

# Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Parish Council Meeting  
Tuesday 1st November 2016 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall



**PRESENT:** Cllr Jill Buck, Chairman (JB); Cllr Carol Blackett (CB); Cllr Barbara Edwards (BE); Cllr Glen Parcell (GP); Cllr Paul Riddle (PR)

C Cllr R Beeching, PCSO Steve Blanks, and eight other members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.45pm

**ACTION**

**16.120 Apologies for absence:**

1. Councillors: None (*all present*)
2. Others: D Cllr Robert Brunton (*received after the meeting commenced*)

**16.121 Declarations of Interest:**

1. Cllr B Edwards: non pecuniary, her husband being Treasurer of the Playing Field Committee
2. a) and b) Written requests for dispensations: None

**16.122 Approval of Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 13 September 2016**

It was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the 13th September Parish Council Meeting were a true and accurate record.** The Chairman signed the Minutes.

**JB/Clerk**

**16.123 Police report:** Presented by PCSO Steve Blanks.

Information on setting up and running a Drivesafe scheme had been emailed to the Clerk.

Crime Figures: between 1 September and 1 November 2016 there were four reported crimes in the Parish (compared to five in the same period last year). These comprised 1 x theft from motor vehicle, 1 x theft of motor vehicle, 1 x theft of straw bale, 1 x burglary dwelling.

Other News: We are currently having issues with off road motor vehicles driving across fields within the East Herts rural area. We have also had issues of theft from motor vehicle offences and motor vehicle interference, mainly in Standon and Sawbridgeworth. Yesterday, two persons were arrested regarding this.

We are aware of parking issues in and around the Benningfield Road area of the village. We will be attending the area, warning notices will be placed on offending vehicles, and when needed, parking tickets will be given out.

The caravan that has been parked in the layby for many months has been reported as stolen – it had been thought the owners had finally moved it.

The Chairman thanked PCSO Blank for attending and he left the meeting at 8.05pm.

**16.124 Chairman's announcements:** None

**16.125 Planning**

**1. New Applications: NONE**

**2. Decision Notices**

**3/16/2200/HH Yew Tree House, Hunsdon Road: Amendment to 3/16/1399/HH** Two storey front extension, porch and gates. *DECISION AWAITED*

**3/16/2131/VAR Wilmoor, Ware Road:** Variation of Condition 2 of LPA 3/14/0629/FP - Construction of a terrace of 3 three bedroom houses and a pair of semi-detached two bedroom houses: **Alterations to approved fenestration, porches and materials.** *DECISION AWAITED*

**3/16/0325/FUL Priory Farm House:** Demolition of existing barn. Reconstruction of new barn, new gravel driveway and new post & rail fence.

**AP/16/0079/REFUSE: Refusal decision APPEALED to Secretary of State.** *DECISION AWAITED*

**3/16/1502/HH Field View, Medcalf Hill:** two storey and first floor front/side extension incorporating the enlargement of the roof, and a two storey and single storey rear extension (with window, render and external elevation changes) **GRANTED**

**3/16/1399/HH Yew Tree House: RECONSULTATION** Two storey extension, porch and gates  
**GRANTED**

**3/16/1330/FUL South Paw, Pegs Lane:** Change of use to a mixed use for residential purposes for one Romani gypsy family and the keeping of horses. Retention of existing barn, static caravan, touring caravan and hardstanding. Retention of existing boundary fencing and alterations to existing walls and gates. **GRANTED**

**3/16/1164/FUL Land South of Martlets:** Erection of 1no 5 bedroomed dwelling, 5no 4 bedroomed dwellings, 5no 3 bedroomed dwellings, 5no 2 bedroomed dwellings and 2no 1 bedroomed dwellings, and associated works. **GRANTED SUBJECT TO s106 AGREEMENT**

**3/15/2104/APPEAL Youngs Little Acre, The Mount:**  
Refusal decision APPEALED to Secretary of State **APPEAL DISMISSED**

**3. Other planning matters:** including matters received too late for the agenda

**1.1 Late notifications:** EHC consulted the Parish Council on its proposal to name the Wilmoor development "Lilly Wood Lane". Following a discussion with members of the public, it was agreed and **RESOLVED to advise that "Lilley Wood Close" would be more appropriate and acceptable.** Clerk

