

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on 28th August 2008 in the Memorial Hall, Marford Road.

Present: Cllrs. K. Stammers (Chairman), I. Begg, J. Burgess, G. Clark, N.D.Clements, D. Hills, L. Hobden, N. Page, J. Turner, S. Walford & A. Waterfield.

Apologies for absence: Cllr. Brewster (holiday)

In Attendance: The Clerk, Mrs. B. Green

Declarations of Interest: These would be taken if the occasion arises.

Minutes of Previous Meeting – These had been circulated and read. Amendments were made to:-

Item 10) – penultimate line the words should read “in any future lease or amendment to a lease, a deposit sum should be held for the full length of the lease”.

Item 13 c) should read ‘Mayor’ not major.

Item 15) committee reports 13th line should read covered by ‘the Parish Council’ logo.

Verbal report from Cllr. Clements – add the words ‘first increase in 11 years to the wording of the annual subscription of the St. Albans Association of Local Councils.

The minutes were then adopted.

- 1) Meads Underground Cable – This is now progressing to the stage of applying for a wayleave.
- 2) York Stone Cleaning – This will be cleaned if a request is made. Members were not happy with the way this matter has been dealt with by the District Council. Cllr. Begg proposed that a letter is sent to the Chief Executive requesting the York Stone be cleaned immediately. After a week a strong letter be sent to the Chief Executive stating the Councils grievances, seconded Cllr. Burgess. Agreed. Copies of letters to go to our three District Councillors.
- 3) Clerk’s Salary – The Chairman proposed an increase in the Clerk’s time to 37 hours and move up on the salary scale from point 31 to point 36, which had been agreed by the working party. The Assistant Clerk’s salary to be increased by the same percentage 31-36 produces for the Clerk and hours increased to 23 hours a week. He reported that Mr. Thatcher had contacted him and told him that he had made a mistake in the grades he had recommended and that the job should be LC2 not LC3. Members were not happy with the report from the Chairman and asked that they all be given a copy of the job evaluation. Cllr. Clements proposed that a vote should not be taken this evening and that all members should have all the information, seconded Cllr. Turner. Vote in favour 8 Agreed. Cllr. Page proposed that the report from Mr. Thatcher and minutes of the working party be circulated to all members and that the working party should show how it arrived at its decision. Also confirmation of the mistake by Mr. Thatcher. Cllr. Burgess proposed that an extra-ordinary meeting of the Council be arranged to discuss this item, seconded Cllr. Hobden. Vote 9 for 2 against. Agreed. Members to receive copies of the salary scale sheets.
- 4) Clerk’s Retirement/Appointment of new Clerk – Committee Cllrs. Hills/Clements/Begg/Stammers/Page/Hobden/Turner. The advertisement will appear in the Welwyn Times and Herts Advertiser at the beginning of September.

- 5) Freedom of Information Act – Model Publication Scheme for Local Councils
Details of this scheme had been circulated to all members. The purpose of the scheme is to be a means by which local councils can make a significant amount of information available routinely, without waiting for someone to specifically request it. The scheme is intended to encourage local councils to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness and transparency. Cllr. Clements proposed that we adopt the core elements minus the optional extras, seconded Cllr. Hills. Vote 9 for 1 against 1 abstention. Agreed.
 - 6) Changes in the Standard Committee Procedure – Interest in indemnifying Councillors
Cllr. Page declared a pecuniary interest and signed the book.
Discussion followed and Cllr. Clements declared he would make it a major topic at the Local Councils meeting and report back. Cllr. Waterfield proposed that Cllr. Clements should obtain more information and report back, seconded Cllr. Turner. Vote –all in favour. Agreed.
 - 7) Village Sign – Nothing further to report. Clerk to chase up.
 - 8) Butterfield Road Playing Field Lease – Cllr. Begg stated that he had not made personal criticism about the signing of the lease.
Clerk to contact our solicitor and ask him to answer the questions we had requested in June.
 - 9) Sandridge Forest – The Chairman, Clerk and several members had attended a meeting at the Memorial Hall to hear about the proposed forest from the Woodland Trust. This forest would be planted on land adjacent to Nomansland Common stretching back to Sandridge and across to the railway line. The Woodland Trust is urgently seeking funds to purchase the land.
Cllr. Walford proposed that the Parish Council makes a contribution towards the purchase of this land, seconded Cllr. Hills.
An amendment was proposed by Cllr. Turner – to be added to the proposal – “at some time in the future when the Council feels it is appropriate”, seconded Cllr. Page. Vote on amendment 6 in favour 2 against 3 abstentions. CARRIED.
Vote on the full proposal, “That the Parish Council makes a contribution towards the purchase of the land at some time in the future when the council feels it is appropriate”. Vote 5 in favour 2 against (Cllr. Burgess who wanted his vote recorded against) and 1 abstention Cllr. Begg who also wanted his vote recorded.
- Cllr. Stammers declared an interest in the next item as he lives in Marshalls Heath Lane, Cllr. Waterfield proposed that he stay in the chair, seconded Cllr. Clements. Agreed.
- 10) Heath Cottage – Signing of right of way for access purposes over Marshalls Heath Common. Cllr. Waterfield proposed that Cllr. Stammers, Chairman of the Council, should sign the Rights of Access Agreement, seconded Cllr. Page. Vote 10 in favour 1 abstention Cllr. Begg who wished to see the agreement. Cllr. Begg would like all future documents (i.e. leases agreements) to go to all councillors.
 - 11) CORRESPONDENCE
 - a) Letter from Rumble Sedgwick advising of rent increase for the Glebe land at Marford (allotment field). Clerk to arrange a meeting with the agent.
 - b) Noted invitation to an Art Exhibition on 12th September from The Mayor, 7.30pm – 10pm in the Council Chamber.

