

# Wheathampstead Parish Council

**25 June 2009, 19.30h**

Present Councillors:	I Begg	Chairman
	J Burgess	
	G Clark	
	N Clements	
	D Hills	
	N Page	
	T Reason	
	J Turner	
	S Walford	
	Julia Warren	Clerk to the Parish Council
	Press	0
	Public	2

## **360-09 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors A Brewster K Stammers and A Waterfield.

## **361-09 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Mr R Adams spoke of St Helen's churchyard wall which was falling into disrepair and his suggestions for its improvement. He offered his support for the construction of polytunnels on allotments sites and his understanding that these met planning criteria.

Mr Adams advised that he had submitted his report on the A505 '6 million' action to North Hertfordshire District Council and Luton Borough Council, and invited councillors to consider their response to the potential chaos which could arise if accidents occurred simultaneously on the M1 and A505. Also with regard to transport he believed that a significant element of NIMBYism existed for the proposed Rail Freight depot

## **362-09 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Clark declared a personal interest in Minute 382-09, 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 Clements declared a personal interest in Minute 374-09 (request from his wife) and in Minute 380-09 as this is his profession

## **363-09 MINUTES OF COUNCIL**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 28 May 2009 were approved

**Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 28 May 2009 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

### **364-09 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The following committee reports were received and receipted:

Planning Committee	8 June 2009
Playing Fields and Youth Committee	9 June, 15 June 2009
Village Day Committee	9 June 2009
Village Plan Committee	15 June

In receiving the draft minutes of the Playing Fields Committee of 15 June Members noted (Minute 349-09) that Councillor Burgess had adjusted the gate on Brocket View, treated it with wood preservative and added a hasp. A quotation to renew the two gate posts had since been received which was referred to the next Playing Fields Committee.

In receiving the draft minutes of the Village Day Committee of 9 June Members noted and approved the final designs for the new Parish Council website, which would be officially launched at Village Day.

In receiving the draft minutes of the Village Plan Committee of 15 June Members noted and approved the recommendation that committees have a standing agenda item to update progress against targets in the Village Plan. (Minute 358-09).

#### **Resolved:**

- 1 To receipt the Minutes noting the updated reports of**

<b>Planning Committee</b>	<b>8 June 2009</b>
<b>Playing Fields and Youth Committee</b>	<b>9 June, 15 June 2009</b>
<b>Village Day Committee</b>	<b>9 June 2009</b>
<b>Village Plan Committee</b>	<b>15 June</b>
- 2 To approve the website design**
- 3 To approve the recommendation of the Village Plan Committee for each committee to review progress against targets in the Village Plan**

### **365-09 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

To note and approve the recommendations from the informal meeting held on 8 June, namely: that each committee review it's structure and scope; to consider whether it should be a committee or working group and to hold a further ad-hoc meeting to discuss the individual committees?.

- Resolved:**
- 1 To note the report and approve the recommendations:**
  - 2 Committees to review their structure and scope**
  - 3 Committees to consider whether they should be a committee or working group**
  - 4 Clerk to arrange an informal meeting of councillors to discuss committee structure changes with a view to confirmation at Council**

### **366-09 APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES**

Until a revised structure could be agreed, as at Minute 303-09 and 365-09 the status quo was agreed.

- Resolved**            **To maintain, temporarily, the status quo until an alternative structure were agreed**

### **367-09 APPOINTMENT TO NOMANSLAND JOINT COMMITTEE**

St Albans District Council had advised that 2 appointments from Wheathampstead Parish Council be made to the Joint Committee. It was agreed that if there were more than two nominations a vote be undertaken, each councillor having two votes. The two councillors with the most votes would be appointed.

Councillors Hills, Page and Turner were nominated. Each was then invited to indicate how they might represent parish views in the event of heated debate and divided perspectives.

Councillors Page and Turner were elected by majority vote.

Councillors spoke of their concerns regarding the new composition of the Nomansland Joint Committee (determined by SADC on 17 June), particularly that Harpenden councillors were not representative given that the Common was partly within Harpenden's parish.

- Resolved:**    **1 To appoint Councillors Neil Page and Jacqueline Turner as representatives to the Nomansland Joint Committee.**

- 2 Clerk to write to Mr Lovelady expressing disappointment over the composition of the NJC and enquiring whether consideration had, or could in the future be given, to a representative from Harpenden Town Council.**

### **368-09 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

A quotation for a 3 year fixed price contract to continue the provision of Christmas lights – maintenance, installation and removal - had been received from Lamps and Tubes Illuminations. Consideration of alternatives were discussed, including hiring a cherry picker and driver and in-house installation/removal. It was agreed that the clerk should confirm the arrangements made for Christmas lights provision by adjacent Harpenden Town Council and St Albans District Council. Following discussion, it was further agreed that a do-it-yourself option should not be progressed but alternative suppliers sought for comparison and referred to the Highways and Public Transport Committee. Where possible local businesses would be approached. The budget for this would not exceed £6,500. Christmas lights are provided under LGA 1972 s144.

