

Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 13th September 2016 at 8pm in the Village Hall



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

D Cllr R Brunton (RB), and twelve other members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8pm and welcomed new councillor Carol Blackett

ACTION

16.102 Apologies for absence:

1. Councillors: Cllr Barbara Edwards (*reason given was accepted by the Council*)
2. Others: C Cllr Roger Beeching

16.103 Declarations of Interest:

1. None declared
2. a) and b) Written requests for dispensations: None

16.104 Approval of Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5 July 2016

It was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the 5th July Parish Council Meeting were a true and accurate record.** The Chairman signed the Minutes.

JB/Clerk

16.105 Police report: None

16.106 Chairman's announcements: None

16.107 Planning

1. New Applications

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

2. Decision Notices

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) **DECISION AWAITED**

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

3/16/1364/VAR Wilmoor: Variation of condition of LPA 3/14/0629/FP – construction of a terrace of 3 three-bedroom houses and a pair of semi-detached two-bedroom affordable houses - **to REMOVE** the provision of affordable housing. **APPROVED**

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. **APPROVED**

3/16/1164/FUL Land South of Martlets: Erection of 1no 5 bed roomed dwelling, 5no 4 bed roomed dwellings, 5no 3 bed roomed dwellings, 5no 2 bed roomed dwellings and 2no 1 bed roomed dwellings, and associated works. *EH Planning lawyers confirmed there is no restrictive covenant on the land* **Awaiting decision DMC 14th SEPTEMBER**

3/15/2104/APPEAL Youngs Little Acre, The Mount:

Refusal decision APPEALED to Secretary of State

3/15/0507/LBC Adams Farm: Alterations to layout and fenestration from previous application 3/09/1344/LB to form 4 dwelling houses. **LBC DECISION AWAITED**

- 3. Other planning matters:** including matters received too late for the agenda
- 1 a) **Late applications:** *NONE*
 - 1 b) **Late decision notice:** **3/15/2496/FUL 2 Benningfield Road:**
Appeal AP/16/0041/REFUSE *APPEAL ALLOWED with conditions*
 2. **Martlets:** see above
 3. **Pegs Lane:** see above
 4. **E/16/0182/ENF Yew Tree House enforcement.** *Issue resolved*

16.111 D Cllr Brunton wished to comment on Martlets and it was agreed to bring forward agenda
16.114 items 16.111 and 16.114 to this juncture.

D Cllr Brunton reminded the meeting that he was the Ward Councillor and was also a member of the Development Management Committee. As such, he said he had not been informed by the Parish Council that it was making a Section 106 request relating to the Martlets development. The Clerk said he was not aware that there was a protocol requiring the Ward Councillor to be copied in to a S106 request. The PC questioned whether Cllr Brunton was suggesting it had been disadvantaged by not copying him in. Cllr Brunton said the planning application had gone forward to the Committee with a strong recommendation by the Planning Officers that it be approved. All issues would be addressed within the Transparency Code regulations.

Cllr Riddle reported that the latest draft of the new East Herts District Plan that will set out development policy until 2033 (presently known as the Pre-Submission Version) will be subject to a final 6-week public consultation period, commencing 3rd November, before being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination, anticipated to be by the end of March. For villages, the Village Hierarchy model is being followed and the Parish Council's campaign for Widford to remain a Group 2 village has been won. The target for G2 villages will be 10% development up to 2033. The goal posts have been moved so that any houses started before April 2017 will not count towards the 2033 target.

Cllr Buck and Cllr Riddle had recently met with East Herts' Cllr Linda Haysey and CEO Liz Watts, together with D Cllr Brunton, to discuss the emerging District Plan. The new Plan is different from the 2007 version in that local policies have been taken on board to retain the "local" feel. East Herts' failure to meet its five-year housing stock target has given an opening for developers to exploit the position by ignoring village boundaries. The new Plan will define the boundaries, but with existing boundaries breached, developers argue they are null and void. A Neighbourhood Plan is the only means by which a boundary may be defined anew, although it cannot conflict with overall District Plan policies. Any dispute can be independently invigilated. A Neighbourhood Plan must be representative of all villagers' views if it is to be approved. There is no cut-off date for a Plan to be done, but the simpler it is, the faster it could be achieved, and is possible to create a Plan that focusses on the village boundary alone. It has been made abundantly clear that without a Neighbourhood Plan, Widford will have no means of controlling the potential for over-development of the village.

D Cllr Brunton clarified that in the Gilston Area Plan, Widford is not included within the Green Belt (as was the idea in the earlier Harlow North proposal).

