



MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AS HELD ON MONDAY 20 MAY 2024 AT 7.30PM AT THE PAVILION, FRIENDLESS LANE

Number: 2 /2024

Present: Cllrs Tim Parsons (Chairman), Jane Timmis, Nancy Wild, Billy Pither, John Williams, Jonathan Humbert, Stephen Behr

Also present: Caroline Freer – Clerk;
Members of the public

1. **Election of Chairman** and receive the Chairman’s Declaration of Acceptance of Office
Cllr Parsons (current chair) would like to resign having been a councillor for 10 years but is prepared to continue for another year and be shadowed by a successor.
Proposed by Cllr Timmis, seconded by Cllr Wild for Cllr Parsons to be Chairman. All agreed
2. **Election of Vice Chairman** and receive the Vice Chairman’s Declaration of Acceptance of Office; Cllr Parsons proposed that Cllr Humphreys be elected as Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Pither, all agreed.
3. **To receive and approve apologies:** Cllr Boothman, Cllr Crowie, Cllr Humphreys
4. **To receive declarations of interest on agenda items: No**
5. **To resolve that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of the previous meeting are a correct record.**

Proposed by: Cllr Parsons
Seconded by: Cllr Timmis

It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 22 April 2024 having previously been circulated as a true and accurate record of the proceedings be duly signed by the Chairman. All agreed

6. **Public and press participation (15 minutes maximum)**
7. **County Cllr Terry Douris to update the meeting:** Nothing to report
8. **Planning:**

i) To consider new Applications:

1	24/01023/FHA – Timbers , Hollybush Lane	Two storey rear and front extension and a single storey rear extension	<p>Posted: 28 May 2024</p> <p>The Parish Council felt that there was inadequate information in the proposal as the plans were difficult to follow.</p> <p>The neighbour (at River Hill View) is likely to lose privacy should the extension go ahead due to the obtrusiveness of the plans. There appears to be incorrect information regarding the measurements between the 2 houses which suggests other inaccuracies may exist. There is also the suggestion that the 45-degree line is not in place correctly and the upstairs line is not given on the plans.</p> <p>Overall it appears to be too large an increase for the size of the plot and because of the proximity to the neighbours their privacy would be compromised.</p>
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			Without being able to see the plans clearly and with the inaccuracies in the proposal, the Parish Council would at this stage be mindful to object.
2	24/00943/LBC - 8 Cheverells House	Remove existing timber window and replace with timber door and frame to include removing brickwork below the existing window	
3	Amended version of above application: 24/00943/LBC 8 Cheverells House	Remove existing timber window and replace with timber door and frame to include removing brickwork below the existing window	Posted 28 May 2024 No objections
4	24/00944/LBC – 8 Cheverells House	Alterations to the existing two en-suites off the master bedroom and bedroom 1 at first floor level	Posted 28 May 2024 No objections
5	24/00968/FHA: Kings View, Chad Lane	Construction of open car port	Posted 28 May 2024 The PC does not object to this proposal although there was a suggestion that the new car port was some distance from the main property, therefore it could be considered inappropriate development. For this the PC will defer to the planning officer to decide on this point, otherwise, no objections.

ii) Planning applications received in last 6 days

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iii) Planning Decisions taken by DBC

1	Granted	5 Trowley Heights, 5 Cotton Spring View, Bonners Farm
2	Refused – The Farriers, River Hill	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, retaining wall, car parking and loss of a large area of the previously approved landscaped garden does not preserve or enhance the Flamstead Conservation area.
3	Refused: Clanelan	The proposed building, by virtue of the increase in footprint, height, bulk and mass, would result in a materially larger building than the one it replaces, which would reduce the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt
4	Doone Brae – refused	Variation of conditions did not comply with planning docs

9 **Working Groups:** Staffing WG: A Working Group was convened to carry out the interviews for the Clerk's vacancy. It was agreed that Cllrs Parsons, Pither and Humbert would join the WG.

Action: Clerk to set time for interviews.

Luton Airport WG: The Secretary of State received the report on 10th May regarding the infrastructure upgrade to Luton Airport to allow 32 million passengers pa. We await his decision.

Noted that many roads will be closed around Luton during the Big Weekend Roadshow plus the County Show will have an effect on road congestion.

- 10 **Preschool Update:** Sushmita Dutta kindly attended the meeting to update the PC with latest news:

Since 1 April there is now funding for early years from HCC for 2 years olds up to 15 hours per week which helps with general financing. The USP of the Preschool is their flexibility of their service enabling parents not to have to commit to whole terms at a time. This however, does impact on reliability of cash flow. The AGM is on 4th June 5 pm at The Three Blackbirds, Cllrs Wild and Humphreys will attend.