**1.2** It was reported that a 2-acre site behind House of Orange was being surveyed for possible development. No information is known. The Clerk to check with D Cllr Brunton. Clerk

**2. Report on EHC Planning Training Event, 18th October.** Cllr Paul Riddle reported: Two weeks ago, Cllr Jill Buck and I attended a Training Seminar at East Herts District Council. The purpose was to update parish councils on the progress of the new District Plan and to tell us what to expect next. The main speaker was Mr Kevin Steptoe who is the Head of Planning and Building Control. Mr Steptoe spoke about the planning process and the value of Neighbourhood Plans. However, it soon became clear that he views Neighbourhood Plans through the prism of the Development Committee and this is not exactly the same as the view of Linda Haysey who rightly sees things from the planning policy viewpoint.

The community is soon going to be asked if it feels that Widford needs to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Council clearly wants to present a balanced view of the pros and cons to support that decision-making process.

The following points became clear during the Training Seminar.

1. East Herts District Plan should be adopted by the middle of 2017. If the plan fails evaluation this may have an impact on Neighbourhood Plans which may need to be revised to comply with the District Plan. Kevin Steptoe felt that Parish Councils should continue to produce their Neighbourhood Plans but suggested that there was no immediate rush.
2. The new District Plan requires East Herts to deliver a 5-year supply of housing land and if the Council should fail in this commitment, the entire Plan, and any Neighbourhood Plan, will once again become invalid.
3. It may be that it is in the interest of developers that East Herts fail to deliver their 5-year plan as this would allow the developers greater flexibility in the planning process and of course it would be a simple matter for them to create a delay and force East Herts to a position of failure.
4. Neighbourhood Plans cannot restrict development even where a specific housing target has been met. The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) will always support the presumption in favour of development.

**At this point, Cllr Riddle wished to comment on the Neighbourhood Plan and it was agreed to bring agenda item 16.127 forward.** He made the following points:

- A Neighbourhood Plan is a major exercise that involves a great deal of time and effort.
- It must be produced by parishioners and with input from all sectors of the community.

- It must not create expectations that cannot be met.
- It would be expensive; £15k is not an unrealistic estimate of the cost.
- It would not provide any protection against wider development.

It was necessary to hold a public meeting to assess the will of parishioners; this should be in January and advertised in the parish magazine as well as leafletting every household. Planning Consultant Lorraine Hart and East Herts Senior Planning Policy Officer, Laura Pattison, should be invited to address the meeting if they are available. It was **RESOLVED that Lorraine Hart and Laura Pattison be asked for dates when they would be available to attend; then a leaflet should be printed and the VH should be booked.**

Clerk

3. **Martlets:** This was covered in the following agenda item, 16.126

**16.126 Report by County Cllr Roger Beeching.**

Concerning Martlets, Cllr Beeching confirmed that no Highways Section 106 money had been secured because no measures were considered to be effective in producing the result expected by the Parish Council. Priorities may change in the future. The question of reported £150k s106 payments for Hunsdon was raised and Cllr Beeching said that £10k per house would be about right.

The damaged Nether Street railings have been referred to Ringway for repair quotes. However, the repairs will not be undertaken until next financial year. Highways have inspected the site and have reported that the damage presents no danger.

County has undertaken a scrutiny into flooding, but Cllr Beeching said he would report on this at a later meeting.

He congratulated the editors of the Widford Parish Magazine for their excellent work - and said he was looking forward to following the pumpkin soup recipe!

