

Widdington Parish Council

Draft Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 2nd July, 2020 at 8.00pm

Present Chair Maria Orr, Cllr Jill Brookman, Cllr Chris Firmin, Margaret Hudson, Cllr Ian Southcott and Cllr Maggs Webb.

In Attendance County Cllr Ray Gooding, District Cllr Neil Hargreaves, 3 members of the public and Amanda Lindsell, Clerk to the Council.

07.20.01 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Orr welcomed those present to the meeting.

07.20.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

07.20.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Hudson declared a personal interest in agenda item 07.20.10i as a neighbour.

07. 20.04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public detailed his plans for Pond Mead, noted his error of judgement with the initial planning application and explained his campaign to improve how new houses are built and achieve carbon neutral homes. Pond Mead is his third project, and he hopes the homes will be self-sufficient in terms of power within eight months.

A member of the public noted the light and sound pollution from Widdington Recycling, the related volume of traffic through the village and the large new building on site and explained his intention to undertake and fund an investigation, commencing in September, to further understand the longer term plans of the business and the restrictions and regulations it is governed by.

The Clerk detailed the meeting 26/06/2020 with Widdington Recycling, Essex County Council's planning department and Widdington Parish Council where it was noted that;

- i. Investigations following complaints about lighting require a site visit that cannot currently be undertaken due to social distancing regulations, but will be undertaken once the rules are lifted.
- ii. The two current planning applications raised queries around risk assessment from the Environment Agency relating to ground conditions, but have now been forwarded to the EA who have 14 days to comment, and if satisfied, determination of the applications will follow, probably mid July.
- iii. It was noted that the building has been built at the owner's risk and would have to be removed if planning approval is not granted.
- iv. Eighty vehicles movements are permitted each day, forty in and forty out.
- v. Widdington Recycling confirmed that the concreting works are completed, although there could be occasional deliveries to site that can't come under the bridge, and agreed that the clerk would be notified in advance of these deliveries.
- vi. Following concerns raised regarding noise pollution ECC confirmed that an average of 55 decibels over an hour should not be exceeded, and noted that the noise monitoring regime has been raised on several site monitoring reports as not having been submitted, and will be expected in the future.
- vii. Widdington Recycling confirmed that there will be a planning application submitted imminently, for a time extension of 9.5 years for completion of all works, and that the whole site will be restored and returned to agriculture and all buildings removed and taken out by truck, under the railway bridge.

County Cllr Ray Gooding commented that the meeting gave a good insight to the individual parties and noted the Planning Departments willingness to answer questions and queries, and agreed to clarify the grace period on the time extension application.

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viii. Following comments of further exceptional noise pollution in recent days, County Cllr Gooding agreed to liaise with Tom McCarthy and request that the noise monitoring at Holly Cottage and Jockwood House is put in place as a priority. Clerk to follow up.

ix. A member of the public agreed to monitor and record the light pollution.

x. The Parish Council noted their disappointment regarding Widdington Recycling's lack of communication and failure to respond to emails or engage with Widdington residents.

07.20.05 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the June Parish Council Meeting were approved by Councillors as an accurate representation and Chair Orr authorised the Clerk to sign the minutes on her behalf.

07.20.06 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Cllr Ray Gooding detailed difficulties in getting children back to school, with the government issuing ambiguous guidance for September, a class of thirty in a bubble is achievable in primary school, but significantly more complex at secondary.

School transport is also an issue, with the Department of Transport instructing that distancing must be maintained, meaning only 17 passengers can board a double decker bus with a capacity of 80, before you consider that most buses cannot achieve more than 1.7m distancing.

07.20.07 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

District Cllr Neil Hargreaves noted;

i. UDC's planning committee works very efficiently on Zoom.

ii. Council tax is £3/week and covers 43% of Council expenditure. There is currently £50m invested at Chesterford Research Park and the target is to increase commercial investment to £300m. The investment board are very busy and have nearly achieved £200m in principle, with investments in freehold land and buildings with decent tenants, all over the country to spread the risk.

07.20.08 CLERK'S REPORT

The clerk reported;

i. £488.66 of allotment rent has been received to date, with £145.83 outstanding.

ii. £925.00 of car park rent has been received to date, with £210.00 outstanding.

iii. No response received from Widdington Recycling regarding the request for notification of large vehicles anticipated through the village.

iv. No response has been received regarding the requested removal of asbestos stored in one of the rental garages.

07.20.09 FINANCE

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

101252 - Playsafety Ltd - ROSPA report - £120.00

101253 - Clerk Salary June - £306.78

101254 - Clerk's expenses June - £57.25

101255 - HMRC - Quarterly PAYE/NI payment - £348.80

ii. Following receipt of an article from the Archdeacon claiming that the Parish Council have the power to make a grant to the Church, further advice was sought from EALC. EALC have confirmed that due to the current LGA 1895 statutory prohibition, that outweighs any subsequent acts, the Parish Council are unable to support the Church financially. District Cllr Neil Hargreaves expressed his opinion that the Parish Council can make a financial contribution to the Church for grass cutting. The Clerk confirmed that this had been her opinion, until EALC raised the issue within Councillor training some months ago. It was agreed that the Clerk would forward details of the Essex County Council Micro Grant to the Church for their consideration.

