



Little Braxted Parish Council

You are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting of Little Braxted Parish Council to be held in The Braxted Bakery, Witham Lane, Little Braxted on Tuesday 17th October at 7.00 p.m.

Gordon Mussett
Parish Clerk
9th October 2017

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence**
To receive apologies for absence
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
For Members to declare any interests in matters on the agenda
- 3. To Consider any requests from Members for Dispensations**
To consider any requests from Members with pecuniary interests for dispensations to enable them to participate on the item in which they have a pecuniary interest
- 4. To Agree and Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held 5th September 2017**
To agree and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2017 as a true record
- 5. To Invite Members of the Public to speak on Matters Regarding and Affecting the Parish**
- 6. To Respond to the Consultation on Local Council Precepts - attached**
To respond to the consultation on Local Council precepts
- 7. To Comment on the Proposal to Include the War Memorial in the Schedule of Buildings and Monuments of Historical/Architectural Interest – attached**
To comment on the proposal to include the War Memorial in the Schedule of Buildings and Monuments of Historical/Architectural Interest
- 8. To Receive A Report on the Quarry Liaison Group Meeting**
To receive a report on the Quarry Liaison Group Meeting
- 9. To receive a financial statement as of 29th September 2017 - attached**
To receive a financial statement as of 29th September 2017

10. Approve the following payments:-

To approve the following payments:-

Document Reference	Payable To	In Respect of	£
455	H Bendall	Litterpicking - September	£37.60
456	G N Mussett	Clerk – September	£120.72
457	HM Revenue & Custome	PAYE/NI	£101.20
458	H Bendall	Litterpicking – October	£37.60
459	G N Mussett	Clerk – October	£120.72
460	G N Mussett	Remembrance Day Wreath	£17.00

11. Clerks Report – for Information

To receive an update from the Clerk including:-

- a) Housing Needs Survey
- b) A12 widening

12. Closure

ITEM 6

To Respond to the Consultation on Local Council Precepts

The Localism Act 2011 contain provisions which allow Government to set a threshold amount above which any increase in precept (council tax) will be deemed 'excessive'¹. Exceeding this centrally set amount will automatically trigger a local referendum. That referendum must be held, and won, before an authority can increase council tax by more than the threshold amount. This can be applied to billing authorities, major precepting authorities (such as the county councils, Police and Crime Commissioners and fire and rescue authorities) and local precepting authorities (local councils). An authority proposing to set an excessive council tax level is required to make substitute calculations which will take effect if the proposed 'excessive' amount of council tax is rejected in a referendum. Government is entitled to restrict application of referendums to all or some of each category of authority. The substitute council tax level must be below the specified 'excessive' threshold amount. Entitlement to vote in the referendum is based on inclusion in the register of electors and on eligibility to vote in local

government elections for a particular area. A simple majority of those voting will determine the outcome.

While it is understood that the principle of enabling a formal mechanism for a vote of the electorate in relation to precept increases fits well with Government policy, the blanket application of a centrally set threshold, is one that local councils have tended to resist owing to the complications of applying a simplistic solution to the finances of local councils which have a significantly different context to those of other public service providers. Additionally, the costs imposed by the referendum process are a considerable extra burden for local people.

This latest consultation at para 4.2.1 indicates that Government will be making its decision on local council referendums, taking into account evidence of the extent of precept restraint when setting precept increases that are not a direct result of taking on additional responsibilities and the extent to which precept decisions have been made more transparent to local tax-payers. The statement is clear that local councils should answer to Government for their local decisions. No mention is made of the principle of localism - local people knowing best what expenditure is needed in their own community and having the power to take action. Government expects local councils to consider their reserve funds before increasing precept. However, traditionally many local councils, have limited reserves. Many have had to adjust their finances over recent years owing to the impact of the potential introduction of referendums and/or have had to increase precepts back up owing to the reduction in Council Tax Support funding in cases where this had been paid to local councils but later reduced or withdrawn.

The Government consultation includes the following statement:-

“4.2 Council tax referendum principles for town and parish councils.