**16.127 Neighbourhood Plan: See report under 16.125.2 above**

**16.128 Finance**

1. The report of the Council's finances for 1 Sept to – 31 Oct was received (Appendix A)	
Finance Summary from 1 September to 31 October	£
<b>Opening bank balance 1 September</b>	<b>6,892.05</b>
Plus income to 31 October	6,022.44
Minus expenditure to 31 October	<u>2,692.27</u>
	10,222.22
Minus previous months' cheques cashed in period	300.00
<b>Balance available to Council 31 October (cashbook balance)</b>	<b>9,922.22</b>
Plus unpresented cheques as at 31 October	<u>225.00</u>
<b>Bank balance reconciled with statement, 31 October 2016</b>	<b><u>10,147.22</u></b>

Reconciliation of the Accounts to the bank statement was noted and it was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Accounts Statement be accepted.**

2. **List of payments.** It was unanimously **RESOLVED to approve all the payments, except for the Playing Field grant which was deferred for agreement at the January meeting:**

Clerk

Date	Payee	Item	£	Chq	Power
29/9	Broxap Ltd	Dog waste bin no.1	217.20	1027	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
29/9	Broxap Ltd	Dog waste bin no.2	168.00	1028	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
29/9	GM Fencing	Fence allotments	802.00	1029	SHAA 1908 s26(1)
29/9	J English	Litterpick to 1/10	105.76	1030	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
-	Cancelled	Cancelled	-	1031	
29/9	HMRC	PAYE 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	191.00	1032	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
29/9	Clerk	Salary September	238.63	1033	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
31/10	Clerk	Salary October	225.00	1034	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
1/11	Clerk	Travel/phone exp Sept/October	14.75	1035	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41

1/11	Clerk petty cash	Petty cash Sept/Oct	14.28	1036	LGA 1972 s111, s112
1/11	LCPAS	H&S course (Clerk)	25.00	1037	LGA 1972 s111
1/11	JS Gardening	Install dog bins	120.00	1038	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
1/11	J English	Litterpick to 29/10	105.76	1039	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
1/11	C Parrott 4 of 4	Closed churchyard	249.00	1040	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
1/11	British Legion	Poppy wreath	50.00	1041	LGA 1972 s137
-	Cancelled	Playing Field grant	-	1042	
		<b>VAT included</b>	<b>64.20</b>		

Cheques for 1st November were signed at the end of the meeting.

**3. Budget/Precept 2017/18.** The Clerk presented the current financial position against budget, and the projected bank balance at year-end, 31 March 2017. This showed an anticipated year-end balance of £5,258, against a budgeted balance of £6,202 (including £500 ringfenced for the F Cooper churchyard seat). The £944 deficit is mainly attributable to unprecedented and unanticipated parish maintenance expenditure in the closed churchyard during the current year. An application has been made via HAPTC for a grant of £397.84 to defray additional administration costs as a consequence of the Government's Transparency legislation. Members agreed to meet informally to consider budget and precept options for 2017/18 so that decisions can be agreed at the January Parish Council meeting. It was unanimously **RESOLVED to accept the budget report.**

ALL

**4. Poppy Wreath.** It was unanimously **RESOLVED to donate £50 to the British Legion for a poppy wreath.**

Clerk

**5. Precept cap.** It was noted that HAPTC has drawn the attention of parish councils to the possibility a future change in the law that could result in their precepts being capped (possibly at 2%) following a local referendum. This would hamstring councils if unexpected expenditure arose and they held insufficient reserves.

Clerk/  
ALL

#### 16.129 Correspondence

The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:

- HAPTC: notice of law change that may result in precept capping (16.128.4)
- Parishioner: complaint about parking on Benningfield Green – referred to police
- Parishioner: complaint about dangerous and overhanging trees and dog mess on FP18 (16.131.1.1)
- Parishioner: re Village Hall boundary – referred to VH Committee
- Parishioner: enquiry re 3/16/0324 – referred to East Herts planning enforcement
- School: Letter of thanks from a pupil for the QEII 90<sup>th</sup> birthday commemorative medallions
- Anita Buxton: re allotments boundary fence (16.130.2)
- HCC Definitive Map Officer: Hearing on Modification Order 2011, 2 November (16.131.1.2)
- Rev Dunstan: re diseased sycamore tree in closed churchyard (16.130.4.1)
- Parishioner: Damage to Nether Street railings (16.131.2.2)

#### 16.130 Village Reports

##### 1. Village Hall:

- The Quiz Night was cancelled due to lack of ticket sales.
- Comedy Night, with professional comedians, will be on 3rd December.
- Photographs are still needed for next year's calendar.
- Village Archive: There is a proposal to split the location between the Village Hall and the School, and to create an Archive Committee. It was questioned whether the Parish Council should have a representative on the Committee, once formed.

