

Hullbridge Parish Council Resolution

Adopted 9th March 2015
Reviewed 13th March 2017

Hullbridge Parish Council – Value for Money

Hullbridge Parish Council strives to provide Best Value for money and give a good service to Hullbridge residents.

The Parish Council adheres to its Financial Regulations and Standing Orders which are reviewed regularly to take into account changes in the legislation.

The Parish Council has recently graded our CCTV Scheme, we had initial meetings with the Police and a CCTV expert and talked about and assessed each area where the CCTV coverage could be within our village, which would benefit not just the Community, but also aid the Police and continue to assist with preventing anti-social behaviour and be Best Value. We instructed our current Contractor to provide an Operational Requirements document and Members decided with all the information provided that the Parish Office and Pooles Lane car park would continue to be in the scheme. We then gained three quotes for these location's to have more advanced cameras, infra-red number plate recognition with a larger area being covered. We then relinquished the CCTV located at the old Medical Centre in Ferry Road. (This part of the Scheme was sold to the Estate Agent now at this location). The other suggested locations Members decided would not be Best Value or beneficial to the Community.

Any projects we always get three quotes, seek guidance from third parties (specialists) if possible and now follow the procurement and award of contracts covered by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which have an estimated value of £25,000 or more must also satisfy the requirements of the 2015 Regulations which include use of the Contracts Finder website and other light touch rules detailed in the 2015 Regulations

When the Parish Council considers / completes contracts we use the following procedure, but we shall not be obliged to accept the lowest quote or tender:

Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.

When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.

If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £25,000 or if all the tenders are identical the council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.

Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 18d and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £500 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.

The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

Our bin collection contract for Kendal Park Nature Reserve and the Parish Office is reviewed annually.

The Clerk along with other Parish Clerks within the District participated in a Procurement workshop with Rochford District Council, information was provided and an offer to link into their skill set, if required to help especially with larger projects. We regularly make contact with local parishes when considering new or review suppliers/contractors to make sure Best Value is found at all times.

During this financial year 2014/2015 the Parish Council in Partnership with Rochford District Council (RDC) and Communities Initiative Fund (CIF) funded the installation of additional play equipment at the Hullbridge Recreation Ground which totalled over £25,000. The equipment installed included items which wheel chair / disabled users could use, climbing activity net and picnic benches, this project was something that residents requested and doubles the size of the park.

The Parish Council has now received confirmation that we have been successful in our recent CIF bids so we can continue to work in Partnership and provide further improvements to the Recreation Ground which will include a Sun Canopy and an Initiative play area (Street Snooker) this is for various users including those who are wheelchair bound, this will be installed in 2016.

The Parish Council are considering the possibility of taking over the Pavilion and maybe the grounds, but this is in its early stages and a full investigation into the cost and risk implications will be considered before making a decision, as Best Value for residents is paramount.

The Parish Council works within a budget along with a Strategic Plan 2015-2019 and a 5 year financial forecast which are reviewed and if necessary updated each year.

Hullbridge Parish Council – Duties under Biodiversity and Crime and Disorder

The Parish Council leases Kendal Park Nature Reserve from Rochford District Council and we fully maintain this location, we have worked closely with Friends of Kendal Park Volunteers, we hope this Group will be regenerated. We currently have Tree Management Plan which includes a coppicing programme. We have carried out considerable work in the Nature Reserve and initially some residents thought our coppicing programme was too drastic, but now they realise that the work being carried out is benefiting the Reserve as we have had an increase in Wildlife including butterflies, hawk and various other birds, also the floor is now becoming alive with wild flowers. Bird Watchers are now regulars at the Reserve.

Trees are regularly checked at Kendal Park Nature Reserve and unfortunately in February 2016 we have been advised that some of our Ash Trees have Ash Tree Die

Back which is likely to spread throughout the Reserve. We have had to put an emergency plan into place as 90% of our Reserve is Ash. A large area has been coppiced and cleared and in March 2016 100 trees were planted of various native species, planting will continue in the years to come. This will allow diversity and allow the Reserve to be strong and around for future generations as well as attract a variety of wildlife in different habitats. Keeping the Reserve well stocked with healthy trees will assist with air quality, carbon removal and help keep good property prices in the area. This tranquil open space also supports social cohesion and helps reduce crime and disorder.

We will be approaching Riverside Primary School to work together on a project to build and install a variety of bird boxes, we hope the children will make them with our templates and perhaps monitor them to see what birds nest.

Due to its location to the River Crouch we have spoken to a Wildlife Conservation Group to see if any of the River banks could be suitable for any Conservation projects and they are carrying out investigations.

In the Reserve we also have a pond and in the future we will be looking to see if there could be any enhancements made to attract more wildlife and support the existing habitats. There are also geo-cache locations in the Reserve to encourage outdoor pursuits and health and wellbeing.

We have been in contact with the Wildlife Trust who have carried out a survey of our large badger set. This was monitored by CCTV and we are making the area safe and a more suitable site for the Badgers.

We have launched our Save the Riverside footpath project, this is an important asset to Hullbridge and we are in the process of working with other Authorities and landowners to try and save it. The footpath is not just for social pleasure for residents and visitors but it attracts a large number of people which supports the local businesses.

We lease Pooles Lane car park from Rochford District Council and we work hard to keep it free for residents / visitors, this is the location for our Christmas Fayre which we hold annually also our Teen Shelter where the younger residents tend to congregate and Youth Workers drop in during their outreach programme.

