

BRICKENDON LIBERTY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Brickendon Liberty Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 28 March 2013, at 7.30 pm in the Fanshaws Room, Brickendon.

*Cllr Mrs L Ashley

Cllr Mrs M Laybourn

*Cllr Mrs A Downes (Vice Chairman)

*Cllr J C Lambie

*Cllr L Kotting (Chairman)

* denotes present.

In attendance: 3 members of the public.

PC Dean Watson

PC Chris James

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs Laybourn.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 31 January 2013 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Clements Farm – Replanting Bunded Area

Cllr Mrs Downes informed members that she had written to Ms Jane Orsborne to ascertain when the planting was scheduled to take place. No response had been received to date.

(ii) Improvements to drainage opposite Brickendonbury

Members were informed that the road closure had been to enable Open Reach to access an overhead structure and had not been related to any highways work. The drainage problems were still an issue at this location.

(iii) Paradise Wildlife Park

Cllr Mrs Downes stated that Mr Peter Sampson continued to keep her regularly updated on matters which the Parish Council had raised and he was still liaising with Paul Dean (East Herts Council) on matters relating to the car park and signage.

(iv) Bob's Logs

Cllr Mrs Downes was pleased to report that the sign had been removed.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH/POLICE REPORT

PC Watson gave the following information on the crime statistics for the period 29 January 2013 to 28 March 2013 as follows:

- 10.2.13. Domestic assault.
- 1.3.13. Person apprehended in possession of cannabis.
- 6.3.13. Damage to hedge opposite Farmer's Boy Public House –
Currently under investigation.
- 8.3.13. Broxbourne Woods – removal of saplings.

Reference was made to the notice issued by the Crime Commissioner with regard to speeding. It was now possible for volunteers, suitably trained, to be allowed to operate the hand-held radar gun. In the first instance a petition, signed by at least 10 local residents, must request the Police to carry out a survey and, if the situation met the criteria, then a scheme could be introduced. Members welcomed this initiative which would benefit the village of Brickendon. However, Cllr Mrs Downes was a little apprehensive of such an initiative being introduced in Wormley West End. Motorists in this area would be travelling at excessive speeds, as the road network was subject to the national speed limit (60 mph) and this could pose a danger to the volunteers.

PC Watson stated that he had been active at the Bayford Station and had handed out 13 traffic offence tickets for parking at the road junction exiting the car park, parking on the grass verges and in the bus layby. The area would continue to be monitored. Members expressed their appreciation for the work being undertaken.

With regard to Neighbourhood Watch, Mr Dennis Downes confirmed that all the volunteers had now signed up to the Owl system and, whilst the provision of additional Neighbourhood Watch signs would be desirable, finding suitable locations was a problem and maybe the Police could assist in this matter.

The Police were following up complaints regarding the use of byways by 4 x 4 vehicles and quad bikes on Back Lane and Bencroft Wood. PC Watson was hopeful of enlisting one of the Police quad bikes and operative to assist. The problem was that riders were very transient and moved from one location to another and it was literally a matter of being at the right place at the right time to confront them. A further problem was that the Police powers in this matter were restricted to non-restrictive byways as byways were open to all traffic.

In conclusion, the Police were thanked for their attendance and Mr Dennis Downes further stated that since PC Watson had come onto the scene there had been a marked difference in the reporting on crime statistics and other Police related matters.

6. PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS

(i) Highway Maintenance

The Chairman stated that the work undertaken by the new contractor, Ringway, in repairing potholes left a lot to be desired and was far from satisfactory.

Cllr Mrs Downes stated that she had been informed that, because of the volume of remedial work required, occasioned by the very bad weather, the present work being undertaken was a 'quick fix'. More permanent repairs would be carried out later in the year when the weather improved.

(ii) Flytipping – Wormley West End

Cllr Mrs Downes drew attention to the amount of fly tipping which had been taking place in Wormley West End with residents forever picking up discarded litter. A notice had recently appeared in the village depicting the wording 'You are being watched'. Cllr Mrs Downes had contacted the person responsible for erecting the sign and Cllr Mrs Downes agreed to monitor its effectiveness. If successful, then a similar sign might be something the Parish Council could consider erecting at other locations in the parish.

(iii) Use of quad bikes on public rights of way

Concerns were expressed regarding the use of quad bikes on restricted byways in the parish and the damage caused not only to the rights of way surface, but to the flora and fauna.

Cllr Mrs Downes confirmed that the issue was known to the Police who were engaged in a pro-active campaign to curtail the activity.

7. PLANNING

(i) General

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached document be noted and the decisions taken be ratified. See Appendix A.

(ii) Enforcement

Cllr Mrs Downes referred to a parcel of land in Wormley West End known as Woodlands, which she stated had always been an issue. Recently the land had been sold to a Mr Paul Bartlett. Previously when the land had been in the ownership of a Mr Smith, an enforcement notice had been secured seeking the removal of hardcore off the site. However, to date no such material had been removed and residents had not seen any evidence of vehicles exiting the site with such material. Of concern now was that the new owner had laid more hardcore on the site, which according to

Paul Dean, Enforcement Officer, was allowed as permitted development. Additionally, two large metal containers had been installed on the site, which clearly were in breach of planning regulations. Despite having these matters referred to him, Mr Dean would appear not to be treating them with any urgency.

Cllr Mrs Downes felt frustrated at this approach by East Herts Council and she requested that a meeting be convened with the Director of Planning/Senior Enforcement Officer in order to escalate the matter.

(iii) Public consultation on draft Statement of Community Involvement

The above document had been received from East Herts Council which set out the Council's approach to public engagement in the planning system for the preparation of district policy documents. It provided guidance on how the Council intended to engage with the local community including its involvement in Neighbourhood Planning. The deadline for submission of comments was 2 May 2013.

