

## **BRICKENDON LIBERTY PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Brickendon Liberty Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 24 July 2014, 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 K Kotting (Chairman)

\* denotes present.

In attendance: 4 members of the public.

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs Ashley      Personal and prejudicial      All matters relating to Monks Green

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 May 2014 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

#### (i) Annual Litter Pick

Members agreed that the annual litter pick would take place on 19 October 2014. Cllr Mrs Ashley agreed to research whether it would be possible to obtain safety warning signs for the day.

#### (ii) Access to Village Green

The Chairman informed members that he had approached the Golf Club, who had agreed to forward a list of suitable dates when the Chairman could meet to discuss the development due to take place at the Golf Club with a view to ensuring the least possible disruption to the Village Green.

#### (iii) Closure of the Farmer's Boy Public House

Cllr Lambie confirmed that an application had been made to the District Council with a view to nominating the Farmer's Boy Public House and land for inclusion on the list of assets of community value. A decision of the Director of Neighbourhood Services (East Herts) was awaited.

5. PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS

(i) Parked vehicle – White Stubbs Lane

A resident drew attention to the presence of a van parked on the grass verge at the junction of Pembridge Lane/White Stubbs Lane. Whilst the vehicle was no longer there, concerns had been raised regarding its presence. The situation would be monitored.

(ii) Woodman Public House, Wormley West End

A resident informed the meeting that there were rumours that the Public House might close and concerns were raised regarding its future should such an event transpire, as local residents would not wish to see the demise of the pub. However, it was mentioned that the pub would appear to be still a popular venue for many patrons and, whilst it might have been going through a difficult patch, it would seem to be showing signs of improvement.

6. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached schedule (see Appendix A) be received and the decisions taken be duly ratified.

7. FANSHAWS ROOM COMMITTEE

8. Minutes of the Fanshaws Room Committee held on 14 May 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the above meeting be received. (See Appendix B)

(ii) Minutes of the Fanshaws Room Committee held on 25 June 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the above meeting be received. (See Appendix C)

8. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Cllr Mrs Laybourn stated that a few complaints had been received since the last meeting and to date there would appear to be ten ongoing issues which had been registered with the County Council throughout the parish.

The Chairman expressed concern that the Highways Authority was not cutting back the foliage on verges which constituted a traffic hazard. Pressure should be brought to bear on either the Highways or the adjacent land owners to take action to remedy this situation. Of particular concern was Brickendon Lane in the vicinity of Owls Hatch Cottage and the verges at White Stubbs Lane were in a terrible state, as were the verges on the approaches to the Paradise Wildlife Park. It was felt that, in order to have a more comprehensive overview of the problem, individual councillors should identify the various pockets of concern, so that approaches could be made to the appropriate authority/land owner.

The Chairman referred to a complaint which had been received from a resident concerning the excessive flooding which had occurred in Brickendon Lane. Whilst Highways had been out to inspect the area and minor improvements had been undertaken, the clearance of drains on the highway was not scheduled for immediate action.

9. PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP

Cllr Lambie tabled the attached report (see Appendix D) and read out the contents for the benefit of members of the public present. Cllr Lambie was pleased to report that the £8,000 cheque had been received.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH/POLICE REPORT

Mr Dennis Downes apologised to members for the lack of a crime statistics report, which he had been promised by the Police for this evening. However, he would chase for the information, which he would make available to members in due course.

Cllr Mrs Downes expressed concern regarding an article which had appeared in the Hertfordshire Mercury some two weeks ago, written by Terry McDonald. The article had referred to a number of crime problem areas of which Wormley West End had been cited. Cllr Mrs Downes had taken up the matter with Ray Neal who had confirmed that the reference to Wormley West End had been completely unfounded. Nevertheless, it was felt that there was a serious lack of communication and that Mr McDonald should ensure that his articles in future were factually correct.

11. PROPOSED NOTICE BOARDS – HIGHFIELD FARM/CLEMENTSBURY

(i) Highfield Farm

Members were informed that the proposed notice board for Highfield Farm had been ordered and was awaiting delivery.

(ii) Clementsburry

Members were of the opinion that the Parish Council should take no further action in siting a notice board at this location.

RESOLVED that no further action would be taken in this matter.

12. VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATOR

Cllr Lambie stated that this item had been included on the agenda, as a resident had drawn attention to an incident which had involved the use of a defibrillator which had been used to save a person's life. A question was raised as to whether the Parish Council had ever considered purchasing one.