- Resolved:**
- 1 Clerk to ascertain arrangements made by Harpenden Town Council and St Albans District Council for Christmas lights provision**
  - 2 Additional quotations for a comparable service be obtained by recognised suppliers including local businesses**
  - 3 That the budget for this not exceed £6,500**
  - 4 That the decision for supplier/contractor be devolved to the Highways and Public Transport Committee**

### **369-09 BUTTERFIELD ROAD PAVILION – RESUBMISSION FOR PLANNING APPROVAL**

It was reported that the pavilion at Butterfield Road – a portacabin used as a football changing facility, being a temporary structure had limited planning permission. A decision was necessary as to whether to seek renewal or to lapse the permission and remove the structure. Councillors Brewster, Chairman of Playing Fields and Youth Committee (in her absence) had advised that she supported renewal. The facility is provided under the Local government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19. The Clerk had informally sought advice from SADC planning department and was advised that a further temporary permission was worth pursuing. A design and access statement would be required to support the application and this process had been discussed.

Estimated costs would be in the region of £400. Discussion followed and whilst planning application fees were set by SADC it was hoped that architects services might be negotiated. Since the pavilion was currently used solely by the Wheathampstead Wanderers FC it was hoped that a club member / parent might assist.

- Resolved:**
- 1 To note the report**
  - 2 To submit a renewal of the planning application to SADC**
  - 3 Clerk to ascertain whether Wheathampstead Wanders FC could assist with the application.**

### **370-09 INSURANCE**

The insurance contract with Zurich was due for renewal and a new 5 year fixed price contract had been received (updated for fidelity guarantee per audit recommendation and to include accident cover for volunteers). A single year option had been requested and received and alternative providers approached. It was noted that a detailed review of insurance cover/requirements had not been undertaken

- Resolved:**
- 1 To note the report**
  - 2 That the Clerk sign the 5 year fixed price contract with Zurich Insurance**
  - 3 That a detailed review of insurance provision be undertaken within the year.**

### **371-09 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SIGNS**

It was reported that WPC had been approached by Mrs Gatehouse of Neighbourhood Watch to erect 20 Neighbourhood Watch signs on lamp posts in specific areas. Councillors wished to support the initiative but in the absence of staff resources, and following enquiries to the community safety team at SADC it was reported that signage could be undertaken by volunteers. Such work was subject to health and safety conditions such working in pairs and signage above 7feet. The Clerk had to date obtained a verbal assurance from Hertfordshire Highways that Neighbourhood Watch signage would not fall foul of flyposting regulations. A discussion followed considering the detail of securing the signs and Councillor Burgess offered to assist. Support may be provided under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s31.

- Resolved:**
- 1 To note the report.**
  - 2 Clerk to contact Mrs Gatehouse supporting signage in principle, advising her of the support available from SADC community safety team and volunteer assistance from Councillor Burgess**
  - 3 Clerk to obtain written permission from Hertfordshire Highways for Neighbourhood Watch signs to be erected on lampposts**

**372-09 TRAINING**

Councillors were asked to consider a number of courses/conferences for the development of councillors and staff. The half day HAPTC conference was expected to become over booked. It had been identified for early booking due to the emphasis in the Village Plan upon shops and businesses. For each conference the prices given were per person. These included early booking discounts ILCM/SLCC and NALC (30% and 10%) respectively and estimated accommodation costs. All would be funded from the training budget.

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had successfully completed and obtained her BA (Hons) Local Policy degree through distance learning study at the University of Gloucestershire. It was noted that as per her contract she would be awarded one scale point. Councillors congratulated the Clerk upon her achievement and presented her with a bouquet of flowers in recognition of her accomplishment. Funding was from the administration budget (LGA 1972 s112).

- Resolved:**
- 1 To approve attendance at the following and book to obtain discounted rates:**
  - 2 14-16 July ILCM annual conference/SLCC summer seminars - £300 Clerk**
  - 3 4-5 Sept NALC Annual conference - £450 (Chairman & Clerk)**
  - 4 18 Dec HAPTC Business Matters Conference - £45 (Chairman, Cllr Clements & Clerk)**
  - 5 To congratulate the Clerk on obtaining her BA (Hons) degree in Local Policy**

**373-09 ABBOTT JOHN MEWS**

In the absence of the Vice chairman the Chairman reported that Councillor Brewster and the Clerk had met with SADC to discuss the spelling of Abbott John Mews – specifically one or two ‘t’. No definitive response had been obtained regarding whether a charge would be incurred by WPC should a renaming consultation be undertaken.

