

Parish Council of Hempstead
Minutes of the Meeting of Hempstead Parish Council
held on Thursday 9th December 2021

Present: Nicholas Turkentine (Vice Chair), David Drane, Diana Frost, Laura Saxel, Mark Welbourn, District Councillor George Smith and the Clerk. Two members of the public were also in attendance.

The Parish Council meeting started at 8pm

133. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were accepted from Sean McCarthy.

134. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

District Councillor George Smith gave a brief update on Uttlesford Council, including the news that Councillor Lees had been elected as the new Council Leader and that Saffron Walden Town Council will be holding a public consultation regarding the potential pedestrianisation of Market Square.

135. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of 11th November 2021 were agreed as a correct record, and signed by the Vice Chair.

136. MATTERS ARISING

Aims and Objectives – The Council approved the amended Aims and Objectives document.

The Bluebell Inn – District Councillor Smith had emailed an update from Uttlesford Planning Enforcement regarding the continued closure of the pub. The tenant has informed Planning that maintenance work needs to be carried out before the pub can reopen, and that they will be looking to get Listed Building consent for the required work. The Council agreed that they are happy to take a communicative role to ensure interested parties in the Parish are kept abreast of the situation.

Policing and possible drug dealing – Concerns had been raised by local residents that drug dealing had recently occurred in the village. After discussion it was agreed that an email would be sent to residents regarding the reports, highlighting that it is not tolerated, that an increased police presence has been requested and that residents should report any illegal activity to the police via 101. It was also agreed for Laura Saxel to liaise with the PCSO to arrange a possible meeting.

137. FINANCE

Financial Update – The Clerk confirmed the current account balance is £4845.91.

Draft Budget – The Clerk had circulated a draft 2022/23 budget prior to the meeting. A detailed discussion took place looking at where savings could be made and what were the main cost priorities. It was agreed that an increase in the precept was going to be required, and that some costs will need to be covered from Council's reserves. The Clerk to make the agreed changes for approval in January.

Invoices – Payment of £60 for the village Christmas tree to Nick Turkentine was approved and invoice signed by Diana Frost.

138. PLANNING

Local Plan/Development outline of the Village – It was agreed that discussion on next steps regarding the development outline of the village and how and when input towards the District Local Plan should take place at the January meeting. The Clerk to add it to the next Agenda as a main item.

Blackthorn: *UTT/21/3396/HHF*. Proposed construction of a double garage. After discussion it was unanimously agreed that the Council would **object** to this application. The garage is proposed to be built directly behind a hedge at the front of the plot, which would impact on the open street scene and character at this point on High Street, and set a precedent for development in front of existing building lines. The Clerk to submit an objection online on this basis.

Newlands: *UTT/21/3395/DFO*. Details following outline approval for the erection of 1 no. dwelling.
AWAITING DECISION

Lakehouse Farm: *UTT/21/1862/FUL*. AWAITING DECISION

139. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had received an email from a resident regarding the planned road closure for Affinity water main replacement work. It was agreed that this would be discussed with Highways issues.

140. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AND WELLBEING

Laura Saxel highlighted that a Police and Crime survey, asking people to have a say on their priorities, was being launched. This would be promoted to residents. Regarding Health and Wellbeing, Laura had received information on a social isolation and loneliness charity, United in Kind, that can offer support to communities, helping those at most risk, and is now in contact with the Uttlesford representative.

141. HIGHWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

High Street resurfacing – Raising of the ironworks is still awaited/being chased.

Highways Panel – Mark Welbourn has submitted the requests to County Councillor Foley.

Footpaths – Broken bridges and finger posts on village footpaths need to be highlighted to Essex Highways Rights of Way Officer. David Drane and the Clerk to action.

Affinity Water Road Closure – The Clerk had been contacted by residents of Wincelow Hall Road regarding concerns with the 8-week closure of High Street and Bumpstead Road due to commence on 5th January, as highlighted by the recent signage. The Parish Council had not been contacted directly by Affinity Water regarding the closure. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would contact Affinity Water to raise the Council's concerns, including increased traffic using Witchtree/Wincelow Hall Road and Boyton's Lane, the damage that might occur, and how this might be managed by effective signage of the road closure and diversions. Mark Welbourn to draft.

142. ENVIRONMENT

Tree Work – Laura Saxel to apply to Uttlesford for planning approval for the horse chestnut by the village hall.

Village Hedges – It was confirmed in discussion that any hedges to be cut back by arrangement of the Parish Council would be those under the Parish Council's responsibility, such as those at the bottom of Church Hill over the railings. Concerns were also raised regarding hedging that is encroaching onto the highway at the far end of Anso Road.

143. FLOODING – The Council has been contacted by residents of Anso Road regarding ongoing flooding issues, but Essex Highways once again have confirmed that drain clearance is on the list but not a current priority. The Vice Chair is looking into the possibility of grant funding for the clearance of ditches and has contact County Councillor Foley for assistance.

144. COMMUNICATIONS – Nothing to report.

145. VILLAGE HALL – Work at the rear of the hall has been completed.

146. PLATINUM JUBILEE – To be discussed further next year. Volunteers will be required to organise any village celebrations, to be highlighted in February's newsletter.

147. EMERGENCY PLAN – Formal review will take place in January 2022.