



MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AS HELD ON MONDAY 8 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM AT THE PAVILION, FRIENDLESS LANE

Number: 9/2023

Present: Cllrs Tim Parsons, Jane Timmis, Nancy Wild, Billy Pither, John Williams, Natalie Crowie, Jonathan Humbert

Also present: Caroline Freer – Clerk; County Cllr Terry Douris

1. **To receive and approve apologies;** Cllrs Boothman (course) Humphreys (unwell)
2. **To receive declarations of interest on agenda items:** Cllr Humbert (planning item for the dog walking paddock for which he left the building); planning item for Hill Farm (as he rents land from the farm owner)
3. **To resolve that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of December 11th 2023 are a correct record.**

Proposed by: Cllr Parsons
Seconded by: Cllr Humbert

It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th December 2023 having previously been circulated as a true and accurate record of the proceedings be duly signed by the Chairman. All agreed

4. **Co option of new Councillor** – Stephen Behr was welcomed to the Council and co-opted as new Councillor. He will bring insight from the farming community and he will be able to represent the interests of the Preschool.
5. **Public and press participation (15 minutes maximum).** Ruben Andrews, Chris Taylor – 82 Trowley Hill Rd, Clare Butterwell re Hill Farm planning app
Chris Taylor: speed of traffic on Trowley Hill Road – he is very concerned about the danger of speeding especially involving young children. Action: Contact Herts Highways via Terry Douris to consider having a 20 mph speed limit around the school (similar to the one seen in Potten End). Currently there is no signage to reduce speed coming up the hill and those who are on a cut through to avoid the motorway are less familiar with the village and possibly more likely to speed. Mr Taylor was also concerned that Westenders may take all their teams to Markyate.
6. **County Cllr Terry Douris to update the meeting:** Works on the M1 may result in some closures will be advertised.
Is an 20 mph possible around the school (see item above). Action: Cllr Douris to enquire.

7. Planning:

i) To consider new Applications:

1	23/02940/FUL Hill Farm, Little Woodend, Puddephats Lane	Construction of new barn with change of use to F1 (learning and non-residential institutions) to provide accommodation for C&G Plastering Academy	The Parish Council unanimously objects to this application for the following reasons: The site is in an AONB and such a large, unattractive building would be completely out of keeping in the landscape on the plot of a Grade 2 listed farmhouse which is of Heritage interest. This proposed building would be visible from some distance in particular from the Chiltern Way. Such a business located here is wholly inappropriate. The rural landscape must be maintained.
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			<p>The road off which the site is located (Puddephats Lane) is narrow and dark, often flooded and access out on to this road from the access track to the farm could increase the danger to other road users and the many horse riders in this area. It is noted that there will be up to 30 more vehicle journeys a day which is a considerable increase in daily movements. There is no other means for the students to arrive at the training centre. There are no buses, cycling would be hazardous and there are no pavements, so walking is not an option. Strong objection.</p>
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ii) Planning applications received in last 6 days

1	<p>23/00694/RET Proposal: Retention of the change of use of two paddocks to secure dog walking areas</p>	<p>Retention of the change of use of two paddocks to secure dog walking areas</p>	<p>With regard to this application and as Cllr Humbert had declared an interest on this item, he left the building until all discussions were finished.</p> <p>The PC felt that the 2 paddocks should have been submitted as 2 separate applications due to the distinct differences in location.</p> <p>With further scrutiny of the location implications and the very valid objections of the neighbour who will be adversely affected by the operation of the second paddock the PC voted unanimously to object to the amendments in the application. It should not be used for dog walking at all. Reducing the number of hours in the second paddock would not mitigate any of the objections. Operating the paddock 7 days a week for 35 hours would offer no comfort. Therefore the very real objections from the near neighbour (who lives closer to the second paddock than the applicant) as well as the wider adverse effects to the immediate area, overrides all other considerations. These objections being: the constant noise and disturbance from barking dogs, noisy dog owners, cars arriving and leaving and their doors banging, the smell (dogs' scent cannot be picked up), the danger to grazing</p>
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			<p>sheep, the danger to and loss of wildlife and the disturbance to footpath users along the Chiltern Way.</p> <p>The PC notes also that there is no objection to the first paddock although it has been operating for 8 years without planning permission. Furthermore it was suggested that this paddock be split in two but the applicant said that even with a buffer between the 2 sides, the dogs would upset each other. As would be the effect on any grazing sheep in the field belonging to the neighbour by paddock 2.</p>
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iii) Planning Decisions taken by DBC

1	The Farriers, River Hill Refused	The hard stand parking area would have a greater impact on the spatial and visual openness than the originally approved landscaped garden area and would fail to preserve openness, be at odds with the aim of the Green Belt to keep land permanently open and conflicts with the purpose of including land within the Green Belt; namely to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The scheme for the hard stand area, car parking and loss of landscaped garden does not preserve or enhance the Flamstead Conservation area. The proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and there are no public benefits identified to outweigh the harm.
2	Hills and Coles	Granted
3	10 OWS	Granted

- 8 Police Attendance at Parish Council Meetings** - Cllr Timmis reminded everyone that we pay a Police tax, but we never see any representative from the Police at a meeting. Clearly it is essential that there should be more police presence. Action: Clerk to write to PCC David Lloyd.

