

A meeting of the WIDFORD PARISH COUNCIL took place in the Village Hall at 8.00pm on Tuesday 11 January 2011

#### PRESENT

Chairman Dr Ian Brett., Vice Chair Mrs Jill Buck , Councillor Mrs F Luck and the Clerk.  
Also attending District Councillor Mr Mike Newman, Police Liaison Officer David Kitching and five members of the public.

Mr Newman was welcomed to this, his first meeting since the By-election on 11 November 2010, and Congratulated on the overwhelming majority achieved.

APOLOGIES had been received from Councillor Mrs Wendy Camp who was unwell and County Councillor Dr Roger Beeching who was attending another function.

CONGRATULATIONS on behalf of the Parish Council by the Chairman had already been sent to Dr Beeching who had been awarded an MBE in the New Years Honours List

#### MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2010 had been circulated and were now approved.

#### MATTERS ARISING

**Benningfield Green** - A large tree from the opposite side of the main road had fallen during a high wind. The County Council workmen had arrived to clear the road and had left the debris on the Green. Under new regulations, they had not been able to use a mechanical saw unless supervised and the work had been carried out by hand saw !

During the course of the work, the Crab Apple trees had received a light pruning and Ivy had been removed from a large tree on the side of the Green.

**Welcome Pack** – The printing of the Wallet and Leaflets from the various groups in the village has been completed by local printer, Mr Hugh O'Reilly, the cost of which is £165 plus VAT ,a total cost of £193.88. Already, five copies have been distributed to new people in the village.

**Felicity Cooper Memorial** – The plaque has been placed on the seat on the north side of the church building

**Consultation on RPB 18.** The County Council, at a request from an unknown source, is looking into the possibility of changing the grading to a B O A T (Byway Open to All Traffic) .This is a popular route used by walkers and bicycles and it is of great concern that this should become a route for traffic of today. The County Council have evidence of a route in the early 1800s and a request has been made to reintroduce it. To date, the Parish Council has been asked for evidence of the existence of it but has been unable to satisfy this request.

**The Village Notice Board** on Benningfield Green has been repaired by the Parish Council and repairs to the Parish Council Board are to be done, material for the two boards has cost £117.73.

**Lambs Gardens** –The problem of vehicles turning into Lambs Gardens is ongoing and a local survey has registered commercial vehicles turning into the Cul-de-Sac and having to turn around to leave , approximately one every other day. It is thought that SATs NAV is misleading the turning for that of Bell Lane a few yards further along to the north.

Clerk to enquire again if a suitable sign could be attached to the existing name plate at the entrance to the Cul-de-Sac.

**Village Pond** – Councillor Mrs Luck and Mr Scott Findlay (Farmer) have spoken regarding progress but it is too early in the year for work to begin. Local planting of trees looks good.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) – A letter received inviting Parishes to voice issues of concern regarding the local access to countryside, listed 12 possible ideas which could be improved. It was decided that Item 11 regarding Fly Tipping , and litter was our greatest concern which will be addressed to the County Council Rights of Way Service.

Correspondence continued.....

HAPTC (Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils) – Widford Parish Council was once a member of the association but due to the high cost of the Annual Premium and the duplicate of advantages with the Parish Council Insurance Company, (also a high premium) ,together with the fact that the information put out by the HAPTC is found in the Local Councils Update, for which a subscription of £65 is needed, it had been agreed to withdraw from HAPTC several years ago.  
***It was agreed at this meeting that no change should be made.***

**Hertfordshire Village of the Year Competition** – Widford had not entered for several years as the Categories for the competition had not been suitable for this village. However, there appears to have been a change to the categories and through the year, much has been achieved by the Parish Council, so it was considered it should be recommended at the Annual Meeting of the Parish due on 1 March.

**IB CDA Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January – Woolmer Green – East of England Rural White Paper.**  
Chairman to attend.

