

2023

WEST BERGHOLT
PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT



PARISH COUNCILLORS

Chair – Brian Butcher

Manya Barrow

Sara Cullis

Joel Fayers

John Gili-Ross

James Owers

Katie Pulford

Andrew Savage

David Short

Harry Stone

Bob Tyrell



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Brian Butcher



Welcome to West Bergholt's Annual Parish meeting, the first I have called and will chair. Well, I hope I am chairing as I will have only come back from holiday at one o'clock this morning!

I took over being Chair in May last year from Chris thanks to the support of my fellow councillors, this year also seeing two new members join the Parish Council, Katie Pulford and Sara Cullis.

The last report I wrote in April 2022 was as Chair of the Orpen Hall Management Committee and noted my hope that in 22/23 the Social Club toilets would be refurbished, and external toilet built and solar panels put on the roof, all projects now complete! The community hub/parish office extension to the John Lampon Hall is slightly on the drag but by the time of this meeting tenders for its construction will be in.

Tonight's meeting reflects the fact this is a Coronation year with His Majesty the King's representative in Essex, Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, His Majesty's Lord- Lieutenant of Essex as principal guest. It goes on to address the perceived disaster of 180km of pylons being built across Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk with leading campaigner Rosie Pearson. We then give time to our local Police Sergeant Ben Knighton on the policing of rural Colchester and to Roger Smith of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance to hear of their recent experiences in helping to get us to hospital!

The floor will then open to questions and comments from electors, Laura and Julie having put together display panels reflecting fully the work of the Parish Council over the last twelve months. Many thanks going to Laura for all she does to keep your councillors in order, and to Julie her new assistant.

Now might also be the time to thank our three village handymen, Simon, Matt and Nigel, our hall administrator Vicky, our Bulletin editor Jacqui and webmaster Dave for their dedication over the last year.

In the rest of this booklet, you'll find reports on finance, the environment and planning by Andrew, John and Bob respectively. Please feel free to ask any questions on these reports when our speakers have finished. And finally, my thanks go to all my fellow Parish Councillors for their freely given time and commitment over the last twelve months to help maintain West Bergholt as the great place it is to live in.

REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEES:

FINANCE, POLICY & PERSONNEL REPORT

Chair - Cllr Andrew Savage



I'm pleased to announce that the External Auditors have 'signed off' the 2021/22 accounts. My thanks therefore go to Laura for all her hard work and to Jan Stobart for undertaking the Internal Audit.

The accounts for the following year, ending March 2023, are currently being prepared and, in view of the influence of many grants being received throughout the year, the pre-audited figures can be reviewed easier by comparing like-for-like with the budgeted figures. Therefore, they can be summed up as follows:

The Parish Council's accounts show an income for the year of £113,909 compared to the budget of £113,740. This is against an expenditure of just £91,180 where the budget figure was £113,740. This shows that £22,560 less was spent than planned for. This is basically due to the main project of the year, building a Community Hub and Office extension on the side of the John Lampon Hall, being delayed so that it is still awaiting Planning Permission. Obviously, this money isn't lost. The project funds are retained and can be used this year as the project moves forward.

The Orpen Memorial Hall accounts show an income of over £46,602 against the budget £44,000 – the increase is due to additional Hall bookings. This is against an expenditure of £45,704 compared to the budget figure of £44,000. This small increase, of around £1700, is basically due to the four-fold increase in the electricity tariff in September.

However, the main feature of the year was grants, and what they achieved.

We started off with a £1,352 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to assist with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations within West Bergholt. They are still memorable – including the Spitfire fly past!

Our next project was the re-modelling of the 70-year-old toilet area within the Orpen Memorial Hall complex so that an externally accessed w.c. could also be incorporated. Our thanks go to Enovert Community Trust for providing a £50,000 grant and Colchester City Council who agreed to provide over £15,000 so that virtually all the construction costs are covered.

Just before we were informed of the four-fold increase in the electricity tariff we had applied to the Essex Climate Action Challenge Fund for a grant to install solar panels and batteries on and within the Orpen Hall building. In this we were successful, with a grant of over £17,000 being provided – around 95% of the total cost. So, our thanks go to Essex whilst we look forward to saving up to £20 a day on our electricity bills during the late Spring, Summer and early Autumn.

