

A meeting of the WIDFORD PARISH COUNCIL was held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 10th January 2012 at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Dr Ian Brett ,Chairman, Mrs J Buck , Vice-Chair, Councillors Mrs W Camp, Mrs F Luck and Mrs J Miller
CC Dr Roger Beeching, DC Mr Mike Newman and seven members of the public.

APOLOGIES The Police Liaison Officer, Mr David Kitching was not in attendance.

MINUTES of the meeting held on 1 November 2011 had been circulate and were now approved and signed.

GUEST SPEAKER'

In February 2011 a survey of the village Conservation Area had been undertaken on behalf of the East Herts Council by Mr John Bosworth.

At this meeting we welcomed Mr Kevin Steptoe, Head of Planning East Herts Council and Mr Bosworth, who presented the Parish Councillors with a document, the result of the survey.

There are 42 Conservation Areas in East Herts with a total of 4,000 listed buildings of a variety of styles. Widford has 40 Listed buildings, Quality hedges , some unlisted 19c properties which are considered worthy of retention and some in a state of decline.

With the current pressures brought about by its proximity to London and influenced by other factors beyond its administrative area such as Stansted Airport and towns of Harlow and Stevenage, it is inevitable that the historic environment emphasizes the need for protection.

This is recognised in the East Hertfordshire Local Plan Second Review adopted in 2001 which commits the Council to review its Conservation Areas and Boundaries.

Travelling through the village from the Church, we were told the Grade II* listed west boundary wall is in need of attention and apparently there are grants available to help with the costs. At Widbury Farm, the outbuildings 19c are deteriorating and are worthy of retention. The iron railings on the field boundary opposite Ash View would benefit from attention as would the iron railings on the Cricket Field boundary. A seat on land by the Cricket Field was suggested as an enhancement of the area.

In Nether Street, it was suggested that Hawthorn Cottage is worthy of retention and the paddock down to the stream should be protected.

“Rose Cottage” is of 19c and worthy of note as are” Whites Farm” and “Wilmoor”, the latter once the Victoria Public House. The Barns at Whites Farm were also of interest but access to them for detail had been denied by the owner. The boundary wall also needs repairing.

The White railings along Nether Street believed to be owned by the Highway Authority since they had made repairs several years ago, would be enhanced by painting. The Priory Farm Bus Shelter area was thought cluttered by posts/signs which could be rationalised .

Barns at Priory Farm were of interest but are deteriorating and the possibility of satisfactory planning outcome may be pursued.

Finally, a map of the Conservation Area dating from 1874 may be altered, excluding “Green Acres”, (Ware Road opposite the Church), “Homefield” ,” The Coppice” and” Little Godards” on the corner of Abbots Lane/Hunsdon Road.

Mr Bosworth was thanked by the Chairman for his interesting presentation and asked if a copy could be available to be put on the Parish Council website as Mr Steptoe had intimated that a future public participation would be made.

He also asked ,**Why the Consultation. Is local input important?** To which the response was, **the Officers do not know the village as the locals do. It is important to work with the Parish Councils.**

And **Is this survey independent from the Local Development Framework ?**
Yes In conjunction with.

And **Widford is presently a Cat:2 Village. Will it remain so as part of the Local Development Framework**

Not able to answer at present – the next stage of LDF is preferred options and may list what level of development can be done.

And – **If it stays at Cat: 2 would it open up development ?**

A personal opinion was given by Mr Bosworth who said “In his view ,a significant development would be inappropriate.”

In 40 years there has been no new listed buildings in Widford. English Heritage have strict criteria and there are only a handful that could be listed in Widford.

District Councillor Mr Newman asked what effect would the Conservation Survey have on Development Control and was advised it would require additional consideration.

Regarding the anticipated time for the public participation, it was thought a period of four to six weeks might be necessary for study of the draft report.

At this stage, a short break was made as Mr Steptoe and Mr Bosworth left the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MNUTES OF 1 November 2011 Meeting

Village Signs

The new sign is in place at Abbotts Lane/Hunsdon Road junction but the one at Hadham Road/Nether Street junction has yet to be received.

Queens’ Diamond Jubilee

A second meeting has now taken place and it has been decided that the Village celebration will be held on Saturday 2nd June on the Playing Field, and a Special Combined Villages Service will be held on the Playing Field on Sunday 3rd June.

White Posts on Playing Field

Little progress has been made regarding removal of the posts and the matter is currently with Mr Pawle’s Solicitors, Longmores, who have responded that so far they are not entirely in agreement with details forwarded to them in a recent letter from the Chairman.

Memorial Seat at Priory Farm Bus Stop

The seat provided by the daughter and in memory of Peter and Elizabeth Lewis is now in place.

Salt

The offer of a ton of salt in 25K bags made by the County Council for ‘do-it-yourself’ spread on the local roads (not main road)in the event of snow , was not taken up. It required Training, proper tools and clothing and responsibility for sensible spreading . County Council Insurance would cover any accident providing the spreading had been done according to instructions. !

It was agreed that, overall, it was not suitable for the this Parish Council.

Grass Cutting – Old Churchyard

Last year a Contract was agreed with a team of local ladies who did the work very satisfactorily. As agreed at the commencement of that season, they had been paid £246.00, a figure that had been satisfactory for the previous contractor.