In 2014 was our first village litter pick, this was an event in Partnership with Rochford District Council and consisted of three litter picks, two during the day for residents and one linked to Riverside Primary School. We ran a competition for the Children, delivered an Assembly followed by a litter pick at the Recreation Ground. We have are continuing with our litters picks and have one planned for the Queen's Birthday and another for the Best Kept Village Competition; it is important the village is looked after and kept tidy.

Additionally the Parish Council owns an allotment site, we have 135 plots consisting of half and full plots, currently we hold a long waiting list but as allotments have become free they have in some cases been divided to make more available for the community, we give priority to residents to take up any unallocated plots and run Competitions and working days.

The Parish Council is currently considering setting up a Community Team in Partnership with Rochford District Council to work more closely with local businesses and organisations, to promote the village and perhaps organise activities for the Community.

The Parish Council works closely with the Police and PCSO's and in the past we had regular NAPS meetings in Hullbridge but now this has been replaced by bi monthly Community Meetings in Rayleigh.

The PCSO's visit Hullbridge including the Caravan Parks especially those adjacent to the Recreation Ground / Pooles Lane car park where in the past anti-social behaviour has been an issue. The PCSO's have monthly drop in's at the Library for the public to speak with them.

Additionally over the years we have worked with Essex County Council Youth Services to ensure Hullbridge Youth Centre is kept open. Hullbridge is one of the three remaining centres and the re launch is in the near future. The Youth Team also do outreach programmes in the village and a new sports programme has been set up for Saturday mornings and during the holidays. The Parish Council fully supports the Youth Centre.

We are working with Riverside Primary School which has set up a Charity and been awarded funding to get the School Pool up and running again and hopefully covered. The pool will not just be for the School children but the wider community, a hoist is also going to be installed so disabled users can also use it. The Parish Council would like to fund a summer programme but this will be discussed further once the pool is functioning.

Hullbridge Parish Council – Leadership in Planning for the Future of the Community

The Parish Council's Planning Chairman reviews all the applications received for the month and provides Members at the Full Council Meeting his recommendations for consideration. Planning applications listing is available on our website and applications in paper format are available for the public to view in the Parish Office, so they are able to make comments.

A representative from the Parish Council is then permitted to speak at the District Council Meetings once registered our interest.

Hullbridge Parish Council formally adopted a Village Plan in January 2014 at the Full Parish Council Meeting which was produced by a Residents Group which included two Councillors. The resident's responses to the Questionnaire which was the basis of the plan the Parish Council has reviewed and has and will continue to try to implement some of the suggestions.

Members also considered producing a Neighbourhood Plan at the Parish Council meeting in July 2014 and reconsidered it in 2015 and agreed that such plan would not amend the quantum of proposed units as detailed in the adopted RDC Core Strategy and this document is pro planning, would take time, funds and a lot of consultations with residents so it was unanimously agreed not to pursue.

The Parish Council has actively held meetings with developers and public meetings for large planning developments such as the Maylons Farm, also we work closely with the Hullbridge Resident's Association and neighbouring Rawreth Parish Council. If the Malyons Farm application is approved we will meet with developers and try and be involved in the different stages to ensure Hullbridge gets more facilities, open spaces and hopefully choose the road names.

A Committee has been set up to put together a Vision Statement for Hullbridge also a more detailed Emergency Plan.

Hullbridge Parish Council _ Performance of the Council as a Corporate Body and of each member and councillor to achieve its business plan

The Parish Council operates through a Committee System:

- General Purposes Committee meeting every 2 months,
- Finance / Policy / Appointments Committee meeting every 2 months
- Parks/ Open Spaces/ Conservation and Footpaths Committee meeting every 2 months
- Full Parish Council every month excluding August recess.

The Parish Council also has several Working Groups/ Sub Committees under the above Committees, which all meet on an as and when basis

- Events Working Group for the Christmas Fayre
- Allotments Management Committee to deal with the day to day running of the Allotments.
- Housing Working Group to deal currently Malyons Farm proposed Development,
- Personnel Committee (meets at least once a year)

The Parish Council works within a budget, Action Plan and Strategic Plan also a 5 year financial forecast which is reviewed. Each month a full breakdown of payments / receipts is provided to Members for agreement so costs are regularly monitored also a monthly bank reconciliations are agreed.

The Parish Council currently has 4 members of staff:

- Clerk currently working 26 hours. (Monday – Thursday)
- Admin Assistant currently working 12 hours (Tuesday – Thursday)
- 1 x Full time grounds man (37hours)
- 1 x part time grounds man (21 hours – Monday–Wednesday).

The Clerk has weekly meetings with staff to discuss the weeks tasks to ensure the smooth running of the Council and completes all staff appraisals and the Chairman of the Personnel Committee completes the Clerk' appraisal, this is carried out every March.

The Parish Council has adopted a training policy also has a training budget for both staff and councillors to ensure all staff/councillors are up to date and have the relevant certificates and knowledge to be able to efficiently conduct their roles and the training completed is listed in a document on our website.

An induction is given to new councillors by the Clerk and a pack which has all the Policies, Laws and Procedures and Roles and Responsibilities.

Several Courses at the EALC have been attended by Councillors and an in-house training regarding Social Media.

Several Councillors have also attended training provided by Rochford District Council.

The Clerk is employed under the terms jointly negotiated with NALC as is all staff. The Clerk continually updates her training as required and maintains obtaining at least 12 CPD Points a year and gives guidance to councillors at meetings.