

NEWPORT PARISH COUNCIL**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Monday 5th October, 2020 by Zoom**

<u>Present:</u>	Cllr H. Bowman	(HB)	(Chairman)
	Cllr D. Alexander	(DA)	
	Cllr S. Amos	(SAm)	
	Cllr S. Ayles	(SAy)	
	Cllr S. Burton	(SB)	
	Cllr J. Emanuel	(JE)	
	Cllr S. Naik	(SN)	
	Cllr A. Sampson	(AS)	

In attendance:

Mrs C. Griffin	Parish Clerk
Mrs E. Edwards	Responsible Financial Officer
Dist Cllr N. Hargreaves	(NH)
Cty Cllr R. Gooding	(RG) (from 20/356)
1 member of the public	

20/353 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr R. Bengé (unable to connect to Zoom) and Cllr A. Gerard (private commitment).

20/354 To receive any 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary' interests relating to items on the Agenda

The following non-pecuniary interests were declared:

JE in 364 and 365; SN in 365 and 367; SAy in 365; AS in 365; SA in 356; HB in 358, 359, 364 and 369.

The following pecuniary interest was declared:

JE in 365, planning application UTT/20/2366/HHF

20/355 Public participation session (To discuss questions sent to the Clerk, by email from members of the public

The following questions were raised:

- I have been in touch with the Chairman of the Sports Committee regarding the new development at the Recreation Ground which is commendable but this will very much depend on getting the car parking. Will all the information be available to members of the public,

The Chairman confirmed that all the information on the proposals will be available to the village and there will be a public consultation.

- I did ask for a quotation for clearing up the conservation area at the bottom of School Lane, I have walked the route from School Lane to the motorway and now understand why there is so much debris collecting at the bridge at

the bottom of School Lane. Wicken Water is an absolute disgrace. Also, the work undertaken by Cala has not been carried out satisfactorily.

The Chairman said the PC would get the relevant authorities to deal with this.

- There is an application for the construction of soil mounds at the Joyce Frankland Academy, how does this fit in with Footpath 4?

JE advised that the person who deals with Section 106 at UDC is away and the matter has not been dealt with. The PC has been attempting to claim the funding for the footpath but have now been informed that there was a variation of conditions and, instead of Amherst paying UDC £10,000 to construct the footpath, Amherst said they would deal with it, but the hogan path has not been done properly and does not constitute £10,000. We were planning to use the £10,000 to move the fence and extend it. This was agreed at a meeting some months ago and we have been awaiting confirmation from UDC that they had received the money. A meeting will now be arranged with Amherst and UDC to agree the next steps.

- I am prepared to go and talk to the Academy. How will the moving of the soil affect the fence line? The PC is not looking at the conditions properly.

The Chairman confirmed that the points have been noted and we can only complain to the authorities involved. The Chairman said he would be happy to attend a walkabout with the resident to look at the issues in more detail and thanked the resident for his interest.

20/356 To receive a report from our Community Special Constables

The Community Special Constable had sent the following report:

- House to house inquiries regarding noise complaints.
- COVID19 Patrols.
- Speed checks.
- Parking compliance (2 x tickets issued for parking on a zig zag at a crossing) this was delivery drivers
- Anti Social Behaviour Patrols

One week has been spent self isolating.

SAm advised that owing to Covid 19 our Community Special Constables are unable to complete their training. Until they become independent the Parish Council will not have to pay their costs.

DA reported on some vandalism at the Diana Sell Playground which happens in the evenings. SAm will ask the CSC to visit when he is next in the village.

20/357 To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Cty Cllr Ray Gooding sent the following report:

I reported last month about the return to school after a significant break and all the impact that would have, and I am pleased to say that across the whole of Essex we now have approximately 92.5% of children returning to school. That compares extremely favourably with the national figure which is running at approximately 88%. To put this in context, at this time of year school attendance normally runs at about 95% due to seasonal colds and other short-term illnesses that are often present in school at the start of term. However, the one concern we have, and this is a national issue, is the number of parents who are withdrawing their children from school and electing to home educate them. Home education is no easy task and we have been advising parents that if they withdraw their child from the school role they may not have the opportunity to take that place again if it has been filled by another child. Given the national nature of this problem the Education Select Committee chaired by Robert Halfon MP is investigating the matter and Essex County Council are presenting evidence to that committee. It is likely that they will recommend additional powers either to Local Authorities or Ofsted to visit families regularly and ensure that an adequate level of education is provided within the home.