Cllr Mrs Downes reminded members that this matter had been considered by the Parish Council a number of years ago, when a decision had been taken not to purchase the equipment. However, it might be worthwhile for the Parish Council to reconsider this matter again, although the question of the accessibility of the equipment was something which would need to be carefully researched.

Members in briefly discussing the matter suggested that the equipment could be sited either in the Village Hall or affixed to the Village Hall, inside the bus stop or in what was felt to be a more appropriate place the local Public House. Wherever the equipment was sited it must be accessible. The general feeling was that it should be sited inside.

Members wished more time to be given to this matter and RESOLVED to defer discussion until the next meeting.

#### 13. VILLAGE FACILITIES AND SERVICES ASSESSMENT

Members had been circulated with a letter from the East Herts District Council, who was conducting an assessment of facilities and services available in the rural area to inform work on the emerging District Plan. Details of the existing facilities were enclosed with the letter seeking the Parish Council's comments on whether they were comprehensive or whether any additions were required. Members referred to the omission of the tennis courts and Golf Club.

The Clerk was requested to complete the survey on behalf of the Parish Council.

#### 14. DRAFT COUNTYWIDE PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL CHARTER

A letter had been received from the Hertfordshire County Council confirming that the authority was working towards producing a countywide Parish and Town Council Charter outlining how the County Council and Parish and Town Councils could work together for the benefit of local residents. An on-line reference was given for completion of the consultation document.

Members agreed to e-mail the Clerk with their comments in order for a composite response to be made.

#### 15. NEW HOMES BONUS

The Clerk had circulated to members a letter from the East Herts Council setting out the annual new homes bonus payable for 2014/2015 to 2019/2020 in the sum of £2,747. Cllr Mrs Downes had obtained additional information from the District Council which set out how the bonus was calculated and details had been e-mailed to every member.

16. THE OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATIONS 2014

Members made reference to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 which had received Royal Assent on 30 January 2014. Schedule 12 (section 2) of the Act referred to Parish Councils and to the fact that regulations were to be introduced which would make it mandatory on Parish and Town Councils to provide facilities for the filming and oral recording of all meetings by the public.

Members, whilst accepting the legal position, nevertheless felt that this was a retrograde step for Parish Councils of similar size to Brickendon and they felt that a letter should be written to the MP voicing the concerns of the Parish Council. The general feeling was that, as the Council was now under a legal obligation, members should also take steps to arrange for the Parish Council to have the same facility for its own protection.

Cllr Lambie had undertaken some research on equipment necessary which could be purchased for approximately £550. Cllr Mrs Ashley made reference to the fact that she had a camera which could be used. She would ascertain whether it would be suitable prior to the Council committing expenditure in this matter.

17. ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO BRICKENDON GREEN

An e-mail had been received from Mrs Brenda Lambie enquiring whether the possibility of the subject of an electricity supply on the Village Green could be raised again. Members would recall that at the meeting held on 15 May 2014, the Clerk had established that it was not possible to take a supply of electricity from the existing lamp column situated on the Village Green, as there was no mains cable situated on the Green side of the road.

The Chairman suggested that a supply could be taken from the Village Hall by means of a gantry over the road. However, the Clerk cautioned against pursuing this course of action as, being in a conservation area, it would be extremely doubtful whether such a structure would be granted planning permission. Therefore, it was felt that there were two solutions, ie that a supply be taken from the Village Hall under the highway (Cllr Mrs Ashley agreed to research a quote) or to hire a suitably sized generator. The Chairman agreed to research the latter proposal. Whatever means was deemed the necessary way forward, there was no way that this matter could be resolved this year.

18. E-COMMUNICATIONS

The general feeling expressed by members was that the majority of correspondence received from the Clerk, including minutes and agendas, could be sent electronically. This means of delivering Council information would reduce the amount of paper. Cllr Mrs Laybourn agreed to assist the Clerk should he find the task too onerous. The Clerk would look into the feasibility of implementing this proposal.

19. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

Members had before them the existing Standing Orders of the Council which had been adopted on 22 March 2012, together with the Standing Orders from Chard Town Council which incorporated amendments up to and including the 2013 recommendations from NALC. A number of the Standing Orders had been amended/reviewed.

The Clerk agreed to incorporate the suggestions and provide a revised composite set of Standing Orders for approval by the Council.

20. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

(ii) Financial Statement

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

21. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- Governance Review (September 2014 meeting).
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22. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 25 September 2014, at 7.30 pm in the Fanshaws Room, Brickendon.

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55 pm.