

HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
held in High Easter Village Hall on Monday 7th February 2022

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

3 residents leaving during the meeting.

21/151 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Cllr Jo Windley due to personal commitments and accepted by the meeting.

21/152 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FOR THIS MEETING

Cllr Robert Lodge declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 21.159.01 application UTT/21/3034/FUL re-consultation, as joint applicant.

Cllr Nigel Boreham declared a personal prejudicial interest in agenda item 21.159.01 application UTT/21/3034/FUL re-consultation, as a close friend of the applicant.

Cllrs Andrea Davis, Neil Reeve, and Paul Sutton declared a personal interest in agenda item 21.159.01 application UTT/21/3034/FUL re-consultation. as a friend and parish council colleague of the applicant.

21/153 PUBLIC FORUM

Following on from the discussion in the September 2021 public forum and subsequent informal discussion with residents at end of October village hall open Sunday, Nathan updated the parish council on the village environmental projects. The plan is to focus on four projects and to encourage volunteers from the community to get involved. The projects being championed to date are,

1. Wildflower oasis – to include reducing cuts to verges to allow later flowering wildflowers to self-seed, whilst recognising the need to cut to maintain highway safety. The parish council ‘controls’ the verge cutting contract and will work with the environmental project team and contractor to determine what is possible. Discussions agreed ‘racking off’ will enhance the soil and help promote wildflowers. Sowing additional wildflowers is challenging to establish, there are plenty of existing wildflowers, the plan is to enhance the environment to allow them to flourish. It may be possible to apply for grant funding to purchase bulbs to help with controlling grasses, which would benefit existing wildflowers. It was suggested that the Jubilee Meadow is not completely cut, and instead pathways are cut through the meadow which will allow the natural wildflowers to establish. The Clerk was asked to share existing tenders with the environmental team for their suggestions on how these could be adapted. Cllr Davis agreed to support this project.
2. Electric vehicle charging points in the village hall car park which would be independent of the village hall to avoid any issues with their charitable status. Funding options would need to be considered and could include grant funding. An option for collective buying power was also put forward, it will be necessary to canvass residents to identify those who would be interested in grouping together. Nathan to supply information to share with residents to gauge interest, Cllr Reeve volunteered to assist with this project.
3. Using local knowledge and expertise there is a plan to provide information to residents on air source heat pumps, encouraging a move away from oil.
4. Use of solar panels including on the village hall, any project would require capital funding. Looking at this as a parish project to see if it is possible to get a survey to look at properties that might be viable and whether there is then a collective buying option.

Given the climate emergency declared by Uttlesford, Cllr Reeve suggested this is an opportunity for High Easter to be a ‘test case’ for how to green a village. The parish council agreed to Cllr Reeve following this up.

Signed
 Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

Cllr Lodge thanked Nathan and the team for their work, and commitment in pushing projects forward for the benefit of the community.

Two residents leave the meeting.

As it was confirmed a resident wished to speak on application UTT/21/3034/FUL, Cllr Lodge left the meeting, and the chair was handed to the vice-chair Cllr Sutton.

A resident spoke in objection to the proposed application UTT/21/3034/FUL and began by following on from the discussions on the parish environmental projects. Comments were focused on the pollution (and noise) caused by vehicles from Lodge Coaches, especially when engines are left to run for extended periods of time. The resident referred Cllrs to the comments submitted by residents to the application and which can be viewed on the Uttlesford website, most relate to concerns with noise and visual impact that would result from the additional proposed units at the rear of gardens along Gepps Close. The resident noted the original conditions for the site were restricted to a bus and coach operation, and not additional industrial units for hire. There are units currently rented out on site and these are those closest to Gepps Close, it was suggested residents had raised these concerns with Uttlesford over the years, but nothing appears to have changed.

Cllr Sutton confirmed the reason for the change in description to include ‘class types,’ would have been prompted by Uttlesford’s concern that it did not fall into a particular use class. In doing this it allows Uttlesford to place conditions on any approval. In summarising the points raised, Cllr Sutton suggested there are two issues, the first relates to tonight’s planning agenda response, and the second to a suggested breach in existing conditions which is an issue for Uttlesford enforcement to investigate and not environmental health or planning..

*Cllr Sutton asked that agenda item 21.159.01, application UTT/21/3034/FUL be brought forward to allow the parish council to continue the discussion and agree its response; there was no objection from Cllrs.
Cllr Boreham leaves the meeting.*

21/159 PLANNING

21.159.01 – New Applications

Application No	UTT/21/3034/FUL
Location	Lodge Coaches, The Street
Development	Proposed erection of building for use as offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions (Use Class E(g) (i) and industrial processes (Use Class E(g) iii) and storage or distribution (Use Class B8).

