

# Wheathampstead Parish Council

**26 February 2009, 19.30h**

Present Councillors:	K Stammers	(Chairman)
	A Brewster	
	J Burgess	
	G Clark	
	N Clements	
	D Hills	
	N Page	
	T Reason	
	J Turner	
	S Walford	
	A Waterfield	
	Julia Warren	(Parish Clerk)
	Press	0
	Public	0

The Chairman welcomed Tessa Reason to her first meeting as newly co-opted councillor.

## **122-09 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Begg (business commitment)

## **123-09 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

None

## **124-09 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor G Clark declared a personal interest in Minute 140 -09, as she is on Plans North of the District Council Planning Authority. The way she votes at Parish Council will not necessarily be the way she votes at District Council. Councillor K Stammers declared a personal interest in Minute 140-09 (application 5/09/0182) as he was the Chairman of Plans North when the original planning application for development of the site was considered.

## **125-09 MINUTES OF COUNCIL**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2009 were approved

**Resolved: 1 To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2009 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**2 With regard to Minute 48-09 Folly Fields Play Area, that a subcommittee of Playing Fields & Youth Chairman, Vice-chairman and Clerk be appointed to view and determine choice of equipment supplier and to authorise the installation.**

## **126-09 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The following committee reports were received:

Village Day Committee	4 February 2009
Highways & Public Transport Committee	10 February 2009
IT Sub-committee (min 55-09)	12 February 2009
Memorial Hall Management Committee	17 February 2009
Wheathampstead Pump Committee	24 February 2009
Rights of Way & Commons/Environment Committee	24 February 2009

In receiving the above minutes Members noted the pleas for assistance on Village Day, and the Memorial Hall Committee minutes 89 -09 - 91 -09 regarding internal works on lighting channels, audio loops and electrical cabling with thanks to Messrs Suggitt and Singleton for their assistance.

It was agreed to notify the Inland Revenue of expenses incurred by staff on behalf of the Council (eg items purchased over the internet and 'petty cash' type items as no petty cash system operates).

The lunchtime hiring of the Hewitt Room to the Patient Participation Group was agreed at the rate of £37. This is the standard meetings charge for use of the Hewitt Room and shared kitchen use (9 - 12am 2-5 pm, 7-10pm)

Committee chairmen noted the request for contributions to the Pump.

**Resolved: 1 To receive the reports of the following committees:**

<b>Village Day Committee</b>	<b>4 February 2009</b>
<b>Highways &amp; Public Transport Committee</b>	<b>10 February 2009</b>
<b>IT Sub-committee (min 55-09)</b>	<b>12 February 2009</b>
<b>Memorial Hall Management Committee</b>	<b>17 February 2009</b>
<b>Wheathampstead Pump Committee</b>	<b>24 February 2009</b>

**Rights of Way & Commons/Environment Committee** **24 February 2009**

- 2 Clerk to write to the Inland Revenue to request that expenses incurred on behalf of Council be repaid without tax penalty to the individual.**
- 3 PPG to be charged £37 for lunchtime hire of the Hewitt Room and shared kitchen use.**
- 4 Committee chairmen to provide a few paragraphs covering the activities of their committees over 2008-9 and future aspirations for the Spring Pump.**

**127-09 LEASE OF RECTORY MEADOWS & THE FERNERY**

The draft lease for the Rectory Meadows and Fernery had been received from St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance's solicitor. This had been referred to the Parish Council's solicitor, detailed comment and recommendations were awaited pending comparison with the 1981 lease. Concerns regarding lease renewal, and future ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the crinkle crinkle wall in particular were raised.

- Resolved:**
- 1 To defer consideration of the new lease pending response from Debenhams Ottaway**
  - 2 To appoint a sub committee comprising Chairman, Councillors Page & Turner and Parish Clerk to consider the response and report to Council.**

**128-09 OFFICE AND STAFF SECURITY**

Council agreed (Minute 46-09, 29 January 2009) that secure and limited access to the Parish Office was necessary. It further delegated details of hatch design, position, contractor etc to the Memorial Hall Committee which met on 17 February 2009 (minute 96-09).

- Resolved** **To approve the installation of an office hatch as determined by the Memorial Hall Committee at minute 96-09**

**129-09 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENTS & INTERNAL CONTROL**

Council agreed, at its Finance Committee meeting on 20 January 2009 (Minute 30-09) to assign 'ownership' to identified areas of 'risk' as defined by the risk assessment as agreed at Min 30-09.

