

The WIDFORD PARISH COUNCIL met in the Village Hall on Tuesday 2nd July 2013.

PRESENT

Chairman Dr Ian Brett, Vice-Chairman Mrs Jill Buck, Councillors Mrs Wendy Camp, Mrs Jenny Miller and Mrs Frances Luck.

County Councillor DR Roger Beeching, District Councillor Mr Mike Newman and three members of the public.

MINUTES of the meetings held on 7 May had been circulated and were now approved.

- a) Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
- b) An Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council which followed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ORDINARY MEETING

EHPTC – Minutes of the meeting on 8th March had been received and notification of the next District Planning Executive meeting to be held on 25th July. A later meeting on 20th September will be with District Councillors Mike Carver and Claire Sim, Leader of Planning Policy.

Footpath 17- The Appeal held in the Village Hall on 16th April attended by Representatives of the Diocesan Registrar and the Hertfordshire County Council, had been resolved in favour of the Ramblers Association who claim to have saved the footpath through the Churchyard for use as a public footpath. This decision was contrary to that issued by the Secretary of State at the previous enquiry when it had been acknowledged that a Public Designated Public Footpath could not pass across consecrated land (Ecclesiastical Law) , although there has never been any restriction to members of the public using the church path to gain access to the designated footpath at the rear of the church.

30 Benningfield Road – the owners appear to have fulfilled their obligation to make good the grass of Benningfield Green damaged by vehicular use . A suitable material had been laid in part which is satisfactory but it may still be necessary to extend the strip towards the kerb entrance.

Signs at Chapel House – although reported in December 2012 to Ringway, nothing has been done to replace the Chevron Board or provide a notice warning drivers of a concealed entrance to Chapel House.

A fresh attempt is to be made by letter to Ringway and CC Beeching who will be able to contribute to the cost of the sign if considered appropriate.

Lilley Bridge – The repairs and modifications have been completed and are very satisfactory. A stile is still in place but a suggestion that a gate instead has been made by the Countryside Management Officer.

The opinion of some members was that it was sad to lose the stile familiar in rural areas and a modern metal gate was not welcome.

A simple wooden gate was suggested which might be able to be funded by the Parish Council through the PPP scheme for the programme for 2013/14.

To be given further consideration.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING - Tuesday 3rd September 2013 , 8.00pm in the Village Hall.

CORRESPONDENCE

Route Change for Bus Service C3 omitting Hunsdon. A letter had been sent to the County Council Transport Officer explaining hardships that would result as a withdrawal of the service, and giving support to Hunsdon PC in this cause.

However, it appears that, either as a result of the letters !! or second thoughts! The service has not been withdrawn but modified to reduce the number of journeys.

Police Commissioners' Drive Safe Scheme – Volunteers from the village are being asked to help carry out the speed checks as required by the Police. An explanation has been placed in the Parish Magazine but to date, no volunteers have volunteered !! It may not be a workable scheme.

The Waggoners ,Much Hadham has been on the market for several years. It now appears that new owners have a scheme in mind and wish to hold public meetings in Much Hadham Village Hall on Saturday and Sunday, 6th and 7th July.

PLANNING

Decisions

3/13/0184FP and 3/13/185/LB. Abbots Farm. Single storey Orangery CP. 27.03.13

New Applications

3/13/0649/OP The Mount, Medcalf Hill. Outline permission for 4 bed house
Parish Council comments :- The proposed development is sited outside the built up area of the village and as such is contrary to Policy OSV 2 of the current Local Development Plan adopted in 2007.

3/13/0657 Martlets, Hunsdon Road. Erection of 4 bed dwelling with double garage and associated access
Parish Council response to be confirmed but consider this backland development

3/13/0659/FP Martlets. Hunsdon Road. Demolition of existing Garage – new build single storey side/rear extension, new porch and double garage.
Parish Council had no objection

3/13/0803/FP Endways Cottage – New Orangery to side elevation.
Parish Council had no objection.

3/13/0818/LB Nether Hall, Nether Street. Installation of secondary glazing on north facing windows.
Parish Council comments type of proposed window may not be suitable for a Listed Building – to be confirmed. No objection to suitable window frames for Listed Building.

REPORTS

County Councillor Dr Beeching report for Town and Parish Councils in June 2013 began with the County Contribution to the economy.

The County Gross Value Added (value of goods and services) amounts to £23,808 per head and is the third highest in All the Counties. 53% of the population work in knowledge intensive occupations.

Sawbridgeworth Electoral Division No 24 - 93% of the population is very ,or fairly, satisfied to live here. Time lived here shows ,12% have spent 5 to 10 years, 26% ,10 to 20 years and 50% 20 or more years.

52% have taken part in Community activities (46% in the last 12 months), 66% are of the opinion that people help each other and do things together.

Problems include :- 48% Teenagers hanging about in the streets (mostly town – less ,20% in rural areas) .28% drug dealing (rural areas 10%) 23% drunk in the streets (rural areas 12%)! Apparently, Norovirus has been reported in Watford Hospital!

Highways – in May, 500 carriageway and 90 footway defects were reported per week. The target of dealing with emergencies within two hours is set at 98% - in fact, achieved 89%.

Communication with Customers is not good but improvements are being worked on.