It's not just large grants that we are appreciative of. We were delighted with the £50 donation from the Allotment Charity Stall towards the Village Christmas Tree decorations - thanks indeed to the Allotment Committee.

Of course, this is not a one-way process. The Parish Council does provide grants to parish organisations. This year they were:

- £500 to West Bergholt Care Network towards the running of a Warm, Welcoming Space.
- £500 to The Orpen Players towards a replacement keyboard for performances.

Moving forward to this year's finances, the Parish Council will continually aim to obtain external sources of funding as usual. With regards to the main project already mentioned, building a Community Hub and Office extension on the side of the John Lampon Hall, Colchester City Council has already agreed to provide nearly £37,000 (known as Section 106 money) of which £1,300 of it has just been used for generating the Planning application.

In addition, the process for applying for an additional £17,000 from the 'ACRE Platinum Grant Fund' is also underway.

The projects agreed within the Parish Council budget for 2023/24 are:

Community Hub/Parish Office project	£ 15,000
Neighbourhood Plan implementation projects (inc. acquisition & establishment of William Sims Sports Field)	£ 4,000
Grants	<u>£ 1,000</u>
TOTAL	£20,000

Despite the extent of these projects, the precept has only increased by around 4.7%. For a Band D property this equates to just **32 pence a month** extra for the household.

And finally, I would like to report on another aspect of our activities, our involvement in the process of selecting an Assistant to the Parish Clerk. Whilst all the applicants were excellent, we are delighted to have Julie in post - proving that we got it right!

ENVIRONMENT & HIGHWAYS REPORT

Chair – Cllr John Gili-Ross



A significant part of the Parish Councils expenditure goes towards keeping the village environs in a satisfactory condition, either through the work of our three handymen, the tools they need to do a good job or the materials needed for new builds, repairs or replacement items. It is through good forward planning by the Environment & Highways committee that we have kept on top of demand and helped to maintain a great village environment.

We are blessed to have three really enthusiastic and capable handymen in Nigel Weall, Matt Harkness and Simon Forrester. Simon joined the team on the retirement of David Hewitt and has quickly settled in to working within the village and helping to maintain our village environs. The handymen deserve a massive thank you for all they do.

This time last year I welcomed James Owers and Manya Barrow to the Environment & Highways committee both of whom contribute to the decision making and direction of travel that the committee wish to progress in environment and sustainability terms. For most of the last 12 months

we have been joined by Katie Pulford on the committee who immediately volunteered for numerous activities. With her hands on farming knowledge, she advises the committee on the best contractors to use for hedge trimming, green waste disposal and maintenance and repairs of the equipment used by the handymen. Harry Stone and David Short remain long serving members of the environment and highways committee providing continuity learning skills and advise to me as the committee chair.

Unfortunately, Essex County Council decided to close its highways devolution project last April but failed to inform the Parish Council of its decision until August. This reduced our repairs income meaning many of the small but important tasks for example flood clearance at the bottom of Newbridge Hill, kerb stone repairs and overhanging tree limb clearance are no longer within our handymen's remit. The loss of income is an issue, but the loss of operating capability is crucial to making repairs etc that directly affect the wellbeing of our residents. We are working together with Cllr Lewis Barber and Cllr Lee Scott (cabinet member for Highways Maintenance & Sustainable Transport) with the objective to reinstate the right for our handymen to undertake selected highways tasks within West Bergholt.

The village heath remains a place of wildlife refuge and natural beauty. All trees under council management are recorded and managed to not just maintain a safe environment but also to nurture each tree to realise their full and natural potential. As part of our late Queens green canopy project to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee we had a number of mature trees donated by the Colchester Mayor, the Allotments Committee, Oak View Landscape Services, TLC, Scissorhands and the Parish Council. With it being a very dry summer, our handymen were happy to donate extra time to water the new trees and give them the best chance to flourish.

