

NEWPORT PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Monday 6th July, 2020 by Zoom**

<u>Present:</u>	Cllr H. Bowman	(HB)	(Chairman)
	Cllr D. Alexander	(DA)	
	Cllr S. Amos	(SAm)	
	Cllr S. Ayles	(SAy)	
	Cllr C. Barnes	(CB)	
	Cllr J. Emanuel	(JE)	
	Cllr A. Gerard	(AG)	
	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) (from 20/298 – 20/303)
Mr. A. Yarwood	Chairman – Newport Youth Club (for 20/300)

2 members of the public

20/298 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr R. Bengé (unable to connect to Zoom)

20/299 To receive any ‘pecuniary’ or ‘non-pecuniary’ interests relating to items on the Agenda

The following non-pecuniary interests were declared:

AG in 312; CB in 311, 312 and 317; SN in 300 and 312; JE in 306 and 213; SAm in 302, SAy in 312; HB in 304, 305, 308, 309, 310, 311.3, 312.2 312.3 313.2.

20/300 To receive an update from the Chairman of Newport Youth Club on the Community Competition project

Andrew Yarwood, Chairman of the Youth Club, reported on meetings that had been held following the PC meeting in June. JFAN took up the basic idea and prepared a draft slide for the project to encourage young members to submit an art, writing or photograph entry. We are aiming to make the competition wide ranging -there will be three age groups 9-12, 13-15 and 16-18 and there will be cash prizes for each group. JFAN have agreed to support the project and will work with their feeder schools. The Youth Club will contribute 50%

towards the prize fund. Adults and young people will be involved in the judging. Newport News has agreed to publish winners and other entries. The slide will be finalised this week for inclusion in the local newspaper. It was proposed that the PC approve a donation of £200.00 towards the project and create a separate email address to receive entries for the competition.

Proposed: JE

Seconded: AG

All agreed

20/301 Public participation session (To discuss questions sent to the Clerk, by email from members of the public)

A resident had emailed the Clerk requesting the following should be raised:

Would the PC request that the latest planning application relating to land adjacent to Branksome, Whiteditch Lane is called in to the Planning Committee if it is recommended for approval.

NH advised that a mistake was made by UDC and the application was refused on the grounds of visibility. It is now retrospective. Owing to the mistake it is unlikely there are any grounds for calling it in. Following discussion JE agreed to speak to Nigel Brown and request a meeting with the Planning Officer concerned rather than call in to the Planning Committee.

UDC is accepting that laurel hedging is compliant with landscaping conditions when it is not a natural native hedge.

The PC agreed this is not natural hedging

Could we please have a date for the opening of the gate on the footpath from Whiteditch Lane through King Edward Mews to the existing public footpath.

JE advised that there is no firm date for the opening of the gate. We are awaiting information from JFAN to relocate the existing fence line. JE will follow up.

AG reported that fencing has been erected on the School ground today preventing access to the fields from the car park. It appears it has been erected by the contractors.

When will there be some action from Essex Highways to repair the potholes, damaged surfaces and verges on Whiteditch Lane

RG advised that he is still in discussion with Pelham Structures to get this work scheduled and under way, but owing to the lockdown this has been delayed. RG will endeavour to get this completed but unfortunately it will not be given the highest priority.

20/302 To receive a report from our Community Special Constables

The PC had not received a report. SAm advised that one of the CSC's has completed their training, the second CSC is currently undergoing training and the statutory checks are being undertaken on the third applicant.

20/303 To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Cty Cllr Gooding had sent the following report:

As we move into July we start to see the gradual relaxation of the lockdown and other restrictions that have so much affected our lives during the past months and it is possibly time to reflect on the dreadful toll Covid-19 has had on our population. At 5th July the overall number of deaths in United Kingdom Hospitals stands at more than 44,000 with 28,888 of those occurring in hospitals across the country. Within Essex hospitals (including Southend and Thurrock) the total stands at 1307 with a similar additional percentage in Care Homes and elsewhere. We must surely all mourn the loss of all these people and express our condolences to their families.

However, these dreadful statistics are just a part of the problem and it is evident that the economic impact of closing down our economy will also have a dramatic effect and it is evident that people need to get back to work as soon as it is safe and possible for them to do so.

RG reported that the virus has been the centre of everything the County has been doing and he was pleased to report that the infection rate has now dropped.

A major factor in this is the reopening of schools because School is the safest and best place for our children and young people to be both for the benefit of their education and wellbeing but also to enable their parents the freedom to get back to work. The gradual reopening of primary schools has been successful so far and almost all primary schools in the County are open and more than 85% of children in the relative year groups have returned. In September all schools and all year groups will be required to return subject to a number of constraints, and it is to be hoped that all children resume their studies. The matter of social distancing will continue to be an issue that schools will need to manage and this is likely to be most problematic in the upper year groups where children have made their subject choices and where their days would normally be taken up with moving from one group to another to fulfil their curriculum.

