

HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
 held via Zoom on Monday 6th July 2020

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

4 Zoom connections during the meeting from members of the public

20/40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Cllr Reeve who was attending the Uttlesford Scrutiny Committee as part of his responsibilities as a District Cllr. These were accepted by the Parish Council.

20/41 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FOR THIS MEETING – None

20/42 VIRTUAL MEETING POLICY

The Clerk had circulated a draft policy which outlines procedures and expectations for Cllrs and members of the public when taking part in virtual meetings. A resident had written to the Parish Council raising points on the draft policy. In response the Clerk confirmed the policy is necessary in order to set out how some requirements of Standing Orders will be managed in a virtual meeting and to encourage residents to engage in the same way they would if the meeting was held in the village hall. Cllr Davis proposed the virtual meeting policy be accepted as circulated; this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement. The policy is available on the website.

20/43 PUBLIC FORUM - None

20/44 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING of 1st June 2020 and extraordinary Parish Council meeting of 15th June were approved by the Parish Council. They will be signed by the Chairman of each meeting once the Parish Council meets in person.

20/45 COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS REPORT - None

20/46 CLERK'S PROGRESS UPDATE and CORRESPONDENCE

The Parish Council and a pool of residents continue to be available to provide support to those in the community who need assistance with shopping, prescriptions or just to chat.

The Clerk received a number of emails from residents following the extraordinary meeting of 15th June 2020. Where these related to questions on procedure, responses were sent. Where these expressed resident's views on the Parish Councils response to the planning application UTT/20/1208/PIP or related to comments about individual Cllrs these were acknowledged only and where necessary residents were directed to the appropriate complaints procedure. All correspondence was circulated to the Parish Council.

The Clerk submitted a pre-application for funding to the Community Initiative Fund for a further grant to help with phase 2 of the play area development, see agenda item 20/51. This was approved and a full application for funding will be prepared in advance of the deadline of 23rd August.

PKF Littlejohn (Parish Council appointed external auditors) has confirmed acceptance of the exemption certificate for 2019/20. Providing there are no issues raised by electors during the notice period, this will conclude correspondence for the accounts to March 2020.

Essex as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has sent copy to the Parish Council confirming the ditch at the rear of Elm Cottage and the Maples has been inspected and confirmed this seems to have been well constructed. They state *'In circumstances such as these the LLFA in exercising its powers under the Act, takes a risk-based approach to enforcement where un-consented works have been carried out. This means that these works will remain unconsented and should there be flooding issues in the future and it was proved that these works were responsible then LLFA would take action to remediate the situation. I have asked that a manhole/inspection pit is put in halfway along the pipe so that inspections and maintenance can be carried out which I shall inspect.'*

Signed
 Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

The Clerk reported the issues with fallen trees on School Lane opposite St Mary's Bungalows to Essex Highways and the landowner. Log reference 2667552, the response from Essex Highways is *'We are currently continuing to assess the reported issue. A further status update will be published when available.'*

Safer Essex Roads Partnership - Cycle Confidence Courses are available free until 1st September, see <https://saferessexroads.org/road-users/cycling/> for details.

A request to sell fruit and veg from the village hall car park for an hour once a week was received. The Parish Council agreed to this providing the preschool and village hall committee had no objections and providing the trader was able to provide the necessary evidence of a hygiene certificate from the district council.

The Clerk circulated details of a planning application for the extraction of sand/gravel from an approved site within the Essex Minerals Plan is currently being considered, reference ESS/77/20/CHL. The proposed site access is opposite Chalk End on the A1060. Cllr Lodge confirmed he had attended the pre-application public consultation.

20/47 COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr Robinson asked whether the Parish Council had an update on the fibre wifi works proposed by Gigaclear as they had been surveying throughout the village in the last week. The Clerk will request an update. *(Post meeting Superfast Essex has confirmed Gigaclear is upgrading some properties to ultrafast broadband, as part of the Superfast Essex programme (roughly 19 properties), this was always part of the plan. In addition, Superfast Essex confirm, 'Gigaclear is also carrying out some work commercially in High Easter, which is not part of the Superfast Essex programme'. The Clerk is chasing Gigaclear for further information).*

Cllr Lodge had spoken to County Broadband who had confirmed they had now resolved the plan for the backhaul into the village and the infrastructure should be in place by August, which will then allow testing.

Cllrs noted that the road sweeper had passed through the village on 6th July.

20/48 PLANNING

20.48.01 – Applications – None

20.48.02 - Decisions

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.).
Decision	Refused

20/49 SALT BAG INITIATIVE 2020/21

Essex Highways will be operating the winter salt scheme for 2020/21 whereby Parish Councils are allocated salt to be used within the local community; the salt cannot be used on public highways or private drives. Cllr Boreham confirmed the Parish Council has sufficient stocks from previous years. Cllr Lodge proposed that the Parish Council takes part in the scheme, however, does not require any further salt. This was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

Cllr Boreham confirmed the two salt bins in the parish which are the responsibility of the Parish Council and not Essex Highways, (corner of The Street and School Lane and the village hall car park) need to be emptied as the existing stock has hardened, and replenished ahead of the winter; Cllr Boreham and Cllr Lodge to arrange.

