

HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
 held in High Easter Village Hall Monday 4th May 2020

Present: Cllrs Nigel Boreham, Andrea Davis, Robert Lodge (Chair), Neil Reeve, Janet Robinson, Paul Sutton, Jo Windley and the Clerk Allison Ward

County and District Cllr Susan Barker (leaving after 20/08)

0 Members of the public

Cllr Lodge opened the meeting and welcomed Cllrs to the first virtual meeting held using the Zoom platform and in accordance with the 'Regulations' following Coronavirus Act 2020; a milestone in High Easter Parish Council history.

20/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - None

20/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FOR THIS MEETING – Cllr Sutton declared a non-pecuniary interest as the agent for The Spinney, Rehobeth Street, agenda item 20.10.01.

20/03 PUBLIC FORUM - None

20/04 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING of 2nd March 2020. Cllr Lodge proposed that the minutes be accepted as a correct record, this was seconded by Cllr Boreham with all in agreement – as this was a virtual meeting the minutes will be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

20/05 COVID 19

Cllr Lodge recorded a vote of thanks to residents for the support being provided to neighbours and in particular the community support offered for those self-isolating and the vulnerable. The Clerks report in appendix 1 contains further details.

20/06 DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr Barker began by congratulating the Parish Council on its first virtual meeting and reminded the meeting of the Covid business grants available via Uttlesford. These are available for local businesses as well as for village halls, sports clubs and any other premises where there is a rateable value; the meeting confirmed High Easter Village Hall had received the grant.

Cllr Barker confirmed she was pleased to be able to support the parish and provide a grant from her Essex County Council fund to help the Parish Council reach its funding target for the play equipment project. At Essex County Council, highways work restarted at the beginning of May and there are a number of schemes which will now be progressed. The County Council employs 7,500 staff and a large number are working from home with others such as library staff re-deployed to ensure key services can continue.

At Uttlesford District Council a meeting at the end of April resulted in the decision to withdraw the Local Plan following the Inspectors report. The process will need to start again and has a targeted completion date of end 2023 for approval. Cllr Barker suggested the number of houses required in the district across the plan period to 2040 is now c.18,000, the equivalent of roughly 400 hectares of land. It was noted the Inspector had commented on the lack of small sites and there is a potential impact of a move away from garden cities which could require the villages like High Easter who were largely protected in the previous plan, being allocated housing on small sites. Cllr Reeve added that at this stage nothing is ruled in and nothing is ruled out and work is due to start soon on defining the process for producing a new Local Plan. There is the benefit of the work done previously and the good bits of both papers will be considered. Cllr Reeve added that the current thinking is the total number may be slightly lower at c.14,500 new dwellings.

Signed
 Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

Cllr Barker concluded by noting the financial pressures on Uttlesford as a result of Covid 19 with reductions in the number of residents and businesses able to make planned payments and other loss of income streams including car parks and planning.

Cllr Lodge commented on the state of roads and asked for Cllr Barker's assistance on arranging for a road sweeper to attend.

20/07 CLERK'S PROGRESS UPDATE and CORRESPONDENCE

See appendix 1.

20/08 COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllrs discussed some arrangements for VE day, Cllr Davis to arrange for bunting along The Street and Cllr Sutton will provide a sound system at the war memorial for the key points during the day. Clerk to forward details of the national schedule via the village email including the information being posted on the village facebook page.

Cllr Reeve raised whether it was necessary to re-circulate the village with contact details should anyone be in need of assistance; Cllrs felt that people were now connected, and it was agreed a second distribution was not necessary.

Cllrs noted that County Broadband are continuing their work across the parish in readiness for fibre connections; there are one or two instances where the large loops of wiring hooked to the poles in readiness for connections to properties have dropped to the ground, these are not currently live.

County and District Cllr Susan Baker leaves the meeting.

20/09 ANNUAL MEETINGS

The 2020 Regulations which support the Coronavirus Act 2020 allow for the Annual Village Meeting and the Annual Parish Council meeting not to be held and Cllr Lodge proposed that neither is held in High Easter for 2020, this was seconded by Cllr Reeve with all in agreement. As a result, Cllr Lodge will remain as Chairman, Cllr Sutton as vice-chairman and Cllrs will continue with their existing responsibilities.

20/08 PLANNING

20.08.01 – Applications

Application No.	UTT/20/0884/HHF & UTT/20/0885/LB
Location	Lower House Farm, The Street
Development	Renovation of the farmhouse and ancillary buildings to include demolishing the existing single storey rear addition and constructing a new single storey rear extension. Minor internal alterations. Conversion of an existing barn into a small annexe and improvement works to the cart lodge to be used as covered parking and storage.

Cllr Sutton proposed that the Parish comments and expresses its concerns with the design of the proposed single storey rear extension on the farmhouse, which in its view is not in keeping with the character of the listed farmhouse building. This was second by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement. Cllr Windley went on to note that there are barn owls on this site and asked that due consideration is given and suitable arrangements made for alternative nesting, the Clerk will include this in the response.

