

Woodham Mortimer and Hazeleigh Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES – TUESDAY 14 MAY 2024

Convened at Woodham Mortimer & Hazeleigh Village Hall at 7:30pm

In attendance: Parish Cllrs: Simon Brady (SB), Kim McDonald (KM), Pauline McDonald (PM), Richard Britton (RB), Stephen Pemberton (SP). County Councillor Jane Fleming (JF).

There were 4 members of the public in attendance.

Andrew Ritchings Clerk to the Council recording proceedings

41.24 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr **Simon Brady** was the sole nominee for the role of Chairman as proposed by KM and seconded by SP. SB accepted the position of Chairman for year 2024/25 and duly signed the form of acceptance.

42.24 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr **Pauline McDonald** was the sole nominee for the role of Vice Chairman as proposed by SP and seconded by LC. PM accepted the position of Vice Chairman for year 2024/25.

43.24 APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Parish Councillor Graham Harle was unable to attend due to business commitments. District Cllr Simon Morgan sent apologies due to attendance at an MDC meeting.

44.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

RB declared a pecuniary interest in Planning item 23/00292 Barn at Old Mill House Vineyard being the landowner and applicant of the appealed application. SP declared a pecuniary interest as the landowner to the Solar Farm item on Hall Farm land.

45.24 PUBLIC FORUM

Some parishioners attended the meeting to raise the Councils awareness, advise their concerns and seek Cllrs support associated with issues surrounding the approved and new planning applications at Land on the south side of Maldon Road. It appears conditions set out in the Planning Inspectorate decision have not been met but have been discharged by the Planning Authority, potentially rendering the discharged conditions and previous application unlawful. A group of residents opposed to development at the site have found it frustrating when attempting to gain information from the LPA. Various government officials have been contacted in order to clarify the situation. Priti Patel MP has had involvement in correspondence and AR will contact her in order to obtain a clarification of the situation regarding the approved application.

A representative from the Crematorium developers provided Cllrs with an update of works.

46.24 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of ordinary Parish Council Meeting 09 April 2024 were approved as a true record of events as proposed by KM and seconded by RB and agreed by all at that meeting.

47.24 APPOINTMENT OF VILLAGE HALL REPRESENTATIVE

Cllr **Kim McDonald** was appointed as the Village Hall representative as proposed by PM seconded by RB and agreed by all Cllrs present.

48.24 APPOINTMENT OF FALKLANDS TRUST REPRESENTATIVE

Cllr **Stephen Pemberton** was appointed as the Falkland Trust representative as proposed by KM seconded by RB and agreed by all Cllrs present.

49.24 APPOINTMENT OF CHURCH LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE

Cllrs discussed whether the appointment of a Church Representative was still needed, for the past few years the position has been filled by a non-council parishioner with a report received once a year at the Annual Parish Assembly. It was considered that if any issues arise during the year it would be quite easy to contact a church representative to resolve any matters and therefore Cllrs considered the yearly appointment now superfluous, but would however monitor the situation during the next year.

50.24 REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

A day before the meeting AR advised EALC had disseminated information that a new model of Standing Orders had been released and the whole model should be adopted as a new document. As this would take some time for AR to review the new model it was agreed to re-adopt the existing Standing Orders until the new model can be understood and adopted or otherwise. Therefore the current Standing Orders as proposed by SP and seconded KM was re-adopted without amendment as agreed by all Cllrs present.

51.24 REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The current Financial Regulations as proposed by KM and seconded by RB were re-adopted without amendment as agreed by all Cllrs present.

52.24 REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF COUNCILS RISK ASSESSMENT

The Councils Risk Assessment was reviewed and as proposed by KM and seconded by RB was re-adopted without amendment as agreed by all Cllrs present.

53.24 REVIEW OF COUNCILS ASSET LIST

Litter picking equipment has been added to the Councils Asset list and the value updated. The equipment will be added to the Councils insurance schedule in due course. Proposed by LC seconded by RB and agreed by all Cllrs present to accept the updated Asset List.

