

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 12 JULY 2021

PRESENT: Councillors: Carl Powling (Mayor)
John Akker
Julie Baker
David Bragg
Sophie Weaver
Chris Wood

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: Vanessa Allen
Borough Councillor: John Jowers
4 members of the public

21/134 TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Councillors Sylvia Wargent and Robert Jenkins, Borough Councillors Robert Davidson and Patricia Moore.

Apologies were recorded.

21/135 TO RECORD DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Akker declared a non-pecuniary interest in 21/140 as a member of Stop 350 and Mersea Island Society.

Councillor Baker declared a non-pecuniary interest in 21/140 as a member of Stop 350.

Councillor Bragg declared an interest in 21/140, planning application 20 2891.

21/136 PUBLIC SESSION

The Secret Music Festival organisers detailed their plans to want to ensure the safety of people on site and to limit disruption. The organisers are fully licenced, have security in place, paramedics, first responders, traffic management and sound engineer to ensure the event remains within the sound limit. The event is licenced for 5000 people, although they are expecting 1000-1200. There is parking on site for 200 cars and running a return bus service to Colchester. The event will close at 11pm.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been presented to Colchester Borough Council; Colchester requested planning amendments to be added. There have been further delays and expense as Colchester Borough Council requested the document in word rather than PDF to put onto their website. The Plan will be independently examined and will be put to a local referendum. It is hoped the Plan will be adopted by early December.

Vote of thanks to Peter Banks for his hard work as Chair and Coordinator of the Neighbourhood Plan, along with all his other work on Bradwell. Peter Banks will continue, remotely, to coordinate the final stages of the Plan.

A request was made for the Council to conduct a feasibility study into charging for the toilets as they are costing £10 per household per year. Colchester Borough Council have previously stated that it is not viable to charge, however the income from car parks should be used for the benefit of residents.

Parking queries were raised to enquire whether the new maps on the website are to be amended or for the working group to discuss and, whether Churchfields will be no parking 24/7 as the consultation does not end until 09/08/21.

21/137 REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

County/Borough Councillor John Jowers

The problems at the top of The Lane and the Caravan site, the date of the caravan forum will be forwarded to the Council so a Councillor can attend.

Councillor Jowers will investigate the consultation on the Red Lines.

Concerns about the length of time, 150 days and mayhem that will be caused through installing the Flood Defences.

Looking to improve the hammerhead on the pontoon as silt has been washed away and is putting pressure onto joints.

Cobmarsh dredging and recharging is going ahead and funding is in place.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted, very late, but better late than never and it needs to be linked to protected status.

Constituency changes consultation proposals to expand Witham to include Lexden, Prettygate, Mersea, Peldon and Wigborough.

21/138 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING OF 4 MAY 2021 - MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Weaver, SECONDED by Councillor Bragg that the MINUTES of the meeting held on 4 May 2021, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

21/139 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 21 JUNE 2021 - MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Weaver, SECONDED by Councillor Baker that the MINUTES of the meeting held on 21 June 2021, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

21/140 PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

(a) 21 1639

Conversion of existing dwelling to 2no. 1 bed flats.

10 Queen Anne Drive, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Wiltshire

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

(b) 21 1570

Replacement of existing timber shed with new, slightly larger timber shed, relocated on site.

The Oyster Sheds, The Old Oyster Sheds, Coast Road, West Mersea – Haward

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

(c) 21 1724

Application to determine if prior approval is required for proposed change of use from retail (A1) to restaurant/café (A3).

5 Queens Corner, West Mersea – Mr D Carter

West Mersea Town Council, in agreement with comments received from Essex County Council Highways considers the proposal inappropriate given its location adjacent to a busy junction and in the absence of suitable parking provision.

This Council also notes residents concerns for noise and odour pollution in what is primarily a residential area.

(d) 20 2891

First floor extension to the property with a new swimming pool elevated deck to the seaward elevation. New terracing to the garden elevation at ground level and new terracing at first floor level on the seaward elevation in conjunction with the first floor extension.

1 Victoria Esplanade, West Mersea – Mr J Borges

West Mersea Town Council has previously noted its objection to this proposed development and sees no significant changes to this proposal which would alter this position.

This Council notes residents' concerns around these proposals impact and considers that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the street scene and considers the proposal an over-development of the site.

This Council is concerned not to establish a precedent that would allow a change in the character of Victoria Esplanade.

(e) 21 1719

Variation of condition 2 of 17 0819 to permit installation of full-length windows and small balcony to new dwelling.

