

BRICKENDON LIBERTY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Brickendon Liberty Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 23 July 2015, at 7.30 pm in the Fanshaws Room, Brickendon.

*Cllr Ms J Camp

*Cllr J C Lambie (Chairman)

*Cllr Ms A Downes

*Cllr A C Roberts

*Cllr L J Kotting (Vice Chairman)

* denotes present.

In attendance: 7 members of the public.

Cllr Mrs J Taylor (HCC)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr McNeece.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ms Camp Personal and prejudicial Planning application 3/15/1233/FP

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 May 2015 be accepted as a correct record the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Wood End Farm – Wormley West End

Members were informed that there had been no communication from the Enforcement Officer, East Herts Council.

(ii) Blocked drain outside Brickendon Church

Cllr Ms Camp stated that, despite telephone calls and emails to Hertfordshire Highways, no action had been taken to unblock the drain.

A Highways Officer, Mr Noades) had promised to pursue the matter.

(iii) Water leak

The Chairman stated that it would appear that work had been carried out to repair the leak near the Baker's Arms in Bayford. Cllr Kotting stated that there was still a little water in evidence at this location.

(iv) Missing sign - Wormley West End

Cllr Ms Downes reported that the request for the missing sign to be replaced in Wormley West End had not yet been actioned.

(v) Broxbourne Woods

The Chairman referred to a letter from Mr Peter Clegg (Gascoyne Holdings) which had been sent to Mr Mark Prisk, MP, (see attached Appendix A).

Cllr Ms Downes reported that she had spoken to Mr Paul Dean, Enforcement Officer, who had confirmed that, apart from one licence which had been requested, all legal actions required had been taken. East Herts Council Planners had visited the site and confirmed that the current activities being undertaken were permitted development, but they would have to apply for a section 269 license within 28. As the land in question was in private ownership, then the activities taking place, in planning terms, were permitted development and there was no further action that the District Council could take.

Cllr Ms Camp reported that a member of her family had forwarded a letter to the Bushcraft Company concerning a number of issues relating to staff and children taking part in the activities of the company and accessing adjacent farmer's field containing a herd of cows and their young and, playing games, making loud noises and disturbing the animals. Clearly the activities and the attitude of the staff were not conducive to the use of the wood.

The Chairman asked that Cllr Ms Camp forward a copy of the letter to the Enforcement Officer with a copy to the Chairman.

(vi) Wood End Farm, Wormley West End

No response had been received from the Planning Enforcement Officer with regard to the dog training activity being undertaken on the above site.

5. PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS

(i) Defibrillator

The Chairman confirmed that Cllr Kotting had installed the equipment on the Village Hall and it was planned to place a notice on the defibrillator advising members of the public of the 999 service.

(ii) Amenity Cleansing

The Chairman wished it placed on record his gratitude to Mr Hugh Dunlop for cleaning all the signs in the village and, in addition, the telephone box.

Mr Dunlop informed members that the village sign was showing signs of deterioration with two cracks appearing down the side. Members were already aware of the problem, but felt that no action should be taken at the present time to affect a repair.

6. PLANNING

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

The Chairman asked the Clerk to contact the East Hertfordshire Council to ascertain whether there was any Section 106 agreement money which might be forthcoming to the Parish Council.

7. FANSHAWS ROOM COMMITTEE

(i) Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2015

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

8. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Cllr Ms Camp informed members that both she and the Chairman had attended a 'Highways Together' meeting hosted by the Hertfordshire County Council and Ringway. One interesting fact coming out of the meeting had been that arrangements could be entered into between the Hertfordshire County Council and Parish Councils with a view to Parish Councils undertaking limited minor cleansing of roadsides, grass cutting and painting work, etc. It was also learned that Parish Councils could avail themselves of community workers with the only cost charged to the Parish Council being that of the supervisor.

The Chairman remarked that it was good to see that the Highways Authority had recognised the importance of Parish Councils in delivering some frontline services and it would be useful in order to progress this matter if a County Council contact was made known.

9. PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman circulated the attached report (see Appendix D) for members' information. He confirmed that the application made to the District Council for an £8,000 grant had been successful and would be forwarded to the Parish Council shortly.