PR

##### 2. Allotments:

BE

1. The tenant of an unworked plot has relinquished their tenancy, whilst three new tenants have taken plots. There have been further problems with the horses and some damage was caused to tenants' produce and plots. The Parish Council is considering further fencing options under its duty of care to tenants. There has been no reply to a

letter written to Anita Buxton asking for clarification on the ownership of the North-Eastern boundary fence when she owned the stables. The new post and rail fencing bordering the licenced paddock was installed in September.

2. Risk Assessment: It was agreed to make amendments to the Risk Assessment. GM Fencing has been asked for effective fencing solutions and prices.

### 3. Playing Field

#### 1. Report:

- The annual RPII report revealed several things that needed attention. The Clerk advised that EHC would consider making a grant for safety repairs under its small capital grants scheme. The closing date for the next round of grant applications is 19<sup>th</sup> December.
- Section 106 funding from the Martlets development is still under consideration for hard standing to be created for the car park area.
- The dog bin has been installed at the playing field entrance and the emptying contract with EHC has been set up. Financial arrangements for the purchase and cleaning contract have yet to be finalised between the Playing Field Committee and the Parish Council.

GP

Clerk/  
ALL

Clerk

2. **Annual donation by the PC:** Deferred to the next meeting.

### 4. Closed Churchyard

1. Diseased sycamore tree: Being followed up with the Rector and the Diocese.
2. East Herts has now provided a brown bin, which is being emptied under their contract.

JB/Clerk

### 16.131 Highways, footpaths and byways

#### 1. Footways and kerbs:

1. FP18 beside the allotments: Trees and hedgerow falling into the footpath, and some dangerous inadequately pruned branches, were reported by a parishioner, together with a lot of dog mess in the area. Countryside Access Officer, Nicholas Maddex, confirmed the hedgerow in question was determined by the previous Clerk to belong to the Parish Council. It was **RESOLVED to ask David Jarrett Gardening Services to clear the footpath asap.**

JB/Clerk

It was acknowledged that there is a lot of dog mess along the path and was agreed for the Clerk to check with East Herts whether a bin could be accessed by their cleaning contractors if one was to be located there.

Clerk

2. Modification Order 2011, FP by the Sewage Works: It was noted that there is to be a public Hearing at County Hall, 10am, 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

#### 2. Highways:

1. Caravan parked in layby: dealt with under 16.123 above
2. Damage to Nether Street railings: dealt with under 16.126 above

3. **Other matters:** The Clerk said the Drivesafe information he had received from PCSO Blanks would be emailed to councillors the next day.

Clerk

### 16.132 Website and Broadband:

PR

- **Broadband:** No further updates, as yet, from Gigaclear.
- **Website:** All up to date. Another Widford Bulletin was posted this day, as was a report on the East Herts planning meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October.

16.133 **Dog-waste bin for Benningfield Green:** The new bin was installed in October and is on the EHC emptying contract.

16.134 **Urgent matters** received too late for inclusion on this agenda: None

16.135 **Items for future agendas:** None

At 9.45pm it was **RESOLVED to suspend the meeting for parishioners' comments**

- A parishioner agreed that the overhanging branches on FP18 by the allotments have worsened considerably.
- It was reported that guard dogs belonging to a security company now patrol the field

adjacent to the allotments, and that a warning notice had been attached to the fence – unfortunately, this was facing into the field and not towards the allotments. The Clerk asked the parishioner to let him have a note of the security firm, if possible. There was also a request to speak to the police and to the dog warden about the most recent dog laws, since the dogs are untethered and the field boundary is not secure.

Clerk

Clerk

- It was also suggested that Mr Billy Joe Saunders be invited to attend a Parish Council meeting.

JB/Clerk

**The meeting was restored to order at 9.52pm**

**16.136 Calendar of Meetings for 2017 and date of next meeting:**

- It was **RESOLVED to agree the draft Calendar of Meetings as prepared by the Clerk, with meetings starting at 7.45pm**
- Date of next meeting: Tuesday 10th January at 7.45pm

Clerk

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.55pm.

**Signed**.....**Dated**.....