One of the other matters that I should report is the issue of care home places within Essex. We have all read the difficulties that have emanated from the Covid-19 crisis and the fact that families are electing to look after their elderly relations at home. This is having a detrimental impact on the viability of many care homes and Essex County Council is endeavouring to support those that are suffering from financial difficulties.

On a more local basis I can confirm that the highway defects that the parish advised me of have now been entered but given the latest weather patterns I would ask that the parish keep me advised of drainage defects. The long period of dry weather coupled with the inability of the drain clearing teams to maintain work through the lockdown, now followed by some extremely heavy and prolonged rain at the very time when leaves are coming from the trees has left some blockages that need to be cleared. Please advise me of these when they happen because I am endeavouring to get all the inspections redone and necessary work completed before winter arrives.

At the meeting RG advised that ECC are now beginning to see the impact of the lockdown which has increased the workload, particularly of social services. Foster carers are urgently required at present.

Surface water drainage is also a big issue and we are now seeing many blocked drains. RG should be kept informed of any problems in Newport. The potholes in London Road have been reported.

The Chairman asked how Newport featured in the social difficulties. RG said there is not a significant number in this area. The schools have been doing sterling work but the problems are coming from families who would not normally be on any risk

register. SN stressed the importance of supporting families because of the extra stress and pressure. RG said he feels we have not yet seen the true impact of the lockdown.

RG confirmed that he is chasing NE Parking Partnership regarding the painting of the zig zag lines at the School and also the "H" bars at Belmont Farmhouse.

DA pointed out that the existing yellow lines in Bullfields should be extended as the UDC refuse lorry cannot gain access to collect bins. Also, there is a strip of tarmac at the junction of Cherry Garden Lane/Frambury Lane which is dangerous. Details to be sent to RG.

RG confirmed that he will contribute to the prizes for the Summer Competition, please let him know when the funding is required. SN will contact RG.

Dist Cllr Neil Hargreaves sent the following report:

UDC is forecasting £800k of losses from Covid-19, after taking into account of emergency funding from the government. This is a snapshot and may change if the pandemic becomes worse before vaccines become available, although as noted below we have set aside a further reserve for this. The good news is that the £300 million commercial investment programme has come on stream earlier than expected and is contributing significantly in this financial year.

All the investments are freehold land and buildings, with rental income from good quality tenants. As the investment programme is ahead of schedule and we have now filled the long-term financial hole, and have also covered the shortfall from the pandemic. As part of our revisiting of this year's budget to address the pandemic issues, UDC has been able to provide:

- £1m to support the council's climate change programme over the next three years
- £1.5m towards the Dunmow waste depot relocation project (out of the town centre)
- £1m into the Business Recovery Fund next year to support economic development
- £450,000 allocated over the next three years to support large-scale sports projects across the district
- £500,000 put into the Emergency Reserve to assist the council in delivering services in the event of a further lockdown or future emergency

There is also a £1m reserve against any shortfall in the commercial income, considered necessary as the council's dependence on it has increased

Ward Initiative Fund

This was put on hold because of the pandemic, but is now back on and there is £2000 available per councillor for good causes across the ward if anyone would like to ask, particularly organisations which may have been hit by the pandemic. As there

is still a councillor vacancy, rather than lose the other £2000, UDC have agreed to add that to another fund which parish councils can apply to.

Unspent funds

Road projects are a County responsibility. However, UDC offers to pay a 50% share of the cost of works to benefit the District, up to £100,000 a year. The process is that the Highways Panel makes the spending decisions and Essex the send the invoice to UDC for the half share. However, in the last financial year Essex failed to claim any cash. Including this year's reserve there is now £200k unspent, which could fund £400k of safety and other projects.