4.2.1 Last year, the Government issued a challenge to town and parish councils to demonstrate restraint when setting precept increases that are not a direct result of taking on additional responsibilities, and to make precept decisions more transparent to local tax-payers. The continuation of this position in 2018-19 is contingent upon the Government receiving clear evidence of how the sector is responding to this challenge. The Government expects parishes, in setting their precepts, to consider all available options to mitigate the need for council tax increases, including the use of reserves where they are not already earmarked for particular purposes or for “invest to save” projects which will lower on-going revenue costs. Any revised proposals will be set out at the time of the provisional local government finance settlement later in the year.”

All councils should consider the potential impact that implementation would have on their budgets and should consider whether they have evidence or comments which should be provided to Government within their response to the consultation. There is no suggestion in the proposal that this would only apply to larger local councils.

The result of implementation would, for example, mean that even if a major project were planned as a result of a community needs survey or because of an urgent unforeseen need, councils and their communities could be faced with the additional cost of an

automatic precept referendum and, consequently, the budget implications need to be considered.

Although Government refers to the fact that last year it was taking into account that some precept increases arise as “*a direct result of taking on additional responsibilities*”, it is not clear how it would define “taking on additional responsibilities”. So, if this concept were carried forward, would this be on the same basis as proposed last year and confined to certain negotiated transfers between a principal authority and a local council, or would it extend to picking up assets and services which had been ceased by public service providers or indeed to providing new services where a local council was otherwise inactive or where a new need arises?

The annual threat to impose automatic precept referendums shows an apparent failure to recognise the differences between local councils and their principal council counterparts. Among the issues that local councils and their Associations will be considering as part of their own responses to the consultation are:

- The extent to which these proposals sit well with Government’s claimed localism principles. For the first time local council finances would be controlled by central Government. Unlike principal authorities, local council expenditure is not dominated by statutory duties imposed by central Government but is based on local need
- The fact that automatic precept referendums based on a centrally dictated threshold would impose disproportionate and unwanted costs on communities which could undermine important local initiatives, without any evidence being produced by Government that any precept increases have been for anything other than justifiable reasons and community benefit.
- Whether applying an inevitably small percentage threshold to local councils is meaningful. The application of a centrally-defined, technical, target-type assessment of what is an ‘excessive increase’ is to misunderstand the unique nature and responsiveness of each local council, as defined and shaped by its own local community. For example, the application of a 20% figure on last year’s precept of £500 amounts to £100 and on a £50,000 precept is £10,000 and in each case the amount could represent a single modest community project at a small cost per council tax paying household. In either case to count the increase as ‘excessive’ and add on the cost of a referendum would be disproportionately burdensome on that community and could make the project unviable. If the principle were ever applied to the smallest councils, buying a village bench would become prohibitively costly as the numbers involved would be so small but a costly referendum would be applied.

Members are recommended to respond to the consultation objecting to the proposals to limit precept increases by parish councils

ITEM 7

To Comment on the Proposal to Include the War Memorial in the Schedule of Buildings and Monuments of Historical/Architectural Interest

Historic England are considering listing the War Memorial. Their report is shown below:-

Annex 1

The factual details are being assessed as the basis for a proposed addition to The National Heritage List for England.

Factual Details

Name: Great Braxted and Wickham Bishops War Memorial

Location

Junction of Beacon Hill and Kelvedon Road, Wickham Bishops, Essex, CM8 3HW

County	District	District Type	Parish
Essex	Maldon	District Authority	Little Braxted

History

The aftermath of the First World War saw the biggest single wave of public commemoration ever with tens of thousands of memorials erected across England. This was the result of both the huge impact on communities of the loss of three quarters of a million British lives, and also the official policy of not repatriating the dead: therefore the memorials provided the main focus of the grief felt at this great loss. One such memorial was raised between Great Braxted and Wickham Bishops as a permanent testament to the sacrifices made by the members of both these local communities. It was unveiled on 26 March 1921 by Lt Col T Gibbons, DSO. Further inscriptions were added at some point after the Second World War to honour the Fallen of that conflict. In April 2002 the memorial was restored and the names re-engraved with the help of funding from the local council, and a rededication ceremony was held.