Last year we installed a Christmas tree at the triangle of Colchester and Chapel Roads and last Christmas we repeated this initiative to help brighten the village during the festive season. James led this project and together with Debra Hornigold and the handymen it was the best display so far. We plan to continue this initiative in future years and improve the display still further.

David Short has again filled the role of our village beacon lighting guru for the Platinum Jubilee. What may appear to be a simple task, it involves significant planning to ensure a safe and effective display that was viewed by many in the village.

To further mark the Jubilee and celebrate the Queen's Green canopy initiative we had a commemorative memorial built in front of the flagpole at the Orpen Hall. The cost to the village was for materials only with the labour donated without charge.

Keeping our greensward areas cut and trimmed and clear of litter remains an on-going task for much of the year. A big thank you to the many villagers who pick up litter and discarded waste around the village and for helping to keep our village clean and tidy. Parents, please encourage your children to dispose of drink containers and waste either in the many bins or ideally get them to take them home with them.

Finally, I would like to thank the handymen and the committee members for their teamwork and support during the last year. Their efforts are very much appreciated.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Chair – Cllr Bob Tyrrell



THE WEST BERGHOLT PLANNING COMMITTEE

We are a statutory consultee to Colchester City Council (CCC- the Local Planning Authority) for all domestic and business planning applications that relate to the parish area. The Parish Council is also a consultee on planning applications relating to waste, minerals, schools and certain highway matters to Essex County Council (ECC). As a consultee, the final decision rests with either CCC or ECC and not with the Parish Council.

The Planning & Development Committee is constituted to consider and to respond on behalf of the Parish Council to all planning applications. In this section of the website, <https://westbergholt-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/planning-committee/>, you can view the latest committee agenda, planning decisions and past minutes.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

These may range from a simple domestic extension, new residential developments and application for commercial premises.

As a consultee, the Parish Council cannot prevent or stop a development from taking place, but its recommendations do form local response, to be weighed in consideration with other evidence submitted to Colchester Borough Council.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

The Parish Council takes guidance from:

- Colchester City Council Local Plan 2019 -2034, Section 2 Colchester City Council Local Plan.
- The West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan (WBNP) which was adopted by CCC and is a useful weapon in our armoury against speculative development outside the Village boundary.
- The Village Design Statement (VDS). This has been CCC policy for the past twelve years and is used to assist determining the Parish Council's response to Planning Applications. The VDS is currently being reviewed and will become part of the Neighbourhood Plan set of documents.

The VDS highlights basic design principles covering new buildings and extension, as well as setting the context for development in the village by outlining the distinctive character areas of the village and its rural setting. The VDS is available on the Village website.

To provide a greater consistency, any Parish Council comment on Planning Applications will quote the relevant WBNP or VDS Policy number and text as our reason for an objection.

FINALLY, The National Planning Policy Framework was revised on 20 July 2021 and sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS 2022-2023

The Parish Council has received 53 planning applications this year. The Parish Council responded accordingly:

- We supported 23 applications without comment.
- Made observations on 14 applications.

- Objected initially to 16 applications.

5 applications were refused by CCC and 3 applications were also refused at appeal.

APPEALS:

The following appeals to the Planning Inspectorate resulted in:

- New house on land south of Cooks Hall Road, West Bergholt. **REFUSED**
- 3No new dwellings at Blackheath Bulb Company, Nayland Road, West Bergholt. **REFUSED**
- 2No dwellings at 30 New Church Road. **REFUSED**

PLANNING MEETINGS

The Planning Committee has regular meetings on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm in the John Lampon Hall. The agenda is published three days in advance. We welcome residents who wish to express their views on any of the Planning Applications.

The Committee also welcomes pre-planning application discussions. This is so that we can briefly discuss and draw to their attention any items in the VDS and WBNP that may affect their application.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow colleagues on the committee for their efforts over the past months.

