

HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
 held via Zoom on Monday 7th September 2020

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

County and District Cllr Susan Baker (leaving after 20/69)

5 Zoom connections during the meeting from members of the public

20/65 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Cllr Robinson (on holiday) and accepted by the Parish Council.

20/66 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FOR THIS MEETING – Cllr Windley declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 20.72.01 Birds Farm, as joint owner of the site subject to the application.

The chairman invited County and District Cllr Barker who had commitments to attend other Parish Council meetings to provide her report. As a result, item 20/69, was brought forward by the Chairman with no objections.

20/69 Cllr Barker confirmed that applications for repairs under the ‘member-led’ pothole repair initiative whereby County Cllrs can put forward their priority repairs had been submitted to Essex Highways; the Clerk had supplied information for High Easter re Green Street.

Uttlesford District Councillors have £2k to provide grants in their wards to support projects, activities and events which will directly benefit the community within their ward, expressions of interest to be sent direct to Cllr Barker.

The government white paper on local government reform is due to be published in the Autumn, this will be the first major reform since the Local Government Act 1972. It is likely this will propose ‘two-tier’ County Council areas. Essex has one of the most complex local government structures in the UK – one county council, 12 district/borough/city councils and two unitary councils in Southend and Thurrock. The white paper if accepted would see this change to 2 to 4 unitary councils replacing County and District Councils. There are no plans to change current Parish Council structures.

County and District Cllr Barker leaves the meeting

20/67 PUBLIC FORUM

The chairman welcome Julian Williams of BB Partnership Ltd, the agents for the Homely planning application and asked that agenda item 20.72.01, UTT/20/1937/FUL Homely be brought forward, there were no objections from Cllrs. Mr Williams updated the meeting on the current application, the key points being,

- a. The applicants intention was to rebuild a replica of the demolished property and an application was submitted on this basis, however in discussion with Uttlesford Development Manager and Essex County Council Historic Environment Manager, it was suggested there is no point in rebuilding what was an ‘awkward and compromised building’ and instead it was suggested a ‘new building in a bespoke response to the conservation area’ would be more acceptable. As a result, the application was withdrawn.
- b. The applicant has worked with Uttlesford and Essex to produce a design which takes its reference from other properties along The Street. Moving the property forward and closer to the road helps to detract from the blank cable wall of the neighbouring property which is highly visible on the southern approach.

This application has the support of both Uttlesford Development Manager and Essex County Council Historic Environment Manager,

The Chairman invited questions from the public and Parish Council

A resident commented that the site has been ‘an eye sore’ for some time, the sooner a plan for redevelopment is approved the better. They confirmed they were in support of the application as proposed.

Signed
 Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

A resident suggested the plan appeared to be a ‘done deal’ and expressed the view that it was an ‘absolute nonsense’ that Uttlesford had allowed the demolition of a thatched, local-heritage asset in a conservation area to happen. What is proposed might look a very nice building, but it does nothing to ‘conserve’ the village. The resident was in objection to the application.

This point was echoed by Cllr Lodge who was of the view the proposal does not replace what has been lost or enhance the conservation area, he added that whilst he understands residents wish to see the site restored as soon as possible, the designs, materials and style of the old properties contribute to the historic character of High Easter and it is important these are preserved. Cllr Sutton supported the comments adding it was a travesty that the situation had been allowed to happen and that the consequence was nothing more than a ‘slap on the wrist’ from Uttlesford. Cllr Davis was of the view supporting this application sends the wrong message and suggests you can demolish a property in the conservation area without the appropriate permission and then rebuild in a preferred design. Cllr Reeve added that he did not feel it was a ‘done deal’, whilst officers can have their views, applications can be passed to the Planning Committee for decision. To only suggest a ‘slap on the wrist’ and to move on with a completely new design in a different position is to go against all the principles of the planning process.

Cllrs were disappointed Uttlesford and Essex appear to have put their support behind a new design without reference to this Council who have engaged with Uttlesford re this site throughout the last 18 months.

Cllr Davis raised several concerns; the reduced parking facility for the site, the issues with road frontage parking giving the sites proximity on a bend and the proposal by the Essex Historic Environment Manager that a dwelling with a thatch roof would be an issue, Cllr Davis was of the view thatch could be used as in the ‘Dorset model’.

