

Woodham Mortimer With Hazeleigh Parish Council
ORDINARY MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES - TUESDAY 08 DECEMBER 2015

Convened at Woodham Mortimer Village Hall 7.30pm

In attendance

Parish Councillors: Simon Brady (Chairman(SB)), Pauline McDonald (PM), Kim McDonald (KM)
Stephen Pemberton (SP), Andrew Macmorland (AM) Ian Spurr (IS)
Andrew Ritchings (AR: Clerk to the Council recording proceedings)
1 member of the public

155.15 APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

County Councillor Penny Channer sent apologies due to a family bereavement.

156.15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made.

157.15 OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

There were no comments raised by the member of public in attendance.

Close meeting for public speaking

158.15 PREVIOUS MINUTES

PM proposed and AM seconded that the minutes of the Council Meetings held on 10 November 2015 and 30 November 2015 were a true record of events, this was agreed by all cllrs present at those meetings and duly signed by the Chairman.

159.15 PLANNING

LAND OPPOSITE MILL COTTAGE – The Forestry Commission officer (Lyndsey Allen) dealing with the restocking enforcement order reported that an attempt had been made to withdraw the appeal but was unfortunately submitted too late and the due process had to take place. An agreement was made to restock the area as per the original restocking notice. The final conclusion is for the appropriate Minister to authorise the agreement which will be completed in due course. The item would remain on the agenda until restocking has been completed.

OUT/MAL/14/01103 – LAND SOUTH OF WYCKE HILL AND LIMBROOK WAY

MALDON – *Outline application for up to 1,000 dwellings, employment area, primary school, open space, allotments sports playing field, landscaping, vehicle access onto existing highway network and associated infrastructure, including footway link from Royal Oak PH and provision of Public Rights of Way linking Maldon to Purleigh.* **DECISION TBA FROM PLANNING AUTHORITY**

FUL/MAL/15/00146 – LAND NORTH EAST OF WOODHAM MORTIMER LODGE,

LODGE ROAD, WOODHAM MORTIMER – *Brick pier and metal entrance gates to barn site. Alterations to internal arrangement including foaling box and alterations to fenestration (retrospective).* **DECISION TBA FROM PLANNING AUTHORITY**

AGR/MAL/15/00048 – SOUTHLANDS BRYANTS LANE WOODHAM MORTIMER –

Agricultural barn for the storage of arable crops and associated machinery. **APPEAL DISMISSED**

FUL/MAL/15/01097 – LAND SOUTH OF LODGE ROAD WOODHAM MORTIMER –

Erection of one stable with associated feed store and tack room. **DECISION TBA FROM PLANNING AUTHORITY**

FUL/MAL/15/01207 – 21 CONDUIT LANE WOODHAM MORTIMER – *Conversion of existing dwelling to former use as two dwellings with additional two storey rear extension to the east unit.* - The Council had supported the previous refused application (15/00909) providing parking conditions were deemed adequate which appears to have been rectified by this revised application and Cllrs resolved to recommend approval noting the application facilitates the inclusion of affordable housing in the village for younger families. Agreed by all Cllrs present.

Actions AR to forward Councils representation to the PA for 21 Conduit Lane

160.15 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING SCHEME

Councillor Kim McDonald continues to review the information available with respect to the feasibility of the Council progressing its own Neighbourhood Planning Scheme. Recent information gained indicates that 6 Maldon District parishes have made a commitment to progress Neighbourhood Schemes which it is believed average completion times are estimated at 3 years. Substantial stakeholder consultation is required along with continued Planning Authority liaison. It is understood Heybridge PC are one of the Councils proposing a scheme and KM would endeavour to contact them for further information and valuable advice.

161.15 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

There were no reports available.

162.15 HIGHWAY MATTERS

Lodge Road - verge defects - from its junction with the A414 to Hazeleigh Hall Lane – **Enquiry 2319066** - (HA assessed 06/11/2014) – No further activity.

Bryants Lane - verge defects - from outside Claremont Nursery to the first house on the left hand side – **Enquiry 2319059** - (HA assessed 07/11/2014). No further activity.

Footpath 11 Hazeleigh - flooding issues southern side of nature reserve reported by local resident **Enquiry 2391077** (reported 12/03/2015 assessed 03/07/2015). No further activity

B1010 Oak Corner - missing signage - **Enquiry 2324291** (reported 28/01/2015) repair scheduled (28/01/2015). No further activity

Lodge Road - excess surface water issues. AM had not been able to ascertain the origin of the continued surface water flowing down Lodge Road, AR was requested to lodge the issue as a defect with Essex Highways for their expert assessment.

Footpath 13 Hazeleigh – missing fingerpost - **Enquiry 2426505** HA to investigate within 28 days (06/10/2015). No further activity

Footpath 22 Woodham Mortimer – missing fingerpost - **Enquiry 2426504** HA to investigate within 28 days (06/10/2015). No further activity

163.15 CORRESPONDENCE

For Circulation: the following correspondence was put into circulation for Cllrs attention:

MDC T&CPA 1990 lists w/ending 13, 20, 27 November 2015

EDF – proposed nuclear power station sites

Chelmsford Local Development Plan – consultation document

For Discussion:

Rectory Lane, highway deposit issues - Correspondence has been received from a resident of Rectory Lane raising the same issue previously experienced in July this year. At that time the Environment Agency concluded the situation to be an environmental low risk and they were only responding to hi risk situations. There appears to be some commitments due for action in the Autumn/Winter which have not been addressed as yet and Cllrs requested AR to contact the EA again suggesting although the activities have been deemed low risk it is obviously causing residents inconvenience raising their concerns of safety issues along the lane.