The following application is for a certificate of lawful development and not open to general comment.

Application No	UTT/20/0699/CLP
Location	The Spinney, Rehobeth Street
Development	Erection of single storey rear extension measuring 1.85 metres by 3.785 metres, adjoining existing rear extension; alterations to roof comprising infilling of gap between existing dormer windows with a sloping roof and vertical face to tie in with face of existing dormer windows, and incorporation of a 'Juliet' balcony (with no external access to any platform).

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

20.10.02 – Decisions for information only, see appendix 2.

20.10.03 – The application for the affordable housing project adjacent to Boreham Court is pending a decision from Uttlesford. Hastoe have confirmed, ‘UDC have requested an extension of time until early June to allow for the S106 to be agreed’, it is hoped agreement can be reached prior to this date.

20.10.04 – As reported under County and District Cllrs Report an Extraordinary Meeting of Uttlesford District Council on 30th April saw a decision made to withdraw the Local Plan following the Planning Inspectors comments and recommended a number of other commitments to future reporting and engagement.

20/11 HIGH EASTER TENDERS

Following a tendering process, the following decisions were made by High Easter Parish Council during the period when it was not possible to hold Parish Council meetings. The following contracts were retrospectively proposed by Cllr Lodge and seconded by Cllr Boreham with all in agreement.

Verge cutting – 1 year contract to JCM Services Amenity & Groundcare Ltd, value £3,400+vat for 3 cuts.

Playing Field – 2 year contract to Paul Brown, value £1,410 for 15 cuts per annum.

Jubilee Meadow – 2 year contract to JCM Services Amenity & Groundcare Ltd, value £570+vat for 3 cuts.

Cllr Lodge confirmed he is meeting with a contractor for a quote on applying weed killer and feed to the playing. Cllrs were in support of this work, the estimated cost is below £250.

The Clerk was asked to check when the contractor has scheduled the verge cutting and if necessary to ask that this is completed as soon as possible.

20/12 NEW PLAY AREA EQUIPMENT

In line with Government guidance and BHIB the Parish Councils insurers, a notice advising of the closure of the play equipment is posted on the gate to the enclosed area and the swings have been temporarily removed; thank you for your understanding.

Following the March Parish Council meeting, reference agenda item 19/163 Creative Play agreed a deposit would not be required and payment would be in full on satisfactory completion of works. As a result, Cllr Lodge and Cllr Sutton signed the contract, witnessed by the Clerk.

Work to install the new play equipment was due to start on 20th April and is now delayed due to the current restrictions. The Clerk to contact Creative Play to understand when they intend to resume

A grant of £1,296, which was the balance of funds required to meet the cost of the project, has been received with the support of County Cllr Susan Barker from Essex County Council Locality Fund 2020/21.

A resident has approached the Parish Council asking if they can purchase the redundant play equipment. Cllrs discussed this and agreed they were happy to see the existing equipment recycled and proposed a sum of £100 excluding the slide which will be retained for a later project.

20/13 ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 2019/20

Legislation under The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 has removed the requirement for a common period for the exercise of public rights and extended the deadline by which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) together with any certificate or opinion issued by the local auditor must be published, from 30 September 2020 to 30 November 2020.

20.13.01 The clerk presented the 2019/20 accounts which are included in the agenda, there were no questions on the 2019/20 figures. Cllr Lodge noted that the £1k grant approved for VE Day was excluded from the 2020/21 revised budget and at this stage there is a possibility this will be carried forward to VJ Day. It was also noted that the cost of the bi-weekly waste service should be reduced as the service is not currently available.

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

20.13.02 The accounts are with the internal auditor and consideration of any findings will be carried forward to the June meeting.

20.13.03 Cllr Reeve proposed that given income and expenditure is below £25k for 2019/20 and all other requirements have been met, that High Easter Parish Council exempts itself from a limited assurance audit, this was seconded by Cllr Robinson with all in agreement.

20.13.04 Approval of the Annual Governance Statement section 1, carried forward to June meeting.

20.13.05 Approval of the Annual Governance Statement section 2, carried forward to June meeting.

20.13.06 The Clerk presented the fixed asset register and the bank reconciliation, both were approved by Cllr Lodge and seconded by Cllr Windley with all in agreement.

20.13.07 Cllr Lodge proposed that the period for the exercise of public rights is 1st June to 10th July. These are the dates during which members of the public are able to inspect the accounts and raise any questions, the notice will be available on the website.

20/14 PARISH COUNCIL INSURANCE

The Clerk presented three alternative quotes for the annual insurance which were discussed by the Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to seek confirmation on whether the existing insurers provide business interruption cover and whether it is possible to reduce the asset cover as the valuations are by group and in excess of the requirements. If the existing insurers are able to amend the quote based on these two points and this proves to be in line with the lowest quote, Cllrs would support renewal with the existing provider. Clerk to check and a final decision will be made via email and brought to the next meeting for ratification.

