

HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
held in High Easter Village Hall on Monday 4th March 2024

Present: Cllrs Nigel Boreham, Robert Lodge (chair), Lucy O'Connor, Janet Robinson, Paul Sutton, and the Clerk Allison Ward

County and District Cllr Susan Barker (arriving during item 23.170.02 leaving at 23/171)

No residents

23/162 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Wendy Colgrave (holiday) and Cllr Neil Reeve (work commitment) sent apologies to the meeting. The meeting accepted the apologies.

23/163 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FOR THIS MEETING - None

23/164 PUBLIC FORUM – No public present.

23/165 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2024 (proposed by Cllr Lodge, seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement).

23/166 COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS REPORT

Cllr Barker arrived later in the meeting and her report is recorded at the point it occurred in the agenda.

23/167 CLERK'S PROGRESS UPDATE and CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE

Uttlesford confirmed the weekend green waste service will commence on Saturday 16th March and thereafter bi-weekly from 11.30am to 12.30pm in the village hall car park until early December. The cost funded by the parish council is £85.50/hour a 3% reduction on the previous year. In line with the decision made by the parish council at the February meeting, the clerk had confirmed acceptance. Dates are on the parish council website, noticeboard and in Parish News.

The annual play inspection (due in May 2024) has been booked with Wicksteed at a cost of £132+vat, there is a 12 week lead time.

The clerk responded to an Essex County Council (ECC) questionnaire on EV charging in parishes to support the ECC bid for capital funding from the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund. This included confirming the possibility of an installation in the village hall car park given this is parish council owned.

Correspondence on the waste collection issues were circulated to residents, correspondence re street lighting issues continue.

23/168 CLLRS REPORTS

23.168.01 – The clerk carried out the playground inspection, there are no new issues with the play area equipment, however the south west corner of the field is very wet where water is not draining effectively. Cllr Boreham to follow up.

23.168.02 – The parish council is co-ordinating a village litter pick on Saturday 23rd March, meeting at 10am in the village hall car park. Cllr Sutton is available to lead this.

23.168.03 – Cllr Robinson noted improvements following the installation of a shield to the street light, however some lights are still on all night. The clerk confirmed there are faults with the units which Essex County Council (ECC) are aware of, it was also noted not all shields are proving to be effective and dialogue between the parish council, ECC and residents effected are ongoing.

Signed
 Robert Lodge (Chair Parish Council)

23/169 PLANNING

23.169.01 – New Applications

Application No UTT/24/0350/HHF & UTT/24/0351/LB
 Location Lanterns, The Street
 Development Removal of two existing staircases, installation of new staircases with related alterations including a glazed screen to living room and blocking up of external doorway to rear elevation. Replacement of rear flat roof covering with a different covering with new roof light

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

Application No UTT/24/0373/FUL
 Location Barn at Games Farm, High Easter Road
 Development Application to vary condition 1 (approved plans added under reference UTT/23/2819/NMA) of UTT/20/2075/FUL (Demolition of barn and erection of barn style detached dwelling) in order for revised plans to be considered.

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

Application No UTT/24/0377/HHF and UTT/24/0378/LB
 Location Punch Bowle, The Street
 Development Proposed insertion of windows to rear elevation within later addition of ground floor and associated works including repairs to modern timber framed wall.

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

To note the parish council is the applicant for the following application

Application No UTT/24/0393/LB
 Location Punch Bowle, The Street
 Development Proposed installation of live saving equipment to be secured to a wall of a grade II listed building

23.169.02 – Decisions

Application No UTT/23/3211/PAQ3
 Location Agricultural Buildings at Wheats Farm, Stagden Cross Road
 Development Prior Notification of change of use of agricultural buildings to 5 no. dwellings
 Decision Permitted Development

Application No UTT/23/3151/FUL
 Location Stables at Malyons, Poplar Road
 Development Section 73a retrospective approval for retention of hay store extension to stables Complex
 Decision Refused

23/170 HIGHWAYS and BYWAYS

23.170.01 The clerk contacted Essex Highways following three separate incidents of vehicles getting stuck on byway 71 close to Lower House Farm because of following sat navs and OS maps. The efforts required to pull them out have left substantial damage to the ditches, and they have left behind their litter. The parish council notes the response and subsequent action taken by Essex Highways to temporarily restrict the use of byway 71 by motorised vehicles for a period up to 6 months, or until the surface can be repaired or recovered. The clerk has also contacted Kemi Badenoch MP to invite her to see the issues and to seek assistance on changing legislation to protect byways in the winter months,

County and District Cllr Barker arrives

Signed
 Robert Lodge (Chair Parish Council)

23.170.02 A resident contacted the parish council with safety concerns due to damage caused to the road and verges by vehicles using the ALD site (Barnston parish) on High Easter road. A discussion took place on the planning permission that exists at the ALD site, the meeting noted there was a certificate of lawfulness issued in January 2001 in relation to the business operations, as this was a certificate of lawfulness there were no conditions. At the time 7 vehicle license were attached to this site, this has now risen to 20 vehicle licenses excluding third party vehicles that use the site. Cllr Sutton proposed the parish council writes to Uttlesford stating an intensification of use since the original certificate of lawfulness which would require a full planning application, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement.

The meeting noted that this would not resolve the current state of the road and verges, County Cllr Barker confirmed discussions are ongoing re long term solutions, and remedial works are planned later this month. Cllr Barker added the role of the Local Highways Panel is being widened to look at local highway maintenance and this issue could be prioritised within that work scheme.

The chair invited County and District Cllr Susan Barker to provide a report to the meeting.