Details

Tall hexagonal stone pillar, topped by a orb and incised cross. This stands atop a three-step hexagonal plinth; the top two steps each bear inscriptions in black lettering. They read - left (upper): TO THE HONOUR OF / THE MEN OF GT. BRAXTED / WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES / FOR KING AND COUNTRY.; left (lower): (names); top (upper): IN MEMORY OF OUR SON / CHARLES OSCAR WILSON / LIEUT. 5TH. BATT. ESSEX REGT. / KILLED IN ACTION BEFORE GAZA / PALESTINE ON THE EVENING OF / MARCH 26TH 2017. AGE 27.; top (lower): GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS / THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR / HIS FRIENDS ST JOHN CH15 V13; right, front (upper): TO THE HONOUR OF / THE MEN OF WICKHAM BISHOPS / WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES / FOR KING AND COUNTRY / (names); right, front (lower): (names); right, back (upper): TO THE / MEMORY OF THE MEN / WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES / IN THE WAR OF / 1939 - 1945; right, back (lower): (names).

Selected Sources**Websitec**

IWM - Parishes Of Great Braxted And Wickham Bishops, accessed 14/09/2017 from <http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/45766>

Waymarking - Combined War Memorial, Wickham Bishops, Essex, accessed 14/09/2017 from

http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMEYMM_Combined_War_Memorial_Wickham_Bishops_Essex

WMO - Wickham Bishops, Great Braxted, accessed 14/09/2017 from

<https://www.war memorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/79125/>

Listing of the War Memorial is unlikely to bring any additional financial burden on the Parish Council but may impact upon any future development in its vicinity.

Members are asked to comment on the listing proposals

ITEM 9
Income

Date	Document reference	From	In Respect of	General Administration £	War Memorial £	Other £	VAT £	Total £
28/04/2017		Maldon District Council	Precept	£ 3,125.00				£ 3,125.00
02/05/2017		HMRC	VAT Refund				553.67	£ 553.67
Total for Year				£ 3,125.00	£ -	£ -	£ 553.67	£ 3,678.67

Expenditure

Date	Document Reference	Invoice Reference	Payable To	In Respect of	Clerk's Salary £	Elections £	Subscriptions £	Audit Fees £	Insurance £	War Memorial £	Information Commissioner £	Transparency Fund £	Housing Needs Survey	Litter Picking £	Other £	Total Net of VAT £	VAT £	Total £
18/04/2017	492		G N Mussett	Clerk's Salary	£ 90.72											£ 90.72		£ 90.72
18/04/2017	493		H Bendall	Litterpicking										£ 37.60		£ 37.60		£ 37.60
18/04/2017	494		EALC	Annual Subs			£ 61.75									£ 61.75		£ 61.75
18/04/2017	495		AON	Insurance Premium					£ 347.74							£ 347.74		£ 347.74
18/04/2017	496		McAfee	Virus Check Renewal								£ 79.16				£ 79.16	£ 15.83	£ 94.99
23/05/2017	497		SALC	Internal Audit				£ 135.00								£ 135.00	£ 27.00	£ 162.00
23/05/2017	498		H Bendall	Litterpicking										£ 45.60		£ 45.60		£ 45.60
23/05/2017	499		G N Mussett	Clerk's Salary	£ 90.32											£ 90.32		£ 90.32
26/05/2017	Cash		Post Office	Stamp				£ 1.86								£ 1.86		£ 1.86
27/06/2017	500		HMRC	PAYE/NI	£ 150.40									£ 9.20		£ 159.60		£ 159.60
27/06/2017	501		G N Mussett	Clerk's Salary	£ 120.72											£ 120.72		£ 120.72
27/06/2017	502		H Bendall	Litterpicking										£ 37.60		£ 37.60		£ 37.60
27/06/2017	503		G N Mussett	Litterpicking Warning Sign										£ 76.88		£ 76.88	£ 15.38	£ 92.26
27/06/2017	504		A Stow	Installation of Defibrillator Cabinet											£ 180.00	£ 180.00		£ 180.00
27/06/2017	505		The Green Man	Electricity for Defibrillator Cabinet											£ 25.00	£ 25.00		£ 25.00
20/07/2017	506		H Bendall	Litterpicking										£ 45.60		£ 45.60		£ 45.60
20/07/2017	507		G N Mussett	Clerk's Salary	£ 120.72											£ 120.72		£ 120.72
20/07/2017	508		Cancelled													£ -		£ -
Total for Year					£ 572.88	£ -	£ 61.75	£ 136.86	£ 347.74	£ -	£ -	£ 79.16	£ -	£ 252.48	£ 205.00	£ 1,655.87	£ 58.21	£ 1,714.08