Cllr Riddle then proposed that, since he had now clearly stated the importance of a recognised village boundary, there should be a public meeting, which the Parish Council was proposing to call. Members of the public present expressed their approval of this and their recognition that a Neighbourhood Plan is essential to preserve the heart of the village against aggressive development over the next 17 years. Response to calls for such a meeting had been met with only nominal interest in the past, but for it to be successful, volunteers had to come forward. D Cllr Brunton offered to ask Cllr Linda Haysey to get someone to come to address the public meeting. It was possible that someone from Hunsdon might be able to help.

JB/PR

RB

The Parish Council would have to facilitate the Plan, but it would up to village volunteers to make it happen. The PC would be responsible for funding and could get a grant up to approximately £9,000, although the total cost might be considerably higher. If the Parish Council calls a meeting, the whole village will be leafletted to advertise it. The first test will be

to get parishioners to take the need seriously. Cllr Riddle encouraged everyone to look at the Parish Council website for more information.

D Cllr Brunton gave his apologies and left the meeting at 9pm.

16.108 Finance

1. The report of the Council's finances for 1 July to – 31 August was received (Appendix A)
Finance Summary from 1 July to 31 August

	£
Opening available balance 1 July	6,986.85
Plus income to 31 August	1,676.36
Minus expenditure to 30 August	<u>1,455.55</u>
	7,207.66
Minus previous months' cheques cashed in period	<u>615.61</u>
Balance available to Council 31 August	6,592.05
Plus un-presented cheques as at 31 August	<u>300.00</u>
Bank balance reconciled with statement, 31 August 2016	<u>6,892.05</u>

It was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Accounts Statement be accepted.**

The Clerk, as RFO, presented the financial position against the budget up to the end of August, and the position taking into account the expenditure due for approval at the September meeting. Along with currently known income and expenditure, this was further projected to 31st March 2017. The financial year-end balance is projected to be £5,400, comparable to the budget if the anticipated ring-fenced churchyard seat maintenance is factored in.

Clerk

The Clerk said an accounts summary is published in the Minutes on the website.

2. Reconciliation of Accounts and bank statement

In accordance with new Financial Regulations and the Transparency Code, Cllr Parcell checked, verified and signed that the Accounts and the end of August bank statement reconciled. It was noted that the Parish Council has only one bank account and only uses only one cheque book at a time. It was unanimously **RESOLVED to accept the reconciliation of the Accounts and bank statement as presented.**

GP/
Clerk

3. List of payments. It was unanimously **RESOLVED to approve all the payments:**

Clerk

Date	Payee	Item	£	Chq	Power
31/7	Clerk	Salary July	225.00	1015	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
2/8	BDO LLP	Audit Annual Return	120.00	1016	LGA 1972 s111
6/8	J English	Litterpick to 6/8	105.76	1017	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
31/8	Clerk	Salary August	300.00	1018	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
3/9	J English	Litterpick to 3/9	105.76	1019	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
13/9	Clerk	Travel/phone exp July/August	33.90	1020	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
13/9	Clerk	Petty cash Jul/Aug	14.42	1021	LGA 1972 s111, s112
13/9	J Turner	Cutting B/fld Grn 3/3	83.33	1022	OSA 1906 s9, s10
13/9	C Parrott	Closed churchy'd 3/4	224.00	1023	LGA 1972 s215
13/9	Banner Ltd	Printer ink	249.36	1024	LGA 1972 s111
13/9	Clerk reimburse	Allotments Law book	14.80	1025	LGA 1972 s111
13/9	Clerk reimburse	software 1/3 rd cost	19.11	1026	LGA 1972 s111
		VAT included	62.74		

Cheques for 13th September were signed at the end of the meeting.

4. **Completion of the Annual Return 2015/16 by BDO:** It was unanimously **RESOLVED to a) Approve and accept the Annual Return as signed off by BDO; b) To note the minor issues arising and that no further action is required; c) To note that the Annual Return and Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been published as required by law.**

16.109 Correspondence

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

- Horses escaping from South Paw Farm into allotments
- EHC re dog bins and bin for closed churchyard
- Police and EHC re accidents and near accidents on Hunsdon Road
- HCC and parishioners re Benningfield Road parking issues
- EHC Planning re s106 money for Martlets
- Parishioner re phone wires in trees at Owletts Corner
- EHC invitation to District Plan meeting
- EHAPTC: 30th August Minutes and reminder of next meeting on 20th September