Please see list of the 2022-23 planning applications overleaf:

WBPC Decision Date	WBPC Decision	Application No.	Location	CBC/Appeal Decision Date	CBC/Appeal Decision	Appeal Pending
16/09/2020	Support	201925	Land adjacent, 12 Colchester Road,	08/04/2022	Approved	N/A
16/02/2022	Observation	220165	20 Bradbrook Cottages, Armoury Rd	08/04/2022	Approved	N/A
16/03/2022	Object	220525	The Cottage, Newbridge Hill	14/04/2022	Approved	N/A
16/03/2022	Object	220540	7 Lexden Road	05/05/2022	Approved	N/A
16/03/2022	Observation	220526	App for approval of reserved matters following outline approval 191522	O/S		
24/03/2022	Object	220103	3 Garret Place, CO6 3SH	13/04/2022	Approved	N/A
20/04/2022	Support	220540	7 Lexden Road - amended plans	05/05/2022	Approved	N/A
20/04/2022	Support	220676	106 Mumford Road	05/05/2022	Approved	N/A
20/04/2022	Object	220650	19 Bradbrook Cottages, Armoury Road	16/05/2022	Refused	
20/04/2022	Support	220735	16 Newbridge Hill	24/05/2022	Approved	N/A
20/04/2022	Object	220799	The Settlers, Newbridge Hill, amended plans	24/05/2022	Approved	N/A
20/04/2022	Observation	220363	Scarletts, Scarletts Chase	11/07/2022	Approved	N/A
18/05/2022	Object	221094	52 Valley Crescent	27/06/2022	Approved	N/A
18/05/2022	Observation	221134	12 Colchester Road	27/06/2022	Approved	N/A
18/05/2022	Observation	221018	Alcrofts Farm, Bures Road	12/10/2022	Approved	N/A
18/05/2022	Object	221042	Newbridge Mill Farm, Newbridge Hill	09/11/2022	Approved	N/A
18/05/2022	Observation	221019	Alcrofts Farm, Bures Road	12/10/2022	Approved	N/A
22/06/2022	Support	221405	Church Cottage, Hall Road	18/11/2022	Approved	N/A
20/07/2022	Observation	220727	30 New Church Road - amended plans	04/08/2022	Approved	N/A
20/07/2022	Support	221704	67 Mumford Road	22/08/2022	Approved	N/A
20/07/2022	Observation	221641	The White Hart, Nayland Road	02/09/2022	Approved	N/A
20/07/2022	Observation	221666	The White Hart - listed building	02/09/2022	Approved	N/A
20/07/2022	Observation	221574	Land off, Colchester Road - amendment to s.106	O/S		
27/09/2022	Support	221823	Oak View Landscapes Ltd, Pattens Yard	15/09/2022	Approved	N/A
27/09/2022	Support	221995	Poplar Cottage, Kings Vineyard, Fossetts Lane	23/09/2022	Approved	N/A
27/09/2022	Object	222036	19 Bradbrook Cottages, Armoury Road	26/09/2022	Refused	
27/09/2022	Support	222226	9 Garthwood Close	03/11/2022	Approved	N/A
27/09/2022	Observation	222100	land adj to, 155 Colchester Road	17/11/2022	Approved	N/A