The pub had used the spelling ‘Abbot John’ as identified in archived photographs. Councillor Brewster had spoken to residents of 9 of the 11 properties of the Mews and established that their major concerns were ensuring that signage clearly marked the road as a ‘no-through road’ and white line marking the entrance to the road as it is somewhat concealed from through traffic. Other concerns included tree pruning. No one questioned was particularly concerned about renaming to Abbott John.

- Resolved:**
- 1 Clerk to formally request the renaming to Abbott John Mews with no charge to WPC**
  - 2 Cul-de-sac signage and white lining to be referred to Highways and Public Transport Committee**

### **3 Pruning to be referred to Rights of Way and Commons Committee**

#### **374-09 USE OF COUNCIL FACILITIES**

The use of Council facilities including correspondence received (and previously circulated) was considered. The need for equality and consistency was discussed for both usage of the Memorial Hall and more generally. It was agreed that a subcommittee of the Finance Committee be established to review and establish charging policies be set up. This would meet at the earliest appropriate time initially and in future annually pre January Finance Committee. Chairmen of charging committees would be invited to join. A de-minimus level was agreed and the Chairman of Rights of Way and Commons (charging currently only for rent of the Forge) opted not to be included

The specific requests were then considered. As previously for events booked but not advised of pricing structure a discounted charge would be applicable: Friends of St Helens School- ball £200 (discounted from £460). The cat seminars would be permitted at the comparable charges subject to Mrs Clements undertaking to clean the premises afterwards, and for the cat shows discounted to £100 for those currently booked (Note Cllr Clements declared a personal interest in the matters raised by his wife and took no part in the debate).

Wheathampstead Playgroup had asked for free use of the Hall (17 July) for their teddy bears' picnic with childrens' entertainer if inclement weather made the playing fields unsuitable. It was agreed that a nominal fee of £10 be charged should they require the facilities, subject to a prompt exit at 1.30pm before the 2pm regular hall booking, and liaison with the toddler group who met Fridays until 11.45am.

A request to allow fireworks on the playing fields for a wedding celebration booked in Spring 2010 was discussed in detail and declined.

- Resolved:**
- 1 That a fees and charges sub committee comprising Chairmen of Council, Allotments Committee, Memorial Hall Committee, Playing Fields and Youth Committee, and Village Day Committee be set up and its first meeting called as soon as practicable**
  - 2 That the Friends of St Helens School be charged the discounted rate of £200 for their ball in November 2009.**

- 3 That the Wheathampstead Playgroup be charged £10 for the use of the hall for their teddy bears' picnic on 17 July if poor weather precluded the free use of the playing fields. This was subject to their negotiation of start time with the toddler group and a prompt end time of 1.30pm.**
- 4 That cat seminars may continue at comparable rates to previous events and cat shows already booked discounted to £100. Future cat show events would be at 'market rate'. This was dependent upon the organisers continuing to clean and disinfect as they have always previously done.**
- 5 That the Clerk advise that fireworks would not be permitted for a private wedding party**

### **375-09 FUNFAIR**

The Playing Fields and Youth Committee on 15 June had agreed Mr Amer's request to bring the family fun fair to Wheathampstead for the week commencing 21 June 09 (Minute 349-09). Mr Amer had subsequently asked for a change of date to 19 -26 July 2009, and also for 20 -27 June 2010 .

**Resolved: That Amer Amusements fun fair be permitted 19-26 July 2009 with charges and conditions as agreed at Minute 349-09, and that they also attend on 20 - 27 June 2010**

### **376-09 USE OF BOWER HEATH**

A request had been received from a small company of first time film makers to produce a film upon Bower Heath during August 2009. Details of the plot were given as well as information on film crew and cast numbers, the equipment they would bring etc, and an undertaking to provide the necessary insurances and risk assessments to Council. It was clearly understood that this is public space so members of the public could not be excluded.

The need to inform the residents was discussed and that the company would be expected to leave the Heath in the condition it was found.

Councillors agreed to the film project. This was to be subject to sight by WPC of insurance and risk assessments, that no damage being done to the Heath, that the company inform, in advance, the local residents of the venture, and that credit be clearly attributed to the location of Wheathampstead and to WPC's facilitation.