Risk analysis was discussed, including the requirement for internal controls and internal audit.

- Resolved:**
- 1 That overall risk analysis be considered by Councillor Begg and the Clerk**

**2 That David Smy of HW Controls & Assurances LLP be asked, as in previous years, to conduct the 2008-9 internal audit following the NALC guidelines**

**130-09 NAMES OF COMMITTEES**

The Rights of Way and Commons Committee at its meeting of 16 December 2008 (Minute 3) recommended that its name be changed to Environment Committee. Minute 40-09 at January Council agreed a review of committee names.

It was noted that one of the Clerk's objectives set upon her appointment was to review the committee structure. The review of names was deferred pending review of structures

**Resolved: To defer any committee name changes pending a structure review.**

**131-09 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

Councillor Burgess wished to join the Village Plan Committee. Councillor Reason requested that she consider her committee membership at the March Council

**Resolved: That Councillor Burgess become a member of the Village Plan Committee.**

**132-09 VILLAGE DAY**

Village Day, themed as 'Before they invented the wheel' was planned to take place on 12 July 2009. This is the largest single community event run by the Parish Council and the committee was keen to see as much participation, in which ever means appropriate from councillors as well as public. Councillors were invited to consider where their individual strengths and interests lay, as well as personal availability- it being recognised that not everyone may be available on 12 July, and volunteer accordingly.

**Resolved: 1 That the Clerk invite the local police to the Village Day Committee meeting**  
**2 That the Village Day Committee create a rota for councillors to sign up upon**

**133-09 SWEEP OF STEPS & AREA AT BOTTOM OF MILL STEPS**

A quote to sweep the Mill Steps (steps/bin/path leading to waters edge next to The Bull Public House) 3 times weekly amounting to £1,170 has been received from SADC as requested at Minute 6, 27 November 2008 Council.

Members were requested to consider whether this additional revenue expenditure be incurred, including the frequency of sweeping.

**Resolved: Clerk to request additional information from SADC regarding Station Road, High Street and Mill Walk, including what SADC already swept, its frequency and costs**

#### **134-09 OFFICE IT**

At its meeting on 22 December 2008 (Minute 6) Council set a number of objectives for its new Clerk. These included a review of the office information technology systems. A report was brought to Council and this decision delegated (Minute 55-09, Council 29 January 2009) to an 'IT sub-committee) which met on 12 February 2009).

**Resolved: To authorise the office IT work as recommended by the IT Sub-Committee at Minute 84-09.**

#### **135-09 BUTTERFIELD ROAD – future Nature Reserve & parking areas**

The Council's solicitor has now received details of amendment to the work to be carried out on the "wedge" shaped land lying between the Development site and the retained playing fields. It is subject to the Landscape Specification and Management Plan which was Schedule 2 of the Landlord's works to be carried out. It is the area which will form the car parking area and "nature reserve" in due course. Debenhams Ottaway, solicitors seek Council direction.

**Resolved: Clerk to seek further information for consideration at next Council meeting**

#### **136-09 CONFERENCES & TRAINING**

Details of two relevant and useful (staff) conferences have been received:

CIPFA South East Spring Conference, 17 March, £50  
(includes the future for public sector finance, efficiency & innovation and technical update)

SLCC Larger Local Councils, 16-17 April, £310  
(includes promoting democracy, corporate governance, accounts including risk management, managing the Code of Conduct, opportunities and challenges of local government)

Given the need to be financially prudent it was suggested that attendance at the Larger Local Councils Conference be deferred to 2010.

John Young, Interim Head of Planning & Building Control at SADC had offered a training evening for councillors, at the Memorial Hall, to cover aspects of planning (eg material planning consideration, timetable for determining applications, processes, probity, enforcement). It is recommended that he be invited, at a mutually convenient near date, to WPC

- Resolved:**
- 1 That the Clerk attend the CIPFA SE Spring Conference on 17 March 2009**
  - 2 That the Clerk invite John Young to deliver a training evening for councillors**
  - 3 That neighbouring Sandridge and Redbourn Parish Councillors be invited to this training event.**

### **137-09 CIRCUS**

This was discussed at Minute 53-09 on 29 January. A verbal report collated local councils' regulations, various legislation and best practice in relation to animals to allow a decision upon the visit of Circus Tyanna.