Cllr Sutton opened the parish council discussion by noting the issue with existing uses and planning conditions. The Clerk was asked to verify from the planning system a summary of permissions.

Cllrs considered and discussed the comments raised in the public forum and the weight of local objection submitted direct to Uttlesford. It was noted the Environmental Health Officer has removed the holding objection and suggested conditions including site operating times of 7am to 7pm, Cllr Sutton suggested the parish council would prefer to see this reduced to 8am to 6pm and in line with the applicant’s proposal. Cllrs noted the applicants suggesting the new buildings would block the noise from existing operations, however Cllrs were not convinced this would be the case.

Cllr Sutton proposed the Parish Council comments with strong concerns that the proposed buildings are too close to residential properties and given strength on local objection the parish council has issues with where the building is located. This motion did not receive a second.

Cllr Reeve proposed that the parish council objects to this application on the grounds of the potential noise and disturbance that would be caused to neighbouring residents. The parish council is of the view the intensification of use of the site for commercial purpose adjacent to the boundaries of residential properties is not appropriate and alternative options on the site should be considered where the impact is likely to be less significant to residents. This was seconded by Cllr Davis with all in agreement. In addition, the Clerk was asked to add that if Uttlesford are mindful to approve the application a condition limiting times when the proposed development can operate be as those supplied by the applicant and not those suggested in the condition from the Environmental Health Officer.

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

Resident leaves the meeting, Cllr Boreham and Cllr Lodge return to the meeting and Cllr Lodge resumes the chair.

21/154 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING of 6th January 2022 were proposed as a correct record by Cllr Lodge, this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

21/155 COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS REPORT – County and District Cllr Susan Barker sent apologies to the meeting and provided a written report.

1. Essex has increased the number of Highways enforcement officers from 1 to 3 to cope with the backlog.
2. The new gates opposite the Spotted Dog are deemed not to block the PRoW as there is a 1.1m gap on one side. Uttlesford enforcement are investigating the new access onto the highway.
3. Road closures why are these necessary and not traffic lights? Essex Highways or anyone working on the highways must allow a 3m wide carriageway for vehicles, a 1.2m buffer and then space for contractors vehicles. If this road width is available then traffic lights can be used, otherwise it is a road closure.
4. Essex is introducing Trucam which is a speed measuring system which the public can be trained on and can issue tickets to speeding vehicles.

21/156 HIGHWAYS

21.156.01 Bishops Green gateway signage to advise motorists they are approaching a hamlet, has been agreed by the Local Highways Panel. These will be positioned at Proverbs Green and Mudwall Farm.

21.156.02 Verge cutting. The tenders will be shared with the environmental project team as outlined in the public forum and brought to the March meeting for consideration.

21/157 CLERK'S PROGRESS UPDATE and CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE

Cllr Lodge, Cllr Reeve and the clerk attended the parish council cluster meeting with the new CEO of Uttlesford District Council; topics discussed included enforcement, planning, waste services and housing allocation policy.

Broken footbridge deck at footpath 74 and missing way markers at junction of footpath 23 and 24 reported to Essex Highways.

The parish council considered the request from the football team to cut the playing field grass. The advice from contractors was this was not ideal giving the wet conditions, Cllrs agreed and suggested the first cut could be earlier than in previous years.

21/158 CLLRS REPORTS

The Clerk completed the playground inspection for the month of January, there were no concerns. There were no further reports or concerns raised by Cllrs.

21/159 PLANNING applications continued

Application	UTT/22/0167/FUL
Location	The Hill, Chelmsford Road
Development	Variation of condition 5 (Natural England licence) attached to UTT/19/0650/FUL in order to allow works to commence on the site

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

21.159.02 – Decisions – For information only

Application No	UTT/21/0653/FUL & UTT/21/0654/LB
Location	Lower House Farm, The Street
Development	Conversion of existing barn into a single dwelling house alongside ancillary access, parking, landscaping, and other associated works.
Decision	Refused

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chairman Parish Council)

Application No UTT/21/3194/FUL
 Location Games Farm, High Easter Road
 Development New access to agricultural field
 Decision Withdrawn