Mr Williams responded to the comments and explained that it had not been the applicant’s intention to demolish the house, the proposal is for a modest sized house for the applicants to live in. He added, the Essex Historic Environment Manager felt that thatch was not an intrinsic part of the conservation area and was of the view if the application is refused because of the thatch it would be ‘weak ground’ if appealed.

It was noted the applicants had visited neighbours to explain the plans which had received favourable comments. The Parish Council were offered the opportunity to view the plans prior to the application being submitted, and declined, (*the Parish Council preference is not to engage with developers in advance of a planning application being validated by Uttlesford*). Mr Williams concluded by saying once the building has gone you have to look at a site afresh and the reference becomes the rest of the conservation area and not the original building.

Cllr Reeve proposed that should the officers recommend approval, the application is called in for the Planning Committee to decide for the reasons set out below, this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

1. Position of the proposed new dwelling is forward of the original, significantly changing the street scene.
2. The proposed new dwelling is a fundamentally different building to the dwelling that was demolished.
3. Highway safety. There is limited parking provision on site and no safe on street parking directly in front of the site due to its position on the bend in the highway.

Cllr Sutton proposed that the Parish Council responds to the application with serious concerns as summarised below, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement.

1. Proposed access, single width and close to a bend in the highway which could compromise highway safety.
2. Limited onsite parking and no provision onsite for visitor parking in a section with no road frontage parking.
3. Proposed building form being vastly different to the original dwelling
4. Detrimental impact on the street scene due to the new forward position of the proposed dwelling.

Cllr Windley thanked Mr Williams for attending the meeting and responding to questions. *Mr Williams left the meeting.*

20/68 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING of 6 July 2020 and extraordinary Parish Council meeting of 27 July were approved by the Parish Council. They will be signed by the Chairman of each meeting once the Parish Council meets in person.

20/69 COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS REPORT – Brought forward in agenda, see above.

20/70 CLERK’S PROGRESS UPDATE and CORRESPONDENCE – Attached as appendix 1.

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

20/71 COUNCILLORS REPORTS

The Clerk had carried out the monthly safety check on the play equipment, the gate to the play area is squeaky and requires oiling, there are no other matters to report. Clerk to prepare a schedule for future monthly checks.

Cllr Windley raised a request on behalf of a resident asking whether it was possible to consider placing a TPO on a tree within the conservation area to ensure long term tree management. Cllrs were of the view the tree merits protection on amenity grounds given it is visible and contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The decision on whether to grant a TPO rests with Uttlesford and before the Parish Council puts the tree forward for consideration the Clerk was asked to write to the residents to advise them of the proposal.

Cllr Reeve responded to the statements made by Cllr Barker at item 20/69. The anticipated white paper on local government changes and suggested proposals are not popular with the majority of District Councils in Essex, although the need to review local government administration is generally supported. The current Uttlesford administration will support any plans that give residents a bigger say in what happens in their communities.

Cllr Davis suggested a village litter pick, to be carried forward to October meeting for decision.

Cllr Davis reported fallen trees on footpath 102/20, Clerk to report. Cllr Windley is following up footpath queries raised by residents and added that landowners have two weeks to reinstate footpaths after ploughing.

Cllr Boreham will store the metal slide which needs to be moved from its current storage location. Cllr Boreham to look at the additional soil requirements to raise the existing mound to accommodate the slide, Cllrs noted this may be an option for funding from Cllr Barkers grant fund along with the proposals already being considered.

Cllr Sutton suggested the hedge around the war memorial needs attention, Cllr Windley and Cllr Sutton to sort.

20/72 PLANNING

20.72.01 – Applications

Application No	UTT/20/1937/FUL
Location	Homely (Walnut Tree Cottage), The Street
Development	Section 73A Retrospective application for the demolition of existing property and proposed erection of new dwelling.

Brought forward in agenda, see item 20/67

Application No	UTT/20/1965/HHF
Location	1 Bellhouse Villas, Barnston Road
Development	Proposed garage

Cllr Lodge proposed that the Parish Council objects to this application for the reasons set out below, this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

1. The proposed garage would have a prominent position within the front curtilage of the dwelling. No other property in this vicinity has a garage or building in front of the principal elevation. Allowing this proposal would have a significant impact on the street scene and change its appearance.
2. Proposed materials are not in keeping with the property.
3. Unclear how the design would allow a vehicle to directly enter the proposed garage.

