

# Widdington Parish Council

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## **Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 8.00pm**

<b>Present</b>	Chair Ian Southcott, Cllr. Chris Firmin, Cllr. Albert Edwards. Cllr. Maggs Webb
<b>In Attendance</b>	2 members of the public County Cllr. Ray Gooding and Katrina Levy, Clerk to the Council.

### **01.24.01 CHAIR`S WELCOME**

Chair Ian Southcott welcomed those present to the meeting.

### **01.24.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr. Steve Smith, Cllr. Teresa Petchey, Cllr. Lynn Smith, District Cllr. Neil Hargreaves, District Cllr. Judy Emanuel.

### **01.24.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None**

*2 members of public joined the meeting.*

**01.24.04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – Concerns raised that Appeal has requested a written hearing; how hearing will be carried out will be decided by allocated Planning Inspector.

Speed survey on Springhill was raised, concern at some of the speeds recorded but also that the survey wasn't placed in the correct place and questions on plan going forward.

**01.24.05 COUNTY COUNCILLOR`S REPORT** – Speed survey, Essex Highways feel traffic generally within speed limit, but pedestrian use of the road could be improved and will be considered by Essex Highways without urbanising the area. Residents live in that area and walk into the village, it is also used by dog walkers and equestrians. Chair asked if we could have more than one option to consider, including extending application of quiet lane down Springhill. Also going to discuss drainage issue with Highways buddy, requested highways representative to come to next Widdington Recycling liaison meeting to discuss issues on Hollow Road. Will be an increase in precept but within government limitations, due to increasing adult social care costs.

**01.24.06 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR`S REPORT** – See Appendix A

### **01.24.07 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the December Parish Council Meeting were approved by Councillors as an accurate representation and Chair Southcott signed the minutes.

### **01.24.08 CLERK`S REPORT**

The Clerk reported;

1. Supported Councillor discussions with Essex Highways reference flooding.
2. Sent Complaint to Essex Mineral & Waste Planning ref. heavy trucks coming through the village to WR.
3. Submitted WPC response to Draft Local Plan.
4. Letters have been sent to local residents reference cutting back hedges.
5. Contacted Essex CC – footpaths – reference new plaques for public footpaths.
6. Spoke to Widdington Girl Guides ref. the jubilee trees plaque.
7. Received update from WAGS ref. cutting back growth in playpark.

### **01.24.09 PLANNING**

01.24.09.1 To consider making representation to the [Uttlesford District Council](#) in response to planning application matters arising since December 2023 meeting.

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01.24.9.1i. UTT/23/3106/HHF - The Malthouse East Cornells Lane Widdington Essex CB11 3SP – Replace conservatory roof and side frames. [Determination Deadline: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.](#)

01.24.9.1ii. UTT/23/3123/DOC - Ringers Debden Road Newport Essex CB11 3RY- Application to discharge condition 3 (landscaping) attached to UTT/20/0530/FUL – [Determination Deadline: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.](#)

01.24.9.1iii. UTT/23/3188/DOC - Pond Mead High Street Widdington Saffron Walden Essex CB11 3SB - Application to discharge conditions 3 (External materials Schedule), 4 (Environmental Noise Assessment), 5 (Written scheme of investigation for historic building recording), 6 (Programme of historic building recording), 7 (Construction Method Statement), 9 (Biodiversity Enhancement Layout) and 13 (Lighting Design Scheme) attached to UTT/23/1569/FUL. – [Deadline for Comments: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024.](#)

01.24.9.1iv. Appeal – Land North of Cornells lane – WPC response is ongoing.

01.24.09.2 To note [Uttlesford District Council](#) planning decisions, decided since December Parish Council meeting.

01.24.9.2i. UTT/23/2870/LB - Martins Farm High Street Widdington Essex CB11 3SG - Internal alterations to form an ensuite shower room in bedroom 2.– [Refused.](#)

01.24.9.2ii. UTT/23/2718/DOC - Land Rear Of Malt Place Cornells Lane Widdington Essex – Application to discharge condition 4 (surface water drainage scheme), condition 5 (scheme to minimise the risk of offsite flooding), condition 6 (maintenance plan), condition 18 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy) and condition 19 (lighting design scheme for biodiversity) of UTT/21/2649/FUL. [Discharge conditions in Full.](#)

01.24.9.2.iii. UTT/23/2483/FUL- Ringers Farmhouse Debden Road Newport Essex CB11 3RY- Section 73A Retrospective application for change of use of agricultural building to Class E(a). [Approved.](#)

## 01.24.10 FINANCE

**01.24.10.1** Invoices; The clerk presented a statement of accounts and reconciliation to cash books which were agreed and approved for signature.