The Ladies are willing to take on the contract for another year at a new and more satisfactory rate of £12.00 per hour per person, for two persons (£24.00), paid in three instalments each of £128.00 making a total of £384.00.

Padlock on the Field Gate – F.13/Pegs Lane.

The Padlock and Chain have once again been removed . Apparently the Water Board had lost the key ! and the gate is currently tied up with rope !

DATE OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday 13th March 2012 – Village Hall.
7.15pm ORDINARY Meeting of the Parish Council
8.00pm ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

Date for Annual Allotment to be arranged,

CORRESPONDENCE

Footpath 17. Notification from Hertfordshire County Council of possible Hearing or Written Reps : procedure concerning the public right of way through the Churchyard leading to Fp 17 which may require Parish Council input.

IB HAPTC meeting re Planning at The Campus, Welwyn Garden City. 8th February.
Also at Ware Priory on 21st February .

REPORTS

Cc Dr Roger Beeching reported that the Pole Hole Quarry application had been refused. The NHS reorganisation sees the National Level of 10 strategic health Authorities reduced to 4 clusters now in East of England (not North Herts). Herts clusters as well as PCT stays the same as large now. Clinical Commissioning Groups 3 shadow one in Herts 560K patients i.e. GP practices buying the services for us – 1.2 billion. But not in statute yet.

Residents Views of Local Councils !

Yes.	EH	73%	HCC	79%	National	73%
Local Councils take notice of residents views						
	Agree		42%		Disagree	26%
	Nationally		49%			38%

Do you recall your CC's name ?

No	52%	Yes	5%	With Prompt	43%	
Who is it then?	No	86%	Yes	14%	Correct	5%
				Wrong	9%	

County Council has four objectives for finances 2012 to 2013.

1. Freeze Council Tax
2. Pay off debts as far as possible
3. Save for a more difficult time i.e. 2013/14 and 2014/15
4. Keep level of spending on roads, schools, localities and key projects.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR Mr Mike Newman reports on Budget reduction, Discretionary Business Rates, eligible Enterprises, and Local Council can give further rate relief on Rural Public houses, Petrol Stations Charitable organisations, sports. May have an impact on the Green Man -there may be changes.

Rationalisation of East Herts Grants, Major Capital above 2009, Minimum below 2000 Reduction of grants available has dropped from 9 to 3.

No Police report is available.

IB Parish Paths Partnership

The Twitchel – part of Footpath 18, between Benningfield Road and High Street has been cleared and the railings are to be painted white on the top.

A tree in the vicinity needs trimming and the owner is being sought for permission before A work begins.

JB Playing Field

A meeting is scheduled for next week –the agenda mostly concerns the Queens Diamond Jubilee celebration.

A grant appears to be available from East Herts for this occasion . Confirmation required about availability of an Oak Tree being available from the Royal Estate to mark the Jubilee.

IB Village Hall

AGM on 15 November saw a change to the Committee. Audited accounts and a copy of the minutes have been passed to the Parish Council, Thanks were expressed to Mr John Morrison who had been Chairman for seven years. The new Chairman is Mr Gregory Prowse.

IB Allotments

Nothing to report – water turned off for the winter, two allotment plots not being worked. Allotment Holder to be given three months notice to vacate in accordance with Allotment Rules.

PLANNING

3/11/1799/LB 2 Elia Cottages.

Replacement rotten front window frames and weather boarding.

No plan available. Sight visited by Chairman. Parish Council has no objection.

Planning explained - - CPRE Booklet.

EHC Parish and Town Council Grants in respect of new homes.

FINANCE

Cheques signed as follows :-

M B Hollylee – Reimbursement for Hall Fee on 19 July –).....£15.00

Presentation of Village Survey for Parish Plan)

J English – Litter 31/12/11 to 28/01/12.....£98.63

J English – Litter 04/12/12 to 25/02/12.....£98.63

I Brett – Various inc: Telephone Kiosk,Allotments,Petrol for Strimmer,& Mower for).....£88.40
Grass cutting Benningfield Green..)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Village Sign.

A proposal for a village sign to mark the occasion of the Queens’ Diamond Jubilee has resulted in discovering that the cost would be approximately £3000.00. It is understood that the East Herts Council are offering a grant that could pay for 50% of the sign.

County Councillor Dr Beeching kindly offered a sum of £500.00 from his Community Budget and it was thought that donations through the village might well be forthcoming for the outstanding amount. Therefore no cost would fall on the tax payer via; Parish Council funding. We look forward to the sign which it is proposed could be placed on Benningfield Green.

Broadband

Poor in the villages, it is understood a presentation is to be made by BT at Hunsdon Village Hall on Monday 16th January at 7.15pm.

Telephone Kiosk – The light went out !– a new junction box has been fitted by the Chairman but there is no timer and the light is on all the time using unnecessary electricity which is paid for by BT.

A kind offer from Mr John Morrison to fit a timer has been accepted.

Exit from Bell Lane onto Ware Road opposite Whites Farm.

A difficult junction but junction markings are in place .

Traffic Sign at Widbury Hill, Ware

A sign relating to reducing speed has been noticed at this location and it has been suggested it may be an appropriate sign that could be used in the village.

It was suggested our Police Liason Officer may be able to advise.

QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the floor and the meeting ended at 9.45pm.

Chairman

Dr Ian Brett.

Date.....13 March 2012.....