(iv) Draft Consultation on East Herts Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2013

The above document had been received from East Herts Council. The strategy had been developed to set out the policy framework for parks and open spaces owned and managed by East Herts Council for the next five years. This followed a review of the previous five year strategy which had assessed the current validity of the objectives and how effective the Council had been in delivering them.

The deadline for submission of comments was 6 May 2013.

Note: Both the above Consultation Documents (iii) and (iv) above were put on circulation.

8. FANSHAWS ROOM COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2013 be received. See Appendix B.

Cllr Mrs Downes expressed her concern that the lack of sufficient members on the Committee (non-Parish Councillors) was such that the tasks which were organised by the Committee were very onerous on members. It was of concern that a lot was being done by a few. There was, it was felt, a desperate need to try to secure more people to come onto the Committee and thus ease the burden on the existing members.

Cllr Lambie concurred that this was a problem and recruiting new members was extremely difficult. Nevertheless it was felt that more publicity should be given to this matter by inserting an article in the parish magazine. There was a public spiritedness in the parish, as has been shown by the number of people coming forward for the Neighbourhood Plan Committee and, therefore, with a concerted publicity campaign other people might come forward.

9. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

(i) General

Cllr Lambie stated that in the absence of Mr Tony Roberts no report was available.

(ii) Localism & Standards – A toolkit for Town and Parish Councils

Members had been circulated with a copy of a letter from East Herts Council which referred to a training toolkit available to Parish Councils. This would be a useful development in assisting Parish Councils in the day-to-day work in supporting the local community and in meeting the challenges that the Localism Act would bring. In due course the District Council would wish to receive a feedback on the documentation.

Cllr Lambie informed members that he had recently attended a meeting of the East Herts Parish and Town Councils with Councillor Mike Carver and Mr Brian Tomsett. Members, at the meeting, had been informed that the publication of the Draft District Plan had been substantially delayed and, whereas initially it had been thought that the document would be available towards the end of the summer of 2013, it was now conceivable that it might not be available until the end of next year. This would not prejudice Parish Councils undertaking preparatory work on their Neighbourhood Plans. However, no decisions could be taken to finalise the documentation until publication of the District Plan. Whilst this was a regrettable situation, the District Council did not want to bring forward a plan which was not sustainable.

10. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Cllr Mrs Laybourn had supplied the Chairman with the following information.

Cllr Mrs Laybourn had made contact with Raj Goutam from Ringway and had highlighted that she would be interested in the opportunity of joining a highways technician when roads were being reviewed in the parish. Mr Goutam had acknowledged that these visits were on the agenda, but no dates had yet been set.

Cllr Mrs Laybourn reported that the new fault line reporting service was easy to navigate and use and it was possible to get an overview of all reported faults in the area. When reporting faults over the telephone the team were courteous and helpful.

Ongoing discussions were taking place over flooding in Pembridge Lane and Brickendon Lane (opposite Brickendonbury). The highways team was aware of the situation and works had been noted for future action.

The Hertfordshire County Council had a new website for reporting problems with the highways in the county – details as follows:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/hhonlineservices/hfr/>
or by calling the service centre on 0300 1234 047.

There was a link to the foregoing on the Brickendon Green website.

Cllr Mrs Laybourn reported that the website was easy to navigate and any reported incidents would be given a fault number. Updates were sent by email and progress could be tracked on line. Faults would fall into one of five categories depending on the severity. The website stated that response time would be 10 days (although whether this meant the reported fault would be resolved was another matter!). As the process had only recently been set up, Cllr Mrs Laybourn was unable to assess the success of the service.

The Chairman referred to a letter he had received from Mr Lance Holman, Project Engineer (HCC) with regard to the proposed waiting restriction at Bayford railway station. The letter confirmed that the scheme to implement the proposal would proceed to the final consultation stage towards the end of March following which a decision would be taken on how to proceed. However, no action would be taken until the next financial year 2013/2014.

11. PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP

Cllr Lambie reported on the following matters:

(i) Path to Bayford Station

Groundwork Hertfordshire's application for a £25k grant towards the construction of the above path had been turned down by Lafarge at the grants committee meeting in March. No reason for the decision had been given.

A meeting between Nicholas Maddex, Hertfordshire Rights of Way, Graham Phillips, Groundwork Hertfordshire, Cllr Lambie and others from Brickendon Liberty Parish Council was to be convened in April (either Monday, 15 April, or Wednesday, 17 April) at which possible options would be explored.

Possibilities were as follows:

- To apply to another source for a grant.
- To plan to proceed with the stretch from Brickendon Green to the corner using the funds already in place.
- Other scenarios might exist.

(ii) Off-road footpath to Hertford

A progress report from Hertfordshire Rights of Way and Groundwork Hertfordshire would be forthcoming at the meeting to be convened in April.

12. LEASE – BRICKENDON GREEN

The Clerk informed members that he had been in discussions with Chris Coupland, the solicitor acting on behalf of the PC in this matter. Chris was awaiting a response from the Land Registry in connection with the deeds for 34 Brickendon Green and he was also awaiting a response from Longmores on the draft lease amendments.

13. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts as shown on the attached (see appendix C) be duly authorised for payment.

(ii) Financial statement

RESOLVED that the contents of the financial statement (see appendix D) be accepted.

14. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- Governance Review (July meeting).

15. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

It was confirmed that the next meetings would be held on Thursday, 23 May. The Annual Parish meeting would commence at 7.30 pm and would be followed by the Annual meeting of the Parish Council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.