20/50 FUNDING FOR A PCSO

The Parish Council considered a request from Hatfield Heath Parish Council for joint funding by local Parish Councils of a dedicated PCSO, annual cost is estimated at £40k. Cllrs considered local issues and were of the view

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

these were minimal and problems including scramble bikes using footpaths were unlikely to be resolved by dedicated resource. In conclusion Cllr Sutton proposed that it was not financially viable for High Easter to contribute to a dedicated PCSO, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement.

20/51 PLAY AREA REOPENING POST COVID

20.51.01 The Parish Council considered the government guidance on the re-opening of play areas, together with information and documentation issued by NALC and EALC.

Based on the guidance, the Clerk had circulated a draft Covid risk assessment which the meeting considered. Cllrs were of the view the responsibility is on individuals to follow social distancing and to accept that the play area cannot be monitored by the Parish Council or cleaned. The Clerk was asked to prepare appropriate signage and to ensure this is placed on the fencing and to post the play area risk assessment and guidance on the website. The Clerk will remind residents of their responsibilities when using the play equipment via the email mailing list and Facebook. The Clerk will forward the information to the village hall committee and ask that this is provided to any hirers of the village hall.

Providing the signage is in place and once the safety checks have been completed for the new equipment, Cllr Robinson proposed that the play area is re-opened for public use on the understanding if guidelines are not followed, the Parish Council will consider closing the area. This was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement.

20.51.02 The new play equipment and surfacing has now been installed. The Clerk, Cllr Davis and Cllr Reeve met Creative Play on site on 6th July to sign off the installation. Some outstanding issues were addressed by Creative Play whilst on site, other points including making good the surround between the surface and the grass, clearing the rubble from the grass area need to be addressed by the installation contractor and a date when they can return to complete this work is pending. The safety fencing will remain, and the area cannot be used until this work is completed and the final agreement signed off by the Parish Council. Clerk to update residents.

The invoice has been issued by Creative Play and the Clerk will submit the applications for the two grants and process the VAT claim. Payment will not be released until final sign off.

The Parish Council wish to acknowledge their grateful thanks to the children of Butterfly pre-school who organised a sponsored toddle in March to raise funds for the new play area, they raised £393. Cllr Lodge proposed this money is designated to the play area project; this was seconded by Cllr Robinson with all in agreement.

The Parish Council agreed to invite the children from Butterfly pre school to officially open the new play area.

20.51.03 The Clerk prepared a draft outline of the proposed equipment for phase 2 of the play area project. This would see the basketball court enlarged to a 'third court', a seating area for teenagers, the current mound enlarged to take the slide that was kept from the old equipment and a table tennis table. Cllrs were supportive of the plan and the Clerk will progress with costings and a submission to the Community Initiative Fund in mid-August.

20.51.04 Cllr Lodge proposed that the Parish Council has no objections to High Easter Village Hall Committee arranging for the refurbishment or replacement of the current picnic benches. This was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

20/52 PRE-SCHOOL ALLOTMENT' REQUEST

Cllr Davis proposed that the Parish Council supports the pre-schools request for a small allotment space adjacent to their existing outside space. This was seconded by Cllr Boreham with all in agreement.

The Parish Council propose the area to be adjacent to the existing pre-school space, with a depth extending towards the trees, with sufficient space between the trees and proposed allotment to allow members of the public access to the field at this point. The width to extend in line with the existing space, up to the current gate, this access is to be left clear and not enclosed within the allotment space. The area needs to be fenced, although this can be wire fencing or picket fencing whatever the pre-school feel is most appropriate. The area is to be returned to existing condition, i.e. grassed if the allotment space is no longer required.

20/53 WELCOME PACK

The Clerk to progress the plans to add information to a specific page on the website specifically for new residents. Cllr Windley to prepare a draft welcome letter which can be added to the website. Cllrs to forward any suggestions for material to the Clerk.

20/54 FINANCE

20.54.01 Cllr Lodge 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 June 2020 inc Zoom subscription	£ 273.35
Rural Community Council of Essex (annual subscription) inc VAT	£ 72.60
Creative Play (new play area and subject to final sign off) inc VAT	£ 38,400.00

20.54.02 The Clerk presented the accounts for the period April to June 2020 including an updated estimate for 2020/21. The only significant changes relate to cash flow and are a result of the delays in the installation of the play equipment; the estimated closing cash position at March 2021 is in line with budget. The closing cash position as at June 2020 was £41,105.

20/55 ITEMS CARRIED FORWARD, welcome pack, telephone kiosk. The Clerk was asked to contact the postmaster to understand future plans for re-opening the mobile post office.

20/56 DATE OF NEXT MEETING scheduled for Monday 7th September 2020 at 7.30pm. Please note there is no ordinary meeting scheduled for August. The Parish Council will call extraordinary meetings where it is necessary to consider urgent business or to consider situations where time limited decisions are required.

TIME AND CLOSE OF MEETING, 8.45pm