Cllr Windley was placed in the 'waiting room'

Application No	UTT/20/2004/FUL & UTT/20/1703/LB
Location	Birds Farm Bishops Green
Development	Conversion of barn to 1 no. dwelling (revised scheme to that approved under planning permission UTT/19/1920/FUL)

Cllr Sutton proposed no objection to this application, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement

Cllr Windley re-joined the meeting

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

Application No UTT/20/1722/HHF & UTT/20/2156/LB
 Location Chapel House, The Street
 Development S73a retrospective application for a single storey, oak framed pergola

Cllr Sutton proposed no comment to this application, this was seconded by Cllr Davis with all in agreement.

Application No UTT/20/2168
 Location Brown's Barn, School Lane
 Development Proposed outdoor swimming pool with associated landscaping

Cllr Sutton proposed no objection to this application, this was seconded by Cllr Davis with all in agreement.

The following applications are not for general comment, the Parish Council had no comments to add.

Application No UTT/20/2186/PDE
 Location 6 Boreham Court
 Development Proposed single storey rear extension - extending 3.6m from rear wall, maximum height 3.16m and height to eaves 2.33m

Application No UTT/20/2187/PDE
 Location The Willows, Acreland Green
 Development Proposed single storey rear extension - extending 5.84m from rear wall, maximum height 2.96m and height to eaves 2.96m

Application No UTT/20/2174/CLP
 Location The Willows, Acreland Green
 Development Single storey side extension with a pitched roof

20.72.02 - Decisions

Application No UTT/20/1761/TCA
 Location Tye Cottage, The Street
 Development Fell to ground level 1 no. Laburnum, crown reduction and thin of 1 no. Walnut
 Decision No objections

Application No UTT/20/1721/HHF
 Location Shootershatch
 Development Erection of two storey side and rear extensions and detached triple garage
 Decision Conditional Approval

20.72.03 The Parish Council noted that a Built Heritage Statement has been submitted for the application at School Lane, UTT/20/1648/OP. Cllr Reeve proposed that this additional information does not result in any amendments or additions to the Parish Councils previously submitted response, this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

20.72.04 At the request of residents the Parish Council carried out a leaflet drop for two recent 'major' planning applications, to notify c.75% of the parish; this is a time-consuming exercise and is not a requirement of Parish Councils. The Parish Council agreed that in future they would not leaflet drop, however they would notify residents of any 'major' applications via the email database, in addition to including details on Parish Council meeting agendas. Uttlesford remain responsible for informing adjoining neighbours of any planning applications.

20/73 COMMUNITY LED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Parish Council noted that to produce a community led plan that can be used to direct local development is a hugely time consuming and costly task, it is not for the Parish Council to do in isolation and requires the support and commitment of a significant number of residents.

In order to make a decision, the Parish Council agreed to produce a leaflet for distribution to residents to outline the options and requirements for producing a community led plan. The leaflet would ask residents for their views on

whether this is something they would like to see High Easter produce and whether they are prepared to be involved in a committee to deliver any plan. Clerk to produce a draft leaflet for consideration.

20/74 STANSTED AIRPORT APPEAL - REFERENCE APP/C1570/W/20/3256619

At the end of July Manchester Airports Group lodged an appeal against Uttlesford's refusal of its 2018 Planning Application. The appeal will now be a Public Inquiry starting in January 2021 and scheduled for 40 days (10 weeks of 4 days). The Parish Council agreed not to make any further comments in addition to those it had submitted as part of the planning application process.

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) has taken our Rule 6 status. Cllr Davis proposed that a donation of £250 is made to SSE in support of their work to represent local communities at the appeal, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement.

20/75 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON WHITE PAPER – PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Government is consulting on changes to the current planning process which will affect the methodology for calculating housing need, see the extension of the Permission in Principle (PIP), raise the threshold that will trigger affordable housing contributions and support the delivery of first homes. Cllr Reeve proposed that these changes were beyond the Parish Council remit and proposed that no response is submitted, this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

The government is also consulting on the Planning White Paper to support its aim to deliver 300,000 new homes per annum and to speed up housing delivery. The deadline for responding to this consultation is 29 October. The Parish Council will consider any further guidance issued during September/October before forming a view at its October meeting on whether it is in a position to form an opinion on the proposals.

20/76 PARISH CLERK SALARY INCREASE

The Clerk is paid in accordance with the national pay scales for Parish Clerks. Cllr Lodge proposed that the Clerk's salary is increased in accordance with the recently agreed pay scales with effect from 1 April 2020, from £9.96 to £10.24. This was seconded by Cllr Windley with all in agreement.

