

Widdington Parish Council

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4th March, 2021 at 8.00pm

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

In Attendance County Cllr Ray Gooding, District Cllr Neil Hargreaves, 2 members of the public and Amanda Lindsell, Clerk to the Council.

03.21.01 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Orr welcomed those present to the meeting.

03.21.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

03.21.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None.

03. 21.04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Following receipt of the publically available Essex Highway map that definitively shows ownership of verges, a member of the public offered to walk the road and mark the trees with biodegradable spray that are Essex Highways responsibility. Cllr Hudson agreed to assist, and it was resolved that following the marking the clerk will request action from Essex Highways.

It was noted that a tree at the bottom of Hollow Road also requires work.

The clerk detailed a request from a member of the public for their landscape gardener to access the rear of their property through the play park with digging machinery. It was agreed that the clerk would request further details and suggest that the contractor submits a proposal alongside evidence of appropriate insurance cover.

Cllr Brookman detailed a request from a member of the public to erect a memorial plaque on a golden elm tree she planted on The Green in 1988 in memory of her late husband. At that time the tree was too small for a plaque. It was agreed to consider this item at the April meeting.

03.21.05 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR AND COUNCILLOR RECRUITMENT

Due to the long standing vacancy on the Parish Council, and the understanding that not all current Councillors will stand again in May, it was agreed to increase efforts to encourage residents to consider joining the Parish Council. The Clerk will advertise the vacancy on Facebook, the Council website, the village email, notice board, and deliver 200 A5 leaflets tomorrow morning to be distributed with the village magazine.

03.21.06 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

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

03.21.07 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Cllr Ray Gooding detailed;

- i. Essex Highways and Stephensons are communicating directly to resolve the painting of the kerb outside Corner Cottage.
- ii. The survey of works required has been completed at North Hall Road, and unfortunately has revealed that there are significantly more works required than originally believed.
- iii. There will be a 0% increase in Council Tax this year.

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iv. The Local Highways Panel has had its budget doubled for the next three years, with an additional £200,000 per district, per year.

v. £1million is being invested into mental health care in response to the Covid pandemic, and an education task force is being set up to investigate the way forward for those disadvantaged by the lockdown process.

vi. The return to schools next week has been challenging to co-ordinate, with 90,000 pupils across 80 schools in Essex. Significant weight has been given to the community responsibility for both pupils and parents to take the tests and help schools manage the situation.

County Cllr Gooding left the meeting.

03.21.08 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR`S REPORT

District Cllr Neil Hargreaves reported;

i. The District Council budget was agreed at full council last week, with band D council tax going up £5 a year. Council tax stands at £3 a week and council rent is increasing 1.7%.

ii. Covid related costs have been covered so far.

iii. £1million has been budgeted to battle climate change and £150,000 of the £450,000 allocated for sports grants is going to build the 3G pitch at SWCHS.

iv. The working party that gives grants to voluntary bodies has had it's budget increased by £388,000 allocated for spending this year.

v. The present Council's pay policy for staff includes gender pay statistics and identifies that Uttlesford District Council do not have a gender pay gap.

vi. The Climate Change Strategy is now published and works to encourage developers to build to the very highest standard.

03.21.09 CLERK`S REPORT

The clerk reported;

i. The owner of Corner Cottage has requested that the kerb is painted in stripes rather than a total block of colour, as a point of reference the driver will line this up as the point of no return when reversing. This was reported to Stephenson's, who were also asked to confirm whether Stephenson's buses are fitted with reversing cameras and forward copies of the risk assessments of both suggested turning points. County Cllr Gooding is looking into who will carry out this work. Stephenson's have noted that the risk assessments need rewriting once the work has been done, and have also offered to complete the work, but need Highways permission.

ii. Sue Hayden from UDC has confirmed that a further £500 from the District Councillor's ward initiative will go to Widdington Village Hall as a contribution towards their new boiler. I have completed and submitted the necessary paperwork.

iii. I have requested a meeting with Tom McCarthy and County Cllr Gooding to discuss Widdington Recycling, and suggested a number of dates and times. It was hoped that this meeting would take place before the March PC meeting, but Tom is on annual leave until 8th March and not answering emails.

03.21.10 FINANCE

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

Cheques; 101293 - Clerk's salary February - £284.92

101294 - Clerk's expenses February - £38.20

were approved for payment.

03.21.11 PLANNING

The following responses were agreed for return to Uttlesford District Council regarding planning applications;

i. UTT/21/0382/DOC - Pond Mead Cottage, High Street, Widdington

Application to discharge condition 5 (Biodiversity enhancement strategy) attached to UTT/20/0029/FUL - No objections.

The following planning decisions were noted;

ii. UTT/20/3340/HHF - Spring Cottage, Spring Hill, Widdington

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Proposed removal of part of hedge to the front, lower of the ground to road level and creation of two car park spaces - Refused.

iii. UTT/20/3121/HHF - The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Widdington

Replacement of five bar timber front gates with solid timber motorised gates and refurbishment including replacement where needed of rear timber gates - Refused.

iv. UTT/20/2783/LB - The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Widdington

Replacement of five bar timber front gates with solid timber motorised gates and refurbishment including replacement where needed of rear timber gates - Refused.

v. UTT/21/0043/PAQ3 - Barn At Malt Place, Cornells Lane, Widdington

Prior Notification of change of use of agricultural building to 4 no. dwellings - Approved.

vi. Following the approval of UTT/21/0043/PAQ3 - Barn At Malt Place, Cornells Lane, Widdington, District Cllr Neil Hargreaves resolved to follow up this decision and the Parish Council resolved to instruct their Planning Consultant to take whatever action he feels appropriate to challenge this decision and to write to the District Council highlighting the failures in this process.

vii. The Council resolved to approve the draft objection statement in response to planning appeal

APP/C1570/W/20/3264013 - Land rear of Malt Place, Cornells Lane, Widdington at an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting to be held on Friday 12th March.

viii. The Council note their Planning Consultant's suggestion that locals who objected to this application may wish to forward their objections to the Planning Inspectorate.

03.21.12 WIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL

The Council agreed that the Keter 2000 was the ideal salt storage structure for the task, but as it is unavailable locally and online, it was resolved that Cllr Firmin will investigate alternative storage units for consideration at the EGM, 12/03/2021.

03.21.13 WIDDINGTON RECYCLING

It was agreed that the Clerk would co-ordinate a Zoom meeting with Tom McCarthy, County Cllr Ray Gooding, the Environment Agency, Chair Orr, Cllrs Southcott and Firmin, and the clerk 11/03/2021, 12.30-1.30pm. The clerk resolved to draw up an agenda detailing the issues raised on the previously circulated letter.

03.21.14 OTHER BUSINESS

- i. Off road vehicle issues can be reported to Cllr Southcott who is liaising with District Cllr Luck from Debden.
- ii. Clerk to confirm the cutting of The Green with Tim Harding.

03.21.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 8pm on Thursday 1st April, 2021, on Zoom.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Approved as accurate
01/04/2021