

## WHEATHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on 31st July 2008 at the Memorial Hall, Marford Road, Wheathampstead

Present: Cllrs. K. Stammers (Chairman), I. Begg, G. Clark, N. D. Clements, D. Hills, L. Hobden, N. Page, J. Turner, S. Walford, A. Waterfield and Cllr. Burgess with apologies for late arrival.

Apologies for Absence: Cllr. Brewster (holiday)

In Attendance: The Clerk, Mrs. B. Green

Declarations of Interest – These to be taken if a matter so arises.

Adoption of minutes of Previous Meeting – The minutes had been circulated and read. Cllr. Hills proposed an amendment be made to item 16 – Butterfield Road Development Centre/Playing Fields Lease. Add the words “Cllr. Begg was unhappy that Cllr. Hills, a County Cllr. had been involved with the Lease negotiations. Also that he had signed the lease along with the Parish Council Chairman”, seconded Cllr. Walford. Vote 4 in favour, 1 against, 3 Abstentions. AGREED.

- 1) PCSO - Service Level Agreement – Inspector Hanson, who was attending the Meeting, reported he was very grateful that the Council had agreed to pay for Jo Merritt’s post. This means she will continue to be the village PCSO for two years. Cllr. Turner proposed that the Parish Council agrees to pay £7125 per annum for a PCSO for two years and that the Service Level Agreement be signed by the Chairman, seconded Cllr. Hills. Inspector Hanson stated that at the current time this could be extended. PCSO funding is under discussion with HCC. Vote 8 in favour 2 abstentions.
- 2) Cllr. Turner presented the minutes of the meeting of the Police Liaison Group, which were accepted. It was noted that Crime Levels are down this year in the village.
- 3) Nomansland Committee – At the meeting last evening (30<sup>th</sup> July), Cllr. Page was elected Chairman and Cllr. Turner Vice Chairman. Grazing on the Common was defeated three to one. (Two of the other members of the committee had left the room).
- 4) Meads – Underground Cables – Nothing further to report.

**Cllr. Burgess arrived at 7.48pm.**

- 5) York Stone Cleaning  
Cllr. Begg declared an interest as he has a business in the High Street. The York Stone – both sides of the High Street and Station Road – is expected to be cleaned shortly. Clerk will also check whether the ‘Quay’ is cleaned regularly.
- 6) Clerk’s Salary Update – The Chairman announced that a report had been received from Mr. Thatcher. He stated that Mr. Thatcher’s account was £1,159. Cllr. Turner proposed that this be paid, seconded Cllr. Clements. Agreed.
- 7) Village Sign – Cllr. Clements reported that there would be no problems with the utility services or sight lines with the area where the sign will be erected. The total

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cost for two panels + bar and brackets will be £3870 + VAT. A local contractor would need to install the signs, the cost of which should not be excessive. Cllr. Clark proposed that we go ahead and purchase the sign, seconded Cllr Turner. Vote 7 in favour 2 abstentions. Agreed. SO RESOLVED.