**Stop Harlow North** – an encouraging report received from the Secretary of the Stop Harlow North Group, speaks of the change of Government meaning two things, a) no second runway at Stansted and b) with the change in planning laws, we should be able to stop Harlow North – both have been ongoing for 10 years ! All is not yet over but East Herts Council maintains its total opposition to any development north of Harlow but it still has to publish its Preferred Option for development in the district later this year. There will be another consultation and we shall be kept informed.

## REPORTS

### POLICE

Mr David Kitching reported that there had been 1 crime committed in November and 2 in December, one of which was Criminal Damage.

PC Tracey Fagan is now on anti-burglary control – offenders are known to the police but have yet to found.

A speed indicator device is now in operation - if the speed is good , it shows a smile ! if speed is over the top, a frown will be seen !The Police will take note.

Local villagers will be invited to do this but will have to be prepared to become Police Volunteers, will need their own Insurance and will receive an 18 page document of explanation ! This will all be explained at the next Police meeting at the Manor of Groves on 19<sup>th</sup> January. It is considered unlikely that many applicants will come forward !.

February is to be an “Anti-Scam” month.

An increase in speeding Camera Crews is desirable. Possible cuts in staff is likely to see Countryside Police being unnecessary and the first to go., but a meeting with the Chief Constable which 25 Countryside Police attended , appeared to have the desired effect that they were needed !

COUNTY COUNCILLOR Dr Beeching had submitted a written report.

*Herts Highways and the weather* saw staff out salting and gritting on Christmas and Boxing Days and through December a total of 28 times out salting (whereas normally overall 40 times through the winter,) covering 58 routes. A and B roads and one entrance/exit to a village and major bus routes were maintained.

East Herts Council helped clear some of the pavements.

Salt stocks at present 3700 tonnes and 9000 tonnes is expected in January.

Members of public may clear footways outside their property provided they are not left in a more dangerous condition than originally and are unlikely to be sued. Salt Bins are for footways and public highways not private drives and theft from a salt bin is a criminal offence.

*Theft* - !00 drain gully covers have been stolen and will cost £300 each to replace. Two sections of the metal parapet from Eastwick Road(A414) to Netherfield Road have been lost making it necessary to close the lane temporarily until they are able to make the parapet safe.

*Finance* – There will be a Council Tax freeze for the next three years - HCC is a high cost and a high quality authority in comparison tables.

To reduce costs and back office support means a reduction in some services. Need to save an additional £3.8m on planned so far this year. – from the next four years problems will be from inflation £30m, Demography..i.e.people getting older £12m..,learning and physical disability group £28m, extra pupil numbers £13m, Landfill tax £9.7m, Carbon reduction tax £3.m.

The report concluded wishing all a Happy New Year and good wishes for 2011.

Reports continued....

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR Mr Mike Newman

To commence the report, a reminder was given of how the East Herts Council operates.

*East Herts* is a sizeable area bordering Broxbourne, Stevenage, North Herts and Essex covered by 50 Councillors representing 30 wards within the District; a single seat ward comprises 2000 – 5000 electors, multiple-seat wards proportionately more.

Day to day responsibilities of the Council are performed by its staff based at offices in Hertford at Wallfields, and currently at Bishops' Stortford, but these are in process of being moved. All report to the Chief Executive (Anne Freimanis).

It was a surprise to learn that elected Councillors are treated very formally and respectfully, not as meddlers as might be expected! , and Councillors can have a real influence on the business of the Council. *Of the 50 Councillors*, 42 are Conservatives, 5 Lib/Dems and 3 Independent. The majority party chose the Leader of the Council (currently Cllr Tony Jackson) who selects an Executive (a Cabinet) of 6 Councillors. As in National Government, nearly all policy making is undertaken within the Executive, but the meetings are open to other Councillors and public and an opportunity is readily given for either to speak. Full Council meets every two months.

*Sub Committees* deal with the business of development control and licensing and a number of other sub-committees are constituted to scrutinise the business of the Executive. There are 75 seats on sub-committees and these are proportionately allocated to the parties. The three Independents have formed a group and so have some measure of choice on which sub-committee they sit. Mr Newman sits on the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Since his election, one Executive meeting and one Full Council meeting have been attended – notes from these meetings can be found on the EH website.