20/15 FINANCE

20.15.01 The following cheques were approved between meetings in line with the budget, Cllr Reeve proposed these as acceptable, this was seconded by Cllr Davis with all in agreement.

<i>PAYMENT TO</i>	<i>VALUE</i>
# JCM Amenity inc VAT (hedge cutting playing field and weed clearing)	£ 546.00
Allison Ward - Parish Clerk March 2020	£ 258.96
Essex Association of Local Councils – Annual Subscription	£ 236.86

Payment in 2019/20 accounts

20.15.02 Cllr Reeve proposed the following are approved for payment; this was seconded by Cllr Davis with all in agreement.

<i>PAYMENT TO</i>	<i>VALUE</i>
Allison Ward - Parish Clerk April 2020	£ 258.96

20.15.03 Payments received between meetings are Essex County Council 2019 verge cutting, £3,797 and 1st instalment of the 2020/21 precept, £11,400.

20.15.04 Cllr Sutton proposed that the Parish Council applies for electronic banking, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement; Clerk to progress.

20/16 ITEMS CARRIED FORWARD, phone box, welcome pack, plant a tree project

20/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING scheduled for Monday 1st June 2020 at 7.30pm.

TIME AND CLOSE OF MEETING, 8.50pm

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

CLERK's UPDATE NOTE – May 2020 meeting**Update on Covid 19 response**

In addition to the many neighbours who are providing support to those self-isolating,

1. The village website has a section 'Covid 19 Information' which contains links to all the key information, plus details of local businesses.
2. The Parish Council dropped a leaflet in every home in the parish with Parish Council contact details, should anyone need assistance.
3. Council for Voluntary Support Uttlesford (CVSU) in partnership with Uttlesford District Council is co-ordinating the Uttlesford Community Support Hub where residents can call for advice or assistance. The Parish Council is registered as the contact for High Easter and has received c.12 calls for assistance for prescription collection and shopping. These requests are covered by a group of residents who have made themselves available to the Parish Council to provide support.
4. The request for the mobile 'takeaway' service was considered and with the support of Lodges who could provide a larger space than was available at the village hall, the Parish Council gave its support to the plans.

Update on general matters

1. Following the closure of 'essexinfo' on 31st March, a new website 'e-voice/higheaster' is now live. This uses the same 'web site package' as the previous site and also provides the domain name and hosting free of charge to Parish Councils and voluntary groups.

The new site has the domain name 'higheaster' rather than 'higheasterparishcouncil' which was used previously. There is a section for the Parish Council as well as the village hall, other village organisations can easily be added to enable the site to be a parish site. The Parish Council will continue to manage the site, please contact the Parish Council if you have any suggestions on additional groups to add.

2. Rural Community Council of Essex, village of the year has been cancelled for 2020 due to the impracticalities of assessing and visiting villages and communities at this time, reference 19/160
3. A number of events planned in the village have been cancelled – 8th May VE Day commemoration, 24th May 10k road race.
4. A number of village services are currently suspended, the mobile post office, the mobile library service. There is no date for when the bi-weekly garden waste service funded by the Parish Council will return.
5. The spring litter pick scheduled for end of March could not take place, thank you to all those who have been picking up litter as they 'exercise'.
6. Key Parish Council information updated and circulated to Parish Cllrs.

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

APPENDIX 2

Uttlesford Planning Decisions between 3rd March 2020 and 4th May 2020

Application No.	UTT/20/0189/HHF
Location	7 Bellhouse Villas, Barnston Road
Development	Demolition of existing detached garage and erection of single storey part side/part rear extension
Decision	Conditional approval
Application No.	UTT/20/0283/CLP
Location	The Willows Acreland Green The Street
Development	Proposed erection of cartlodge and outbuilding.
Decision	Conditional approval
Application No.	UTT/20/0277/HHF
Location	The Willows Acreland Green The Street
Development	Demolition of existing conservatory. Proposed single storey rear and side extensions. Proposed first floor rear extension and internal alterations. Upgrading existing windows and creation of vehicular entrance and gate.
Decision	Refused
Application No.	UTT/20/0362/HHF
Location	Peakins Farm
Development	Part demolition and erection of two storey extension to existing dwelling
Decision	Conditional approval
Application No.	UTT/20/0417/HHF
Location	Fieldway, The Street
Development	Proposed single storey rear extension (revised scheme to that approved under UTT/18/2289/HHF).
Decision	Conditional approval
Application No.	UTT/19/2741/HHF
Location	Houseground, Onslow Green, Barnston
Development	Construction of a detached cartlodge within the curtilage of the property
Decision	Conditional approval
Application No.	UTT/19/2431/HHF
Location	Penvites, The Street
Development	Installation of 14 Kw air source heat pump with screening
Decision	Refused
Application No	UTT/19/1920/FUL & UTT/19/1921/LB
Location	Birds Farm Bishops Green High Easter Road
Development	Conversion of barn to 1 no. dwelling (revised scheme to that approved under planning permission UTT/1317/04/REN)
Decision	Conditional Approval