

Widdington Parish Council

Draft Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7th October, 2021 at 8.00pm

Present

Vice-Chair Ian Southcott, Cllr Chris Firmin and Cllr Maggs Webb.

In Attendance

District Cllr Judy Emanuel, three members of the public and Amanda Lindsell, Clerk to the Council.

10.21.01 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Vice-Chair Ian Southcott welcomed those present to the meeting and in Chair Orr's absence the Council resolved that Vice-Chair Southcott would chair the meeting.

10.21.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Chair Maria Orr, District Councillor Neil Hargreaves and Cllr Jill Brookman.

Apologies for delayed arrival were received and noted from County Cllr Ray Gooding.

Two members of the public joined the meeting.

10.21.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Webb declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 10.21.14.

10.21.04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public raised the following issues;

- i. The owner of Shipton Bridge Farm detailed his bus company based at the farm which provides school transport for 2500 children every morning and afternoon to principally Uttlesford primary schools. He employs one hundred people over two sites, currently at Takeley and Widdington, but to retain viability they need to operate from only one site. They have been forced off the Takeley site by National Express and have temporarily relocated to an expensive unviable site. Plans were shared of the planning application he intends to submit for vehicles to be parked in the paddock on the right as you leave the village, where the horse currently is, who will be accommodated in a paddock behind and the owner noted his intention to seek Parish Council support for his proposal. It was noted that 50% of the operation is cars and minibuses that are not kept at the site and it was suggested that there would be twenty vehicles operational on a daily basis, as opposed to the seven current vehicles out of the site. Vice-Chair Southcott referenced the eighty vehicle movements per day anticipated from Newport Quarry as it becomes operational in the next months or year, and it was noted that some vehicles leaving the site will be accessing Beadle Lane to provide links to Wimbish. Usual operating times were confirmed as 7.30am-4.15pm and it was noted that not all the vehicles are full size, some are 30/35 seater vehicles. Vice-Chair Southcott thanked the resident for his presentation and confirmed that the Parish Council will consider his application in detail once it has been submitted. The resident left the meeting
- ii. A petition was presented to the Council from residents of Springhill and the wider Widdington community, requesting the installation of traffic calming measures at Springhill. The resident detailed their own records of traffic speeding in the area and was asked to collate the data and forward it to the clerk to submit with the petition.
- iii. Concerns were raised that footpaths are not being reinstated following the ploughing of fields around Widdington, Vice-Chair Southcott asked for specific locations to be forwarded to the clerk to investigate.
- iv. The format of the Council agenda was questioned, including public participation and the ability for the public to speak at other times within the meeting. The clerk and Council confirmed that the agenda format and timetable is dictated in places by law and enables all parties to have the opportunity to share their thoughts in a structured manner. The clerk reminded the public that the Parish Council are a statutory consultee and not decision makers with regard to planning applications and that residents are welcome and encouraged to submit their planning comments direct to Uttlesford District Council as the decision making body.

v. Concern was raised that UDC have not objected to the Widdington Recycling planning applications and District Cllr Emanuel offered to enquire regarding the change of terminology and introduction of UDC related code for ECC applications and why not all documents are available on the UDC website.

vi. The Council were asked if they would ask Widdington Recycling to reinstate the green waste skip for residents. Vice-Chair Southcott resolved that it would not be appropriate for the Council to request the skip whilst planning applications are ongoing, but the Council may be able to revisit this once the planning applications are resolved.

10.21.05 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

None submitted.

10.21.06 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

District Cllr Judy Emanuel introduced herself to the Council, confirmed that she sits on the planning and governance audit and performance committees and detailed her interest in planning, offering to assist in any planning matters as appropriate.

District Cllr Emanuel noted that UDC's Interim Chief Executive, previously in charge of the planning review, has published his report on UDC's website. The new Chief Executive took up his post last week. The report is a snapshot of a moment in time and significant improvements have been made including the employment of two new planners and two further planning lawyers in the process of starting. Roger Harborough, previously in charge of planning is leaving shortly and Jeanette Walsh has been brought in to lead the transformation process, looking at what additional resources are required. There is lots of work still to do but the department is currently under stringent review. Vice-Chair Southcott asked whether the improvements have delayed planning decisions and noted that there are several application in the area where decisions are outstanding, including the proposed demolition of a house in Widdington that may not have benefited from sitting empty for another year. District Cllr Emanuel noted that the conservation team is now outsourced to Place Team at ECC and agreed to look at the current status of the application.

District Cllr Neil Hargreaves submitted a report, as attached appendix one.

10.21.07 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Extra-Ordinary August Parish Council Meeting were approved by Councillors as accurate representations and Vice-Chair Southcott signed the minutes.

