

BRICKENDON LIBERTY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Brickendon Liberty Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 25 July 2013, at 7.30 pm in the Fanshaws Room, Brickendon.

*Cllr Mrs L Ashley
Cllr Mrs A Downes (Vice Chairman)
*Cllr L Kotting (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs M Laybourn
*Cllr J C Lambie

* denotes present.

In attendance: 7 members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs Downes and Cllr Mrs Laybourn.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 23 MAY 2013

Under 'Matters arising, (iv) Neighbourhood Watch/Police Report, paragraph 2, line 4:

Delete 'record' and insert 'display'.

Having given effect to the above amendment it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 23 May 2013 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

None.

5. PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS

(i) Fanshaws Lane – verges

A request was made for Riversmead Housing Association to arrange for the verges under its control to be cut.

(ii) Overgrown hedges

Attention was drawn to the overgrown hedges around the Parish which were becoming very dangerous with a number obstructing sight lines.

(iii) Nutwood Cottage

The matter regarding the change of use of Nutwood Cottage to house vulnerable young people was raised with grave concerns being voiced concerning the potential risk to local residents and the effect on the rural area in general.

The Chairman stated that, although this was not a Parish Council matter, nevertheless, the Council was doing all in its power to seek a cessation in the activity. A letter had been sent to Jenny Coles, Director of Children's Safeguards, Herts County Council, with copies to Mark Prisk, MP, Cllr William Ashley and Kevin Steptoe outlining the concerns of the Parish Council. Initially a response had been received from Herts County Council which, in essence, pointed out that within the current legal framework the Herts County Council had no powers to act in this matter. Further responses were awaited.

Cllr Lambie felt that this activity was totally alien to the rural environment and placed local residents in a difficult situation. There was no place for such a detention centre in a rural setting. Indeed moving inner city children into a rural environment only put them at risk.

At the juncture, the Chairman introduced Alison Lindop, Regional Manager, Advanced Childcare, Tracey Morphet, Registered Manager of Nutwood Cottage and Neal Walker, Business Development Director, Advanced Childcare. The representatives assured the meeting that the service provided was not that of a detention centre. As far as the organisation was concerned its role was to provide vulnerable young people with a better environment. Such persons came from differing backgrounds some having had no parents and others having suffered traumatic experiences. The organisation was dealing with people who had problems not of their own making. Being in a quiet environment was felt essential to help in the rehabilitation process. It was appreciated that there had been a recent incident when a young person had entered a garden unauthorised and on a few occasions young people had been guilty of using foul language and every effort would be made to ensure that such incidents were minimised.

Members pointed out that if Advanced Childcare had approached the Parish Council stating that the change of use was to provide facilities for example disadvantaged children, then there would probably have been no objections. However, the nature of the occupation and the lack of consultation with local residents had caused the present situation whereby residents were anxious for the inhabitants of Nutwood House to leave.

The representatives of Nutwood Cottage stated that they had no intention of leaving and there had been no notice served by the owner of the Cottage to terminate the lease. The fears and anxieties expressed were appreciated. However, the representatives were committed to continue to work with the community and they would ensure that in the future all the young people referred to the centre were of a calmer nature.

The Chairman stated that as it stood it would seem that Nutwood Cottage could continue with its present service without the need to apply for a change of use. Although technically not a Parish Council matter, the Council would follow up ways by which the activity could be curtailed. The Council would be challenging the planning aspects, as it seemed totally unacceptable that such a fundamental change of use of premises could take place without the need for planning permission. When the current lease expired, the Parish Council would do all in its power to make sure that it was not renewed.

In conclusion, Mr Walker thanked members for the opportunity to address the Council and he would take on board the concerns expressed. He assured the meeting that he would seek to have more appropriate youngsters housed at Nutwood Cottage in the future. He stated that it was necessary for Advanced Childcare to work with the local community to re-build trust.

Cllr Lambie stated that trust had been broken and would only be restored when the activity ceased.

6. PLANNING

(i) General

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

(ii) Brickendon Grange Golf Club planning application

A letter had been received from Peter Warren on behalf of the Brickendon Grange Golf Club which stated that, following discussions at a recent board meeting, it had been decided to appeal against East Herts Council's decision to refuse permission for the erection of two detached dwellings.

The contents of the letter were noted.