46 St Peters Road, West Mersea – Ms T Reece

West Mersea Town Council notes the original planning condition in respect of the proposed 'small balcony' and sees no merit in changes to the original consent.

This Council considers the proposed additional changes detrimental to the street scene.

(f) 21 1690

Single storey rear extension.

10 Brambledown, West Mersea – Mr Spink

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

(g) 21 1706

Removal of existing timber staircase and balcony, replacement with metal staircase and balcony for fire protection.

20 Saltings Crescent, West Mersea – Mr G Pamment

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

(h) 21 1607

Application to discharge condition 3, 4, 5 and 8 of planning application 20 2492.

Land at, Brierley Paddocks, West Mersea – Ms H Vincett-Wilson

West Mersea Town Council wishes to state the following in respect to the application to discharge conditions: We note that there is no planning application being made to vary that Seaview Avenue will serve solely for temporary access limited to a period of 18 months for vehicular access for sales and residential purposes. This is already agreed through the approval of the site's construction method statement.

We reiterate our staunch objection to any moves to allow vehicular traffic to access the site via Seaview Avenue beyond that identified above and would express concern that this cannot be allowed at any point in the future to achieve such wholly inappropriate access.

Further, West Mersea Town Council would wish to communicate that it believes that additional work and consultation will be required, to include Essex CC Highways, to ensure that the access via East Road is made safe and appropriate. This is particularly with respect to further development associated with Dawes Lane.

Additionally we note that – further to our comment last August – in respect of Affordable Homes we requested – and still request - that the management of the affordable homes is granted to a local organisation for the benefit of local and Borough residents. The affordable housing still does not appear to be integrated into the market housing as required under Policy DM8 but concentrated near Seaview Avenue properties and near Farthings Chase. There is no affordable housing near Cross Lane.

(i) 21 1741

Single storey and two storey rear extension.
18 Garden Farm, West Mersea – Mr J Vince

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

(j) 21 1512

Proposed two storey side extension and single storey rear extension.
36 The Lane, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Thurgood

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

(k) 21 1471

Retrospective change of use of domestic outbuilding to AirBNB.
6 Firs Chase, West Mersea - Mr G Marshall

West Mersea Town Council considers the proposal unsuitable both in terms of the proposed use of a non-residential outbuilding, and the impact upon other domestic residents in the locale.

Further this Council is concerned not to establish an unacceptable precedent for this kind of use for residential outbuildings, which it considers inappropriate.

Further, this Council reiterates its opposition to retrospective proposals as a general principle.

21/141 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING DECISIONS RECEIVED

Applications passed

(a) 21 1146

Retrospective planning permission for a fence over 1m on the southern boundary of 1 Kingsland Beach, which is adjacent to the public highway. This section is approximately 6m long. This is to provide security and privacy to our garden, which sits adjacent to public parking and public access to the beach.
1 Kingsland Beach, West Mersea – Mrs C James

(b) 21 0910

Proposed garage extension.
2 New Captains Road, West Mersea – Mr A Pamment

(c) 21 1211

Part two storey and part single storey extension (revised plans).
19 Mersea Avenue, West Mersea – Mrs J Gozzett

WMTC Recommendation: Following discussion it was agreed that consent be granted in respect of this application, with a condition that reasonable privacy between applicant and neighbours be maintained.

- (d) 21 1220
Proposed farm shop to sell own produce with associated infrastructure, access and car park.
Bower Hall Farm, Bower Hall Lane, West Mersea – Jowers
- (e) 21 1238
Proposed extension and alterations. Changes to approved scheme reference 19 1659.
Kansu, 53 Seaview Avenue, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Ramsay
- (f) 21 0958
Remodelling of existing roof, replacement window and front extension. Amended description.
24 St Peters Road, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Lord
- (g) 21 1287
Rear extension and remodelling of external elevations.
5 Spruce Close, West Mersea – Mr J Thompson
- (h) 21 1332
Rear and side extension to existing two storey chalet. Reconfigured/extended roof layout to provide front/rear gable and small mez level above master bedroom. Footprint reduction from consented scheme 20 0199.
18 City Road, West Mersea – Mr P & Mrs S Langley
- (i) 21 1070
Remove old dilapidated outbuildings and replace with a modern summerhouse of lesser floor area.
Tides Reach, 92 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea – Mr J Harrison

21/142 TO REVIEW THE ANNUAL ROSPA PARK INSPECTION REPORT AND TO CONSIDER ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE RISKS IDENTIFIED

Discussion included the risk areas identified by RoSPA report include the skate park and slide at Wellhouse Park. The skate park has erosion which needs to be addressed, recommended materials are unavailable due to Brexit and Covid. The Assets, Facilities and Environment Committee are taking steps to rectify. There was discussion on whether to close the skate park, there was concern over how to close it off and secure it and the fact that the 6 weeks school holidays are about to start. Repairs have been made but failed. EALC have been contacted for advice.

