

Parish Council of Hempstead
Minutes of the Meeting of Hempstead Parish Council
held at the Village Hall on Thursday 13th February 2020

Present: Mr Sean McCarthy (Chairman), Mr David Drane, Miss Diana Frost, Mr Alan Weedon, Mr Nicholas Turkentine, Mrs Laura Saxel, Mr Mark Welbourn and the Clerk.

The Parish Council meeting started at 8 pm

114) Apologies for absence: County Councillor Walsh and District Councillor Alan Storah

115) Reports from District or County Councillors:

County Councillor Simon Walsh had sent a February report that had been circulated. He had also sent an email saying that he would be in touch in due course with David Drane to agree a date to walk around the village to discuss areas of concern. Mr Drane would contact him to confirm that he was looking forward to the meeting.

District Councillor Alan Storah had sent a report, as described below, that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Stansted Airport: The planning application for expansion at Stansted was refused for reasons relating to noise, air quality and climate change.

The Local Plan: Uttlesford Council had not yet determined how to proceed in response to the government inspector's letter criticising the submitted Local Plan.

Boytons Planning Application for change of use to Nursery provision. There is no progress on this case despite Councillor Storah's efforts in chasing Planning Enforcement.

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Enforcement to enquire on the current status of the case. There was no clear evidence if the house was being used as nursery or not.

116) Minutes of the previous meeting held 16th January 2020 were agreed as a correct record. The Plans and Objectives document agreed at that meeting was also signed.

117) Matters arising:

The Chairman raised issues that had arisen under Environment and Highways at the last meeting particularly to do with flooding. He said that the responsibilities had become rather unclear as the discussion had ensued. It was agreed that this is an area where the responsibilities of the various parties involved, especially on the issue of flooding and drainage on the Highways, are not always easily defined. Different teams in ECC, UDC and owners of land adjoining the highways all having a role. It was agreed that there should be a meeting with John Sladen the retired Parish Councillor who had an extensive knowledge of this area and useful information on contacts at ECC. His experience could help clarify some of these dilemmas.

118) Planning:

The following are all still awaiting decisions

Land South of Limes: UTT/19/1756/FUL

Land north of Old Bakery, High Street. UTT/19/2517/FUL.

Places Services at ECC had submitted Built Heritage Advice to Uttlesford planning commenting that no assessment on the impact upon a listed building and Conservation area had been submitted.

Whilst not objecting to the application as such they considered the orientation of the building and proximity to the road to be completely out of character with the Conservation Area

Land by Thatch Cottage, Hill Road. UTT/19/2707/OP. Essex Highways had submitted

unfavourable comments but the applicants had responded by submitting a speed survey and analysis.
Chaseside, UTT/19/3088/ FUL alterations to conditions for disabled access submitted.

Bullsbridge Farm UTT/20/0015/FUL

With the current building work and removal of hedges etc. already having a significant detrimental impact, on the rural setting of this property, the Council considered that there was a danger of the character of the Grade 2 Listed Farmhouse building being further impaired by this latest application. There would be two new dwellings and a conversion of another building that would provide a house at right angles to the road. Additionally, the latter, like the building already under construction on the other side of the entrance to Bullsbridge Farmhouse, would be almost adjacent to the road.

Whilst it is noted that there is some planned landscaping proposed, it would be a great benefit for some of the hedging along the road in front of the grain silos be restored or enhanced on the country setting of this property, and some key strategic, protected, trees included.

119) Neighbourhood Watch and Wellbeing

Mrs Saxel had nothing to report on Neighbourhood Watch issues but had been in contact with Fleur Brooks, Safeguarding Officer at Uttlesford who offered liaison and collaborative promotion on safe-guarding and wellbeing issues. There was a training session for local councils on domestic violence on March 9th but Mrs Saxel regretted that she could not attend but the offer was open to any councillors who were able to attend in her stead.

However, there will be a Wellbeing conference on later in the year in Dunmow that she hoped to be able to attend.

It was agreed that these contacts would be useful when the Parish Council considered these issues more fully later in the year.

120) Correspondence:

Velo cycling event. 20th September. It was agreed that Miss Frost would contact the organisers to ascertain how we could participate and support this event

121) Highways and Rights of Way:

The 40 mph Speed limit apparently is imminent, as we have been told for some time now. Mr Welbourn had asked about details of a supposed objection that had delayed things.

The state of the High Street was further discussed, and it was agreed that Mr Weedon would speak to the person in charge at the construction work at Dimmings about the mess that they were making on the road.

Wincelow Hall to Bobblows. This right of way that is open to vehicular traffic has become impassable to anything other than large four by fours. The depth of the mud makes walking, horse or bike riding impossible. Even the motorised vehicles are driving onto the adjacent farmland due to the conditions. The track has become nearly 15metres wide in places. There is even a section completely off the track that has been used for practicing handbrake turns that has ruined a large section of arable land. It was agreed to mention this to Simon Walsh on his visit as residents will be raising this with him as well.

122) Environment:

Mr Welbourn had suggested that we take part in the Great British litter pick and it was agreed that it should take place on Sunday March 29th at 10am until 12am.

Tree survey: Mrs Saxel had obtained quotes for the survey of trees in the village which vary quite widely. This include some areas not directly under the auspices of the Parish Council. It was hoped that the Church and Village Hall Management committee would contribute subject to negotiation. Mrs Saxel would circulate the detailed costings.

There were several other concerns that the Parish Council needs to be aware of and consider in the future.

Muntjacs are causing an increasing nuisance eating planted vegetation. Mr Turkentine would contact James Sill about the possibility of some culling. The legality of this would have to be carefully considered.

There were instances of verges being spoilt by the plethora of large delivery vans bringing online shopping etc. Dumping of garden waste in some places in the village is also causing potential problems of flooding and unsightliness.

Future changes in farming policies and practices may change the way that the countryside is used and managed with more uncultivated areas. This re-wilding may be welcomed by wildlife conservationists, but the implications are not yet clear either for farmers or residents.

123) Communications: Miss Frost and Mr Kitchen were working on the update of the history section of the website.

124) Finance:

The Clerk mentioned the fact that the printer needed replacing. It was agreed that he should go ahead to purchase one.

The grants to VE Day celebrations approved at the last meeting had been seen to be aiding a celebration that would mark this event and give opportunities to engage residents.

The grant to the village hall car park was also seen as a positive contribution to the community both local and wider. The car park now has greater usage with the play area and other facilities which many people living on the outskirts can only access by car. This will benefit both regular and casual users of the hall. Therefore both instances fulfil the conditions for Section 106 grants. An invoice for the payment of the management contract for the defibrillator was signed. Payment had already been made.

125) Defibrillator:

The new equipment has made the checks of the defibrillator easier and consequently the yearly management donation has been paid. The clerk apologised for the delay in setting up the volunteer training but hope to have this underway soon.

126) VE day Celebrations:

The committee dealing with this were planning to have an afternoon tea party and an evening event with food and activities. It would be on Friday 8th May 2020 and the hall would be suitably decorated.

127) Village Hall:

A new oil tank had now been installed. There will be a committee meeting next week Tuesday 18th February

128) Appointment of a new clerk;

The clerk clarified that appointment of a new clerk could have an impact on the budget, either positively or negatively, depending on the experience and qualifications of the appointee.

He also mentioned that it would be a good idea, if possible, to retrieve the clerk's email address from Claire Dittrich. Miss Frost agreed to speak to her about this.

He also agreed to put details of the vacancy on the village noticeboard.

Future Meetings: Thursdays March 12th, 9th April & 7th May at 8pm, all in the Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm