

Widdington Parish Council

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 6th July 2023 at 8.00pm

Present Chair Ian Southcott, Cllr. Steve Smith, Cllr. Lynn Smith, Cllr. Teresa Petchey,

In Attendance 6 members of the public, District Cllr. Neil Hargreaves and Katrina Levy, Clerk to the Council.

07.23.01 CHAIR`S WELCOME

Chair Ian Southcott welcomed those present to the meeting.

07.23.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. Chris Firmin, Cllr. Maggs Webb, Cllr Albert Edwards, County Cllr. Ray Gooding

07.23.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Items 07.23.10.2 – Cllr. S. Smith and Cllr. L. Smith.

07.23.04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Springhill, speeding, update from County Cllr. Ray Gooding, funding for speed survey at that location has now been approved, staff resource issues have now been resolved. Accident on Springhill with stationary vehicle, driver claimed sun blindness and going to fast for the conditions of the road.

Potholes a survey has been done in parts and the beadle lane pot hole has a temporary fill. Drivers unfamiliar with the road have the biggest issue. Clerk to report potholes again.

07.23.05 COUNTY COUNCILLOR`S REPORT – None

07.23.06 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR`S REPORT –

Cabinet meeting, 22/23 financial year – small surplus allocated into medium term reserves (which now total £7M). Surplus partially due to very high collection rate, therefore gained a bonus. Commercial invests netted circa £5M, changes to rules result in this becoming circa £500K, requiring an extra £5.5M to offset change in revenue. UDC letting out ground floor of London Road offices and trimming of some non-statutory spend from the budget. Council houses, damp issue has affected council tax surplus meaning new council house building is on hold (2800 council houses in Uttlesford).

Local highways panel, ECC – rules revamp, chair has discretion over local representation which has been removed. ECC has refused UDC funding. Chair now allows representatives to present to the panel. There was a 7-month delay between meetings, hoping to develop a map to show where work is ongoing. 1098 schemes on the list now across Essex.

UDC had a shortage of lawyers due to pay levels being uncompetitive (salary bands are set centrally). New band used for head of law department, 3 candidates have been interviewed and job offer has been made.

07.23.07 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

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

07.23.08 CLERK`S REPORT

The Clerk reported;

1. Garage and car park renewals sent.
2. Allotment renewals sent.
3. Sourced new defibrillator pads.
4. Discussions with Insurance providers
5. Requested quotes for garage/car park area weed/bramble clearance.

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6. Contacted landowner on Springhill to request clearance of ditches and overhanging dead trees.
7. Helped with emergency plan co-ordinator change.
8. Invited chair of Widdington Allotment and Garden Association to July meeting ref. allotments.

07.23.09 PLANNING

1. Update on planning applications for Land North Cornell's Lane - Judiciary review actions and finances (applications UTT/21/2137/FUL (UTT/22/2278/FUL and UTT/22/3191/FUL). JR – hearing happened on 14th & 15th June for WPC claim against UDC, awaiting judgement, expected before end July.
2. To consider making representation to the [Uttlesford District Council](#) in response to planning application matters arising since June meeting.

9.2i UTT/23/1569/FUL - Pond Mead High Street Widdington Saffron Walden Essex CB11 3SB - Proposed subdivision of dwelling house to create two dwelling houses. Demolition of existing conservatory, erection of single storey extension, including ancillary driveways and parking - alternative scheme to planning approval UTT/18/0449/FUL – [Deadline for Comments: 21st July 2023, no parish council comment as frontage remains the same.](#)

9.2ii UTT/23/1619/LB – May House, The Green, Widdington, CB11 3SD - PROPOSAL: Internal alterations including the removal of modern partitions to ground floor bathroom and first floor bedroom/shower room. – [Deadline for Comments: 2nd August 2023, no comment from WPC.](#)

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

9.3i. UTT/23/1444/TCA - 1 Brick Cottage High Street Widdington Essex CB11 3SG - Remove 1 ash tree - [Tree no objections.](#)

9.3ii. UTT/21/2892/CC (ESS/80/21/UTT) - Widdington Pit Hollow Road Widdington Saffron Walden Essex CB11 3SL- Demolition of an existing workshop and the construction of a replacement building (in a revised location). [Approved.](#)

9.3iii. UTT/21/2634/CC (ESS/68/21/UTT) - Widdington Pit Hollow Road Widdington Saffron Walden Essex CB11 3SL- Continuation of excavation of sand and restoration of land to agricultural use, including deposit of inert waste, without compliance with condition 4 (time frame) attached to planning permission ref: ESS/35/18/UTT to allow an additional period of time to complete the infilling and restore the site. [Approved.](#)

07.23.10 FINANCE

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

UDC- Election expenses	£52.47
Solicitors	£9,628.10
Clerk Salary	£380.14
Clerk Expenses	£75.24
councillor expenses	£72.72
EALC councillor training - planning	£56.00
Defibrillator pads - replacement	£80.34

They were [approved for payment.](#)

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07.23.10.2 Quote – clearing weeds & brambles from car parking/garage area. 2 quotes received, £200 difference between the quotes, therefore agreed to accept quote from Steve’s gardening services as this was the lower quote.

07.23.10.3 Insurance – WPC insurance agree on provider for 23/24 & approve payment. Unanimously agreed to stay with current insurers (BHIB) & approve payment of £591.87.

07.23.11 WIDDINGTON RECYCLING – No update or contact since S106 was signed. Extension of operations now approved until 2033.

07.23.12 ALLOTMENTS – The lease renews in 2025, Chair of allotment association gave update on the allotments. In return for the allotment subsidy from the WPC the allotment holders do help with cutting the grass and a cost comparison may need to be used to see if the current situation is financially viable. Some of the reduction has been due to long term plot holders no continue. Newport allotments have a large waiting list if could open allotments to Newport residents. It is felt that is an unusual year for the current occupancy rate & it’s likely to improve. To be discussed again in September/October.

07.23.13 AIR AMBULANCE DONATION – decision taken to donate £150 to air ambulance & £97 to the defibrillator charity Heart 2 Heart (Clerk to action).

07.23.14 VILLAGE HALL MINUTES & ACCOUNTS REVIEW – Filing of accounts not submitted for 5 years to charities commission, now fully filed. No revenue during covid closure, received a grant £8K when reopened. March 2023 reserves £18K, annual expenditure is £4K higher than income and for H&S electricity repairs required (£5K) grant money applied for to help offset this cost. Fundraising needed due to ongoing financial pressure. Planning Christmas fair, anonymous donation received and registering with HMRC for gift aid. Relaunching the 200 club to increase membership. Website should be working by end of July but H&S has been priority (now completed). WPC to review finance plan progress in 2024.

07.23.15 ROSPA REPORT ACTIONS – Cllr S. Smith; no high-risk action points all low risk. Some equipment needs replacing. Clerk - request quotes for replacement equipment.

07.23.16 OTHER BUSINESS:

Review of code of conduct policy and maybe one other before September meeting.
Dates for September standards training.

07.23.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at **8pm on Thursday 7th September 2023**, in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at: 21:37