*Matters of recent interest:-* Disruption to waste collection due to icy weather before and after Christmas, All Councillors have been advised by Councillor Mike Carver to completely ignore any representation from interested parties, reiterating EH complete opposition to development in North Harlow. and an enquiry has been made regarding provision for Gypsies and Travellers, a) does the requirement for finding new sites still stand, ? b) are the studies to address the requirements defined by the previous government still valid? c) has planning to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers now been wholly subsumed into the Local Development Framework process ?

*A Rural Communities conference* is to be held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January.

The Chairman congratulated Mr Newman and thanked him for this report.

**IB Parish Plan**

The group had met on 9 December to agree the way forward on producing a user friendly form of the 65 page document that had emerged from the survey. It is anticipated that a public meeting is likely to be held in April.

So far of the £1000 allowed for the work, some £700.00 has already been spent and more money may be required to complete the task.

**IB Parish Paths Partnership**

Nothing to report other than the footpath maps have finally been produced and distributed. It was interesting to note that a Footpath map was top of the list in the Parish Plan survey requirements. A little work has been done on Fp 18 adjacent to the allotments.

**JB Playing Field**

The Zip Wire has been installed and tried out and considered good by some enthusiasts.

The Grant proposed by the Parish Council for annual grass cutting falls short of the amount needed by the preferred contractor and this will be debated at a meeting of the Playing Field Committee on 13 February together with the question of fund raising.

**FL Village Hall**

A busy year with several events organised. The accounts are in good order and stood at £13,000 at the end of September.

Copy of AGM Minutes and end of year accounts to be received from the Village Hall Secretary.

**IB Allotments**

Not much to report. Water turned off for the winter, pipe joints checked and in good condition. Four plots still available – 23 being worked.

AGM will be held in April.

It was noted that Camden Council has increased their rents from £70 to £120. Our rents are £8, £10 and £12.

**PLANNING**

**New application**

Hillside ,High Street, Replacement Chicken Shed. Parish Council had no objection (No listed building permission involved.)

**Decision**

2 Elia Cottages , Nether Street. – Single storey rear extension to replace conservatory.,

CP.December 2010

**FINANCE**

Cheques paid between meetings :-

Image Prints for Footpath Maps.....	£470.00
EHC...Fee for 2007 District/Parish Elections.....	£534.04
Dr Ian Brett..for material to repair to Notice Boards.....	£117.73

Cheques signed.....

Hugh O’Reilly.....for Welcome Pack.....	£165.00 +£28.88VAT.....	£193.88
Luke English .... Litter Picking.... 01/01/11 to 22/01/11.....		£ 76.32
Luke English.....Litter Picking....29/01/11 to 26/02/11.....		£ 76.32

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Mr Scott Findlay** – notified the Parish Council that in the event of a substantial fall of snow, (4”) he has been given the responsibility by the County Council to keep the roads clear in this area..

**Telephone Kiosk** –it had been noted that elsewhere, a disused telephone kiosk was being used twice a week for a book exchange. It was usually kept locked at other times.

**Grass Cutting – Widford Churchyards**

Now that Simon Foster had given up due to poor health, it is necessary to find a replacement. In agreement with the Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council, an advertisement is to be placed in the Parish Magazine for help.

**Mr Tattersall**

A member of public, had come across a delightful book of poems and stories written in 1863 by E A Buckmaster who had lived in Widford. – its title “My Native Village”. It was suggested passages might be used in the Parish Magazine.

**Letter re Fp16.from Mr James**

The content of the letter appeared to refer to Fp 17 ,currently being investigated between the County Council and the Diocesan Solicitor regarding its being recorded on the definitive map.The Parish Council has no input into this matter.

He was also concerned regarding pruning of the Crab Apple trees on Benningfield Green.

**IB** The Chairman to respond to the letter.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Double meeting :- Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council – 1 March. Village Hall 7.15pm  
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH.....8.00pm

**QUESTION TIME** There were no questions but one member of public said thank you for an entertaining and informative meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

Chairman.....

*Dr Ian Brett*  
1<sup>st</sup> March 2011