RG said he felt it could be particularly difficult for years 10 and 11 who have made their choices and he would not like to see individuals chances narrowed. This will be extremely challenging for teachers and school leaders to manage but I am confident that, given the outstanding work that schools have done to adapt to the requirements of the lockdown, they will continue to do the very best for our young people.

There are also concerns about school transport and this will present some difficulties.

AG reported that it appears that the contractors will soon be commencing work on the JFAN development. Do we need to co-ordinate a plan. RG said this is essential and perhaps we could arrange to meet with the Head to discuss this and see how it links with the travel plans.

AG pointed out that in the past Bridge End has been used as a “rat run” if Bury Water Lane is very busy and this could happen again.

JE will set up a Zoom meeting with the Academy which must include the contractor and representatives from ECC Highways and Passenger Transport.

JE reported on arrangements being put in place at the Primary School; three year groups are now back but each class has been split into two. There is concern that if there is a second wave we will be in the same situation again.

RG advised that Essex schools have had a significant amount of support. They have produced their own risk assessments and the Essex package has been taken on by International schools. If there are cases of the virus in school the government guidance is very clear.

With regard to the VAS sign, NH asked if ECC is responsible. RG confirmed that, as Christine was advised, they are the responsibility of the Local Highways Panel. If the sign is owned by ECC, the LHP take responsibility for the maintenance.

JE asked if there was any progress on the line painting outside the Primary School, it would be helpful if this could be carried out after 22nd July. RG is awaiting a date for this and the painting of the “H” bars at Belmont Farmhouse.

The Chairman thanked Cty Cllr Gooding for his report and he left the meeting.

Dist Cllr Neil Hargreaves had sent the following report in advance:

UDC continues to be under financial pressure resulting from coronavirus.

Our latest return to the MHCLG shows the forecast shortfall on our 2020/21 budget has reduced slightly at **£4.841m**. This sum is made up of the following elements

General Fund – Income	£2.343m
General Fund – Costs	£0.273m
Business Rates	£0.778m
Council Tax	£0.147m
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	£1.3m

Government support so far has been £932k and on 2nd July the government announced another package which includes ‘Where losses are more than 5% of a council’s planned income from sales, fees and charges, the government will cover them for 75p in every pound lost.’. The implementation down to individual councils is not done yet, but the estimate is that our loss in the year **may be reduced to about £2.24m**.

Our budget for this year is now likely to be changed to bring it back into balance (councils are not allowed to run a deficit budget) and this will mean looking at all aspects of our finances and commitments including all the usable reserves. UDC has a £1.7m reserve held in case MAG take the Stansted expansion refusal to appeal. There are however a few weeks to go until the appeal deadline expires.

UDC Band D council tax is only £3 a week which just covers 43% of council expenditure. Without action the council would have a revenue shortfall, even without the effect of Covid 19, of £3.6m per annum. Therefore, R4U in its first year set up a cross party Investment Board, which includes two external independent experts, and set a commercial investment fund target of £300m. A number of investments have already been agreed and are in progress. The board met last month and recommended several more investments to be added to the portfolio. These were agreed by a meeting of the Full Council, and, subject to meeting all due diligence checks, UDC have built the fund to over £200m. The purchases are freehold land and buildings, with rental incomes from good quality tenants. A key part of the strategy is not to have all our eggs in one basket, so each investment is in a different business sector, and located both locally and elsewhere in the UK.

I think UDC staff have done a brilliant job in keeping council services running at the same time as being the local delivery agent for the many government schemes, and our own local support operations.

JE reported on recent UDC Planning Committee meetings. The Committee allowed her to show them a document and take charge of it for a short while which is a much better arrangement than previously.

The Chairman thanked NH for his report.

20/304 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1st June 2020 (by Zoom)

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

Proposed: AG

Seconded: SAy

All agreed

20/305 Chairman's comments

With regard to the new building at the recreation ground, the Chairman reported that there has been a long delay because the Scouts had not responded. Therefore at the moment there are no drawings to present.

As the Travellers have been evicted from Saffron Walden I contacted a local farmer and he has put a large trailer across the entrance to the Common. A new padlock and new posts have been installed at the Recreation Ground.

I received an apology from the Editor of Newport News because my report was not included in the last edition. It was suggested this could be made available on the website, facebook page etc. I was also asked to give an interview regarding how we have coped during the lockdown period and this has been completed.

Some giant hogweed on private land, adjacent to the Common, has been dealt with. Rob Willis and the landowner assisted with this.

AG advised that there is more hogweed on the land owned by Anglian Water. The Clerk advised this has been reported to them several times and a reminder was sent last week.