20/77 FINANCE

20.77.01 The following cheques for approval at this meeting

PAYMENT TO	VALUE
Allison Ward - Parish Clerk Aug/Sept 2020 inc Zoom subscription for month	£ 583.10
Information Commissioners Office (annual data protection fee)	£ 40.00
High Easter Village Hall (hall hire April 2019 to March 2020)	£ 209.00
JCM Services (2 nd Meadow cut inc VAT)	£ 228.00
JCM Services (2 nd Verge cut inc VAT)	£ 1,320.00

20.77.02 The following receipts have been received, HMRC VAT recovered for the play area equipment (£6,670), ECC Locality grant (£1,296) and UDC community initiative fund (£3,500_.

20.77.03 The Parish Councils bank account has the name of the previous Clerk as the contact, although the address is that of the current Clerk. Cllr Davis proposed that the name for account correspondence only be changed from Sharon Mills to Allison Ward, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement.

20/78 ITEMS CARRIED FORWARD, Government white paper on planning, electronic banking, litter pick.

20/79 DATE OF NEXT MEETING scheduled for Monday 5 October 2020 at 7.30pm.

TIME AND CLOSE OF MEETING, 9.20pm

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

CLERK's UPDATE NOTE – September 2020 meeting

1. The Essex PRow officer sent notification re footpath 13. A group of volunteers confirm they will help clear it during September. In addition, Cllr Windley is following up an enquiry from a resident re footpath 18.
2. The Clerk responded to correspondence relating to bonfires. Residents are reminded of the guidance on the Uttlesford website, <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5706/Bonfires> Please note this site has a link for reporting bonfires that are causing an issue due to smoke. Residents are reminded that the bi-weekly garden waste service visits the village on alternate Saturdays, details on the notice board and website. This is a 'free' service at the point of use and is funded by the Parish Council from precept.
3. Concerns were raised with the state of the trees on the cricket pitch and the risks to public safety from falling branches. The Clerk was asked to write to the resident responsible.
4. The Clerk responded to residents' enquiries on planning applications UTT/20/1648/OP and UTT/20/1208/PIP.
5. The clerk circulated information from the leader of Essex County Council providing information to support the proposed Government White Paper to begin to reform local councils in 'two-tier' County Council areas.
6. The Post Office is scheduled to re-start on Tuesday 8th September between 9am and 11am in The Snug. Whilst The Snug remains closed on a Tuesday, the Post Office will be supported by the Clerk or a Parish Cllr as a second person is required for security reasons.
7. The Clerk circulated information to Cllrs on the consultation on LGA changes to Code of Conduct. Cllrs were invited to respond should they wish, the consultation closed on 17 August.
8. Cllrs supported a request from Dunmow Rhodes Football Team who play at High Easter, to change their name to High Easter Football Club.
9. The Clerk contacted Superfast Essex for an understanding of Gigaclears plan. Superfast Essex confirmed Gigaclear are planning to connect approximately 19 properties in the parish which is as per the original plans and this may be this year. Superfast Essex also suggested Gigaclear may be carrying out some commercial work in High Easter (same category of work as County Broadband, i.e. not part of the Superfast Essex project). A request for information was sent to Gigaclear customer services in July, the Clerk continues to chase for a response.
10. Cllr Lodge, Cllr Reeve and the Clerk continue to chase Uttlesford for a decision on planning application UTT/19/3172/FUL, affordable housing site.
11. The play equipment installation was completed, and the equipment officially opened by County and District Cllr Susan Barker and the children of Butterfly's pre-school on 20th July. The handover documentation which includes all the guarantees has been received from Creative Play and is pending a full review by the Clerk. The Covid 19 risk assessment was completed, and the site has been open throughout the summer holiday period with no concerns raised.
12. Uttlesford has sent notification requesting Parish Councils submit expressions of interest for tree planting on any land they own and supply drawings on planting schemes and types of planting. Clerk to prepare.
13. The Clerk circulated to Cllrs a 'Vision for Easton Park' from the Stop Easton Park Group.
14. The four picnic tables on the playing field which are part of the Parish Council asset register have been refurbished. The Parish Council records its thanks to High Easter Village Hall Committee for arranging and funding the work.
15. Outstanding phone box and welcome pack.

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)