10.21.08 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk reported;

- i. £1235.19 has been received of the £1320.19 garage rental fees for 2021/22. Outstanding fee notices have been despatched.
- ii. £557 allotment rental fees for 2021/22 has been received.
- iii. The waste bin at South green has been reported as badly damaged and needing replacing.
- iv. The two missing drain covers near Shipton Bridge Farm have finally been replaced.
- v. The four potholes on Hollow Road have been reported to Essex Highways ref 2743006 and 2743009.
- vi. The resident who offered to run the telephone box as a library has politely declined the Council's suggestion to coordinate the art exhibition space.
- vii. The external auditor's report has been received. WPC was selected for an intermediate review for the 2020/21 accounts which included the submission of additional documentation and further questioning. The External Auditor's report highlighted the following points; employment expenses were recorded in the wrong box, the date a document was signed was incorrect, invoices not received at the year end were incorrectly included as reconciling items in the bank reconciliation and the VAT debtor at year end was incorrectly included on the bank reconciliation. These matters will be amended in the 2021/22 AGAR.

10.21.09 PLANNING

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

- i. ESS/80/21/UTT - UTT/21/2892/CC – Widdington Pit, Hollow Road, Widdington

Widdington Parish Council

Demolition of an existing workshop and the construction of a replacement building (in a revised location)- The Council agreed that they object to this application as it should not be considered until the future of the site is finalised. The proposed building is significantly larger in conflict with Planning Policy Gen 2 Design, and indicates a longevity of the site beyond the current license expiry of April 2022.

The following UDC planning decisions were noted;

ii.UTT/21/2260/CLP – Camfield, Hollow Road, Widdington

Proposed outdoor swimming pool with two pool pavilions, general landscaping works and proposed garden store building – Approved.

iii.UTT/21/2892/CC – Widdington Pit, Hollow Road, Widdington

Essex County Council consultation application number ESS/80/21/UTT - Demolition of an existing workshop and the construction of a replacement building (in a revised location) – No objections.

iv.UTT/21/2632/CC – Widdington Pit, Hollow Road, Widdington

Essex County Council consultation application ESS/67/21/UTT - Continuation of use of land for skip hire, waste .recycling, waste transfer and green waste composting operation, without compliance with condition 2 (time limit) attached to planning permission ref: ESS/30/19/UTT to allow the use and associated development to continue/remain until the adjacent quarry is restored – No objections.

v.UTT/21/2634/CC - Widdington Pit, Hollow Road, Widdington

Essex County Council consultation application number ESS/68/21/UTT - 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 – No objections.

vi.UTT/21/2401/HHF - The Weft House, Cornells, Widdington

Rear minor extensions, demolition and alterations to the house and garage including construction of a glazed link between them, and landscaping of garden – Approved with conditions.

10.21.10 FINANCE

i. The Council noted receipt of the External Auditor`s Report and the publication of the Notice Of Conclusion of Audit.

ii. The Council approved payment of the 2021/22 lease of land for use as allotments.

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

Invoices; Unity Trust Bank – quarterly charges - £18.24

PKF Littlejohn – External Audit - £240.00

Gardner Planning – Inv 074.4 – August Widdington Recycling - £1070.00

Gardner Planning – Inv 074.5 – September Widdington Recycling - £600.00

Clerk`s salary September - £338.28

Clerk`s expenses September - £67.20

HMRC quarterly payment - £295.40

Widdington Woodlands Ltd – lease of land for allotments - £1200.00

were approved for payment.

10.21.11 PLAYGROUND MAINTENANCE 2022

Vice-Chair Southcott shared a document detailing materials (£685) required to resolve maintenance issues within the play park. It was agreed that the Clerk will circulate the document for consideration at the November meeting and the Council expressed their thanks to Pip Hudson for all his work in the play park.

10.21.12 SPEEDING ON SPRINGHILL

The Council resolved to submit the petition and recorded data to the Local Highways Panel (EHP) and formally request speed monitoring on Springhill.

Residents requested that they are consulted over the exact location of the monitoring and also requested to have sight of the results.

10.21.13 WIDDINGTON RECYCLING

Vice-Chair Southcott detailed the August meeting with Widdington Recycling and Essex County Council and further meeting this week only with Essex County Council and noted his anticipation of submission of a further application amalgamating the current applications.

Widdington Parish Council

The Council resolved to request the planning consultant drafts the Council's objections to all the applications and documents the Council's position with suggested solutions.

County Cllr Ray Gooding arrived.

Due to the application deadline, and in response to Tom McCarthy's comments that this application could be determined separately, it was agreed that the Clerk would submit the Council's objections to this application in the first instance with the planning consultant continuing with the follow up to his interim objection letter, as previously agreed.

10.21.14 LANDOWNER DITCH MAINTENANCE

Following ongoing concerns regarding landowners not fulfilling their legal obligation to clear their ditches beside their land, County Cllr Gooding requested that the Council forward photographs and specific locations for him to take forward.

10.21.15 OTHER BUSINESS

The vegetation needs cutting back around the Springhill speed signs– Clerk to contact Highways Rangers.

The bridge has collapsed and needs replacing on the footpath connecting Newlands Field and the Weft House.

A tree has fallen and is obstructing the footpath between Fruit Hill and Newlands (22).

Vice-Chair Southcott submitted apologies for absence at the November Council meeting.

07.21.12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 8pm on Thursday 4th November 2021, in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 21:44