

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 30th October 2008 in the Memorial Hall, Marford Road.

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

Apologies for late arrival: Cllrs. Hills & Walford

In Attendance: The Clerk, Mrs. B. Green

Declaration of Interest – Declared by Cllr. Clark Cllr. she is a member of the District Planning Authority. The way she votes at Parish Council will not necessarily be the way she votes at the District Council.

Adoption of minutes of Parish Council meeting of 25th September – RESOLVED that the minutes which had been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Adoption of Special Parish Council meeting 21st October – RESOLVED that the minutes, which had been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Public Speaking – Mr. Adams was disappointed that the campaign to retain Butterfield Road School did not come to a satisfactory end for the village. He was unhappy that Persimmon Homes would now be building houses on the site and thus bringing more children into the area. Referring to the traffic cameras along the Lower Luton Road, he told members that the charges made using evidence from them was unenforceable. He further felt that the Council should have appointed a local person to the position of Clerk, it should be local jobs for local people. He could not understand why the Memorial Hall Roof was costing so much money.

Mr. David Fawcitt, Amwell Farm. He lives in one of the new houses on this land and has a right to use the lane leading to Amwell Farm. The track across the Common to the houses needs repairing and he and his neighbours would like the Parish Council to undertake the work. Cllrs. Hills & Clements had seen the area referred to.

Mr. Partington was concerned that Redbourn and Wheathampstead are the only villages around which pay for their PCSO. The cost of £15,000 is shared by the two villages. He felt the Parish Council had been misled. He suggested the Council request a refund for the loss of service whilst the Redbourn PCSO was away from her post.

Cllr Turner asked whether S. O. 66 (Exclusion of the Press and Public), should be invoked and the Chairman ruled not.

- 1) Appointment of New Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (Minutes of 21st October 2008). Mrs. Warren had accepted the position offered to her but stipulated she would like the Council to support her with the continuation of her studies for the Degree in Local Government. Also she wished to commence in January after her holiday. There was discussion on the change which would be coming to the Council and also the point scale for Local Council Clerks (as approved by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services). It was proposed by Cllr. Turner, that the Clerk writes to Mrs. Warren and confirms that Wheathampstead Parish Council will honour the annual leave arrangements that she has already made and accepts her continuing with her degree. We also appreciate

1) continued.....

that by appointing her we have voted for change and that members will support her in effecting this change. The Council confirms that it will pay point 38 including increment for qualifications she will bring with her, after 6 months satisfactory performance the salary should go to point 39; this was seconded by Cllr Hobden. The Chairman reminded the Council that Mr. Thatcher had made a mistake on the grades and thought it should be LC2 and not LC3.

Cllr. Turner referred to item 3 of the 28th August minutes – the clerk's salary where the Chairman had first made this statement. She then read from an e-mail she had received from Mr. Thatcher in which he stated that he had not changed his mind about the grading of the job but had made a mistake on the income levels. In the e-mail Mr. Thatcher stated that it was still his view that the job was LC3.

Cllr. Turner declared that Cllr Stammers had not given members the correct Information.

Cllr. Turner left the meeting stating that she had no confidence in the Chairman and invited others to follow her. Cllrs. Brewster and Hobden also left the meeting.

Cllr. Begg asked the Chairman whether he wished to comment on what Cllr. Turner had said.

The Chairman proposed that having received satisfactory references for Mrs. Warren, the Wheathampstead Parish Council offer her the position of Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer at point 38 starting on 1st January 2009 with a review towards the end of March and a further review at the end of June, seconded Cllr. Clements.

Vote in favour 6 1 against

Cllrs. Hills & Walford arrived during this item.

Cllr. Brewster rejoined the meeting.

- 2) Meads Underground Cables – Further documentation regarding existing wayleave has been passed to the Parish Council's solicitor.
- 3) Trees overhanging Mill Walk in the grounds of McIntyre Home – The Christmas lights have been removed but McIntyre Homes cannot afford to carry out the tree work. (Note: The trees are over the Mill Race and are also in the Conservation Area). It was agreed that this matter be referred to the Rights of Way and Commons Committee who would obtain quotations for the work.
- 4) York Stone Cleaning – The Council has been informed that the stone paving will now be cleaned on a monthly basis.
- 5) Clerk's Gratuity – Members were informed that the bond had lost £5,000 since August. Cllr. Waterfield proposed that the Bond be cashed in, seconded Cllr. Burgess. Vote in favour 8 Against 0 Abstentions 2.
Action – Clerk to write to Mr. Clements.
- 6) Assistant Clerk's Contract of Employment – This was signed by the Chairman. Cllr. Clements proposed that the Assistant Clerk be paid at the rate of LC2 36 for the month of December as she would be deputising because the new Clerk would not be in place until the beginning of January, seconded Cllr. Brewster. Agreed unanimously.
- 7) Changes in the Standard Committee Procedures – This indemnity could be added to our policy with Zurich.
- 8) Signage around the Village – This subject had been drawn to the attention of the Highways and Public Transport Committee in February by the WPDS

8) continued.....