Sushmita had a special thank you to Nancy Wild who has spent considerable time and effort improving the Preschool allotment. A Tesco grant allowed the purchase of new sleepers. A very kind anonymous donation was received to purchase new barrier signs at the village hall.

Cllr Wild asked:

Has preschool started aggressively marketing for September?

Has preschool thought about the scarecrow festival and the potential to advertise/make money from the event?

Are they making a scarecrow?

Are there fundraising events in the calendar?

Susmita explained that engagement with parents tailed off due to Covid and hasn't been the same since then so that is an area for improvement - eg the planned Big Dig for the allotment - this requires parental input.

The preschool did promote themselves at last year's Scarecrow Festival which helped increase awareness.

Other ideas for fundraising eg asking former parents for financial help.

There is a meeting before the AGM to discuss the above points and Cllr Wild will attend.

Thanks to Sushmita.

Cllr Parsons has also met with the villagers responsible for the other venues to look to seek a solution to providing the afternoon childcare provision. Cllr Wild voiced her scepticism as to whether there is the demand for afternoon sessions enough to justify the extra staffing costs.

- 11 **Unreliability of official household tips to take items** - Cllr Pither was unable to dispose of fence material at 3 consecutive household tips as they were all full. Their websites were not updated and in fact at Harpenden he was given the tale that the laptop used to update the website had been stolen. It could be that not everyone has the time or commitment to drive around the county looking for space at the tips and would therefore use the very popular lay-by option. If this is the state of the recycling centres, then surely they need to open for longer or offer a better service. Cllr Timmis to ask for costs of fly tipping retrieval from DBC. The Clerk had asked for this information which was not forthcoming.

- 12 **Affordable Housing Survey:** viewing of sites: Cllr Williams explained that he can visited the various sites that had been suggested on the survey. There are strict criteria for these sites which need to be level, ideally have no trees or hedges, to not impact on conservation/church views and have access. There were only 2 sites which had some potential but unless they would be bequeathed to the project or sold at a very low cost, this project wouldn't be able to get off the ground. The owners of the land will be

contacted to ascertain viability, but Cllr Williams felt that it looked unlikely that anything would come of it.

- 13 **Apply for new whips for verge erosion in Delmerend Lane** – to be minuted for September action
- 14 **Warden:** Weed killing of verges on-going
- 15 **Finance:** To consider receipts and payments reports from 23 April – 20 May 2024 as circulated - To authorise payments as itemised; to consider expenditure against budget report and to sign off invoices against payment report, bank reconciliations and bank statements to month end @ 30 April 2024. To agree to payments by BACS as per report presented.
Proposed by: Cllr Parsons
Seconded by: Cllr Humbert

All agreed

- 16 **Correspondence:** Flooding in River Hill; With regard to the disgusting state of the flood at River Hill which is thick with sewage - MP Mike Penning has arranged a meeting with Thames Water at the sewage treatment site.

It was asked whether there could be protests against Thames Water in collaboration with other communities who are suffering similar incidents especially in the other chalk streams in the UK. There is also the argument that what constitutes exceptional circumstances? Thames Water claims they are permitted to discharge raw sewage into the river network in “Exceptional Circumstances”. However, if sewage is being discharged continually for months on end, it can no longer be considered as “Exceptional” but “Normal” and therefore illegal.

PC Onyon has written to say he is leaving the role and there is at present no replacement. We go from having a Police Constable for the ward whom we saw at one meeting in 5 years to a non-existent replacement. At least we won’t notice the difference.

17 Agreed Action/By Whom

	Actions from April meeting	
CF/JT	Ask re fly tipping clearance costs	CF wrote to Cupid Gr – didn’t answer that question
CF	Set up Staffing WG for interviews	
	Actions from May meeting	
Cf	Minute whips for Delmerend Lane for September action	
	Planning Enforcement matters	
JT	<p>There is a Planning enforcement order at Newlands where all the plots of woods are sold and they have had tents and awning erected which disturbs wildlife Cllr Timmis is waiting to hear about the enforcement order re the track and they have also erected a metal gate and filled culvert to get access. All the best trees were felled before it was sold.</p> <p>Dog walking paddock: The second paddock is being withdrawn.</p> <p>Abilea Meadows – gone to appeal</p> <p>Cotton Spring – tbc, Woodend Lane stables: tbc; Chalkdell cottages – turned down</p>	

Cllr Tim Parsons
Chairman – 20 May 2024