

Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 2nd May 2017 at 7.25pm in the Village Hall



PRESENT: Cllr Jill Buck, Chairman (JB); Cllr Carol Blackett (CB); Cllr Babs Edwards (BE);
Cllr Paul Riddle (PR)

County Cllr Roger Beeching, District Cllr Robert Brunton and six other members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.25pm, immediately following the Annual Parish Council Meeting **ACTION**

It was noted that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the Council will consider excluding press and public for the discussion of confidential business under agenda item 17.059.

17.042 Apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None
2. Others: None

17.043 Resignation of Cllr Glen Parcell

The Chairman said that, with regret, she had received the resignation of Cllr Parcell. His contribution to the Council has been appreciated. East Herts Council will shortly be issuing the statutory notice that will offer the opportunity for an election if 10 parish electors call for one within a set time frame. If no election is called, the Parish Council will seek to co-opt a qualifying parishioner to fill the vacancy as soon as practicable. Notices will be posted on the notice boards and on the website.

Clerk

17.044 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. **Interests:** Cllr Babs Edwards - as wife of the Playing Field Committee Treasurer
2. **Dispensation requests:** None received

17.045 (i) Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th March 2017

It was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the 7th March 2017 Parish Council Meeting were a true and accurate record.** The Chairman signed the Minutes.

JB/Clerk

(ii) Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish, 7th March 2017

Draft received and agreed by the Council. To be approved by parishioners attending the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Parish.

Clerk

17.046 **Police report.** No report received.

17.047 **Chairman's announcements:** None

17.048 Planning

1. New Applications

No new application notices received by the Parish Council

2. Decision Notices

3/17/0233/OUT 1 Hillside: Outline application for 3 dwellings.

REFUSED

3/17/0068/FUL Coal Yard: Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 5 No. detached dwellings and 2-storey office building (B1)

REFUSED

3/17/0002/FUL & 0003/LBC Widfordbury Farm, Ware Road: Alterations to enable change of use to B1 office, residential, and B1 light industrial; demolition of sheds.

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. Other planning matters**, including items received too late for the agenda
- (i) **Consideration of late planning applications:** None received
 - (ii) **South Paw.** New large static caravans: No planning breach – caravan size not stipulated on planning approval.

17.049 Reports by County and District Councillors

County Cllr Roger Beeching said this would be his last meeting since he is not standing at the forthcoming County elections. There is not very much happening at the moment because of the pre-election purdah period. He said he had been a Councillor since 1976 and a County Councillor for the last eight years; he has another two years to serve on Sawbridgeworth Town Council. For the last two years he held the office of Vice-Chair of the County Council and still had 23 events to attend before his term ends.

The Chairman then presented Cllr Beeching with a gift in appreciation of his regular attendance at Widford’s Parish Council meetings and his willingness to advance Widford’s cause whenever called upon, for which both the Council and parishioners were very grateful.

District Cllr Bob Brunton apologized for being unavailable to attend the last meeting. He said the District Plan had been submitted at the end of March and that an examiner has been appointed. Examination will hopefully take place in September/October with approval by the end of the year. Cllr Brunton was asked whether the decision meeting would be open or in camera; he said he wasn’t sure, but thought it would possibly be open.

17.050 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Paul Riddle said that all had been done to give an opportunity for the parish to make a Neighbourhood Plan, but following the public meeting with independent consultant Lorraine Hart on 6th April it was clear that there is no real will to take it forward. Lorraine had suggested that the parish could produce an “informal plan” that set out the views of parishioners and which could be used to formulate responses to development. Responses to applications should be as professional as possible. DC Bob Brunton said the Parish Council could go through him to take up application responses with the relevant Planning Officer.

PR

Clerk

Cllr Riddle noted that draft notes of the April Neighbourhood Plan meeting had been received and asked the Clerk to now send him a clean set for the website.

Clerk/PR

17.051 Finance

1. Reports of the Council’s finances for 1-31 March, and for 1-30 April were received (App A)

<u>Finance Summary from 1 to 31 March (year-end)</u>	£
Opening bank balance 1 March	6,740.49
Plus: income to 31 March	875.00
Minus: expenditure to 31 March	<u>2,464.51</u>
	5,150.98
Minus previous months’ cheques cashed in period	<u>420.76</u>
Balance available to Council 31 March (cashbook balance)	4,730.22
Plus: unrepresented cheques as at 31 March	<u>0.00</u>
Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement and cashbook, 31 March 2017	<u>4,730.22</u>

<u>Finance Summary from 1 to 30 April</u>	£
Opening bank balance 1 April	4,730.22
Plus: income to 30 April	5,695.17
Minus: expenditure to 30 April	<u>904.56</u>
	9,520.83
Minus previous months’ cheques cashed in period	<u>0.00</u>
Balance available to Council 30 April (cashbook balance)	9,520.83
Plus: unrepresented cheques as at 30 April	<u>498.77</u>
Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement and cashbook, 30 April 2017	<u>10,019.60</u>

Reconciliation of the Accounts to the bank statements was noted and it was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Accounts Statements for March and April be accepted.**

The bank statements and accounts reconciliation were checked and signed as correct by non-signatory parish councillor Carol Blackett.