Cllr Mrs Taylor referred to the Parish Council's request to her for £30,000 to defray a portion of the capital sum due in respect of the provision of the footpath from Brickendon Green to Bayford station. She stated that as this equated to a third of her locality budget, she was unable to accede to the request. However, she was very pleased to confirm that she would be making available a sum of £15,000 towards the footpath project. Cllr Mrs Taylor stated that she was aware that the Parish of Brickendon had not drawn or even requested financial assistance from the County Council over a great number of years and she was keen to see that money was now channelled to the Parish Council, which, she stated, was a worthy recipient.

Cllr Mrs Taylor also made reference to the balance which would be remaining on her locality budget which could be in the region of £5,000. The Parish Council was advised to make an application for consideration for any other project which the Council wished to pursue, although there was no guarantee that further money would be provided other than the £15,000 already earmarked for Brickendon.

The Chairman stated that the original plans for the path project had had to be modified (its length reduced), because of the increase in the capital sum involved. The added grant now made available by Cllr Mrs Taylor would mean that the original plans for the path could be revisited and the two end sections could now be extended. The Chairman agreed that he would seek a quotation from the contractor on site as to the costs involved to carry out the work.

Cllr Mrs Taylor also referred to a locality grant of £5,000 made available to Hertford Heath Parish Council and she confirmed that any balance unspent would be paid over to Brickendon Liberty Parish Council.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH/POLICE REPORT

Mr Downes reported to members that no police statistics had been made available to him and that there was now a new reporting regime in place which resulted in the Parish Council being informed of the monthly crime statistics directly. In future no further reports would be issued to individuals. Under the circumstances, Mr Downes stated that his work on reporting police matters was now redundant. The Clerk confirmed the comments made by Mr Downes and he produced documentary evidence of the new reporting system which, he was under the impression, had been forwarded to all members.

Cllr Ms Downes, whilst accepting the new regime, felt that it was still a good idea to have a local person who would act as a focal point for local residents who were unsure of how to go about reporting any matters requiring police involvement. It was always helpful to have an intermediary to act as a liaison between the public and the Police and perhaps one of the existing Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators could be approached to under take this task.

11. VILLAGE GREEN

(i) Land dispute

The Clerk informed members that a letter from the Council's Solicitor had confirmed that the Land Registry had written to confirm that the application to register Brickendon Grange Ltd as the owner of the disputed land had been completed.

The Chairman stated that, under the circumstances, it was now down to the Parish Council to open up discussions with the Golf Club and in furtherance of this a meeting had been suggested for next Tuesday. This meeting would be to discuss a possible lease of the land in the ownership of the Golf Club.

(ii) Electrical supply to Village Green

Cllr Kotting informed members that the electricity supply to the Village Green would entail the digging up of the whole width of the lane in order to get power to the Green and it was envisaged that this work would not commence until mid-October. However, Mr David Morgan (Hertfordshire County Council Network Management Team) was looking into the possibility of completing the work by 4 September.

Of concern was the fact that there would be a need for a road closure to carry out the work, which would be for a period of three days, and this would be coupled with the possible increased cost of carrying out the work. Clearly, the disruption caused by the road closure would have an affect on the free movement of villagers over the period. A suggestion was made that, as there was going to be a new development at the Golf Club and to the rear of the Village Green, it would seem more sensible, if possible, to take a supply off the new supply going to the development rather than disrupting the whole of village.

In view of the fact that a meeting was to be held with the Golf Club to talk about the lease, this would be an opportune time to discuss the electricity supply to the Village Green.

12. PARISH COUNCIL PENSIONS

Members had been circulated with a document from the Pensions Regulator, which gave details of the law on workplace pensions. Every employer with staff in the UK must automatically enrol those members of staff who meet certain criteria into a workplace pension scheme and make contributions to it. The staging date for Brickendon Liberty Parish Council was 1 April 2016, which was the date automatic enrolment duties would come into effect.

The Clerk stated that he had registered with the Pension Regulator and he would be setting up the necessary documentation to comply with the new regulations.

13. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Cllr Ms Downes had circulated to members a copy of the existing operational risk assessment, which had been adopted by the Council on 16 September 2013. Since the last review, the Council had undertaken to erect the marquee on the Village Green for the village fete and had purchased a new defibrillator. Reference was also made to equipment which was brought onto the Village Green during the fete, ie bouncy castle, etc, and it was felt that risks associated with any equipment should be identified. Cllr Ms Downes also referred to the play equipment on the Village Green and she suggested that members should consider an inspection of the older equipment with a view to ascertaining whether it was still fit for the purpose for which it was originally intended.