Government proposals to eliminate District Councils

Noted last time. There is now very strong opposition to this from most of the potential council participants, of all political colours.

Government proposed changes to the planning system and housing numbers

I responded to the first consultation, which was largely on numbers. UDC did a very thorough response. Among other criticisms UDC pointed out that the calculations only considered those buying houses. The rental market and social housing was ignored. Also that the income figures for Uttlesford are very much skewed by the large number of low wage airport jobs, with 80% of staff not living in Uttlesford. And that mortgage affordability was being based on building society rules from the pre low interest era, of not borrowing above 2.5 times income.

NH advised at the meeting that he had attended a UDC meeting today, 5th October, and the main topic was the current Corona virus situation. Uttlesford is now at the highest level of Covid in the County, today it is 58 cases per 100,000. There is no obvious cluster and we are not being considered for special measures, but there is concern and UDC is trying to ascertain the source. People do need to adhere to the rules and there will be publicity coming out from UDC shortly.

RG said he had attended a briefing with the Director of Public Health and there is no obvious cause, however it is of great concern.

20/358 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 7th September, 2020 (by Zoom)

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

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: AS

All agreed

20/359 Chairman's comments

The Chairman commented as follows:

- The Parish Council office remains closed, particularly in view of what NH and RG have reported. Any requests will be dealt with by the Clerk by telephone.
- I will liaise with NH regarding the flower boxes.

- I will attend the meeting regarding the Remembrance Day arrangements with Dawn French and Supt. Norris
- There will be no fireworks this year owing to Covid.
- An extra meeting will be required next month to discuss the Budget.

20/360 To receive the Clerk's Report, circulated prior to the meeting

Duly received.

Drainage work on the River Cam and at the bottom of School Lane - A letter was sent to Advance Fuel Systems in Station Road and Network Rail asking if they would make a contribution to the drainage work.

Advance Fuel Systems said that following guidance from the Environment Agency, they did not want to get involved in anything to do with removing the silt from the River Cam adjacent to their property. They are aware that the Environment Agency regularly monitor the river and are happy with the current condition.

Network Rail advised that they investigated the matter with their Asset team, but unfortunately the budget is very tight this year, so they are unable to help.

As requested, I contacted the Environment Agency and asked if they would contact the riparian owners of the land alongside the watercourse at the Common and School Lane/Bury Water Lane. They advised that as this is not Environment Agency work they are not responsible for contacting the riparian owners to gain permission. This is not something they do on behalf of permit applicants but the Council do need to seek permission from the riparian owners before applying for a permit. The granting of EA permits to do works does not grant access to privately owned land.

Telephone Box in Station Road - I have asked UDC to make the necessary arrangements to remove the telephone box in Station Road.

New bollards at the bottom of School Lane - Following the approval of the quotation I have asked Hilbery Turf to go ahead with installing these. (These have now been installed)

Frambury Fields - Trivselhus are planning to upgrade Byway 16 and it will be adopted to highway standard. This will make the route much safer for pedestrians who walk from Frambury Lane to the Recreation Ground.

The Common is registered as Village Green (VG36) and Newport Parish Council are the owners. I attach Common Land Guidance Sheet obtained from Essex Legal Services but they advised that any queries or questions should be directed to the Planning Inspectorate.

Planning - Compass database - Could you please let me know if a decision has been reached on this in order for me to go back to Saffron Walden Town Council. (Please let me have a reply)

UDC Tree Planting Initiative - Having registered an interest in the scheme we now have to submit a plan showing location and details of proposed planting of trees on the Common. (We need to send a plan detailing location and species. Advice will be obtained from the Nursery.)

The Sports Committee do not require any additional trees at the Recreation Ground

Trees on Shortgrove Estate - Following the last meeting I contacted the ECC Arboriculturist to enquire whether the grant was still available. I regret it was only a short term offer. She has reiterated that it would have been UDC's decision to accept the offer or not at that time.