Application UTT/21/3529/FUL & UTT/21/3363/LB
 Location Birds Farm, Bishops Green
 Development Conversion of barn to 1no. dwelling (revised scheme to that approved under planning application UTT/19/1920/FUL)
 Decision Conditional Approval

Application No UTT/21/3504/HHF & UTT/21/3505/LB
 Location Mudwall Farm, Bishops Green
 Development Proposed side extension (revised scheme to that approved under UTT/1380/07/FUL & UTT/1381/07/LB)
 Decision Refused

Application No UTT/21/3546/HHF
 Location Peartree Cottage, Slough Road
 Development The demolition of the existing conservatory and its replacement with a single storey lean to extension. Alterations to existing porch enclosure together with minor alterations and associated operations.
 Decision Conditional Approval

Application No UTT/21/2847/HHF
 Location 4 Bishops Green Villas High Easter Road
 Development Section 73A Retrospective application for the erection of replacement gates
 Decision Refused

Application No UTT/21/3156/FUL
 Location The Garage, The Street
 Development Proposed extension to existing museum.
 Decision Conditional approval

21.159.03 Land at School Lane - The parish council notes the applicant has submitted a non-determination appeal for application UTT/21/2338/FUL at School Lane for the 'erection of 5no. dwellings alongside ancillary access, landscaping, parking and associated development.' The applicants appeal documents including the appeal statement can be viewed on the Uttlesford website against this application reference. A date for the appeal is pending.

21.159.04 Homely - The hearing against Uttlesford's refusal for Homely took place on 18 January. Cllr Lodge thanked Cllr Sutton and Cllr Reeve for giving up their time to represent the parish council at this appeal. A decision is pending.

21/160 HASTOE NEW HOMES

21.160.01 Cllr Lodge, Cllr Reeve and the Clerk have taken part in several meetings with Uttlesford and Hastoe re the Uttlesford housing allocation policy, its inconsistencies with the Hastoe policy and with rural exception sites. Whilst this is acknowledged and Uttlesford has agreed to review going forward, it will not help the issues currently faced in High Easter given the section 106 agreement in place. The parish council awaits information from Hastoe to verify local connections following allocation to applicants.

21.160.02 The proposed official opening date is 1st April. The Clerk has been in correspondence to make arrangements which will include a 'reception' at Lodge Coaches with The Snug providing refreshments post the site opening. The parish council has confirmed its guest list, and this has been forwarded to Hastoe. Cllr Lodge confirmed he is in discussion with the Royal Air Force to see if it is possible to have a representative present given the naming of the road in memory of Flight Lieutenant Maurice Mounsdon.

21/161 VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN – PARISH OWNED

The Clerk forwarded quotes from the Highways approved suppliers, these ranged from £3.2k to £4.1k. Given the previous sign purchased by the parish council was c.£2k and it has proved very efficient in the six years it has been in place, Cllr Lodge proposed that a quote is obtained from this supplier Viatronics, and if it is lower than the cheapest quote obtained that this is purchased; this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

21/162 QUEEN’S PLATINUM CELEBRATIONS

21.162.01 Notes from second joint meeting with village hall committee and church circulated to Cllrs. Currently the parish council will be responsible for the two main village events, Thursday 2nd June beacon lighting with food and music at the village hall (this is subject to insurance confirmation), and the Big Lunch which will take place along The Street. The clerk to prepare risk assessments, Cllrs Boreham, Lodge and Sutton and the Clerk continue to attend the jubilee committee meetings.

21.162.02 Uttlesford has confirmed confirmation of the road closure on Sunday 5th June, the conditions include providing suitable signage and barriers and marshalling. The clerk has written to Uttlesford for clarification on who is responsible for providing signage and barriers, a response is pending.

21.162.03 Tree planting for Queen’s canopy, trees expected between 28 February to 18 March, areas for planting to be considered.

21/163 FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL PROJECTS

C/fwd to next agenda.

21/164 FINANCE

Cllr Lodge proposed the following payments are authorised; this was seconded by Cllr Davis with all in agreement.

PAYMENT TO	VALUE
Allison Ward - Parish Clerk January 2022	£ 266.24
Uttlesford District Council – Green waste service 2021	£ 1,400.00
R C Boreham – Hire of digger for ditch works inc VAT	£ 144.00

20/165 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- a. Annual review of parish council policies
- b. Verge cutting, playing field and jubilee meadow contracts for 2022

20/166 DATE OF NEXT MEETING, Monday 7th March at 7.30pm in the village hall.

TIME AND CLOSE OF MEETING 9.20pm