23/166 COUNTY AND DISTRICT CLLRS REPORT

Reporting on Essex County Council

- a. There will be no member pothole scheme this year, instead a team will be allocated to each county ward Cllr for a week and they are then able to direct where they go. This is unlikely to be effective for issues on rural roads or one-off locations at his would not be best use of their time, it should however help where there are consolidated pot hole issues.
- b. The main budget pressures continue to be children's services including home to school transport and where there are special educational needs with health care plans in place. In addition the increase in the living wage from April and inflation are putting pressures on budgets.

Reporting on Uttlesford District Council

- a. Uttlesford have raised council tax by the maximum permitted.
- b. Car park charges are being increased, there are local concerns this will push parking onto local streets. There are plans to introduce a 12 day a month pass to help with flexible working.
- c. Uttlesford has set the budget for 2024/25 and in doing so agreed to sell its 50% share in Chesterford Research Park. If the sale is progressed, Uttlesford will (as required by law) spend the proceeds reducing short-term borrowing which would reduce the council's exposure to fluctuating interest rates. Further information can be found on the Uttlesford website.
- d. The issue with bins collections was totally avoidable. Cllr Barker confirmed she has requested a paper on costs and expressed disappointment that employees who were unable to do their normal roles during this time were not re-directed to services such as litter picking.

The clerk noted the closure of High Easter Road at Leaden Roding (3rd-5th April) and the inappropriate diversion route via Shorts Farm Road, a narrow single track lane with few passing places. Cllr Barker agreed to raise with Essex Highways.

County and District Cllr Susan Barker leaves the meeting.

23/171 PARISH COUNCIL CONTRACTS 2024

23.171.01 Playing field grass cutting

Quotes had been received from the existing contractor and JCM services. The meeting considered a proposal from JCM services for a combined playing field and Jubilee Meadow contract that would also increase the number of cuts beyond where the tractor cuts from the current 3 to 15, i.e. in line with grass cutting.

In conclusion Cllr Sutton proposed the parish council accepts the most cost effective proposal of a one year combined services quote for £2,425 which will allow for 15 cuts of the playing field and surrounding areas, plus 3 cuts of the Jubilee Meadow. This was seconded by Cllr Boreham with all in agreement.

23.171.02 Jubilee Meadow

A combined contract was agreed, see item 23.171.01.

23.171.03 Verge cutting

Cllr Lodge proposed the parish council accepts a quote from JCM Services of £4,126.56 ex VAT to cut the verges 3x during the season. This was seconded by Cllr Boreham with all in agreement. The clerk added Essex County Council will not confirm the verge cutting contract until the purchase order is issued in April, last year the revenue received was £4,104.15,

23/172 PARISH COUNCIL MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL RISK REVIEW

The parish council is required to assess its financial and management risks at least annually and to satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise these. The clerk produced a schedule and met with Cllr Colgrave and Cllr O'Connor to discuss and agree any actions necessary. A final version was circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting.

Cllr O'Connor proposed the parish council accepts the report and notes the actions required which will be followed up in future meetings, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement.

23/173 NEW PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES

As a result of the review in 23/172, the parish council considered the following new policies and updates, these had been discussed in detail by the clerk, Cllr Colgrave and Cllr O'Connor.

23.173.01 Document retention policy – Cllr O'Connor proposed the parish council approves this policy as circulated, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement. The clerk will add to the website.

23.173.02 Reserves policy, this will be deferred to the next meeting to allow further consideration.

23.173.03 Health and Safety policy, this will be deferred to the next meeting to allow further input.

23.173.04 Financial regulations update to reflect the move to online banking - Cllr O'Connor proposed the parish council approves the amendments as circulated, this was seconded by Cllr Lodge with all in agreement. The clerk will update the website.

23/174 80TH D-DAY ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Cllr Lodge proposed the parish council purchases the commemorative D-Day flag to be flown from the church tower, providing the Parochial Church Council are in agreement, cost c.£50 dependant on size. This was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement. Clerk to liaise.

The clerk had been in contact with the parish coronation event committee and received an outline of the plans proposed by the village hall which are centred on Friday 7th and Saturday 8th June. The meeting noted lighting of beacons as part of the national event is on the evening of Thursday 6th June and were of the view it is important to mark this symbolic event. Given this is a working day, the clerk was asked to contact the village hall to ask if they would be willing to open the bar from 8pm to 10pm in order that residents could attend and the beacon could be lit at 9.15-9.30pm as advised by the national organisers. Cllr Boreham agreed to take responsibility for lighting the beacon.

23/175 FINANCE

23.175.01 Cllr Lodge proposed the following payment is approved, this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement.

PAYMENT TO	VALUE
Allison Ward – Parish Clerk February 2024	£ 322.92

Signed
Robert Lodge (Chair Parish Council)

The clerk confirmed the village hall committee have received successful confirmation of the grant applied for from Uttlesford District Council to install solar panels on the village hall roof. As a result, the parish council will release the £2,500 grant approved at item 23.145.01.

23.175.02 The clerk confirmed Monday Muster funds banked during February, £77.15 (balance from term ending December 23) and £257.40 (January to February 2024 receipts).

23/176 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING – None noted

23/177 DATE OF NEXT MEETING, the meeting agreed the following changes to the scheduled first Monday of the month due to forthcoming bank holidays. These dates are subject to confirmation the hall is available. Tuesday 9th April and Tuesday 7th May, Meetings start at 7.30pm.

TIME AND CLOSE OF MEETING 9.15pm