(Wheathampstead and District Preservation Society). Cllr. Burgess thought a meeting between the committee and WDPS should be arranged. Cllr. Waterfield agreed. Cllr. Clements announced that the WDPS would be invited to attend the Highways Committee meeting on 18th November.

- 9) Village Sign – Now waiting for this to be finished.
- 10) Butterfield Road Playing Field Lease – The Parish Council solicitor has not answered the question raised by Cllr. Begg. The Clerk will pursue this matter. Cllr. Hills was interested to know the costs involved so far.
- 11) Glebe Land – Rectory Meadow – Clerk has received correspondence from the land agent informing her he will be contacting her in February time.
- 12) Sale of Office Printer – The Chairman reported he has this in hand.
- 13) Enforcement by Bylaws, a Consultation – Cllr. Clements reported that the only change in the system is that the final approval of any by-law will now be handled locally rather than the secretary of state. There is no need for Wheathampstead to respond to the Consultation Document.
- 14) Renaming of Waddling lane to Abbott John Mews – Cllr. Page proposed the Parish Council pays the District Council £450 to have this road renamed, seconded Cllr. Burgess. Agreed.
- 15) Village Plan – All the data had been entered. A meeting of interested parties to be organised. (Action Clerk).
- 16) Representation of the Annual Return for year ended 31st March 2008
The Clerk presented the Annual Return (copied to all members) and it was signed by the Chairman.
- 17) Period of time for Retaining Council/Committee Notes of the Clerk – Cllr. Clements proposed they are kept for 13 weeks, seconded Cllr. Brewster. Vote 6 in favour 2 against. So Agreed.
- 18) CORRESPONDENCE
 - i. Letter from Mr. David Fawcitt informed the Council that the proposed works to the track are prohibitive to the residents and asked the Parish Council for financial assistance. There is no money budgeted for the work in the current budget. Cllr. Page proposed that the Council did not think a farm track should have a tarmacadam surface, seconded Cllr. Waterfield. Vote 5 for - 0 against - 4 abstentions. So agreed.
 - ii. Correspondence from Mr. Stocker queried the fact that the Parish Council is the owner of the stretch of Down Green Lane between the grass triangle and the old Three Oaks pub. He also wanted to know whether the track leading to Amwell Farm and on passed Cutts Cottage is a public right of way. Letter to be passed to Rights of Way and Commons Committee and Highways Committee. Mr. Stocker to be advised.
 - iii. Letter from Mr. Coombs who thought there should be a wide track through behind the Cricket Pavilion, past Silverlands to the junction opposite The Wicked Lady. Letter to go to the Rights of Way and Commons Committee. Mr. Coombs to be advised.

18) continued.....

iv. Letter from Mid Herts Golf Club querying who is responsible for installing Dog Waste Bins on Gustard Wood Common in front of the old Tin Pot PH, also would the Parish Council install a litter bin and pay for its emptying. This is not Parish Council land. Letter to be passed to Rights of Way and Commons Committee. The Golf Club to be advised.

v. Letter from HCC regarding the stopping up of footpath next to 29 Garrard Way.

Cllr. Hills declared an interest as a County Councillor and signed the book.

Cllr. Page reported that there are electricity cables under this path. He proposed the Parish Council objects to the stopping up of this footpath, seconded Cllr. Burgess. Vote 5 for - 3 against - 1 abstention. Cllr. Page will provide information to the Clerk next week to reply to this letter.

vi. Three letters has been received from Mr. Adams and in one he informed the Council that a new ATM machine had been installed at the old Barclays Bank building. He had pressed Barclays Bank for this. His other comments related to the Lower Luton Road and the old Butterfield Road school on which he had spoken earlier. His other comments related to the expensive repairs to the Memorial Hall roof. Clerk to acknowledge his letters.

vii. E-mail from Mr. Tofts (St. Albans Market Manager) requesting the use of a small part of the Memorial Hall car park for the Farmers Market. Passed to Memorial Hall Committee.

viii. To note receipt of the following:-

To note invitation to the 17th AGM of the Community Meeting Point Harpenden – 10th November, 2pm at Marlborough House in the High Street; Copy of the 2007/08 Annual Report of North Herts Homes; Notification that the Government will seek Parliaments approval to move the 2009 local elections to the same date as the European elections; Details of Grant – max £20,000 min £3,000 from ACRE; Appeal by Knight Homes Ltd for Vale Garage site on 26th November, 10am at St. Albans District Council, Civic Centre.

19) The Chairman reported that the funeral service for David Evans, a past Parish Councillor, would be on Monday 3rd November, 10.30am in St. Albans Cathedral.

20) Peer Monitoring Programme – Members were advised of the Mentoring Programme being introduced by NALC. Members agreed that this programme should be in the day time. Clerk to advise NALC.

S/O The Chairman asked to a 15 minute extension

21) Cllr. Brewster asked if there was any news on the East Lane car park survey. The Clerk would make enquiries.

22) Letter from Cllr. Brewster to the Chairman – defer to next meeting.

23) Chairman reminded members of the Remembrance Day Parade on Sunday 9th November. Members to meet at 10.30am in Church Street.

24) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Plans Committee – 13th October 2008

The Chairman presented the minutes which were adopted herewith.

b) Village Day Committee – 22nd October 2008

The Chairman presented the minutes which were adopted herewith.

24) continued.....

c) Cllr. Brewster reported that the Youth Club was proving very successful and that an enjoyable weekend had been had on a narrow boat. The visit by the mobile skateboard had been very well supported by 8-13 year olds. Watford Football Club now has mobile floodlights for use at the evening training sessions.

d) Cllr. Clements reported on the outside meetings he had attended:-

30 September – Scrutiny Committee – Special Expenses

He objected strongly to St. Albans deciding such matters without involving the parishes or Harpenden and was promised that no changes would be implemented before the local councils had had an opportunity to make their points. (See below).

7 October – St. Albans Association of Local Councils (ALC)

Discussions covered many topics, but mainly the issues of the District Council tending to ignore the “First Tier” of local government ; “special expenses” mechanisms and the objective behind the legislation; and indemnity arrangements to cover the cost of defence against a charge of infringing the Standards legislation provided that the person charged was found not to be at fault. Further information (quotations) is being sought on the last of these.

8 October – Standards Committee

A highly technical meeting during which we considered the make-up of the various “Hearing Committees” (there are 260 variations) and a matter of jurisdiction between Standards and Audit areas of primacy.

13 October – LLACC 9London Airport Consultative Committee)

Helicopters passing near Luton but not landing are being investigated by NATS. Currently aircraft that fly “off track” are not being fined – this was referred to a sub-committee for report at the next meeting.

14 October – Meeting with HCC Highways Engineer

Chasing various works that have been promised including the 40mph zones on Marford and Codicote Roads (all legal steps complete; the zone should be operative within weeks but we are waiting for the signs to be made!). Dangers on The Hill, Lower Luton Road, Leasey Bridge/Cherry Trees and other roads were discussed. Arrangements for meetings covering the junctions of Necton Road with Marford Road (public – 19th November) and all matters relating to Wheathampstead House (4th November) were concluded.

15 October – Car Parking Working Party

Details of the verge-parking bans on Harpenden Road, Watson’s Walk and in Colney Heath were discussed. There are no developments concerning Wheathampstead.

16 October – Special Expenses Working Party

16 October – LSP Board (Local Strategic Partnership)

At the conclusion of the meeting on special Expenses, Cllr. Clements joined the LSP Board to help finalise arrangements for the LSP Conference (see below).

17 October – Parish Conference

Although there was nothing new and no new ideas were brought forward, the fact that a much wider “audience” heard the arguments than previously was an advantage. The one major development is that the “Parish Charter” (previously blocked by the District Council despite objections by all of the local councils) is now to proceed – apparently with the backing of Daniel Goodwin. The next conference will probably be held in April although both the date and the venue are uncertain.

(N. B. This was originally thought to be in addition to the Parish Liaison Committee. Since it is apparently to replace the old committee, radical changes to format are needed to give the parishes more input to the programme, rather than having it all decided by St. Albans District Council and its staff).

22 October - Highways JMP (Joint Member Panel)

Mostly routine matters or matters not affecting Wheathampstead (such as speed restrictions near the Pre Hotel). The poor state of roads throughout the district (and the county) was raised but no hope of imminent improvement was offered.

Many roads in this parish are due to be treated during the current or next financial year in addition to the work already carried out (such as footway work on The Hill and Wick Avenue, “slow” markings on our main roads etc.).

Outside the meeting Cllr. Clements checked the mechanism for restricting speeds on the new estate (off Butterfield Road) to 20pmh.

24) continued.....

23 October – LSP Conference

The theme of the conference was to determine what the area should be like in twenty or fifty year's time.

This all-day meeting concerned itself primarily with “green” and “global warning” issues although we were able to press the point that St. Albans is not a single community but a number of discreet communities based on the city, the town and the villages that make up the city and District of St. Albans.

25) PLANNING

5/08/2232 Land in front of 1 & 3 Palmerston Drive
Change of use from public space to private garden area
RECOMMEND REFUSAL

5/08/2218 73 Necton Road
Change of use garage to living quarters.
RECOMMEND REFUSAL
Loss of parking with additional parking to be deplored.

5/08/2410 6 The Broadway, Gustard Wood
Two storey side and rear and single storey side ext.
NO OBJECTION (6 in favour 2 abstentions)

5/08/2317 6 Burton Close
Two storey rear ext. and alterations to openings
NO OBJECTION

5/08/2400 Lamer Lodge, Lamer Lane
Removal of conservatory and outbuildings and erection of rear orangery
NO OBJECTION

5/08/2412 St. Helen's Church of England School, Brewhouse Hill
Single storey ext. with glazed entrance canopy and external glazed canopies
NO OBJECTION

Cllr. Begg left the meeting before discussion of this plan

5/08/2265 7 Old Rectory Gardens
Single storey front & rear ext. two storey side ext & alterations to openings.
NO COMMENT
As the applicant is a member of this Parish Council.

26) Accounts for Payment – The following accounts were passed for payment, (see separate sheet), including the reimbursement to Cllr. Stammers.

The meeting closed at 10.45pm