The Clerk will look in the files to see if there are any records and, if information is available, residents will be asked to take photographs and this can then be followed up with UDC.

(NH has sent me today information from a neighbouring Parish Council on (1) a climate change policy and (2) a tree management policy.

Arrangements for dropping off and collecting pupils away from the Academy (Park and Stride scheme) - At the beginning of term we received complaints as parents were parking in Gaces Acre and I contacted the Academy to ensure that parents were being advised that the Station car park could be used. I had not received any complaints until yesterday when a resident of Whiteditch Lane reported chaos on Bury Water Lane caused by JFAN construction vehicles.

Summer Competition - The competition closes on 30th September. Notices have been placed throughout the village.

Remembrance Service, 8th November 2020 - I advised Rev. Neil McLeod that the Council were very happy for a Remembrance Service to be held on the Common on Sunday, 8th November, weather permitting. He has now reviewed the situation in view of the latest regulations and is now considering a smaller gathering and will invite a small number of people to lay a wreath at the War Memorial and attend a short service within the churchyard. The PC Chairman will be invited and details will be sent nearer the date.

I have asked Clavering RBL branch to order the usual Poppy wreath for us and will collect when this is available.

Hercules Bridge - We were advised that the bridge will be closed again for 7 days from 12th October. I have been in touch with ECC and there is some doubt as to whether this is actually going ahead as planned.

Footbridge at bottom of School Lane - I have not heard any more following the LHP meeting so will ask Essex Highways for an update.

Salt Bag scheme - The pallett of salt has now been delivered to the Nisa Stores

Permission to place a memorial bench on the Common - Howard met with the daughter of Bert Rand regarding the memorial seat and the contractor who will be laying the concrete base.

Giant Hogweed - Rob Willis now has the strong weed killer which I ordered to treat the hogweed which is reappearing on the Common.

VAS sign, London Road - I understand that a part has been removed and taken away for repair. I have heard nothing further so will contact ECC again.

Whiteditch Lane - Our Community Special Constable assisted residents following another "Rave" during the early part of the month. I have not received any further reports since the new restrictions came into force.

I have received a number of emails from a resident of Whiteditch Lane regarding the clearance of a hedge which gave the resident privacy from the school and footpath 4. Apparently this was done last year and they hoped it would regenerate in the Spring but unfortunately it hasn't. Someone from the Academy advised that the PC had done this. I have informed the resident that it was not the PC and ECC have confirmed that they have not carried out any work on this path. Now work has started on the School ground they would like the hedge reinstated.

Chestnut Court - I have received further complaints from residents who have been confronted when walking through Chestnut Court. I have informed them that Chestnut Court is privately owned by a Residents Association but residents have used the path for many years.

I also advised them of the legal definition of a private road – a private road is often established because an individual needs to gain access to land. A private road can be used by the general public and is open to all who wish to use it, but it primarily benefits those at whose request it was established. Unlike highways that are cared for by the public at large, private roads are maintained at the expense of the private individuals who requested the road.

Managing Pavement Parking - UDC informed us that the government is consulting on managing pavement parking. It is likely that the Department of Transport will legislate against footway parking in some form (either by decriminalising obstructive footway parking or banning it entirely). The consultation is seeking views on the Traffic Regulation Order making process, the introduction of a new civil contravention of unnecessary obstruction of the pavement and the introduction of an overall pavement parking ban.

The closing date for the consultation is 22nd November 2020 and details can be found at the following link: –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking>.

I will include this on the agenda for November in view of the deadline.

Appeal – Land North of Wicken Road - I recently received an email from Bruce Bamber regarding an unpaid invoice (Elaine and I have been unable to trace receipt of this). I have investigated the matter and the Invoice is outstanding for work he did on the above. This will be included on the payment schedule for the meeting next week.

Newport News - Please note the deadline for the next edition is, today, 1st October 2020. I have forwarded the PC advert.

UDC Community Grants Scheme -Details of the latest scheme are available from UDC. I have forwarded details to all groups on my “grant funding” list.