SN advised that Natural England have advised that the local council has a right to fine people who do not deal with it on their land and will obtain more information. SAy asked how this would be followed up. NH said this is the responsibility of the land owner. SN reported that hogweed at the back of the White Horse has been reported to a Public Rights of Way Officer. The ownership for the land in White Horse lane has not been established as we need the o/s co-ordinates and this will be followed up.

20/306 To receive an update on arrangements put in place during the Corona virus

JE reported that some of the volunteers have had regular contact with neighbours. Alan Carr has thanked me and my family for all we have done and we have received very good feed back from residents. I have produced a list of volunteers who have helped with manning the door at the Shop and the online deliveries for Alan Carr, The Chairman has written a letter of thanks from the PC to Alan Carr. Alan was really grateful for all the help he received, particularly from JE and Mike Hannant. It was suggested that the person who interviewed the Chairman should ask the residents for feedback.

After discussion it was proposed that an award ceremony of Community Champions should be held at the next Annual Assembly. Certificates could be presented to recognise the tremendous efforts of all the volunteers.

Proposed: AG

Seconded: SN

All agreed

This will be discussed at a future meeting.

20/307 To receive the Clerk's Report, circulated prior to the meeting

Duly received.

The Clerk reported:

Frambury Field - Ellis Trust site

JE and HB had a meeting with Tom Macartney from Trivselhus, Philip Rogers, Drainage Consultant, and other representatives on 10th June and the notes from the meeting were circulated.

Three options were raised at the meeting for dealing with the surface water drainage. Following the meeting, Phase2planning have been in touch to ask if any progress has been made and whether a Consultant has been appointed. I have advised them that this will be discussed at the meeting on Monday and they have asked me to get back to them.

Regarding the naming of the roads within the site, following the suggestion at the last meeting, Sandra has spoken to Olive Denyer regarding naming one of the roads

on Frambury Fields after her husband Ted. Howard and I have spoken about this proposal and I feel the PC should consider having a policy or criteria to cover this in order to avoid any problems arising in the future.

Footbridge at the bottom of School Lane

Following the last meeting the Environment Agency advised that they have spoken with their team, who deal with the area, and they have confirmed that the footbridge would be the responsibility of the riparian land owner (the owner of the land alongside the watercourse). I have been back in touch with Cty Cllr Gooding and he is taking the matter up with ECC again. I have spoken to ECC today, 6th July, and although work has been done on the bridge by them in the past it is not an ECC asset and not their responsibility.

River Clearance

Following receipt of a quotation from Pearl Land Drainage HB and CB met with Anglian Land Drainage Company and requested a quote for drainage work at the Common and at the bottom of School Lane. A report will be given at the meeting on Monday.

Bridge at the Croat

I understand that following the damage caused by the car, ECC have now completed all the necessary work.

Repairs to Hercules Bridge

Following the last meeting Essex Highways have advised that they are proposing to undertake surveys, including topographical surveys, to support plans to re-construct the Hercules Bridge in Debden Road. In order to do this they requested permission to have access to the Common and other properties. I have confirmed that the PC will allow access to the Common and R & R Saggars have also given permission to enter their garden.

ECC have also confirmed that they are in touch with the Fire Station and are awaiting a response from the Station Manager to advise them of their requirements. However, pedestrian access will be maintained whilst the investigation works take place. Therefore they hope that any disruption to the Fire service will be kept to a minimum. ECC understand the Fire Service is intending to access the village by using the rail bridge and they have requested details of how this will impact on their response times.

They also advised that Hercules Bridge is due to undergo major reconstruction works in the future; the programme is currently being finalised. It is possible the Fire Station may need to be relocated on a temporary basis but this is being discussed with them.

Salt Bag scheme

The scheme is being run by ECC again this year, I understand that following the relatively mild winter last year our stocks of salt are still high. If you would like me to place an order please let me know and also where it can be stored.

The PC confirmed that an order should be placed for delivery to the Village Stores.

Trail bikes

Following reports of trail bikes at the last meeting I have received further complaints about trail bikes riding on footpaths as well as byways. They are allowed on byways but they should not be on footpaths so I have advised residents to get their registration numbers, if possible, and report via Crime stoppers or 101. I was advised by ECC Highways that they do permit the use of bicycles on bridleways.

H Bars

The owner of Belmont Farmhouse has been in touch regarding the extension of the H-bars outside his property. Cty Cllr Gooding is following this up.

Giant Hogweed

I have contacted Savills and Anglian Water again regarding giant hogweed and asked them to carry out regular inspections. To date we have been unable to find out who owns the wood where there were further reports but Samantha has advised that Shirley Anglin, PROW officer from Essex Highways will be carrying out an inspection.

Training

I reserved a place for Samantha on the EALC Health & Well Being course. UDC advised us of Domestic Abuse Awareness training and bookings have been made for Sandra and Samantha on different days. I have also reserved a place for Samantha on the EALC New Councillor course on 3rd July.