Clerk Salary + Expenses	£441.93
Appeal – Planning consultancy	£2000.00
Village Green – cutting	£1250.00

They were [approved for payment.](#)

**01.24.10.2** Precept Demand Form – signed to be sent to UDC.

**01.24.11 WIDDINGTON RECYCLING** – Action to address at next public liaison meeting the automatic assumption WR can use village route when Hollow Road flooded without any remedial action to improve the flooding. Council have received complaints from residents’ reference heavy vehicles on the weight limited road, this is a police issue for enforcement not Essex Planning Minerals and Waste. WPC has requested County Cllr. Gooding invites Essex Highways Representative to next liaison meeting to discuss the state of Hollow Road and necessary remedial action. WPC would like to highlight that after rainfall the road is likely to be flooded and the flood water drains extremely slowly therefore it is still dangerous for cars to pass through for a number of days following persistent or heavy rain.

**01.24.12 SPEEDING SURVEY**– See County Cllr. Report.

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**01.24.13 VILLAGE EVENT: ITALIAN DINNER** – Objective of event, night out for local people (9<sup>th</sup> March) and raise money for the village hall with complementary glass of prosecco, 4 course meal with entertainment. Requested WPC to fund the prosecco and for Clerk to share advert with mailing list. WPC agreed to donate up to £200 towards prosecco cost to boost Village Hall fund raising.

**01.24.14 I.T** – 1. Website, email domain name, 2. Hardware and document storage/access

**01.24.14.1** – WPC agreed unanimously to start progressing moving to .gov.uk address.

**01.24.14.2** – WPC agreed unanimously on moving to separate Microsoft account. Clerk to cost and propose laptop for PC ownership only.

**01.24.15 PARISH MEETING** – Citizen's advice, foodbank, planning – local plan update – Clerk to contact for pencil in speakers.

**01.24.16 OTHER BUSINESS:** Energy efficiency scheme – Village Hall committee aware and will be applying for a grant, if granted also get a free energy assessment. Haven't yet heard from zero carbon emission grant application. Need new storage sheds due to tops getting ripped off in high winds. Water butts being considered.

*Cllr Firmin left the meeting.*

## **01.24.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at **8pm on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024**, in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at: 21:45

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## **APPENDIX A – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT**

**Planning:** Latest housing build figures (which councils have no influence over) have shown a slow of building. This triggers a 20% buffer on top of the 5-year land supply which we had at April 2023 and so UDC no longer has the required 5 years and the balance towards giving permission has reappeared

Members will be aware of the Local Plan intervention letter from Mr Gove demanding a revised Local Development Scheme, which is the timetable.

Part of a statement from our council leader Petrina Lees:

*'The Council had already published and agreed this LDS providing that timetable on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023. And UDC is currently on schedule to deliver against this timetable, with the Draft Local Plan having been approved by full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, and the public consultation period having closed on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the day before his letter, and exactly on the published schedule. Regular and supportive meetings have been held between Department officials and our council officers. Therefore, the intervention letter was a surprise.'*

A measured response is going to be sent.

The gov't have provided £100k for us to have some more planning officers. Current caseload about 80 each.

**Budgets:** Our 24/25 budget is in preparation. We are not in the position of other authorities, typically those with social care responsibility, who are going to s114 effective bankruptcy, but it will still be a tough budget. More below inflation gov't funding and a bar on council tax increase above 3%, so the council income increases are below inflation two years in a row, means a hard look at non statutory spend, the council gives £700k a year, nearly 5% of the budget to voluntary bodies and grants such as to Citizens Advice. The unused parts of the London Road office are to be rented out - the ground floor of the 'new' wing has been rented out for some years. As part of Blueprint Uttlesford several projects are in hand to improve efficiencies.

**Car parking charges:** These have not been increased since 2015. And there are some significant anomalies in the various charges like season tickets at Stansted being hugely cheaper than the station commuter car park, so significant increases are proposed, with a big discount for those working locally. In Walden the consultants say the centre ones are too cheap and so there is not enough churn, and that price increases will benefit trade as the spenders value being able to find a space over whether it is cheap.

The consultation is on <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/car-parking-consultation>

**Neighbourhood Plans:** Although previously advice was that the work to do this was not commensurate with the benefit, the balance has been changed in the Dec 2023 reissue of the NPPF. Previously NHPs had only a 2-year life at full weight – Newport Quendon & Rickling had already passed that date. Now they have a 5-year life at full strength, so we have a full weight NHP again and which has been very effective at opposing unsuitable applications, as well as supporting good ones. It has also helped in getting benefits for the villages. We are now doing a refresh and that includes independent assessment of the size of houses needed. We are also intending to nominate Local Green Spaces which is provided for in the NPPF and gives a Green Belt type protection.

There is UDC and Gov't funding.