Reports - Some repairs have been carried out by ECC but the kerb at the top of Wicken Road has been chased again. I have reported to the Rangers the cracked paving slab at the top of the steps which lead to Pond Cross Way. Potholes in London Road and the High Street, footpath in Elephant Green reported to ECC.

The missing sign on the railway bridge has been reported to Essex Highways following the recent bridge strike.

Several more complaints have been received about the trees in the High Street and Wicken Road and these have been reported again.

The contractor has inspected the tree on Elephant Green and I hope to have his quotation next week.

All the street lights reported to our contractor have been repaired. If you are aware of others which are not working please let me know so they can be dealt with before the end of the month.

The Clerk will chase ECC regarding the light on the railway bridge and also the light on Cambridge Road which has been out of action for a significant time.

Insurance - Our policy is due for renewal next month. Last year we met with a representative from Came & Co. If you feel a meeting is necessary this year please let me know and I will organise.

Future PC Meetings - EALC and NALC are still strongly advising local councils to continue to meet remotely

The Clerk will chase ECC regarding the light on the railway bridge and also the light on Cambridge Road which has been out of action for a significant time.

20/361 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 £7,580.72 for 13 items was approved.

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: SN

All agreed

The RFO reported that:

- Problems with the BT account have been resolved although we are still receiving letters.
- The Ridgeons invoice has been received and paid.

- NatWest have been contacted regarding online access.
- Allotment invoices have been distributed.
- The insurance is due for renewal on 12th November 2020.
- The insurance renewal has been received and circulated. Gates and fences cover to be queried. The playground equipment is currently insured for £50,000, but does not include replacement cost of the zip wire, slide or individual rockers. DA will obtain replacement costs.

20/362 To receive an update on arrangements for Remembrance Sunday on 8th November and approve a donation to the Royal British Legion for the Poppy Appeal

The Clerk is in touch with Rev. Neil McLeod and there is a meeting with UDC on Wednesday, 7th November. A report will be given on arrangements following the meeting.

It was proposed that a donation of £100.00 should be made to the 2020 Poppy Appeal.

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: SAm

All agreed

20/363 To consider a donation to the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

It was proposed that a donation of £250.00 should be made to the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance.

Proposed: JE

Seconded: DA

All agreed

20/364 To receive reports/updates on Infrastructure/Maintenance

364.1 To review a presentation received from Newport Sports Committee for the new development at the Recreation Ground and approve a pre-application meeting with the UDC Planning department

The Chairman thanked Mike Hannant, Chairman of the Sports Committee, for the presentation. The Council need to have a further discussion concerning the parish office and will include this on the next agenda.

Mike Hannant advised this will not hold up the process.

DA suggested that the existing building could be used by the Scouts, but MH said this would not be large enough. MH confirmed that as the village is growing a better facility is required for the Scouts and Sports Clubs but the hall and social club will not be available for other users.

It was proposed that MH should arrange a pre-application with the Planning department at UDC.

Proposed: JE

Seconded: SAy

All agreed

364.2 To receive an update on drainage work on the River Cam adjacent to the Common and on Wicken Water at the bottom of School Lane

Following further communications with the Environment Agency, JE confirmed that she will follow this up.

364.3 To receive an update and approve a quotation for installing the height barrier at the Recreation Ground

The Chairman advised that the Sports Committee will cover the cost but the height barrier will not be installed by a volunteer, as originally suggested, but our contractor has agreed to charge under the price that is quoted by the supplier.

364.4 To discuss the use of the Fire pit at the Recreation Ground

Concern was expressed because the fire pit is not being used properly. The Clerk advised that the License which was sent to the Scouts dated 3rd June 2019 stated that "The Scouts shall use the fire pit in accordance with the guidance in Fact sheet FS315076 dated January 2013 produced by the Scout Association". A letter will be sent to the Scouts asking them to clear up the pit, put up a sign and comply with the fact sheet in future.

364.5 To approve a quotation for installing a new climbing frame, bridge and dealing with maintenance issues at the Diana Sell Playground

It was proposed that the quotation of £5,474.00 plus VAT from Fenland Play should be approved,

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: AS

All agreed

DA reported that he is not happy with the distance between the slats on the bridge section and is currently in touch with Fenland Play concerning this.

