

NEWPORT PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Tuesday, 14th April, 2020 by Zoom**

<u>Present:</u>	Cllr H. Bowman	(HB)	(Chairman)
	Cllr D. Alexander	(DA)	
	Cllr S. Ayles	(SAy)	
	Cllr C. Barnes	(CB)	
	Cllr O. Davies	(OD)	
	Cllr J. Emanuel	(JE)	
	Cllr S. Naik	(SN)	

In attendance:

Mrs C. Griffin	Parish Clerk
Mrs E. Edwards	Responsible Financial Officer
Dist Cllr N. Hargreaves	(NH)
Cty Cllr R. Gooding	(RG)

20/242 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr A. Gerard (private commitment)

20/243 To receive any ‘pecuniary’ or ‘non-pecuniary’ interests relating to items on the Agenda

The following non-pecuniary interests were declared:

CB in 251, 255, 256.1, and 260; SN in 255.4; OD in 255; SAy in 255.4; JE in 250, 255, 256, 257 and 258; HB in 248. 249, 250 and 251.

20/244 Public participation session (15 minutes available if required)

Residents had emailed the Clerk requesting that the following should be raised:

- JFAN Appeal - the possibility of a judicial review

SN reported that she had looked into the grounds for a judicial review. If the decision exceeds powers; it could be illegal, irrational, involve procedural impropriety, defy legitimate expectation and powers used for the wrong purpose.

Members felt that although they do not agree with the decision and feel the Inspector did not give sufficient weight to the cumulative impact of the proposals, the Appellants did follow correct procedure and have not done anything illegal. Therefore there are no grounds for a judicial review. NH pointed out that the Appellant would almost certainly claim costs and this could involve the PC in a great deal of money.

- JFAN's response to footpath maintenance of Whiteditch Lane

The Chairman and JE reported that they met with governors of JFAN and agreed that the PC would explore the possibility of using the £10,000, Section 106 money, for the new footpath. After this meeting we met with three officers from the ECC Public Rights of Way team and David Bentley, the JFAN Site Manager. We agreed to move the fencing and separate the path from the School grounds and resurface the path.

- Enforcement and escalating planning applications in Newport

Members confirmed that they are very happy with the way the Planning Working Group is dealing with the applications. A resident has already written to our MP, Kemi Badenoch, in relation to Whiteditch Lane and this letter will be sent to the Clerk for circulation to all members. JE said it is disappointing that after all the discussions over the last four years concerning over development, there has been no satisfactory outcome or remedy.

20/245 To receive a report from Special Constable Tom Morement

SC Tom Morement had sent the following report giving details of activity over the last month:

- Three parking offence tickets for dangerous parking
- Four Anti Social Behaviour patrols
- One speeding operation
- One warrant completed
- Two fraud investigations/interventions with good results and intel reports completed.

Crime rates are falling in Newport, however with more people now staying indoors due to the virus this should be taken with a pinch of salt.

I have been in and around Newport six times over the last month, however I have also been called to assist the County with the current virus situation so have not been around as much as I would have liked.

HB will contact SC Tom Morement regarding a complaint he has received about someone riding a quad bike.

Following a question regarding the incident of fraud, NH said he is aware of the people involved and they have been removed from the Facebook page.

20/246 To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Cty Cllr Ray Gooding had sent the following report and highlighted some of the issues:.

Whilst we have all been working from home over the last few weeks being a member of the Cabinet at Essex County Council has meant little respite given the current crisis. ECC is the lead authority for many of the issues relating to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the effect it has in the County. That includes Public Health, Adult and Children's Social Services, Education, Passenger Transport to name just a few but most importantly, dealing with and making plans for the consequential impact that the lockdown is both having now and in the future. It is evident and we have all heard about the impact that the virus is having on the NHS, the rate of deaths in Essex has risen significantly and indeed, one of our own Councillors, the much-respected Terry Cutmore from Rochford, sadly died two weeks ago. The dreadful fact is that he is just one of the 506 Essex residents that have died in hospital up until 13th of this month. It should however, be recognised that whilst there are currently approximately 2500 people in Essex hospitals suffering with Covid-19 there are also more than 17,500 elderly people in Essex care homes and the issue of Personal Protection Equipment is extremely important for the safety of carers and vulnerable residents not only within those care homes but also within the community where many carers and social workers visit people in their homes for essential support.

There is now a list of people waiting to go into care homes.