(iii) Withdrawn applications

To note receipt of a notice from East Herts Council confirming that the following applications had been withdrawn:

3/13/0894/FO Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) LPA 3/11/0733/RP to allow amendment of plans to Plot C at Birch Farm, White Stubbs Lane, Broxbourne.

3/13/0895/FO Variation of condition 9 (approved plans) LPA 3/12/0732/FO to allow amendment of plans to Plot B at Birch Farm, White Stubbs Lane, Broxbourne.

Note: The Clerk was requested to forward details to all members.

7. FANSHAWS ROOM COMMITTEE

Mrs Brenda Lambie gave a resume of the meeting held on 17 July 2013 as follows (meeting 19 June having been cancelled):

- Ten members had been present.
- Cllr Mrs Downes was taking up the matter with Timberplay regarding the risk assessment on the play equipment.
- The Treasurer had reported that a balance of £16,921.41 was held in the accounts with £10,000 held in a high interest account.
- Discussions had taken place on the possibility of providing a basket ball net on the green and the provision of a new swing for the older children, the object being to make the whole playground more user friendly.
- Mr Bryan Parks had indicated his desire to step down as the Treasurer and Mr Robert Williams had very kindly offered to take over the role as Treasurer.
- The gent's toilet had been refurbished at a cost of £922.58 providing a new water heater, quarry tiled flooring and redecoration.
- Discussion had taken place on this year's fete to be held on 1 September 2013 from 11.30 am to 4.00 pm and the various duties being allocated to the volunteers. Shepherd's estate agents were once again sponsoring the event.
- The next meeting would take place on 21 August 2013.

The Chairman was pleased to learn that a new Treasurer was now in place. However, he felt that every effort should be made to appoint a permanent Chairman.

Mrs Lambie stated that the Committee had a permanent Secretary and the present 'rolling chair' was working well. A good Committee was in place with a great deal of enthusiasm and commitment being shown by all the members.

Mrs Lambie was thanked for her report.

8. HIGHWAYS

In the absence of Cllr Mrs Laybourn no highways report was forthcoming.

Mrs Retallick informed members that the flickering light in Fanshaws Lane had been repaired.

9. PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP

The attached reported (see Appendix B) had been compiled by Cllr Lambie.

Members were extremely pleased to learn that the work was now to proceed and gratitude was expressed to Cllr Lambie for all his efforts in the matter.

Cllr Lambie stated that he was shortly to have a meeting with Groundwork Hertfordshire to discuss the project and the extent of hedge maintenance. He stated that it was important that only selected sections of the hedges were cut as a physical defence was still required between the highway and the Golf Club.

Members also referred to the use of a path once in-situ and they suggested that appropriate signs be erected at either end indicating the path was for the use of walkers only.

In answer to a question, Cllr Lambie confirmed that all the work to construct the path would be contained within the highways verge, which was in the ownership of the Highways Authority.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH/POLICE REPORT/ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

(i) Neighbourhood Watch

In the absence of Mr Dennis Downes no report was forthcoming.

(ii) Police Report

Mrs Brenda Lambie gave the following information:

- There had been 8 crimes covering the period June and July 2013 which was three down on the previous year.
- There had been a reported assault on a Police officer.
- Theft of an off-road vehicle.

(iii) Neighbourhood Plan

The attached report was tabled for members's information. See Appendix C.

11. LEASE – BRICKENDON GREEN

An email had been received from Chris Coupland of Birketts LLP, Solicitors, acting on behalf of the Parish Council stating that the draft lease, incorporating the amendments, had been forwarded to Longmores Solicitors for approval and a response was awaited.

12. GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Members were reminded that the Parish Council had at its meeting held on 31 January 2013 resolved to review this matter at its July meeting.

RESOLVED that this matter be deferred until January 2014 when it was hoped the Draft Local Plan would be out for consultation.

13. CONSIDERATION OF PROVISION OF VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN

RESOLVED that this matter be deferred.

14. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the contents as set out in the attached statement (see Appendix D) be duly authorised for payment.

(ii) Financial Statement

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached statement (see Appendix E) be received.

15. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- Nutwood Cottage update.
- Governance Review (January 2014 meeting)
- Consideration of provision of vehicle activated sign.

16. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Monday, 16 September 2013, at 7.30 pm in the Fanshaws Room, Brickendon.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15 pm.