Clerk to send a copy of the quotation to the RFO.

364.6 To receive an update on the CCTV at the Diana Sell Playground

DA reported that he is obtaining quotations from suppliers. The Chairman reported that a member of the Sports Committee is involved with security equipment and he will ask him to contact DA.

20/365 To receive reports/updates on Planning

365.1 To receive an update on Frambury Fields including (a) Update on the adoption of Bridleway 16 (b) Update on the drainage options (c) Update on the playground on the Common

(a) Update on the adoption of the bridleway - JE reported that Trivselhus are proposing to upgrade Bridleway 16 between Frambury Lane and the Recreation Ground to Highways standard and it will then be adopted by Essex Highways.

(b) Update on the drainage options - the drainage report has now been received from Ardent.

(c) Update on the playground on the Common - Trivselhus are proposing to develop a new playground, for older children, on the Common.

The PC is aware that the developer intends to submit a scheme that does not contain the 40% affordable housing provision. Geoff Gardner has been contacted for advice.

A meeting will be organised with Maria Shoesmith, the UDC Case Officer, who will be dealing with the application when it is submitted to discuss the PC's strategy. NH advised that if the number of affordable houses is significantly below the requirement it will not get through the Planning Committee.

365.2 To approve a response to the White Paper “Planning for the Future”

JE reported that she is still working on a response and will circulate a draft later this week. If members have any comments on the questions please send to JE.

The response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government “Changes to the current planning system: Consultation on changes to planning policy and regulations” was submitted last week. NH advised that UDC did a very thorough response to this and it will be circulated.

365.3. To receive a report from the Planning Working Group

JE advised that:

- The application to the rear of the Chestnuts was refused on overlooking issues and backland development. In view of the number of applications on this site an attempt has been made to try and work with the neighbours to find a resolution.
- Most of the Shortgrove applications have been withdrawn.
- The Appeals at Charlottes Meadow and Chaddam House were both allowed by the Appeal Inspector.

NH advised that he is willing to “call in” applications but this facility must be used carefully.

The following applications will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Planning Working Group and draft responses circulated:

UTT/20/2354/HHF Carnation Bungalow, Cambridge Road Newport (Comments by 19th October)

Removal of existing roof, forming of new roof for 3 no. bedrooms, front and rear dormer windows and one and two storey rear extension.

UTT/20/2368/HHF 56A Gaces Acre (Comments by 21st October)

Demolition of side extension and erection of two storey side and rear extensions.

UTT/20/2366/HHF Millers Gate, Church Street (Comments by 22nd October)

Replacement of 3 doors and relocation of 1 door.

UTT/20/2389/FUL The Joyce Frankland Academy, Cambridge Road (Comments by 23rd October)

Construction of soil mounds for the relocation of the existing soil mounds to enable the construction of the new car park as permitted by Appeal Ref.

APP/C1570/19/3229420.

20/366 To receive reports/updates on Green Spaces and Sports

To receive an update on Footpath 4 from Whiteditch Lane to Bury Water Lane

This was raised earlier in the meeting.

20/367 To receive reports/update on Liaison matters

367.1 To receive a report on the Summer Competitio

SN will give a report at the November meeting.

367.2 To discuss a Health and Wellbeing Plan

SN reported that she is currently preparing a plan and will circulate for the next meeting.

20/368 Items for next agenda

To review the situation regarding the Parish Office.

To reach a decision on the Compass data base.

To receive a report on the Summer Competition.

To discuss a Health and Wellbeing Plan.

20/369 To discuss any Urgent matters of interest to the Parish

369.1 DA reported that an allotment tenant would like to put a poly tunnel on the Allotment, 9ft wide x 20ft long x 6ft high. It was suggested that the tenant should come back with a smaller proposal.

369.2 The Chairman requested that when documents are circulated, would you please ensure you respond even if you have no comments to make.

20/370 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held by Zoom on Monday, 2nd November, 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.39 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 02.11.20