CB/Clerk

2. Report of the budget vs actual financial position at the year-end, 31 March 2017.

The Clerk presented the report. There had been a considerable amount of unanticipated expenditure during the year on both new allotments fencing (to mitigate the risk caused by out of control horses entering the allotments) and on mitigating risks identified in diseased and dangerous trees in the closed churchyard. East Herts Council had made a grant towards the fencing, and HAPTC had obtained grants from the Government’s Transparency Fund to help offset the increased costs of administering Transparency Code regulations. The bottom line was that the Council had budgeted for a balance of £5,395 at year-end; the end of year bank balance was £4,730. The VAT reclaim for 2016/17 of £695.17 has now been received. This was an excellent result in view of the additional financial burdens encountered during the year. It was unanimously **RESOLVED to accept the budget report as presented.**

3. List of payments. It was unanimously RESOLVED to approve all the payments as listed

Clerk

Date	Payee	Item	£	Chq	Power
	2016/17	March cheques			
13/03	HAPTC	Delegate fee	40.00	1075	LGA 1972 s111
13/03	D Jarret Services	Cutting FP18 hedge	168.00	1076	HA 1980 s43
22/03	Clerk	Salary March	252.51	1077	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
22/03	HMRC	PAYE 4 th quarter Jan-March	190.60	1078	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
	2017/18	April/May cheques			
06/04	Community Land Use	N/Plan consultant fee	175.00	1079	NP(G)R 2012; LA 2011
06/04	CPRE	Annual subscription	36.00	1080	LGA 1972 s111
06/04	HAPTC	Annual subscription	273.77	1081	LGA 1972 s111
06/04	Clerk reimburse	Printer ink	58.79	1082	LGA 1972 s111
06/04	CZ Print	N/Plan flyers	20.00	1083	NP(G)R 2012; LA 2011
22/04	J English	Litterpicking April	116.00	S/O	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
22/04	Clerk	Salary April	225.00	1084	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
01/05	C Parrott	Cutting Closed Churchyard 1 of 4	240.00	S/O	LGA 1972 s215
28/04	Clerk	Expenses Mar/April	32.60	1085	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
01/05	Clerk Petty Cash	Top-up Mar/April	24.91	1086	LGA 1972 s111
02/05	Cancelled		cancelled	1087	
02/05	Village Hall	Hall hire 2016/17	92.00	1088	LGA 1972 s134
02/05	Cllr Buck reimburse	Allotments gate lock	18.99	1089	SHAA 1908 s26(1)
02/05	Zurich	Insurance renewal	390.39	1090	LGA 1972 s114, s140(1), s111
02/05	JB Gardening	New gatepost FP16	98.65	1091	OSA 1906 s10
02/05	Cllr Buck reimburse	Paper and ink	46.96	1092	LGA 1972 s111
02/05	Cllr Buck reimburse	Retirement gift	25.00	1093	LGA 1972 s111
02/05	Accountancy Services	Internal audit fee	90.00	1094	LGA 1972 s111
02/05	J Turner	Cutting Benningfield Green 1 of 3	100.00	1095	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
		Total VAT included	45.63		

Cheques for 2nd May were signed at the end of the meeting.

4. Annual Return. Approval of Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2016/17

The Clerk reported that the internal auditor had looked at the Council’s financial records and reviewed its practices before undertaking the internal audit. No issues were identified and the internal audit was subsequently examined, approved and signed off by the internal auditor in his Annual Internal Audit Report on page 5 of the Annual Return. Section 1 of the Annual

Return could therefore be confidently approved, and on this basis, it was unanimously **RESOLVED to approve and sign Section 1 of the Annual Return, the Annual Governance Statement 2016/17.** Section 1 was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

Clerk/JB

5. Annual Return. Approval of Section 2 - Accounting Statements for 2016/17

The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, explained that Boxes 1, 3, 7 and 8 (for 2016) were to be restated because two accruals cheques in the 2016 opening balance (totalling £100) were never presented. Therefore, the opening 2016 balance was adjusted by £100. Also, due to the anomaly posed by the rounding up/down to whole numbers, a further adjustment of £1 was necessary to keep the balances accurate going forward. The internal auditor agreed with these adjustments. This had also been discussed with the Council's contact at BDO who confirmed it would be in order provided an explanation was sent with the Annual Return when it was submitted. The figures were shown to reconcile with the end of year bank statement, and on this basis, it was unanimously **RESOLVED to approve and sign Section 2 of the Annual Return, the Accounting Statements for 2016/17.** Section 2 was signed by the Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk) and the Chairman.