It was agreed that the risk assessment be amended to include a reference to the aforementioned matters.

RESOLVED that both the operational and the financial risk assessments be deferred for discussion at the next meeting.

14. EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The Clerk informed members that there was an action on the Parish Council to consider the effectiveness of the Internal Audit and to confirm whether members were happy with the reports that they received. The Clerk referred to the copies of the recent financial accounts and to the Auditor's report accompanying the documentation.

Members expressed their total satisfaction with the content and professionalism of the report and were more than happy to confirm that the present Internal Auditor continue in his auditing capacity with the Parish Council.

15. AUDITORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

The Clerk referred members to the action plan containing recommendations of the Internal Auditor as set out in the document attached (see Appendix E). The Clerk confirmed that all matters had been addressed, although R2 had been deferred until the next meeting.

16. VILLAGE SIGNS - REPLACEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the footpath work to the station currently being undertaken and he stated that during the course of such work the village sign had been discovered to be rotten in parts and was in need of remedial work or total replacement. Members were informed that a quotation had been received setting out a number of options which could be pursued.

On balance members felt that it would be advisable for a new sign and header board to be obtained. The quoted sum being £1,328 plus VAT (supplier Turnex) and members RESOLVED to proceed with the purchase.

Members also felt that as this replacement sign could be looked upon as being part of the path project, the cost could legitimately be charged to the project. Cllr Mrs Taylor suggested that, whilst no guarantee could be forthcoming, an application should be made to Ms Rosemary Chatindo, Highways Locality Officer, for consideration of a grant towards the cost. Cllr Mrs Taylor agreed to speak to the Highways Officer to ascertain whether money could be made available from her budget. The Chairman agreed to email Cllr Mrs Taylor with details of costings.

17. WORMLEY WEST END – NOTICE BOARD

Cllr Ms Downes referred to the condition of the notice board at Wormley West End with the Perspex cover now yellow in colour making the notices displayed on the notice board extremely difficult to read.

Members agreed to replace the Perspex cover. Cllr Roberts agreed to look into this matter with a view to taking appropriate action.

18. DOG BIN PURCHASE

The Chairman informed members that, following on from a request from Mrs Jean Retallick, he had established that a new dog waste bin would cost in the region of £250 this would be excluding installation. It had been ascertained that the District Council could supply a bin, which would be somewhere in the region of £450.

The Clerk was asked to ascertain the precise cost of such a bin and whether the total cost was inclusive of installation. If this was confirmed, then the Clerk was requested to arrange for the purchase. With regard to siting it was suggested that this should be near the pedestrian exit at the back of the Village Hall car park.

19. WASTE BIN REPLACEMENT – VILLAGE GREEN

The Chairman stated that he had checked on the condition of litter bins on the Village Green and also the security of the vehicular access points and had found that two bins needed a new metal liner, two hasp and staple fittings and four padlocks (two for the new fittings and two for other unsecured fencing exits and he gave details of litter bins from Wybone. He asked members to consider purchasing two bins, plus one additional liner – approximate cost £400. The Chairman stated that he would purchase the padlocks and hasp and staple fittings and submit a bill for reimbursement and he agreed to email the information on the bins to the Clerk in order for a purchase to be made.

RESOLVED that two litter bins, plus one additional liner be purchased at a total approximate cost of £400.

20. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts as set out on the attached schedule (see Appendix F) be duly authorised for payment.

Note: Bank Mandate – The Clerk was requested to organise a new bank mandate.

(ii) Financial Statement

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

21. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- Risk assessments.
- Path to the station.
- Neighbourhood Plan.
- Clerk's job description.
- Governance Review (September meeting).

22. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 24 September 2015, at 7.30 pm in the Fanshaws Room.

23. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.

22. CLERK'S REMUNERATION

RESOLVED:

- (i) that with effect from 1 January 2015 the Clerk's rate of remuneration be equivalent to 5 hours per week on SP 21 (£2,667 pa);
- (ii) that for the additional work in respect of 2014/2015 the sum of £1,049.88 be paid.

For the benefit of new members, the Clerk was asked to set out the details of how the Clerk's remuneration was computed and the sums payable were calculated.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50 pm.