And finally, for some reason, Hertfordshire uses twice as much water domestically as the County as a whole !! Why ? !
Affinity Water are carrying out a Survey on line (www.water.uk) as they need to know .

District Councillor Mr Newmans' report included reasons for the delay in finalising the new Development Plan such as the Strategic work not received by the East Herts Council on Transport, and Education from Hertfordshire County Council.

Three Workshops are considering Policies on Heritage, Water, Transport and Economy and the District is working hard to develop these policies.

All the time the District does not have a completed plan, it is increasingly vulnerable to challenge from Developers – there is a presumption in favour of development. A development for 100 houses on land in Buntingford has gone to appeal because the Plan is not approved. District is now dealing with the third option – Preferred Sites on which there will be a 12 week period of consultation.

County Transport deny any hold-up on their part, Bishops' Stortford has a plan for 700 new houses. Education has plans for only two inadequate Primary Schools. 8-9000 people are likely to generate a need for 5 form of entry per secondary school. Developers are not co-operating.

There is a Public Meeting scheduled for 18th July for the Local Plan Framework.

Police – Not much to report – operationally East Herts is a single rural entity except for pressure on Officers whose areas can now be more widely spread. In practice, Duncan Wallace unofficially will keep as much as possible but an Officer could be whisked off elsewhere and we may see unfamiliar officers in our patch.

Inspector Chris Hunt has an initiative to provide resources that would make vulnerable people less vulnerable to crime.

With regard to the Police Meetings, the most recent of which was not attended by any Parish Council representatives, the Chairman asked Councillor Newman if the time of the meetings could be changed from afternoons. when many people are working. However, it appears it is best timing for the Police.

With regard to the possibility of a scheme for a 20mph speed limit, this is being discussed at County level and surprisingly is in force in places in Bishops Stortford, but traffic has to be at 24mph for the limit to be imposed.

IB Parish Paths Partnership – The repairs to Lilley Bridge are now very satisfactorily complete.

With regard to the existing stile, comments have been made regarding ease of access for many, including the larger dogs.

A suggestion has been put forward to replace the stile with a simple wooden gate, similar to that on Fp25. The County Council are replacing dangerous stiles with the rather extensive metal structure which many find unacceptable in a rural area. Before the Parish Council could include the cost in its 2013/4 programme of works, it is necessary to ask the Landowner if he would agree to such a change.

(Of the £1000.00 available to the Parish Council from the PPP Budget, none has been used and it might therefore be possible to fund the purchase of a gate.)

It has been noted that the hedge to the paddock belonging to Martlets is overhanging the Footway and the owner is to be asked to trim this back as the footway(highway) is quite narrow.

JB The Playing Field has 6 Committee members and £4,000.00 in the bank. A Charity Cricket Match on the adjoining private Cricket Field has been arranged and the Playing Field are glad to co-operate and allow car parking on their land for this occasion on August Bank Holiday. On Saturdays during the summer months, a three hour booking has been made for Primary Age Boys football training.

There is a respite from Football (May – September) to allow the pitches to recover, but Friendly matches and training may occur in the evening by arrangement.

FL **The Village Hall** - is preparing for the Bike Ride in July – problems experienced with signage last year will be improved.

The Hall has a three day booking for an Art Festival and is generally in good order.

JM **Allotments** - Those being worked are looking healthier. Unfortunately there are five vacant plots but advertisements have been placed in Hunsdon and in the Village News in the Mercury.

Nigel English is the new Groundsman replacing Paul Prior who was paid £75.00 for his time through May and June. Mr English will receive £125.00 in two payments in August and October.

FINANCE

Received.

Annual Grant for Litter Picker.....£1341.60 = 13 payments at £103.20
½ Annual Precept.....£2250.00
East Herts payments for Tax Reduction.....£ 219.00
AoN Annual Insurance – return overpay.....£ 25.53

Cheques signed.....

M B Hollylee – reimburse for CDA Annual Subscription.....£ 30.00
Mrs C Parrott Grass Cutting ,Closed Churchyard (2).....£ 240.00
Includes 2 payments for strimming @ £56 each)
Mr J Turner.....Grass Cutting Benningfield Green(2)£ 83.33
Widford PCC.Contribution to upkeep of New Churchyard £ 300.00
Dr I Brett – repair to Notice Board.....£ 221.62
BDO Audit Fee – inc: £20.00VAT.....£ 120.00
Litter Picker 22/6 to 13/7.....New Rate.....£ 103.20
Litter Picker 20/7 to 10/8.....£ 103.20
CommunicorpLocal Councils Update.....£ 75.00
Paul Prior.....£ 75.00
Nigel English.....1 of 2 payments.....£ 60.00

The Council was made aware of the **Completed Audit** and the Public Notice is now in place.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS – A faulty drain in Nether Street, opposite Honeysuckle Cottage had been the cause of damage to a vehicle and will be reported to Ringways.

QUESTION TIME A member of public was concerned at the possibility of illegal access though a gate at the rear of Lambs Gardens which backs onto the Playing Field.

The Gate is kept locked and therefore no illegal access is likely as to gain access to it, it would be necessary to pass through the gardens of Lambs Gardens.

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 9.30pm.

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Chairman Dr Ian Brett

Date..... 3rd September 2013.....