16.110 Village Reports

1. Village Hall:

- There had been a VH meeting the previous evening. Redecoration is progressing and will be completed when the decorating team return. PR
- Quiz Night will be on 24th September, in aid of the Village Hall.
- Comedy Night will be on 3rd December.
- The village calendar will be produced again for next year. Photographs for consideration should be sent to Greg.
- Village Archive: Ownership was passed to the Parish Council earlier this year by Mrs Smith's daughters. The final location is being considered, with it possibly being split between the archive room in the school and a room in the Village Hall, although there is no agreement on this at present. Mrs Luck has acted as unofficial archivist. Grant funding possibilities to be explored, including Lottery Heritage and Community Voluntary Services for East Herts. PR/JB

2. Allotments:

- The Chairman read a report sent by Cllr Edwards in her absence:
At present 14 allotments are occupied by 12 plot holders. 1 plot is vacant. Carmel Holland has reorganised her 12 plots into 1 large exercise area for her greyhounds. It has been levelled and temporarily cordoned off with plastic fencing. She expects to start introducing some more permanent fencing in the future. Carmel has worked extremely hard and gone to some considerable expense to do this. The events of the last few days with the horses has been quite distressing for her.

In general, the plot holders have responded to the request to get their plots up to a reasonable standard by the end of September. Four plots that hadn't been worked for a number of years have repossessed and subsequently re-let.

An estimate for the cost of strimming the allotment common areas has been sought to ascertain how often we can afford to have them cut in the growing season. BE

- The Chairman outlined the recent problems with horses breaking into the allotments and said the Parish Council would be erecting a sturdy fence between the licenced paddock and the allotments in order to fulfill its duty of care to allotment tenants. Since some fencing had been previously installed by the Parish Council, it was believed there was a precedent for the PC to maintain the integrity of the fence. Mr Frank Parker wished it to be recorded that he vehemently opposed the expenditure of public money on the proposed fence and that the boundary could be secured with barbed wire, which, at a fraction of the cost, is the usual and accepted means of controlling stock. The Chairman strongly disagreed, and Mr Parker left the meeting. The Clerk advised the Parish Council against the use barbed wire, which had the potential to harm the neighbouring horses and also users of the allotments. Cllr Parcell offered to check what fencing is recommended for horse management and said that the PC should ask for a copy of the horse owner's indemnity insurance. The Council will consider writing to the owner restating the conditions of the grazing licence and requesting a contribution towards the cost of the new fencing. GP
The Clerk asked for formal approval of the expenditure for the new fence and it was unanimously **RESOLVED to pay £802 for new fencing between the allotments and the licenced paddock.** Clerk/JB

3. Playing Field

a. Report: The AGM was held in July and a copy of the general and financial reports had been received by the Parish Council.

- Cllr Glen Parcell said the new committee is still forming. The play area inspection has been done but the RPII report has not yet been received. GP
- It was hoped that the application for Section 106 funding from the Martlets development might be approved to enable hard standing to be created for the car park area.
- A dog bin was needed at the playing field entrance and the Clerk said that if another one was ordered to be delivered together with the new Benningfield Green bin, due the end of September, the £41 delivery charge would cover both bins. It was **RESOLVED to add another bin to the current order, both bins to be delivered together.** Emptying arrangements to be confirmed with EHC once they have been installed at the agreed locations. Clerk

b. Donation by the PC: Deferred to the next meeting. Clerk

4. Closed Churchyard

a. Diseased sycamore tree: Being discussed with the PCC. JB/Clerk

b. Removal of grass cuttings from the site: East Herts has agreed to provide and empty a brown bin. Clerk

16.111 Report from District Councillor: Dealt with following agenda item 16.107

16.112 Highways, footpaths and byways

1. Footways and kerbs:

- a) Lack of footway maintenance: Highways report there is no problem.
- b) Green Lane Bridleway 10 overgrown: Cleared by RoW Officer.
- c) FP3 is overgrown with rape. Issue resolved following rape harvest.

2. Benningfield Road parking: Survey submitted to Highways; they will not take action for cost reasons.

3. Caravan parking in B1004 layby:

- a) Enaction of bylaw or introduction of parking restrictions: Not discussed.
- b) Site and surrounding area inspected by the Environmental Health Officer who said no health risk is posed.

4. Other matters: None

16.113 Website and Broadband: Website: all up to date. **Broadband:** Wayleave granted to Gigaclear for cabinet on Benningfield Green.

16.114 Neighbourhood Plan. Dealt with following agenda item 16.107

16.115 Stop Harlow North: No report

16.116 Dog-waste bin for Benningfield Green: Due for delivery end of September. Clerk/JB

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

16.118 Items for future agendas: None

The Chairman said the Council would consider suspending the meeting if parishioners had any further comments to make:

There were none

16.119 Date of next meeting: Tuesday 1st November at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. *Clerk's note: It was subsequently agreed to meet at 7.45pm as the Hall will not be available earlier.* Clerk

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.15pm.

Signed.....Dated.....