- 8) Butterfield Road Playing Fields Lease – Nothing to report.
- 9) Victorian Post Box on The Hill – The door is now back and has been painted.
- 10) Rainbow House Nursery School – It was proposed by the Chairman that the sum held for two years – as per the agreement signed with Mrs. Smith – be returned with interest. The Nursery School had complied with the agreement. There was concern that in any future lease or amendment to a lease, a deposit sum should be held for the full length of the lease. Vote 10 in favour 1 abstention.
- 11) Signing of Tennis Club Memorandum – This covers the rent increase for the next (5) years. Cllr. Turner recommended this be signed by the Chairman, seconded Cllr. Clements. Vote 9 in favour 1 abstention. Agreed. SO RESOLVED.
- 12) Clerks' Retirement – The Clerk had advised the Council that she will be retiring at the end of November. It was agreed that a committee be set up to decide on a job description for a new Clerk and reach a conclusion on the salary for the current Clerk. Committee will consist of Cllrs. Stammers, Turner, Page, Waterfield, Clements, Hobden & Begg.  
Cllr. Turner proposed that the Parish Council pays for a baby sitter if necessary to allow Cllr. Hobden to attend the meetings, seconded Cllr. Begg. Vote 6 in favour 3 abstentions. Agreed.  
First meeting to be on 5<sup>th</sup> August after the Village Day meeting.
- 13) Correspondence
  - a) The Chairman reported that Cllr. Oxley had sent an email requesting, under the Freedom of information Act, details of the negotiations regarding the lease of the Butterfield Road Playing Fields. The Chairman had taken legal advice and been told that to provide some of this information could cost about £700. Cllr. Oxley had been made aware of this fact. At the present time Cllr. Oxley is not proceeding with this request.
  - b) Several e-mails have been received regarding the fencing of the river Lea along Long Meadow. Cllr. Page, as Chairman of the Rights of Way and Commons Committee has replied to the senders. Note The public only has the right to walk the footpath through this field.
  - c) Letter of thanks received from the Deputy Mayor thanking the Council for inviting her to Village Day which she had enjoyed (e.m.a.m.).
  - d) Noted a letter of thanks from the Cricket Club for its grant (e.m.a.m.).
  - e) Letter of complaint regarding parking on the Marford Road by parents of St. Helens School children passed to the Highways Committee.
  - f) St. Helens Churchyard Wall – Letter received from Revd. Doye explaining about the urgent repairs now needed to the churchyard wall. The letter advised that when the works are undertaken it is likely to require restrictions and possible temporary closure of the respective footpaths for a period. Also work will be undertaken with the co-operation of the local highway authorities. The church would be asking the Parish Council for funding and it hoped that the Council will consider this in the 2009 budget. Lastly the Parish Council was asked to nominate a member to sit alongside

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the Church's project group. This member would have access to early information about the proposals and be the link person between the church and the Parish Council. Cllr. Burgess declared an interest as he undertakes tidying/clearance work in the churchyard.

Cllr. Begg proposed that Cllr. Burgess should be the Parish Councils nominee for the committee, seconded Cllr. Page. Vote 5 in favour, 3 abstentions. Agreed.

g) E-mail request from the MacMillan Nurses for a banner to be displayed in Wheathampstead advertising "The Worlds Biggest Coffee Morning". Members agreed this should be allowed near the Abbot John mound but not tied to the trees, it must be staked.

h) Letter notifying the Parish Council of the intention to plant a forest at Sandridge bordering on to Nomansland received from the Woodland Trust. Noted.

i) Noted letter from East of England Plan – consultation on draft project plan be submitted by 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Clerk has responded.

j) Necton Road – Cllr. Clements informed members that a reply from Hertfordshire Highways relating to Necton Road/Marford Road has been received and this has been passed to the Highways Committee.

14) Planning – None to hand.

15) Committee Reports

Allotments Committee 9<sup>th</sup> June 2008 were presented by the Chairman Cllr. Walford and accepted.

Rights of Way and Commons Committee 24<sup>th</sup> June were presented by the Chairman Cllr. Page and accepted.

Village Day Committee 7<sup>th</sup> July were presented by the Chairman Cllr. Waterfield and accepted.

Highways and Public Transport Committee 23<sup>rd</sup> July were presented by the Chairman Cllr. Clements and accepted.

Cllr. Clements reported a letter of thanks had been received from Mr. Tizan of Four Limes. Also that a letter from Hertfordshire Highways relating to Necton Road/Marford Road had been received and will come up at a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> August. Hertfordshire Highways has suggested the blue "P's" indicating parking at the Memorial Hall could be covered by the Parish Council logo.

Planning Committee 23<sup>rd</sup> July were presented by the Chairman Cllr. Clark and accepted.

Verbal report from Cllr. Clements.

The annual subscription to the Local Council is to be increased to £90, first increase in 11 years.

The seminar organised by Zurich Municipal was very interesting and well worth attending.

There were many local Councils represented by Cllrs. and Clerks most of whom belong to the Local Advisory Service.

16) Christmas Lights Switch On – It was agreed this should again be the last Thursday in November which this year is the 27<sup>th</sup>. Clerk to advise installers.

17) Accounts for Payment – The following accounts were passed for payment with the exception of the one for Nicholls. New invoice to be requested (we had not ordered the sides and back for the gazebo).

18) Meeting closed at 9.03pm.