- Resolved:**
- 1 That a circus including animals not be invited in the current year**
  - 2 The Clerk advise Circus Tyanna of this decision**
  - 3 That future consideration be given to restrictively allowing animals in visiting circuses**

### **138-09 BANK BALANCES**

It was reported that as at 31 January 2009 balances were:

Brocket View Drainage Account	4, 242.70
Current Account	5, 000.00
Premium Account	<u>187, 789.32</u>
	<u>197, 032.02</u>
Less unpresented cheques	16, 851.22
Cash at Bank	<u>180, 180.80</u>

**Resolved:** To note the report.

### **139-09 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

**Resolved:** To pay the accounts per February 2009 schedule amounting to £32,187.06 Nett

### **140-09 PLANNING**

**The following plans were considered:**

Project no 206017	Tesco Express, High St Wheathamp- stead	Proposed Traffic Regulation Order Loading bay & Waiting Restrictions
----------------------	---	---

5/09/0155	31 Long Buftlers	Loft & garage conversions plus side extensions
5/08/2698	126 Marford Road	Vehicle crossover
5/09/0171	9 Dawes Lane	Single storey rear extension & alteration to openings
5/09/0206	Thistledown Farm Bower Heath	Temporary permission of site of mobile home (resubmission following refusal of 5/07/0334)
5/09/0294A B	New Mill, Lamer Lane	Prior Approval – extension to existing agricultural barn

**Resolved Parish Council recommendation to SADC:  
NO OBJECTION**

**The following plan were considered**

5/09/0182	Wheathampstead Education Centre, Butterfield Road	Demolition of existing and redevelopment of site for the erection of 67 units of residential accommodation with associated estate roads, parking and landscaping. Detailed design of all buildings.
-----------	---	---

**Resolved: Parish Council recommendation to SADC:  
OBJECTION – RECOMMEND REFUSAL**

**On the grounds listed below and that a councillor, as agreed, be sent in person as representative of the Parish Council to put forward these views to the Plans North Committee.**

**Wheathampstead Parish Council believes that this application does not adequately address the reasons given for refusal of the first application (5/08/2204) by SADC, namely:**

- 1. The proposal would fail to achieve a satisfactory standard of public visual amenity for the development or adequate residential amenity for the future occupiers of dwellings within the site. Unacceptable harm, by reason of overshadowing or an overbearing impact and a perceived loss of privacy would result for existing occupiers adjoining the site within Butterfield Road and High Ash Road. Consequently, the development represents an overdevelopment of the site, due to the size, mix, layout and relationship of dwellings, failing to achieve an acceptable standard of environment. It is therefore contrary to the provisions**

**of Policies 5 (New Housing in Specified Settlements), 69 (General Design & Layout) and 70 (Design & Layout of New Housing) of the adopted St Albans District Council Local Plan Review 1994.**

- 2. The proposal would fail to provide for adequate landscaping and planting opportunities within the site area to provide for an acceptable standard of residential and visual amenities for the proposed development or to satisfactorily assimilate it into its surroundings. It would also endanger the existing mature trees at the rear of unity 43-45, the loss of which would be considered harmful to the amenities of the locality and contrary to the provisions of Policies 69 (General Design & Layout) and 74 (Landscaping and Tree Protection) of the adopted St Albans District Council Local Plan Review 1994.**
- 3. The failure to provide for adequate landscaping and screening measures within the site area along its southern edge would result in harm to the character, appearance and openness of the adjacent land to the south that lies within the identified Metropolitan Green Belt. Such a proposal would therefore be contrary to the provisions of Policies 5 (New Housing in Specified Settlements), 69 (General Design & Layout) and 74 (Landscaping and Tree Protection) of the adopted St Albans District Council Local Plan Review 1994, which requires the integration of development with the existing landscape and normally seeks the provision of additional landscaping.**
- 4. The proposal in terms of its proposed layout and parking provision would adversely affect rural roads in Wheathampstead and be likely to result in conflict between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians within the development prejudicial to the interests of highway safety. The proposals would conflict with the provisions of Policy 34 (Highway Considerations in Development Control(i) and (iv)) of the adopted St Albans District Council Local Plan Review 1994.**

**Wheathampstead Parish Council further notes:**

- 5. the need for more extensive archaeological investigations prior to any building consent**
- 6. the need for Ecological consideration in terms of both slow worms on site (WCA 1981 as amended Sect 1, Sch 5) and trees particularly that planted by the Queen Mother when the Butterfield Road School was opened**
- 7. the limited amount of car parking bays and inadequate public transport alternative to private vehicles**