Budget Comparison

BUDGET ANALYSIS						
2017/18	Budget		Figures are net of VAT			
Item	£	Income £	Expenditure £	Net £	%age Budget Spend	Notes
Clerk's Salary	£ 1,900.00		£ 572.88	£ 1,327.12	30.2%	
Subscriptions	£ 65.00		£ 61.75	£ 3.25	95.0%	
Audit Fees	£ 85.00		£ 136.86	-£ 51.86	161.0%	
Insurance	£ 340.00		£ 347.74	-£ 7.74	102.3%	
War Memorial	-£ 81.00			-£ 81.00	0.0%	
Information Commissioner	£ 35.00		£ -	£ 35.00	0.0%	
Grass Cutting	£ 380.00		£ -	£ 380.00	0.0%	
Hall Hire	£ 300.00			£ 300.00	0.0%	
Transparency Fund			£ 79.16	-£ 79.16	#DIV/0!	Restricted funds
Other	£ 200.00		£ -	£ 200.00	0.0%	
Election Fees	£ 15.00			£ 15.00	0.0%	
Remembrance Day Parade	£ 220.00		£ -	£ 220.00	0.0%	
Parish Plan	£0			£ -	#DIV/0!	Restricted funds
Village Fete	£0			£ -	#DIV/0!	Restricted funds
Litterpicking			£ 252.48	-£ 252.48	#DIV/0!	Restricted funds
Defibrillator	£0		£ 205.00	-£ 205.00	#DIV/0!	Restricted funds
Other	£0			£ -		
Precept	-£ 3,125.00	-£ 3,125.00		-£ 3,125.00	100.0%	
VAT Refund	-£ 100.00	-£ 553.67		-£ 100.00	-100.0%	
Totals net of VAT	£ 234.00	-£ 3,678.67	£ 1,655.87	-£ 1,421.87		
VAT		£ -	£ 58.21	£ 58.21		
Totals inc VAT		-£ 3,678.67	£ 1,714.08	-£ 1,363.66		

Bank Reconciliation

LITTLE BRAXTED PARISH COUNCIL

AG 2006 (HJ82-596) (80008-36350-0740) 1-050152011

ISSUED ON 2 October 2017

AIR GORDON MUSSETT
25 EBENEZER CLOSE
WITHAM
CM8 2HX

Your Community Account

Date	Description	Money out £	Money in £	Balance £
1 Aug	Start Balance			4,856.90
8 Sep	Cheque issued Ref: 100570	120.72		4,536.18
21 Sep	Cheque issued Ref: 100529	45.60		4,490.58
29 Sep	Balance carried forward			4,490.58
Total Payments/Receipts		166.32	0.00	

At a glance
01 Aug – 29 Sep 2017

Start balance	£4,656.90
Money out	£166.32
Commission charges	£0.00
Money in	£0.00
Gross interest earned	£0.00
End balance	£4,490.58

Your deposit is eligible for protection by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Over the next few months you may notice a change to the numbering of accounts you hold, the page numbering will start from page 1. The page number in the top right hand corner of your statements. Please be aware you may receive this message more than once.

Our UK ring-fencing plans
We plan to transfer UK retail and business banking customers to our ring-fenced bank in April 2018. Learn more, including how to participate in the court process should you wish, at [home.barclays/ring-fencing-explained] or contact us via your usual point of contact at Barclays.

Barclays Bank PLC. Registered in England. Registered No. 1120167. Registered office: 1 Churchill Place, London E14 4EU

BANK RECONCILIATION

As at 31/03/17

Petty Cash	£	2.44
Barclays Bank	£	3,002.57
Total	£	3,005.01
Less Uncashed Cheques	-£	337.12
Total	£	2,667.89
Add Income for year	£	3,678.67
Less Expenditure for year	-£	1,880.40
Total	£	4,466.16
As at 29/09/17		
Represented by		
Petty Cash	£	0.58
Barclays Bank	£	4,490.58
Total	£	4,491.16
Less Uncashed Cheques	-£	25.00
Total	£	4,466.16

