Council. The Chairman noted that an application had been received for the casual vacancy and announced that co-option would be held at the meeting on 30 <sup>th</sup> January. <b>Action:</b> <i>The Clerk to circulate the application for review ahead of the meeting</i> Cllr Nicholas was thanked for his comprehensive survey of the footpaths and Rights of Way, in support of the project to join the Parish Paths Partnership (PPP). Cllr Mickelsen noted that sufficient volunteers had been found and the project would therefore be progressed.
<b>18/006</b>	<b>Clerk's Report</b> The Clerk drew attention to the updated Issues List which had been circulated to all Councillors. A follow-up email had been sent to the owner of The Mulberry Tree regarding the unkempt verges, and all footpath issues would now be tracked separately under the PPP project. Despite the drains on the southern section of Wickham Hall Lane appearing to be blocked, Essex Highways had decided no immediate action was required. The Clerk explained that without residents reporting a problem, it would not be possible to escalate the issue. <b>Action:</b> <i>Councillors to monitor the situation and advise residents to report the problem to Essex Highways at <a href="http://www.essexhighways.org">www.essexhighways.org</a>, giving the issue reference number to the Clerk.</i>

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<b>18/007</b>	<p><b>Planning Applications and Decisions</b></p> <p>There were no applications or appeals received from Maldon District Council to discuss, and there were no delegated decisions made by the Parish Clerk to note.</p> <p>The decisions made by Maldon District Council and the Planning Inspectorate were noted.</p> <p>Cllr Wardrop remarked that the reason for the dismissal by the Planning Inspectorate of the appeal <i>OUT/MAL/15/01342 – Land Rear Of 9 Church Road</i> was due to the adoption of the District Council's Local Development Plan and the proposal not meeting any of the exemption criteria. Cllr Wardrop was disappointed to note that the expert reports and all other arguments against the appeal appeared to have been given no weight by the Inspector.</p> <p>Cllr Bass advised that members of the District Council would be meeting with Essex Highways to work on improving Essex Highways' planning consultation responses.</p>
<b>18/008</b>	<p><b>Removal of the Parish Trigger</b></p> <p>Cllr Bass explained that he had asked the Leader of the District Council, D/Cllr Durham CC, to attend the meeting to respond to the concerns over the loss of the Parish Trigger.</p> <p>Cllr Wardrop questioned the lack of parish consultation or opportunity to address the District Council at the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> December. D/Cllr Durham explained that the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> December was a housekeeping exercise to agree necessary changes to District Council protocols, to enable the new process required by the decision taken on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.</p> <p>Parish Councillors queried the Chief Executive's claimed cost savings and suggested the true saving would be low. D/Cllr Durham agreed that the saving was difficult to quantify, but could not agree that the change would lead to a loss of the democratic process or poorer decisions, as Parish Councils – as long as they had sound Planning reasons for objecting – could still ask their District Council member to Call-In the application to Committee.</p> <p>D/Cllrs Durham and Bass (in his District Councillor role), reiterated the reason for the removal of the Parish Trigger was to increase the delegated decision rate following recent, strong, auditor criticism. Anecdotal evidence suggested that the Parish Trigger had been too easily applied, causing applications to be determined by Committee even when objections were not based on sound Planning objections. The volume of applications being decided by Committee meant that all District Council Members sat on a Planning Committee, and did not always have the relevant expertise.</p> <p>D/Cllr Durham explained that Parish Councils had no statutory right to be consulted on planning objections and the Planning Trigger was a highly unusual process across Planning Authorities nationally. D/Cllr Durham confirmed that the decision could not be revisited for six months from the decision date.</p> <p>In answer to Chairman Mickelsen's request for clarification of the new process, D/Cllr Bass asked that the Clerk send the Parish Council's planning application comments to both himself and D/Cllr Durham. The District Councillors assured the meeting that instances where the Planning Officer had determined the application prior to the published deadline, thereby preventing the Parish Council from having its comments considered, were isolated and should not reoccur.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Parish Council advised the meeting that a review of the Parish Council's Planning Committee's Terms of Reference would be held at the meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> January, to agree any amendments needed to work with the new process.</p>