Police Update received on request from PC Onyon:

- The Biggest issues across Watling Ward remain the theft from vans at the Premier Inn, Theft from Lorries at the Truck stop and thefts from the fuel station. These account for the vast amount of the thefts reported in the area with the victims all residing outside of the area.
- The anti-social behaviour that seemed to increase around the Halloween/Half Term period subsided in December. The CCTV on the Pavilion is a welcome help to tackle this.
- The Asylum Centre at the Holiday Inn remains. This has caused some issues around feelings of safety for women and girls in the villages. Although over the few years it has been there, no crimes related to the residents have occurred within the village. I have been patrolling at specific times, including when local church groups invite the hotel residents to events in the villages to try to increase the feelings of safety for all. The length of time that the centre remains, and its location are not a decision made by the local police.

- 9 Flooding issues in Flamstead:** The question was asked when were the drains/ditches being maintained? Apparently HCC did clean the gullies on 3 Jan 24. A new drain is required outside 1st Thatched Cottage at Trowley Bottom. Currently the cleaning is on a 6 month cleaning cycle. Thames water sewage works on the A5138; the Ver is one of the rare chalk streams in the UK – on Jan 4-5th, the sewage works discharged effluent for over 5 hours into the Ver. Action: PC to write to Thames water to see why this is necessary.
- 10 Working Groups:** Pavilion/Recreation Ground; Boot scraper is arriving on Friday and John Williams can install it. The Chairman brought up the subject of how the recreation ground should be funded. Currently the users of the rec pay to hire the pitches/cricket square, not to make any profit, but to cover costs. There are some suggestions that no one should have to pay to use the recreation ground and it should be funded entirely from the precept. Costs to maintain the rec range from £5,000 to £7,000 – so this would be added to the Precept, to be paid for by everyone regardless of whether you use the rec or not or whether you actually live in Flamstead (and therefore do not pay precept), as some recreation ground users do not live in Flamstead. This concept will be aired at the Annual Parish Meeting.
- 11 Budget to be signed off for the 24-25 financial year.** The budget for the precept had been circulated.
Proposed: Cllr Parsons to accept the budget as presented and agree to the precept figure of £40,773.00, a very slight increase of £1526 overall, or £2.52 per household.
Seconded: Cllr Crowie; all agreed
- 12 Warden:** report mattress on Hollybush Lane; 30mph sign on Hollybush Lane has been knocked down.
- 13 Finance:** To consider receipts and payments reports from 13 Dec to 8 Jan 2024 as circulated - To authorise payments by BACS as itemised; to consider expenditure against budget report and to sign off bank reconciliations and bank statements to month end @31 December 2023.
Proposed by: Cllr Parsons
Seconded by: Cllr Crowie
All agreed

14 Correspondence

The Clerk has announced that at some point this year she would like to retire so a new Clerk will have to be found. The position will need to shadow the Clerk for some time.

15 Agreed action/by whom:

	Actions from Jan Meeting	Results
CF	Letter to DL re lack of policing	Sent
TD	To request 20mph limit around the school	Request made
	Actions from Dec Meeting	
CF	Buy boot scraper	Done, JW to install
CF	Donation to Air Ambulance	Done
CF	Contact Cadent	Done. Cadent to repair verge
CF	Buy Toad signs	Done
JT	Ask re Community Asset at DBC	Done
JT	Advise TD re kerb by Hill Farm – flooding issue	Done
	Actions from Nov meeting	
JW/CF	2 mops and buckets for each changing room and 2 x cupboards 2 signs Home and Away for cricket teams Await Honours boards to put up	

CF	Hedge trim in Friendless Lane	Done
	Planning Enforcement matters	
JT	<p>Request updates on Enforcement Orders for: Shipping container in field on Abilea Meadows, Friendless Lane Barn on Cotton Spring Gates/barn – not enforced inappropriate gate for a wood yard. Stable at Wood End Farm – refused and has not been removed Newlands Wood – have been spoken to as they are selling parcels of woods for camping, encouraging camp fires – dangerous in woods etc. As they sell more plots they are being visited – drive in and park on road which is hazardous Chalkdell Cottages – container in field and other earth works</p>	<p>On-going Appeal has been lodged</p> <p>Semi hard core road to be challenged Ret planning app submitted</p> <p>Appeal lodged for stables Planning Enforcement – on it</p>

Cllr Tim Parsons
Chairman 8 Jan 2024