**Resolved:**

- 1 To approve the use of Bower Heath as requested during August 2009 for filming subject to**
- 2 Appropriate insurances and risk assessment**

- 3 The Heath was not damaged, littered etc and left as found.**
- 4 Notification to local residents by film company outlining their plans**
- 5 Non intrusive use of Bower Heath, ie acknowledging it was a public open space and public had rights of access**
- 6 Credit was clearly acknowledged by the film company to the locality and Wheathampstead Parish Council's facilitation**

### **375-09 VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE**

It was noted that volunteers were now covered within the insurance policy

**Resolved: To note the report**

### **378-09 VILLAGE DAY TASK ASSIGNMENT**

The task assignment schedule had been previously circulated. Councillors confirmed their availability. The importance for councillors and volunteers to report on time was agreed.

**Resolved: 1 To note the report**

### **379-09 APPROVAL OF 2008-9 ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN**

The draft annual return with governance statement and accounts had been previously circulated. This was discussed and unanimously approved including line by line confirmation of the governance statement. It was noted that the carried forward figure from 2007-8 for box one of the annual return was £160,744 as clarified by BDO Stoy Hayward, external auditors.

**Resolved: That the Chairman and Clerk sign the Annual Return sections 1 and 2 as presented on behalf of Council.**

### **380-09 BANKING**

It was reported that better interest rates could be obtained by investing in a fixed term bond compared to the deposit account, currently this amounted to approximately 0.5% above base rate. Councillor Clements declared a personal interest in this and took no part in the debate. Such bonds were offered at limited time periods. Treasury deposit accounts did not offer as high rates. The option of remaining with Barclays or diversifying was discussed. It was agreed that when available the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk would determine an appropriate amount to invest in a Barclays bond.

It was noted that staff were currently paid monthly by cheque. It was agreed that staff be offered the option to be paid their standard salary by monthly standing order on 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. Any payments, such as reimbursements, expenses or if applicable overtime, would continue to be paid by cheque.

- Resolved:**
- 1 To authorise the Chairman, Vice chairman and Clerk to invest when appropriate in a Barclays bond**
  - 2 To offer staff the option to be paid their basic salary by monthly standing order on 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.**

### **381-09 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The schedule of accounts for payment amounting to £25,932.33 had been circulated.

- Resolved: To pay the accounts per June 2009 schedule amounting to £25,932.33 Nett**

### **382-09 PLANNING**

Councillor Clark, as chairman of Planning Committee, took the chair for this Minute.

It was reported that within the terms of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Persimmon Homes Ltd was appealing on 8 July 2009 regarding the Education Centre in Butterfield Road.

The following plans were considered:

5/09/0937DC	1-7 Hill Dyke Rd	construction of bin stores
5/09/0936DC	8-15 Hill Dyke Rd	construction of bin stores
5/09/0909DC	1-7 Beech Cres	construction of bin stores
5/09/0910DC	2-8 Beech Cres	construction of bin stores
5/09/0915DC	43-49 Hewitt Close	construction of bin stores
5/09/0934DC	9-23 Allen Close	construction of bin stores

5/09/1111LB	Ayres End Barn, Ayres End Lane	LB consent – internal alterations including removal of internal wall adjacent to utility room, creation of opening for door and fire shutters between kitchen and reception room and insertion of steel beams and poles to support chimney above kitchen
5/09/1043	Heath Cottage, Marshalls Heath Lane	Erection of pool house
5/09/1104	79 Necton Rd	Single storey extension & conservatory

**Resolved: Recommendation: No objection**

The following plans were considered

5/09/0911DC	8-32 Beech Cres	construction of bin stores
5/09/0919DC	9-23 Hewitt Close	construction of bin stores
5/09/0913DC	18-24 Hewitt Close	construction of bin stores
5/09/0914DC	35-41 Hewitt Close	construction of bin stores
5/09/0935DC	33-47 Allen Close	construction of bin stores

**Resolved: Recommend Refusal of grounds that this is an intrusive position**

5/09/1120	35 Marford Road	Conversion of single storey side extension to form self-contained residential unit
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**Resolved: Recommend Refusal**

### **383-09 FARMERS' MARKET**

The chairman, on behalf of the vice chairman, reported that no firm decision had been made regarding the future of the Farmers' Market. At the meeting held on 23 June consideration was given to a pilot market in the Memorial Hall car park. This and other options including the need for consideration of current Sunday lettings of the Hall and football pitches were to be referred to the Farmers' Market steering committee.

**Resolved To note the report**

**384-09 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED**

Councillor Clements gave a report on the District Council about the 2010 parish conference and the HAPTC AGM at Woolmer Green where the main speaker had been Rosie Sanderson explaining the relationship between the LAA and LSP

**Resolved To note the report**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 22.10.**

**Dated this day of 2009**

**Chairman**