The closure of our schools within my portfolio has been particularly challenging. We have 217,000 children in Essex schools but at present less than 2000 are currently attending either because they are the children of Key Workers or because they have Special Educational Needs or are otherwise vulnerable. I would personally extend my thanks to the teachers and other staff within schools who have managed this drastic change, looked after those children who are at the schools and extended distant learning and safeguarding to all of the children.

There has been a significant increase in calls to social services and ECC is trying to get some children back into school.

It is that safeguarding that is particularly important and I am currently working with the Police, Youth Services and Children's care professionals to ensure that safeguarding is intact. It is interesting that Domestic Violence has been a concern in relation to families being cooped up for long periods but the major concern at this point is that whilst some women's refuges have had an increase in referrals, the police have seen a diminished number. That is clearly doubly concerning because of the fear that people, locked down within the home, may not get the opportunity to seek help when it is most needed.

I am working closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner who are endeavouring to set up a team of youth workers to help with younger children.

Aside from the social aspects of the lock down, the bus services are currently reporting that the passenger numbers have dropped to approximately 2% of the normal numbers and that is clearly having a significant impact on the viability of the operators. ECC are therefore continuing with the contractual payments to those operators, it is clearly important that they remain in operation so that they are able to return when all this is over.

In addition we have been closing country parks, dealing with issues concerning motor cyclists and PPE.

Highway work is continuing and scheduled repairs are still being carried out (road repairs are considered as Civil Engineering and are not part of the Construction shut down) albeit that it is envisaged that materials for resurfacing will be unavailable due to the shortage of supply.

That brings me to Whiteditch Lane and the progress that was being made between ECC and Pelham Structures. The agreement to do the necessary works that were previously agreed is still in hand albeit rather delayed at the moment because of all the issues that the Covid-19 crisis has brought – however, I am continuing my conversations with Pelham Structures in the hope that we can finally get this resolved.

I have spoken to Pelham Structures today (14th April) and work on Whiteditch Lane is still in hand. The agreement made with Pelham Structures is still in place. They would do the initial work on the lane and ECC would “top-off”, but the lock down is preventing physical work and the supply chain has closed down.

I will report back to the PC as soon as this can be progressed.

The Chairman thanked RG for his report.

Dist Cllr Neil Hargreaves sent a report prior to the meeting and highlighted some of the issues:

Local Plan

There is an officer recommendation to Council to withdraw the draft Local Plan and start again. An Extraordinary Council Meeting has been provisionally scheduled for 30th April for a decision. The draft document for the meeting lists the advantages of withdrawal, and the next steps, but fails to assess the very large increase in housing numbers which will be involved.. Housing numbers would increase from under 6,000 to between 12,000 – 15,000. These would be brand new site applications. I am working with officers and Cllr John Evans (who is chair of the Plan Working Group) to get this included so members can see a balanced picture.

It seems officers are reluctant to include the numbers in the document because they know how big the increases really are. Also, when the plan is withdrawn this will mean that all the A B and C settlements will be withdrawn and all future applications would be considered on their own merits.

JE pointed out that there is a lot of good information in the existing local plan which could be added to the adopted local plan. NH said this is our intention but no work has yet been done on this, however it will be raised.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Plan is now entirely with the examiner and we await his report and alterations to it. I forwarded to him the appeal result documents for JFA and Bricketts. In response he said he would be working on his report 'before Easter'. Most encouraging that the inspector who refused to allow an increase from 11 to 20 houses at Bricketts gave 'substantial weight' to our policies HA1 Coherence of the villages and HA4 Building in the Countryside. It is unusual to give such weight to a Plan not yet adopted. He also agreed with our criterion of 800m being the maximum distance to local facilities beyond which internal vehicle commuting happens.

Ward Member Initiative

Previously known as the New Homes Bonus, funds have been allocated to:

- A payment towards the cost of the Quinquennial architect's inspection of the church
- The parish council for provision of two new planters for the main road. These will be of the same cast iron design as those at Thaxted, and with the parish logo on them.
- Widdington for an event to mark 20 years since the village hall was built (the event is of course on hold)
- Quendon & Rickling to replace damaged posts on the Green and to restore the village noticeboards
- Uttlesford Citizens Advice Bureau. The implementation of Universal Credit and Coronavirus has caused a significant increase in the work load, and an increase in the complexity of the help requests.

Coronavirus

As many UDC staff as possible were switched to working from home, and teams for the many council functions split in two and segregated. Numbers in the UDC office have been cut to about 20 people, and council meetings switched to video. The government has asked councils to do extra functions such as making grant payments to businesses (£20m for UDC, of which as of last week about £9m has been paid to around 800 small businesses).