RFO/JB

6. Benningfield Green grass cutting contract. It was unanimously **RESOLVED to increase the amount to £300 per annum, payable by a cheque for £100 in May, July, and September. The contractor to buy his own petrol.**

Clerk

7. Annual insurance renewal

The Clerk said that Zurich Municipal had been contacted about various insurance aspects during the year and their advice had been invaluable. Adjustments had been made to include new assets. An updated schedule from Zurich for the coming year was considered and it was unanimously **RESOLVED to accept and appoint Zurich Municipal as the insurer for 2017/18.**

Clerk

17.052 Correspondence

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

- Zurich Municipal: Insurance aspects of closed churchyard monument (17.053.4)
- Hugh McAlpine (stonemason): Closed churchyard monument costs (17.053.4)
- PCC: Closed churchyard monument issues (17.053.4)
- EHC: Street naming
- HCC: Re SID by Ashbourne Manor and elsewhere in the parish (17.054.2)
- EHC: Advising appointment of the inspector for the District Plan
- MP Mark Prisk re development and other concerns in the parish

17.053 Village Reports

1. Village Hall

1. Report by Cllr Paul Riddle:
 - The next fundraising event will be a comedy night in September. The comedy nights are very popular and successful.
 - Following that will be a Christmas event and a Rock'n'Roll bingo night.
 - Changing the location of the stage is still under consideration.
 - The next meeting will possibly be in the Green Man.

2. Allotments

1. Report by Cllr Babs Edwards.
 - Although some tenants have left, new interested parties have come forward.
 - Mr Stephenson has agreed to maintain the footpaths and common areas.
 - With the new fencing installed, there have been no further problems with horses.
 - The allotments Working Group look forward to a better year ahead.

3. Playing Field

1. In the absence of a Parish Council Playing Field representative, Treasurer Tom Edwards reported the following via his wife, Cllr Babs Edwards.
 - It seems very likely that the football team from Ware that have used the venue for the last few years will no longer be playing here. It is not certain, but this may be due to lack of interest at the club or among its rival teams.

4. Closed Churchyard

1. **Risk caused by leaning Wiseman family monument.** The PCC still has to decide what to do about this. In the meantime, the monument and its surrounds will remain taped off with hazard tape, as advised by the Parish Council's insurer. JB/Clerk
2. **FP16 gate.** The Clerk reported that JB Gardening Services had inspected the rotten gate post and quoted £98.65 to replace it. At this price, applying to P3 for a grant wasn't worthwhile and in view of the H&S risk identified, the Clerk said he had asked JB Gardening Services to undertake the necessary work. It was unanimously **RESOLVED to ratify the Clerk's decision and action.**

17.054 Highways, footpaths and byways

1. Footways and footpaths

FP7 by House of Orange: It was agreed to contact the Public Rights of Way Officer and, if necessary, the Definitive Map Officer, to get a ruling on the correct route of FP7 and the correct status of the permissive footpath. JB/Clerk

2. Highways:

The private funding and siting a Speed Indicator Device (SID) outside Ashbourne Manor: Following the report by Paul Patmore of Herts Highways, which included copies of his communications with the owner of Ashbourne Manor, it was clear that even with private funding, there was no guarantee that Highways would approve the siting of a SID at that location. It was further made abundantly clear that if permission were to be given for a SID in the parish, not more than one would be allowed. Since the Parish Council had already made approaches about a SID by the Martlets site entrance, Paul Patmore advised the Parish Council to be very sure what their priority location would be. In view of this, it was **RESOLVED to seek the opinions of parishioners for the most important location if only one device was permitted.** It was agreed to do this via the magazine and the website. It was agreed to write explaining the dilemma to Mr Lester once the wider view becomes clear. JB/PR/
Clerk

17.055 Website and Broadband

Report by Cllr Paul Riddle

- **Website:** This has been cleaned up and revamped. PR
- **Broadband:** There is still a lot of clean-up work to be done on Benningfield Green; assurances have been given that full reinstatement will be completed in due course. No start date has yet been given for the start of the Gigaclear service

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

17.057 **Items for future agendas:** None raised in the meeting.

At 8.50pm it was **RESOLVED to suspend the meeting for parishioners' comments**

No comments were made by members of the public present.

The meeting was restored to order at 8.51pm

17.058 **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 4th July at 7.45pm in the Village Hall Clerk/JB

17.059 Allotments Grazing Licence

It was **RESOLVED that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for the following agenda item, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and members of the public duly left the room.

Consideration was given to the Clerk's advice that Grazing Licences should not be granted for longer than two years and that NALC legal advice was for 729 days (one day less than two years). Difficult legal ground could be encountered where a licence extends beyond this time frame. The current Grazing Licence runs for three years, expiring in September 2018. Since the Clerk

Parish Council has the right to determine the licence at any time and upon one month's notice, it was **RESOLVED to determine the current licence forthwith and to offer a two-year licence in its place.**

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.17pm.

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