

# Wickham Bishops Parish Council

## Parish Councillors

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



Winner Best Kept Village 2008, 2015  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Essex Village of the Year 2015  
[www.wickhambishopparishcouncil.org](http://www.wickhambishopparishcouncil.org)

## Parish Clerk

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<b>MINUTES</b>	
<b>Of Library Committee Meeting held Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall Boardroom</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>
<b>19L/001</b>	<b>Those Present and Apologies for Absence</b> Present: Cllrs Bass, Bates and Jarvis; the Clerk. There were three members of the public present including Cllr Mickelsen.
<b>19L/002</b>	<b>Election of Chairman</b> <b>Resolved:</b> Cllr Bates was elected Chairman of the Committee. Proposed: Cllr Bass; seconded: Cllr Jarvis.
<b>19L/003</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests and Compliance with the Ethical Framework</b> There were no declarations of interests.
<b>19L/004</b>	<b>Introduction by Chairman</b> The Chairman welcomed the members of the public to the meeting. The two main aims of the Committee were given as (i) to retain a library service, ideally within the existing building, and (ii) to retain the building in public ownership for use by the community.  The Chairman explained that he and Cllr Bass had arranged for the Parish Council to consider replacing the Committee with a working group, with the same aims.
<b>19L/005</b>	<b>Project Status</b> <u>Service Retention</u> Two Freedom of Information requests had revealed that operating costs for the previous year were £10,900 staffing, £12,084 premises and £4,707 for the library services and books. The data also showed a reduction in footfall from 8,277 to 6,872 between 2008 and 2018. For the same period, Cllr Durham CC had provided loans and renewals figures, showing a reduction from 15,020 to 11,372.  <u>Building Retention</u> The building had been successfully listed by the Parish Council as an Asset of Community Value on 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2018, and its application for non-listed Heritage Asset status was being considered by Maldon District Council.  Investigations into the ownership of the building, built in 1850, had revealed it was paid for by the Rev. Stratford Leigh from personal funds as a school. Between 1902 and 1914, the school came under control of the Maldon District Education sub-Committee. Minutes from the school manager's meetings in 1969, shortly before its 1971 closure, state the building would revert to the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance if no longer used. The building opened as a library in 1973.  It was reported that Essex County Council (ECC) shows a freehold interest in the building on its database and that no Land Registry listing exists.  <u>Key Dates</u> 29 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2018                      Consultation began Dec. 2018 to Mar. 2019      ECC development of community library offer 20 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019                      Last day for consultation <a href="https://surveys.essexinsight.org.uk/librarystrategy2018#">https://surveys.essexinsight.org.uk/librarystrategy2018#</a> Mar. 2019 to May 2019      ECC consultation evaluation and final strategy drafting Mar. 2019 to May 2019      ECC initial development of principles of Community Managed Libraries Jun. 2019                              ECC Cabinet approval of final strategy Jul. 2019 to Dec. 2019      ECC to formalise proposals and develop agreements for Community Libraries

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<b>19L/006</b>	<p><b>Public Forum</b></p> <p>Three members of the public advocated retention of the library service and building, praising the parish council for its actions. The importance of the library service as an information source, particularly the inter-library lending scheme which satisfies the local need for reference and rare non-fiction publications, was contrasted with community libraries and mobile services which tend to cater for fiction readers and do not offer skilled librarians.</p> <p>The accessibility of the location was acknowledged to be important to the 45% of users in the Under 9s and Over 60s age groups; the challenges of visiting Maldon or Witham libraries were expected to present barriers to these age groups and would result in increased social isolation for these most vulnerable age groups. Residents felt the County Council had under-weighted the importance to these users and was ignoring the community aspect in measuring the worth of a library based on usage and distance data.</p> <p>The 'Save Our Libraries Essex' Facebook group was suggested as a suitable resource and pressure group.</p>
<b>19L/007</b>	<p><b>Action Plan</b></p> <p>The County Council's criteria used in the Tier 4 Library classification were discussed. Councillors agreed to target a re-classification to Tier 3, which would provide greater support from Essex County Council in providing a community-led library service.</p> <p>The different aspects of the library service were considered. Councillors identified the Delivery at Home programme as a possible volunteer-led service that could be offered to Essex County Council.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to ask the Parish Council to appoint a fourth member, to work with Cllr Jarvis on the Service Retention aim.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Cllr Jarvis to analyse the data and seek any clarification required, and to investigate the SOLE group for ideas and support.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Clerk to invite Cllr Durham CC to the Parish Council Surgery on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Clerk to write to the neighbouring parishes seeking expressions of interest in supporting the service and building retention.</p> <p>It was agreed that Cllrs Bass and Bates would lead the Building Retention aim.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Cllr Bass to contact the Bishop of Chelmsford regarding the Church's possible ownership.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Cllr Bates to invite a representative from each library user group to the next meeting and encourage participation in the consultation.</p> <p>The Clerk stated she could provide details of possible grant and loan sources if necessary.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that a budget of £200 budget would be requested from the Parish Council towards incidental expenditures associated with data gathering and proposal development. Proposed Cllr Jarvis, seconded Cllr Bates.</p> <p>It was agreed that meetings would be held approximately monthly, with the next meeting likely to be Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019.</p>
<b>19L/008</b>	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>Due to the proposal to replace the Committee with a Working Group, there was no discussion to develop possible amendments to the Committee's Terms of Reference</p>
<b>19L/009</b>	<p><b>Dates of Future Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 Meeting of the Parish Council at 7.00pm</li> <li>- Friday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019 Planning Committee Meeting at 11.30am</li> <li>- 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019 Library Committee Meeting at 7.30pm <i>to be confirmed</i></li> </ul>
<b>19L/010</b>	<p><b>Close of Meeting 9.27pm</b></p>