UDC is ahead of what the rest of the country is doing. UDC is also the government's storage and distribution arm for delivering food and essentials to vulnerable residents. Switching of council tax payments to bring forward the two 'free months' has also been done for those in need making the request. This is being covered as well as keeping core council services operating.

As Council taxes and business rates which are usually received at this time of year have stopped, Aspire have been asked to make the interest payment early.

The Chairman thanked NH for his report.

20/247 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 24th February 2020

It was resolved that the Chairman should sign the minutes as approved

Proposed: CB

Seconded: DA

All agreed

20/248 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 2nd March, 2020

It was resolved that the Chairman should sign the minutes as approved.

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: CB

All agreed

20/249 Chairman's comments

The Chairman said he is hugely impressed by the way the village is conducting itself and the way the PC is adapting.

20/250 To discuss and receive reports on the assistance and arrangements put in place during the Coronavirus (Codid 19) including:

1. The Parish Council

Everything seems to be running very smoothly.

HB thanked JE for organising the leaflets which were delivered to every house in the village and for arranging the policing of the Village Shop which took pressure off Alan Carr. Also thanks to Mike Hannant for helping the Village Shop with the distribution of orders in the village..

JE thanked NH for working out the sectors and maps for the whole village which helped tremendously with the distribution of the leaflets.

2. The Village Shop and Pharmacy

A vote of thanks was recorded for the tremendous amount of work being done by the Village Shop, the Doctors Surgery and the Pharmacy. Over 30 volunteers are manning the Shop and over 50 volunteers are acting as local contacts for each part of the village. We have been contacted by people from outside the village, referred by the Surgery.

It was suggested this could be followed up by a door knocking exercise by the team of volunteers.

A vote of thanks was recorded for the tremendous amount of work being carried out by the Doctors Surgery and the Pharmacy. This is very much appreciated by both people in the village and neighbouring villages.

RG drew attention to the “Shield” package which ECC is organising. Food parcels are being delivered across the county. The Doctors practices are dividing patients into different categories and sending out notifications of where to apply for additional assistance. If the PC is aware of anyone in the village who requires assistance I would urge you to let me know in order for this to be organised without being intrusive.

3. Other authorities

The PC will keep in touch with SC Tom Morement and other authorities/agencies when necessary.

20/251 To agree to cancel all public Parish Council meetings in accordance with advice from EALC and NALC and agree future meeting dates by Zoom

It was proposed that all public Parish Council meetings should be cancelled until further notice in accordance with the advice given.

Proposed: SN

Seconded: CB

All agreed

The organisation of future meetings, by Zoom, will be discussed after this evening's meeting.

20/252 To receive the Clerk's Report, circulated prior to the meeting

Duly received.

The Clerk reported that:

- The exhibition which was organised for Trivselhus was cancelled. Trevor Dodkins at Phase2planning is our contact during the lock down.
- A new “School Lane” sign has been ordered and the responsibility for the footbridge is being followed up with ECC. The Environment Agency will be asked to remove the debris which was cleared from the river at the bottom of School Lane.
- The damaged “Whiteditch Lane” sign has been reported.
- SC Tom Morement has advised that any Police matters must be reported initially to 101 in order to obtain an incident number, which will be picked up by him.
- The street lights which are out of order have been reported .
- The green garden waste skip which we organise to collect from the Allotments has been suspended for the time being.
- Our district councillors have kindly contributed to two new flower boxes for the High Street. The quotation for maintaining the existing four wooden planters is still not available.

- The height restriction bar for the recreation ground and new gate for the Common will be ordered once the lockdown is over. The Chairman confirmed that the installation work would be carried out by volunteers.
- No response has been received from Riga Property services regarding the amenity areas.
- All events organised for April have been cancelled until further notice.

20/253 To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Report and approve accounts for payment, schedule circulated prior to the meeting

Duly received.

The payment schedule showing 7 items, totalling £2,624.65 was approved.

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: CB

All agreed

Three more Invoices have been received – R & R Sagers (office rent), Parish Online (annual membership) and E-on (street lighting charges). The E-on bill is considerably higher than last year so this will be investigated.

The question of switching to on-line banking was raised. The RFO confirmed that this had been investigated previously but business rates would be incurred. NH pointed out the advantages particularly during the current lock down period. The RFO will look into this again when the current lock down is over.

The PC agreed to pay the staff as normal as they are currently carrying out all their normal duties.

Proposed: JE

Seconded: SAy

All agreed

20/254 To receive report/updates on Public Relations

To receive a further update on the website

The Clerk reported that her son has now downloaded all the data from the essexinfo website and it is now available on newportsex.org. A new photograph for the front page will be organised as soon as possible after the lock down. Information has been added regarding arrangements during the lock down and the Clerk's son will continue to do this and maintain the site.