54.24 PLANNING

24/00011/VAR – LAND OPPOSITE ST MARGARET’S CHURCH MALDON ROAD WOODHAM MORTIMER - *Variation of condition 2 on approved planning permission 21/01276/FUL (Erection of a crematorium with ceremony hall, memorial arboretum and associated use of land, restoration of Coopers Monument, vehicular access, parking, landscaping, pedestrian crossing and diversion of footpath (PROW 269_17)* **LPA Deadline 09/04/2024. TO BE DETERMINED BY THE LPA**

24/00059/HOUSE – HIGHLANDS BURNHAM ROAD WOODHAM MORTIMER – *Single storey front porch extension, including covered veranda and staircases. Alterations to fenestration including additional cladding.* **LPA Deadline 02/04/2024. TO BE DETERMINED BY THE LPA**

23/00292/FUL BARN AT OLD MILL HOUSE VINEYARD HAZELEIGH HALL LANE HAZELEIGH – *Convert agricultural barn into vineyard manager’s dwellinghouse with associated internal and external alterations, laying out of amenity area and planting of native hedgerows and trees.* **APPEAL Date 24/04/2024 REF: APP/X1545/W/23/3327753 TO BE DETERMINED BY THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE**

24/00125/FUL – LAND ON SOUTH SIDE MALDON ROAD WOODHAM MORTIMER – *Demolish existing buildings, redevelop site and siting of two additional mobile homes with associated facilities for Gypsy and Traveller use.* **LPA Deadline 31/05/2024. TO BE DETERMINED BY THE LPA**

24/00229/FUL – SOUTHLANDS BRYANTS LANE WOODHAM MORTIMER – *Construction of stable barn with associated hardstanding and fencing.* **LPA Deadline 16/05/2024 TO BE DETERMINED BY THE LPA**

24/00284/FUL – ST FRANCIS POST OFFICE ROAD WOODHAM MORTIMER – *Demolition of existing bungalow and outbuildings, erection of replacement dwelling, with associated landscaping, parking, refuse and cycle storage.* **LPA Deadline 22/05/2024 TO BE DETERMINED BY THE LPA**

24/00262/VARM – HALL FARM LAND HAZELEIGH HALL LANE HAZELEIGH – *Variation of condition 27 (Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)) on approved planning application 22/00261/FUL (The construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic farm and associated infrastructure, including inverters, security cameras, fencing, access tracks and landscaping.) Variation seeks: - Inclusion of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan as an approved document.* **LPA Deadline 03/07/2024** SP advised Cllrs the variation would mean an area of land would be identified as an area subject to a landscape and ecological management plan in order to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Cllrs SUPPORT the variation application.

24/00311/VAR – GOLF DRIVING RANGE BURNHAM ROAD WOODHAM MORTIMER – *Variation of condition 6 on approved planning permission 22/00482/OUT (Outline application with all matters reserved for up to 18 dwellings with a provision for affordable housing).* **LPA Deadline 02/07/2024.** It appears to the Council the requested variation of Condition 6 would allow reserved matters of the final development a greater chance to achieve an enhanced mix of suitable housing appropriate to the local environment and surrounding neighbourhood. Cllrs support the requested variation and recommend GRANTING the application.

23/01181 – BARN AT HATCH HOUSE FARM BURNHAM ROAD HAZELEIGH – *Replacement of an agricultural building with a new self-build/custom-built dwelling in lieu of the deemed prior approval for conversion of a building into a dwelling subject of application 22/00158/COUPA* **LPA Deadline 17/04/2024.** The MDC Planning Portal for this application appears confusing in respect to the determination and consultation dates and Cllrs have NO COMMENTS to make about the application. AR to seek clarification of various confusing dates.

24/00366/FULM – LAND SOUTH WEST OF THE WARREN HACKMANS LANE PURLEIGH – *Proposed solar farm together with sub-station, ancillary buildings, structures, landscaping, emergency lighting and access.* **LPA Deadline 24/07/2024.** Due to the length of discussions at this evening's meeting this application will be carried forward to the June agenda.

General discussion - it was recognised that sometimes it is difficult for Cllrs to digest vast amounts of Planning Application documents in time for respective meetings in order to formulate an appraised opinion, LC suggested that when new applications arrive each one could be assigned to a specific Cllr to review and feed-in details at the respective determination meeting. It was agreed by all to proceed with this method on a trial basis; SB to allocate each application.

Section 106 Planning Obligations – The Parish Council had been copied to a parishioner request email sent to the Planning Authority seeking an explanation why none of the recent approved applications along the A414 had secured any community benefit obligations for the village of Woodham Mortimer. JF explained that the use of s106 Agreements was only generally used in large strategic applications and that when applications are determined by Committee the respective members do not seek s106 Agreements.

55.24 COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS

The only matter to report by Cllr Jane Fleming was her attendance at the new format Local Highways Panel inaugural meeting, a detailed list of schemes will shortly be available.

56.24 SOLAR FARM ON HALL FARM LAND HAZELEIGH HALL HAZELEIGH

Nothing to report.