Community Competition project

Andrew Yarwood, Chairman of Newport Youth Club, has sent a report giving details of the above He will also attend the meeting on Monday.

Casual Vacancy

I have advertised the vacancy on the notice boards and website following the resignation of Oliver Davies.

New sign for road to the Recreation Ground

The new sign for the passing bay has been on order for some weeks. This is taking longer than usual as it is being made for us and we are waiting for artwork. The cost will be £35.30.

Speedwatch

Some months ago a member of our Speedwatch team offered to try and get some more volunteers in order to carry out regular Speedwatch sessions. Leaflets have

been delivered to some houses in London Road which has achieved some success. I will organise another training session for them as soon as these are being held again by the Community team. SAy and CB will assist with delivering leaflets and taking up Speedwatch again.

Reports

There have been many reports regarding trees obstructing the footpaths. I have written to some of the residents of Chestnut Court and other trees in the High Street and Wicken Road, which are the responsibility of ECC, have been reported. A number of footpaths have not been cut, but the Public Rights of Way Officer advised me that the cutting programme has been delayed because of the Covid-19 virus. However the contract has now been signed and work should commence in the Uttlesford area very shortly. At present there are no dates as to when the paths in Newport will be cut.

Councillors and our Caretaker continue to advise me of problems with hedges, pavements, carriageways, lights etc., and these have all been reported to ECC or appropriate authorities.

Some small barbecues and fires at the recreation ground during the very hot weather have been reported. I asked our CSC to try and visit when he is in the village.

VAS sign in London Road

This was reported to ECC several weeks ago but as it was still out of order I chased it again and have now been told to report to the Local Highways Panel. Following a conversation with ECC today, 6th July, they have confirmed that the LHP is responsible, but because the company that carries out the repairs has been on lockdown they are unable to give any indication as to when it will be repaired.

20/308 To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Report and approve accounts for payment, schedule circulated prior to the meetings

Duly received.

The payment schedule totalling £6,543.66, for 11 items was approved.

Proposed: CB

Seconded: SAy

All agreed

The RFO reported that:

- The PC now has a three year street lighting contract with E-on
- £559.57 has been recovered from BT following the recent mistake on our bill.
- Saffron Building Society signatures need changing.
- The Internal Audit has been completed. The Auditor advised that photographs should be taken of all the PC's assets together with serial numbers. The PC should also have risk assessments for the areas they are responsible for. SN said there are EALC risk assessment courses. HB offered to attend one of these and will take photographs of all the PC's assets.
- The Sports Committee has received £995 from the National Lottery.

training. UDC Planning officers deal with certain areas and it was requested that there is more direct contact between PC's and Planning officers. UDC was very interested in our comments and it is hoped there will be further meetings to follow up on the issues raised.

312.2 To discuss the report received from Trivselhus following the meeting held on 10th June, consider options for surface water drainage and the next step.

Trivselhus are concerned about the discharge of surface water and they have agreed that we can engage an independent drainage consultant and they will cover the cost. JE has contacted ECC to see if they could recommend a company.

The Clerk reported that Phase2planning have advised that a neighbour in Frambury Lane has expressed concerns and could we provide a name and address. HB and Clerk will discuss tomorrow.

SN pointed out that the leaflet distributed by Trivselhus stated that the consultation closed shortly. SAm raised para 1.05 in the meeting notes and HB confirmed that the PC will be looking at all options. SAm suggested that if the pipe did go on the Common it could go round the edge and not across. The drainage consultant will give a report and will be asked for views on all the options.

JE pointed out that if the PC decided not to allow the pipe to go across the Common it would cause more disruption if it was laid down London Road and Station Road.

312.3 To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan and approve a quotation from Geoff Gardner on the wording of a specific policy.

NH advised that we have received the report from UDC and most of the updating has been completed. However, there is one significant area, policy HA1, where the Inspector has changed the purpose of the policy. We have obtained a quotation from Geoff Gardner to look at it and then write a letter to UDC pointing out the consequences in this policy and asking them to change it. The Chairman said it is important that we make the Neighbourhood Plan watertight.

It was proposed that the quotation from Geoff Gardner of £1,500 should be accepted.

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: SAM

All agreed

311.4.To receive a report from the Planning Working Group

UTT/20/1218/LB Priory Cottage, Bridge End (comments by 3rd July)

Proposed removal of existing render to front elevation and application of new lime/chalk render and lime wash finish.

Comments: No objections

UTT/20/1334/FUL Land adjacent Branksome, Whiteditch Lane (comments by 22nd July)

Retrospective application for the erection of a front section of boundary wall to dwelling approved under planning permission UTT/18/1486/FUL

PWG will look at.