As mentioned previously the PC documents need to be reviewed and included. This will be done as soon as possible.

20/255 To receive reports/updates on Planning

255.1 To receive an update on communications with Trivselhus

As reported earlier the Clerk has been advised that if she needs to contact Trivselhus during the lock down she should do so through Trevor Dodkins at Phase2planning.

255.2 To receive a report on the UDC Local Plan

This item had been covered in the report from Dist Cllr Hargreaves earlier in the meeting

255.3 To receive an update on Appeals

JE reported on the JFAN Appeal which has been allowed. The main concern is the proposed new car park which would be accessed via the playground. The PC have suggested these should be switched and the playground should become the car park. We continue to maintain a positive relationship with the Academy despite objecting to the plans. The Head, in his letter to parents, referred to the PC opposing the plans but pointed out that it was for sound reasons which was appreciated.

The Bricketts appeal for 20 properties was dismissed. The Inspector gave significant weight to our Neighbourhood Plan which was excellent news. Permission has been granted for 11 properties and we now await the outcome as the layout of the original plans was preferable.

Appeals for No.6 Belmont Hill and the Conifers, White Horse Lane, were dismissed..

255.4 To receive a report from the Planning working Group

JE reported that the group have worked on a number of applications since the last meeting.

UTT/20/0496/FUL Land to the North West of Whiteditch Lane (Charlotte's Meadow)(Comments by 6th April)

Erection of three dwellings and associated external works.

Comments- JE reported that the response was forwarded to UDC today (14th April) and is available on the website. The Chairman thanked JE for compiling a really professional response. JE said she is now using a format suggested by Geoff Gardner, Planning Consultant, for responding to most applications. JE thanked NH for reviewing the response and for his input.

UTT/20/059/HHF The Turigs, Cambridge Road (Comments by 15th April)

Erection of part first floor, part two storey rear extension and single storey porch extension.

Comments: No objections

UTT/20/0683/HHF The Bothy, Shortgrove (Comments by 21st April)

Replacement of single storey rear extension with rear extension with rooms in roof.

Comments: No objections

UTT/20/0701/FUL Glyncolan, High Street (Comments by 21st April)

Proposed erection of four terraced dwellings with associated parking and garden areas.

Comments: Members of the planning group were asked to review this and a response will then be drafted and forwarded before the deadline

The Coach & Horses, Cambridge Road

Proposed erection of properties in the rear garden (awaiting application number and details).

The application has not yet been received from UDC.

Mature trees have been removed from the rear garden.

UTT/20/0843/FULL Five Acres, Whiteditch Lane (Comments by 12th May)

5 New build Residential Units and associated highway works

This application was received after the publication of the agenda

JE reported on the results of other applications:

1, King Edward Mews - Refused. Another application submitted (UTT/20/0663/CLP)

Nolton Cottage (UTT/20/0228/HHF) Approved.

20/256 To receive reports/updates on Green Spaces and Sports**To receive an update on the new Public Right of Way from Whiteditch Lane to Bury Water Lane**

JE reported that a quote has been received for the fencing which is just under £10,000. Another price is being obtained.. UDC have not yet confirmed that they are in receipt of the £10,000.

NH said he would chase UDC. A review is taking place of the workings of the Planning Department and one of the issues to be addressed is planning officers not responding to emails. He will also obtain a list of all Section 106 payments for the Newport ward.

20/257 To receive reports/updates on Village Improvements**To receive an update on Bridleway 16 to the Recreation Ground**

CB advised that the project has been completed with the exception of a "Passing Bay" sign which he will look into.

20/258 To receive a report/update on Liaison matters

258.1 It was confirmed that liaison with the Academy is working very well.

258.2 The Chairman confirmed that he will contact members of the public who raised matters under public participation.

20/259 Items for next agenda

No items were requested.

20/260 To discuss any Urgent matters of interest to the Parish

260.1 SN advised that she is obtaining some posters relating to domestic violence and abuse which can be displayed throughout the village. HB will contact SC Tom Morement to enquire if arrangements that have been put in place by the Police. RG said that ECC are working across the county on this and please let him know if he can assist. SN will speak to RG on this matter after the meeting.

20/261 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held by Zoom on Tuesday, 5th May 2020 at 7.30pm. Members of the public to send any questions to the Clerk by Friday evening, 1st May. The meeting to be advertised on Facebook and on the website with link to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 05.05.20