Councillor Baker proposed getting it fixed before the school holidays, proposing to spend up to £1000 to get a temporary repair. Seconded by Councillor Bragg. 4 in favour, 2 against. Councillor Wood counter proposed closing skate park.

21/143 TO CONSIDER A WORKING GROUP FOR THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATION

Councillors Baker, Powling, Weaver and Wood agreed to form a working group.

21/144 TO APPROVE THE REGULAR PAYMENTS MADE BY DIRECT DEBIT, STANDING ORDER OR BY CREDIT CARD FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR; APRIL 2021 TO MARCH 2022, AS PER FINANCE REPORT

Proposed: Councillor Weaver, Seconded: Councillor Wood. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/145 TO AGREE MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION TO CALC AT A COST OF £35

Proposed: Councillor Akker, Seconded: Councillor Wood. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/146 TO APPROVE THE SUPPLY AND FIT OF JUMBO TOILET ROLL HOLDERS AT WILLOUGHBY TOILETS AT A COST OF £460

Proposed: Councillor Weaver, Seconded: Councillor Wood. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/147 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE RESTRUCTURE OF COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINT WORKING GROUP CHAIRMAN

Following discussion, Councillor Wood proposed Councillor Akker as Chair of the Bradwell Monitoring Committee, with its status to be decided later. Seconded by Councillor Baker. All in favour.

Deferred until next meeting.

21/148 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE RESTRUCTURE OF WORKING GROUPS AND MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINT WORKING GROUP CHAIRMEN

Deferred until next meeting.

21/149 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

There is no update as the Group has not met yet. Councillor Wood will arrange a meeting in August to discuss priorities of the Council.

21/150 SECTION 50 LICENCES:

License Agreement 01 (Ref. S50-1619) – Flood Barrier

License Agreement 02 (Ref. S550-1680) – Sump Pits

License Agreement 03 (Ref. TBC) – Flood Barrier Storage Container

Essex County Council have confirmed that the Town Council will not incur any costs as a result of endorsing the 25 year agreements as these have been covered by Essex County Council when making the application. The Town Council and the Old City Flood Gate Group will need to enter into a collaboration agreement with provision requiring the Group to cover any renewal costs.

Following discussion on concerns about indemnity and legal advice it was suggested that a meeting be arranged with Town Councillors, Lee Sencier, Surface Water Planning Engineer at Essex County Council and The Old City Flood Gate Group.

21/151 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM CALC MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2021

Councillor Akker reported that the latest CALC meeting advised on the Climate Emergency Report, with a proposal that Colchester Borough Council fund detailed research on rising sea levels.

21/152 TO CONSIDER RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP OF RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ESSEX 2021/22 AT A COST OF £115.50

Proposed: Councillor Weaver, Seconded: Councillor Wood. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/153 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE A CO-OPTION POLICY FOR WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

A Co-option Policy had been shared with Town Councillors.

Proposed: Councillor Baker, Seconded: Councillor Weaver. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/154 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE CHANGING PLACES PROJECT AND AGREE NEXT STEPS

Councillor Weaver reported that funding of £55,000 has been confirmed by Essex County Council Senior Commissioning Officer, funds to be released subject to planning permission and completion by 31 March 2022.

The project will come under permitted development and there appears to be no issues. A teams meeting is arranged for Monday 19 July with Colchester Borough Council's Parks and Recreation Officer to discuss exact location and public consultation due to disposal of public space. A quote has been received for the project including ground works of £68,000 with a fully managed planning service of £1,000. CiF (Community Initiatives Fund) application to be completed. Project estimated costs of £75,000 to include utility connections.

There was discussion on the use and benefits along with recurring costs of cleaning and maintenance.

The Clerk raised concerns with the limited timeline for funds from Essex County Council and Community Initiatives Fund both requiring completion by 31 March 2022, and the requirement that the project will need to be put out to tender and added to Contract finder. A very detailed specification will be required, along with time scales for the tender process, selection, lead time and ground works.

Councillor Wood offered his assistance.

21/155 MAYOR'S NOTES

Thank you to Peter Banks for his work and effort over the years and to wish him well in his move.

There being no other business, the public meeting closed at 9.37pm.