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07.20.10 PLANNING

The Parish Council agreed to submit the following comments to Uttlesford District Council relating to planning; Cllr Hudson did not participate in this agenda item.

i. UTT/20/1344/FUL - Pond Mead, High Street, Widdington

Construction of two new detached dwellings and associated works following the demolition of existing dwelling. It was agreed that the Parish Council objects to this application despite the applicant's significant changes to the original application to alleviate how the approach to the village would look. The Parish Council agreed that they object to the application on the following grounds;

i. Contravention of ULP Policy Gen 1 - noting the dangerous access to these immediate roadside properties.

The Council also notes the Planning Inspector's recent comment regarding the general unsuitability of Widdington as a 'sustainable' location for development. The development is not compatible with movement by means other than driving a car and the Council maintains concerns regarding the adequacy of the access (Both in contravention of ULP Policy GEN1).

ii. Contravention of ULP Policy Gen 2 - the Parish Council is concerned at the proposed demolition of an historic 18C building and replacement with two mock Georgian mansions, and notes that the massive 10m high, modern executive homes would be entirely out of keeping for Widdington and an extreme over-development of the site. The Council also draws the District Council's attention to Place Services 25/03/2020 Historic Buildings and Conservation Advice in response to the previous application (UTT/20/0313/FUL), which specifically notes that an application to demolish the original Pond Mead house should not be supported.

iii. Other concerns include the negative visual impact on the village entrance and domination of the landscape.

It was noted that the site plan details the demolition of the existing brick boundary wall with the pavement and a replacement "new brick and flint boundary wall" be erected. The current wall is cited in the, recent "Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals, Approved October 2013" as an important feature of Widdington Conservation area, and as such should be protected and retained

iv. Using the Council's decision tree the Council continues to object to development outside the village envelope, the development of executive homes and development that puts further strain on the already stretched utilities and adds to current traffic and congestions issues, and also notes concerns for the impact on wildlife as great crested newts are reported as sighted close to the boundary.

The following planning decisions were noted;

ii. UTT/20/0876/FUL - Land Rear Of Malt Place, Cornells Lane, Widdington

Replacement of Existing Single Storey Agricultural Building with 1no. dwelling (Revised scheme to approved UTT/17/2960/PAP3Q) Approved.

iii. UTT/20/0860/FUL - Land Rear Of Malt Place, Cornells Lane, Widdington

Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and erection of 4no. dwellings with associated parking and landscaping Refused.

iv. UTT/20/0853/LB - Thatched Cottage, High Street, Widdington

Proposed porch extension, addition of roof lights to existing single storey rear extension and new door and windows to existing garage associated with new use as amenity space. Refused.

v. UTT/20/0852/HHF - Thatched Cottage, High Street, Widdington

Proposed porch extension, addition of roof lights to existing single storey rear extension and new door and windows to existing garage associated with new use as amenity space. Refused.

vi. UTT/20/0829/LB - The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Widdington

Proposed upgrade of electrical and heating mechanical and electrical plant and services. Rewiring of property. Removal of 3 no. internal modern studd partitions and construction of 1 no. internal stuff partition wall. Installation of new security and CCTV system. Repair 2m square pitched roof to rear. Repairs and redecoration of windows. Approved.

vii. UTT/20/0029/FUL - Land at Pond Mead Cottage, High Street, Widdington

Erection of 1 no. detached dwelling. Approved.

07. 20.11 WIDDINGTON RECYCLING

Discussed within Public Participation.

07.20.12 HAMEL WAY GARAGES

Cllr Firmin detailed a conversation with the leasee. It was agreed that the Clerk would write again to the leasee again requesting that the asbestos garage stored within the garage is safely removed, and confirming that the Parish Council cannot permit a new garage to be built on the empty platform.

Cllr Firmin noted that the asbestos signs on some of the garages have been disturbed, Clerk to resolve.

07.20.13 ROSPA REPORT

Chair Orr expressed the Council's sincere thanks to Pip and Margaret Hudson for their sterling work at the play park, the consequence of which has been a much healthier ROSPA report.

It was agreed that the clerk would forward a risk assessment document for consideration, to allow the future reopening of the play park once all current guidance has been considered.

07.20.14 OTHER BUSINESS

- i. Unauthorised encampment of one caravan on Beadle Lane, arrived 02/07/2020. Clerk to report.
- ii. District Cllr Hargreaves noted the major incursion of 30 caravans at Friends School and other locations in Saffron Walden, which will be moved on over the weekend and start of the next week. Anti-social activities have been rife. Cllr Firmin requested contact details of a land owner to request the installation of a gate to prevent incursion in Widdington.
- iii. Reopening of Village Hall.
- iv. Emergency Plan updated forms received.
- v. UTT/20/1507/HHF - Willow House, Wood End
Erection of 1.5 storey cart lodge - deadline 30/07/2020.
- vi. NALC/SLCC advise that Parish Councils continue remote meetings for the foreseeable future.

07.20.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 8pm on Thursday 6th August, 2020, on Zoom.

The meeting closed at 21.55

DRAFT