27/09/2022	Object	222267	Tresillian, Bourne Road	14/12/2022	Approved	N/A
27/09/2022	Object	221831	Mcnally Mews, The Crescent	13/10/2022	Refused	N/A
27/09/2022	Observation	221781	Alcrofts Farm, Bures Road	25/11/2022	Withdrawn	N/A
27/09/2022	Support	221780	Alcrofts Farm, Bures Road	16/02/2023	Approved	N/A
28/09/2022	Support	222372	36 Lexden Road	03/11/2022	Approved	N/A
28/09/2022	Object	222361	5 Bradbrook Cottages, Armoury Road	16/11/2022	Approved	N/A
19/10/2022	Support	222418	44a New Church Road	17/11/2022	Approved	N/A
19/10/2022	Support	222372	36 Lexden Road	03/11/2022	Approved	N/A
16/11/2022	Support	222660	Co-op, 41-43, Chapel Road	09/12/2022	Approved	N/A
16/11/2022	Support	222635	The Firs, 38 Lexden Road	13/12/2022	Approved	N/A
16/11/2022	Support	222762	53 Chapel Road	21/12/2022	Approved	N/A
16/11/2022	Support	220526	Land adj 67, Braiswick, CO4 5BQ	O/S		
21/12/2022	Observation	222908	West Bergholt Reservoir, Hall Road	10/01/2023	Approved	N/A
21/12/2022	Object	222950	8 Lampon Close, CO6 3FE	23/01/2023	Approved	N/A
21/12/2022	Observation	222861	Hop House, 2nd Floor Office, Colchester Rd	O/S		
21/12/2022	Object	222860	Hop House, 2nd Floor Office, Colchester Rd	O/S		
21/12/2022	Support	222853	Barns at, Hall Road,	10/01/2023	Approved	N/A
21/12/2022	Object	222961	Blackheath Bulb Co, Nayland Road	24/02/2023	Refused	
21/12/2022	Object	223071	19 Bradbrook Cottages, Armoury Rd	28/02/2023	Refused	
16/01/2023	Support	223139	Pond Cottage, Fordham Road	07/02/2023	Approved	N/A
16/01/2023	Support	223165	Kings Vineyard, Fossetts Lane, Fordham	O/S		
16/01/2023	Support	223184	Barn at Hall Road, West Bergholt	22/02/2023	Approved	N/A
13/02/2023	Support	230120	1 Orpen Close, West Bergholt	O/S		
22/02/2023	Support	230301	5 Bradbrook Cottages, Armoury Road	O/S		

Parish Council Contacts:

Councillors:

Chair:	Brian Butcher cllr.butcher@westbergholt-pc.gov.uk			
Vice Chairs:	Harry Stone	Bob Tyrrell		
RFO:	Andrew Savage			
Councillors:	Manya Barrow	Sara Cullis	Joel Fayers	John Gili-Ross
	James Owers	Katie Pulford	David Short	

Parish Council meetings are held at the Orpen Hall Complex every fourth Wednesday of each month except August and December, at 7.30pm unless otherwise advised (see notice boards). During the meeting the public are invited to raise any issue for consideration by the Parish Council during the "Questions from registered electors" item.

For general enquiries, email the Parish Council using clerk@westbergholt-pc.gov.uk or telephone the Clerk on **07726 424419**. Contact made in this way will be dealt with by the Clerk or forwarded to relevant Parish Councillors. For specific enquiries about matters dealt with committees, email the contacts provided below, although please also copy to the Clerk.

Finance, Policy & Personnel Advisory Committee	Environment & Highways Committee	Planning & Development Committee
cllr.savage@westbergholt-pc.gov.uk	cllr.giliross@westbergholt-pc.gov.uk	cllr.tyrrell@westbergholt-pc.gov.uk
Andrew Savage (Chair) Brian Butcher (Vice Chair) John Gili-Ross Harry Stone Bob Tyrrell	John Gili-Ross (Chair) Manya Barrow (Public Transport Rep) James Owers David Short Harry Stone Katie Pulford	Bob Tyrrell (Chair) Joel Fayers (Vice Chair) Brian Butcher Andrew Savage Sara Cullis

Other Useful Contacts:

Clerk to the Parish Council:	Laura Walkingshaw	07726 424419 clerk@westbergholt-pc.gov.uk
Assistant to Clerk:	Julie Gillott	asst@westbergholt-pc.gov.uk
Village Hall Administrator:	Victoria Beckwith-Cole	07434 949631 westbergholthall@gmail.com
Webmaster:	Dave Kingaby	westbergholtweb@gmail.com
Borough Councillors:	Cllr Lewis Barber	cllr.lewis.barber@colchester.gov.uk
	Cllr Sara Naylor	cllr.sara.naylor@colchester.gov.uk
	Cllr Dennis Willetts	cllr.dennis.willetts@colchester.gov.uk Dennis.Willetts@colchester.gov.uk
Essex County Councillor:	Cllr Lewis Barber	Cllr.Lewis.Barber@essex.gov.uk
MP Harwich & North Essex:	Bernard Jenkin	Bernard.jenkin.mp@parliament.uk

A diary of village events can be found on the home page of our web site at <http://www.westbergholt-pc.gov.uk>