57.24 SOLAR FARM ON LAND NORTH OF MALDON ROAD

Due to the time spent on discussions in the Open Public Forum and time restraints for other matters on the agenda Cllrs did not resolve to raise any specific questions for the attendance of the developers at the June meeting.

58.24 HIGHWAY MATTERS

Member led Local Maintenance Scheme – Following JF's invitation for applications to the County Cllr led scheme; the condition of road surface in Conduit Lane would be added.

A414 Pedestrian Crossing – *measures to aid crossing the hazardous A414 Maldon Road. Scheduled for early 2023 feasibility study, added to the LHP Major schemes April 2024.* Cllrs were informed this scheme is to be discussed at next week's LHP Chairman's meeting.

Footway Defect A414 – *Foliage/soil restricting width of footway/pavement between Runsell Green Danbury and Woodham Mortimer Church. (First logged by Essex Highways at site meeting with SB 14/09/2018. Added to LHP list and Footway Clearance Scheme by County Cllr Flemming - June 2023.* Nothing to report.

Footpath 11 Hazeleigh – *width and gate restrictions.* To be discussed at next meeting.

Burnham Road Hazeleigh gateway structure – *sightline restrictions.* Essex Highways have advised they will not be attending the site again as they do not perceive any visibility issues.

Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VAS) A414 Oak Manor Chelmsford Road. Following communication with another Essex Parish Council who advised their similar scheme has been very successful SB will contact the respective parishioner offering to fund a VAS device to progress the matter. It was discussed that the current signage near the Zara restaurant is currently not fit for purpose due to foliage growth, damaged and unsuitable signage location; JF to request changes to the current layout that would better compliment a VAS device.

Conduit Lane – Poor surface conditions. To be added to JFs Member Led Scheme.

Bryants Lane – Vehicle conflict from Claremont Garden entrance/exit. SB to convene a meeting with interested parties.

Chimney Lane – Weight restriction request – JF advised this has now been added to the MDC LHP list of minor schemes.

Footpath 17 Diversion – Further to the Order Making Authorities' (MDC) request for the Parish Council to re-consider their objection, representatives of the PC will accept the invitation to meet on-site and discuss the matter with the Planning Authority, Essex Highways and developer. Date TBC.

59.24 **BUS SHELTERS** - Graffiti removal. An updated quotation for graffiti removal plus final treatment with an anti-graffiti coating has been received and as proposed by SP seconded by KM was approved by all Cllrs present. AR to instruct work to proceed and inform insurance provider of costs.

60.24 FINANCIAL MATTERS

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN YEAR ENDING MARCH 2024

60.24.1 – Certification of exemption from a limited assurance review; Cllrs reviewed the criteria of exemption and certified the Council as exempt.

Internal auditor report; the Internal Audit report was considered by Cllrs, there were no recommendations made by the Internal Auditor or any matters of concern raised and Cllrs accepted the report.

60.24.2 – Approval of Annual Governance Statement; Cllrs acknowledged their responsibility for ensuring a sound system and internal control had been met during the financial year ending March 2024 and completed the Annual Governance Statement.

60.24.3 – Approval of Accounting Statements; Cllrs reviewed the accounting statements as presented by the Responsible Finance Officer; no matters of concern were raised and the Accounting Statements for year ending March 2024 were accepted.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return year ending March 2024 as proposed by KM and seconded by RB was approved by all Cllrs present. SB and AR duly signed the document.

Balance of Accounts

Unity Trust Instant Access Savings Account	£11,019.27
Unity Trust T1 Current Account	£737.11
Total funds on deposit	£11,756.38

Authorisation of payments

Npower non-metered street lights electricity Period 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024	£578.64
Heelis & Lodge Internal Audit	£130.00
Transfer of funds from Deposit to Current account	£1,500.00

Npower charges have increased by 64% and AR is liaising with Npower in an attempt to understand why they have increased so much. Cllrs resolved to pay the bill anyway but continue to dispute the cost.

As proposed by SP and seconded by LC all payments as noted above were agreed and approved by all Cllrs present.

61.24 INFORMATION ONLY

AR noted that new street names have started to appear on the Electoral Register and following enquiries a map has been provided by MDC that shows new properties in Woodham Mortimer and Hazeleigh as the South Maldon Garden Suburb nears its completion.

Street lighting maintenance contractor has advised the recent inspection of 09/04/2024 revealed all street lights in good working order and no repairs or new parts were required.

It has been noted that graffiti has appeared on the BT exchange unit on the A414, AR to try and inform BT.

Next scheduled meeting is Ordinary Council Meeting 11/06/2024.

.....*Simon Brady*..... (Chairman to the Council) 11/06/2024