The Chairman stood down from the meeting and Cllr. Clements took the chair for the next item.

- 11) c) Letter of complaint (circulated to all members) from Mr. Adams regarding his treatment by the Chairman recently.
Cllr. Turner proposed that the Chairman should write a letter to Mr. Adams stating he was extremely sorry for any distress he may have caused him and regretting the incident, seconded Cllr. Walford. Vote. Agreed.
- d) Noted e-mail from Friends of Nomansland (circulated to all members). Cllr. Begg proposed that a member of the 'Friends' be invited to talk to members before the next Parish Council meeting at 7pm, seconded Cllr. Burgess. Vote – all in favour. Cllr. Page thought that information could be provided in advance of the Rights of Way meeting on 9th September.
- e) Noted the Oxfam Herts Hike details 20th September.
- f) Invitation to Scouts AGM on 16th September at 7.30pm. The Chairman would be attending.

12) COMMITTEE REPORTS

Village Day 5th August – The minutes were presented by the Chairman and accepted with one correction – 2nd page end of line 2 the word 'day' to be added.

Allotments Committee 18th August – The Chairman presented the minutes which were accepted with one alteration. Item 8) add the words "not be" financially and delete the words from after 'financially'.

Plans Meeting 20th August – The Chairman presented the minutes which were accepted.

Highways Committee – Notes of a meeting 20th August. The notes were accepted. A meeting to be arranged with residents from Necton Road and Marford Road.

Memorial Hall Management Committee 26th August – The Chairman presented the minutes.

a) Building works – Cllr. Clements declared that he pays rent to T & B Builders.

b) Alcohol Licence – An application for an occasional licence is being sought. The police have sent in a list of eight requirements they would like the hall to meet which includes CCTV covering the bar area and the entrance doors.

The hall committee must alter its rules of hire to incorporate details such as "No alcohol to be sold to under 18's", "children not in bar area" etc.

The Chairman will contact the police and speak to them about their requirements.

Cllr. Turner proposed that Cllr. Stammers should undertake training for a Personal Licence Holder, seconded Cllr. Clements. AGREED.

A new set of procedures to be adopted by the Hall Committee and this will require the booking forms to be amended.

A member of the Dramatic Society to be co-opted on to the committee.

Cllr. Turner proposed that the Chairman should be authorised to take all necessary steps to address this issue, seconded Cllr. Hobden. Vote in favour 9. Agreed.

Request from the Guides to use the hall. It was agreed that the guides could use the Hewitt Room on a Friday evening and the Green Room if preparations is going on.

Agreed to let the Guides use the Hall for a trial year at the same rent as they are paying to the scouts.

The minutes were accepted.

Verbal report by Cllr. Clements.

12) Cllr. Clements continued.....

13th August Parking Working Party – The blanket ban on verge and pavement parking with nominated exceptions is illegal. Three experimental areas for a small ban have been set up in Colney Heath and St. Albans.

20th August Plans Committee of HAPTC – review of the East of England Plan.
Response to Consultation on closure of Rural Post Offices.

The outcome of general action has not resulted in a net saving at all.

13) Play Equipment – Cllr. Turner Chairman of the Playing Fields reported on quotations received to carry out repairs to Parish Council play equipment requested in the RoSPA report.

Cllr. Turner requested that the amount of £919 be paid for the repairs to the twin fly apparatus in the senior play area, seconded Cllr. Hobden. Vote all in favour
SO RESOLVED.

14) Youth Activities – Noted that the mobile skateboard from District Council will be coming to Wheathampstead probably in October. The summer play scheme was a big success.

15) PLANNING

5/08/1915

Whitepightle Wood, Sauncey Wood Lane, Harpenden
Demolition of existing & erection of detached dwelling

Cllr. Stammers proposed Recommend Refusal overdevelopment in the Green Belt seconded Cllr. Turner. Vote 7 in favour. Agreed.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL

Overdevelopment in the Green Belt
(use same working as before)

5/08/1758

Wheathampstead Lawn Tennis Club, Marford Playing Field
Variation of Condition 2 (extension of hours of use of floodlights from 0800-2030 to 0800-2200)

Cllr. Turner proposed “no change” recommend refusal, seconded Cllr. Hobden
A recorded vote was requested in favour of recommend refusal.

For - Cllrs. Clark, Clements, Hills, Hobden, Stammers, Turner, Walford

Against – Cllrs. Begg, Burgess, Page, Waterfield. 7 for recommend refusal 4 against

RECOMMEND REFUSAL

16) Accounts for Payment – The attached accounts were presented for payment. SO RESOLVED.

17) Audit 2007/08 – The Clerk had been asked to remove the VAT from the audit. This had been done but the Clerk is now £416 out on the balance sheet. She will send this to the auditors with an explanation together with other papers requested.

Meeting ended at 10.35pm.