During these discussions it was pointed out that the similar situation experienced in Hazeleigh Hall Lane continues to inconvenience the residents and these residents had been advised to contact Essex Highways for their inspection.

Actions AR to contact the EA for action

164.15 BALANCE OF ACCOUNTS

AR reported balances of: Tailored Account £880.93, Tailored Deposit Account £3608.41, Alto Debit Card £12.76

165.15 CLERKS EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY REVIEW

Due to the personal nature of this item Councillors and the Clerk were asked if they wished to discuss this item without the presence of the public, all agreed they did not mind if the discussion was open and transparent.

Cllrs sought an update of average hours spent on Council activities by the Clerk which he stated as averaging between 5.5/6 hours per week. The Council proposed to increase hours to accommodate the increased time spent by AR but AR advised this would be a significant increase to the Council precept and he was not acceptable to the proposal. The past year or so had seen the Council compile and adopt new standard policies which had required significant administration time and it was envisaged this time should reduce as in future the policies would only require updating. The subject of more concern was the Planning Authority decision not to allow any extensions to application consultation responses which has meant extraordinary meetings being arranged causing an unknown budget factor for following years. AR advised an upgrade to the next National Salary Award SCP level could be more appropriate for Council budget and precept demands. KM proposed to increase the Clerks hourly rate from SCP 17 to SCP 18 being an increase of 17.8p per hour, maintaining the existing 20 hours per month and that AR should claim overtime hours where appropriate, - to commence April 2016 which was seconded by SP and agreed by all Cllrs.

Actions AR to update contract for signing at next meeting

166.15 BUDGET PROPOSALS AND PRECEPT DEMAND 2016/17

Current budgets appeared to be on target with no unexpected financial items having arisen. It was still unknown the expense of May 2015 elections which had undergone a contested election and therefore the budgeted amount of £1500.00 would be carried forward along with a contingency sum of £500 should a parish election situation arise in 2016/17. Concerns were raised with respect to the Planning Authority decision not to allow consultation extensions and the costs thereof associated with meeting venue hiring costs and clerk administration overtime. AR advised that the Council's laptop was now over 3 years old and no funds had previously been allocated to costs associated with a mechanical or software malfunction and it would be advisable to budget for this. Indications are that inflation for 2016 is expected to run at just under 2%. AR also advised as per The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities the Council will be exempt from submitting Annual Returns commencing April 2017 and it was unknown at this time what the full requirements and costs for the Council would be with respect to The Smaller Authority Regulations, which requires further administration time and possible training courses in order to fully understand the legislation of any extra duties to be imposed on the Council.

In summary the Council considered its precept demand with consideration to:

- Increase in Clerks salary
- Potential election costs
- Costs associated with extraordinary Planning decision meetings
- Potential Clerk overtime
- Potential computer recovery costs
- Unknown costs associated with abolishment of current Audit Regime in consideration with the Audit and Accountability Act & Transparency Code
- General inflation

With consideration to the above, if all budgetary allowances were disbursed and the Council were to propose a 0% increase in precept then an end of year 2016/17 balance is predicted of approximately £400 which would be the lowest carry forward amount for many years and leave the Council rather exposed to any unexpected financial matters should they occur. It was therefore suggested to seek a precept demand of £3350 being an

increase of £350.00 on the previous year's demand. This was proposed by KM, seconded by PM and agreed by all Cllrs.

167.15 AUTHOURISATION OF PAYMENTS

A & J Lighting Solutions (SO) December	13.80	(11.50 excl VAT)
E.ON non-metred electricity (DD) December	13.90	(13.24)
Lodge Information Services	150.00	(125.00)
Clerks salary (NETT)	433.34	
Clerks work from home allowance	32.00	
HMRC payment (Clerks salary)	108.40	
Transfer to Alto Debit Card	87.24	

The above items being proposed for authorisation by AM and seconded by KM were agreed by all Cllrs.

AR advised that A & J Lighting Solutions had included a Direct Debit mandate with their usual monthly invoice though no explanation was given why it had been supplied. At present a Standing Order payment is in place and it is thought the DD would simply replace the SO, however AR has some concerns with respect to the cost of annual inspections which can often incur significant expenditure and whether this charge would be included on the DD mandate. This could result in an unexpected debit from the current account with possible depletion of funds without prior notice.

Actions AR to seek clarification of DD mandate from A&J Lighting

168.15 COMMUNITY LITTER PICK

A review of the usual date of the annual litter pick was discussed and AM proposed to bring the date forward to February/March, although it was considered weather conditions may prove more difficult by conducting the activity earlier in the year it was believed that litter clearance would be easier to manage before verge foliage became dense therefore hiding certain objects. A date of 06 March 2016 was set for the next litter pick. During discussions KB brought to the Councils attention that he understands some other parishes have all their streets cleansed by Maldon District Council and that the same service should be provided for this Councils villages. It was therefore resolved that prior to conducting any clearance activities MDC would be contacted for clarification of the village street cleaning schedules.

Actions AR to seek clarification of street cleaning schedules

169.15 PRESS & MEDIA POLICY

Due to planning, budget and other matters no progress had been made to this item and AR would hopefully provide an update at the January meeting.

170.15 INFORMAITON ONLY

AR advised a new planning item FUL/MAL/15/01099 Colts Pightle – additional double garage and larger utility to previous application, had been received which was put into circulation with Cllrs, Chairman to advise if extraordinary meeting is required.

Date of next Meeting Tuesday 12 January 2016 at 7:30pm.

Simon Brady (Simon Brady Chairman to the Council)

Tuesday 12 January 2015