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	<p>Parish Councillors discussed writing a further letter to the Chief Executive, stressing the unacceptability of the lack of consultation and finding out about the change from the media, however it was felt that this would not result in any useful outcome. D/Cllr Durham would ensure the Chief Executive and Planning Officers were aware of the Parish Council's concerns and the new process would be carefully monitored.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>D/Cllr Durham CC to report the Parish Council's continuing concerns to the CEO and Planning team.</i></p> <p>The Chairman thanked D/Cllr Durham for his attendance and input.</p>
<b>18/009</b>	<p><b>Braintree District, Tendring District and Colchester Borough Council's Local Plan Consultation</b></p> <p>Cllr Bass expressed concern over likely pinch-points accessing the A12.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>Cllr Bass to provide comments on the proposals via email to the Clerk for consideration.</i></p>
<b>18/010</b>	<p><b>Neighbourhood Plan Report</b></p> <p>The Chairman read out a report from the NHP Steering Group.</p> <p>155 residents' questionnaires have been returned electronically, and 15 hard copies. More hard copies are expected with data entry of up to 150 arranged; blank questionnaires are available from the Library, tennis club and Aquarius. The target response is 500 in total by the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 deadline. 9 business questionnaires had been returned.</p> <p>Over £1000 of the grant budget had been spent by the 23<sup>rd</sup> December deadline; the demand to return the unspent £56.95 to Groundwork UK had been received that morning and the Clerk would arrange for its immediate repayment <i>in accordance with Financial Regulation 6.4</i>. A further grant would be applied for in the Spring, to fund consultants to review the draft Plan.</p>
<b>18/011</b>	<p><b>Monthly Councillor Surgeries</b></p> <p>Attendees at the Surgery on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018 will be Cllrs Wardrop and Williams. The next Surgery will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> February, with Cllrs MacGregor and Mundell attending.</p>
<b>18/012</b>	<p><b>District Council Report</b></p> <p>District Councillors Bass and Durham had nothing further to report.</p> <p>Cllr Wardrop, noting that both District Councillors sat on the Local Highways Panel (D/Cllr Durham CC as LHP Chairman in his County Council role), queried the status of outstanding LHP requests and highlighted the continuing lack of response from the LHP Liaison Officer.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>D/Cllr Durham CC to contact Mr Jon Simmons and demand that the rotation of the Speed Indicating Devices be progressed.</i></p> <p>Councillors expressed concern that another LHP request had circumvented the Parish Council, appearing on the list of potential schemes without notification or consultation. D/Cllr Durham CC advised that the County Council Divisional Member's approval is required.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>D/Cllr Bass to investigate the unexpected repositioning of the Wickham Bishops sign to the wrong side of the River Blackwater.</i></p>
<b>18/013</b>	<p><b>Neighbourhood Watch Report</b></p> <p>The Clerk read out the Neighbourhood Watch report, which outlined two house burglaries along Back Lane and Grange Road, and a break-in to an outbuilding on Station Road. Residents were asked to remain vigilant.</p>

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<b>18/014</b>	<b>Governance</b> Council reviewed its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. There were no desirable or mandatory updates required. <b>Resolved:</b> the existing Standing Orders and Financial Regulations would be re-adopted without amendment. Proposed Cllr Nicholas, seconded Cllr Mickelsen.
<b>18/015</b>	<b>Finance</b> <b>Resolved:</b> The balances were noted and the list of payments agreed. Proposed Cllr Mundell, seconded Cllr Wardrop.  <b>Resolved:</b> The budget was agreed with the addition of a provision of £1000 for re-surfacing of the Handley's Lane byway and the expectation of acquiring a similar level of grant funding via the Parish Paths Partnership. The Precept for 2018-2019 would be set at £15,222 being £15.42 per Band D dwelling. Proposed Cllr Mickelsen, seconded Cllr Mundell.
<b>18/016</b>	<b>Correspondence</b> The invitation to the A12 Community Forum on 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2018 was noted. Cllr Nicholas would attend. <b>Action:</b> <i>The Clerk to forward the invitation to Cllr Nicholas and D/Cllrs Bass and Durham CC.</i> The Chairman reported that a resident had thanked the Parish Council for replacing the missing fingerpost sign on Kelvedon Road, at the entrance to the footpath to Goat Lodge Road.
<b>18/017</b>	<b>Progress Reports from Councillors and Committees</b> The Chairman and Clerk gave a short update on the Grange Road drainage project request. Representatives of Essex County Council and Maldon District Council had agreed to attend the meeting on 30th January to discuss the CFIF grant funding and flood protection scheme.
<b>18/018</b>	<b>General Village News</b> The recycling collection team had been unable to collect from Byron Drive due to a Highways works van blocking the entrance. The collection had been rearranged.  The new dwelling, 16A School Road, did not appear to have met Planning Condition 8 which required that part of the existing dwelling house should be removed and made good prior to occupation. <b>Action:</b> <i>The Clerk to write to the Enforcement team, copied to D/Cllrs Bass and Durham CC.</i>
<b>18/019</b>	<b>Dates of Next Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friday 19th January 2018 Planning Committee Meeting at 11.30am <i>if required</i></li> <li>- Tuesday 30th January 2018 Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm</li> </ul>
<b>18/020</b>	<b>Close of Meeting 9.20pm</b> Items for future agendas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-option to the Parish Council (30th January)</li> <li>- Essex County Council's CFIF grant opportunities for drainage issues (30th January)</li> <li>- Amendments to Planning Committee Terms of Reference (30th January)</li> <li>- Annual review of asset register and risk assessment (6th March)</li> </ul>