

NEWPORT PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Monday, 1st February, 2021 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)
7 members of the public	

21/424 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr A. Gerard (private commitment), Cllr R. Bengé (unable to connect to Zoom). Cty Cllr Ray Gooding attending another meeting and would, if possible, join later on.

21/425 To receive any 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary' interests relating to items on the Agenda

The following non-pecuniary interests were declared:

JE in 433 and 434; AS in 434; SN in 434; SAm in 427 and 433; SAy in 434; HB in 429 and 430.

21/426 Public participation session (To discuss questions sent to the Clerk, by email from members of the public)

No questions had been received by the Clerk.

21/427 To receive a report from our Community Special Constables

The Community Special Constable had sent the following report.

At this moment I have been moved over to the COVID enforcement team which is making it very difficult to carry out local patrols. I will be happy to ask about CCTV once I am back on the local beat which hopefully will be sooner rather than later.

21/428 To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Cty Cllr Ray Gooding had sent the following report which was read by the Chairman.

Grant Funding

In addition to the Locality fund that has been available this year and has funded two items within Newport I can report that a Winter Emergency fund of £2000 per division has been made available throughout the County. The intent of this fund has been to ensure that families and vulnerable people are supported through the difficult months of the year with a particular reference to the additional challenges that Covid-19 and the associated lockdowns have caused. I have made this money available to the Uttlesford Food Bank with a specific request that it is available to provide support in Stansted, Elsenham, Newport and all the surrounding villages. I have also specifically asked that this make provision for fuel poverty which for many families is a particular challenge at this time of year.

Should the Parish Council be aware of anyone who requires support could I ask that they are directed to the Uttlesford Food Bank.

Flooding

Further to the recent visit of the Essex Watercourse Regulation Engineer on 14th January I can confirm that Essex Highways returned to the location on 20th January and carried out further jetting to the drains on the affected section of the road.

It is advised that the field to the west of the highway will require further investigation by the landowner to identify details regarding the source of the water that is running off the field in that location. However, given that the ground is currently sodden it will require that a period of dry weather allows the terrain to dry before this can be carried out and it is estimated that this may take four weeks or more.

It is evident that the land is farmed on behalf of the landowners and ECC Officers have been in contact. However, it is apparent that he may not be responsible under their contract to carry out the investigative work. Accordingly, and with thanks to the Clerk the landowners have been identified and the Watercourse Regulation Engineer is endeavouring to contact those landowners.

Notwithstanding this it was evident that further ponding had occurred last week after intensive rainfall. I visited the site on Thursday last week and noted that not only did there appear a large amount of general rubbish in the location, but that water was again flowing from the field. In addition to this I was concerned to see that the general line of the kerb was lower at this point. I have therefore again met with Officers to highlight that when the investigation work is carried out there should be analysis of the surrounding ground conditions that may have been affected by the surface water.

Dist Cllr Neil Hargreaves had sent the following report, received from Cllrs John Evans and Colin Day, to the PC in advance of the meeting:

PLANNING AND THE LOCAL PLAN – Newsletter No 2/January 2021

We wrote to you in September 2020 when we introduced ourselves and advised that we would send you a quarterly Newsletter to let you know in broad terms how Local Plan preparations were progressing. We are sure that your District Council Members will be keeping you up to date and this Newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for their advices to you nor we hope, be over duplicative of the information that you are receiving both from them and our team of Planning Policy Officers.

The foundations for the Local Plan will be provided through extensive early consultation and engagement with the Community. This represents valuable and additional engagement (which will of course still be provided under Regulations 18 and 19) and which will be included in the evidence base for the Local Plan and go towards support of the strict timetable for the introduction of a new Local Plan.

You will be pleased to know that the progress made to date is indeed meeting the challenging timetable which has been set.

There are two reasons for this: one is that Government Policy requires Local Planning Authorities to put into place their Local Plans without delay – we do not want to risk any central government intervention in our plan making – and the other is to arrive at a district wide development policy as soon as practicable. With a Plan in place, development will once again be plan led rather than perceived to be developer led which, it might be suggested, leads to planning policy evolving on an ad hoc basis arising out of Planning Appeal Decisions.

1. Community Stakeholder Forum

The forum was launched in November 2020, with four sessions covering individual topics/themes already held and is due to run with five more topics/themes to be considered every two weeks or so until March, with responses invited on each until May 2021. The Forum is independently chaired by Ms Angela Dixon, the Chair of Saffron Hall, and is made up of 20 individuals who have a particular interest in the nine given topics/themes. They are not specialist advocates for their given interest nor any geographical area and the views expressed by them at the Forum meetings are not taken as determinative on any particular subject, and input on the discussions held at the forum meetings is welcomed from the wider community in addition. Considerable efforts were made to invite participation from individuals with wide interests from across the district and their involvement and time provided on a voluntary basis is very much appreciated.

2. Town and Parish Council Workshops

In addition to the debates initiated at the Community Stakeholder Forum, consultation on the same topics/themes is invited at workshops to be held in February and March 2021 and to which representatives from the Town and Parish

Councils will be invited. It is anticipated that members of the Local Plan Leadership Group will also be able to attend those workshops and have the benefit of hearing the Councils' input directly.

3. District Housing Delivery Test/Supply

Under the latest Government requirements for Housing Delivery/Supply, that for Uttlesford has been reduced to **706** dwellings pa, which provides very significant relief compared with the greatly increased figures canvassed in the first White Paper of August 2020, which were the subject of considerable criticism, including by UDC in their consultation submissions.

We are pleased to be able to advise that the latest housing supply figures have on updated calculations increased from **2.68** years (October 2019) to **3.11 years** (January 2021). While this value represents considerably less than five years' supply, it will be of particular relevance in consideration of development in those places which are covered by a recently made Neighbourhood Plan.

As you will have read, the Government continues to require that those Local Planning Authorities without an up to date Local Plan in place update their Local Plans "to ensure the country gets on with building the homes it needs and in the right places" and the Minister has issued a Statement on 19 January 2021 to that effect.

[Councils urged to ensure Local Plans are up to date - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-urged-to-ensure-local-plans-are-up-to-date)

UDC Officers continue to keep the Ministry abreast as to the status of the consultation and evidential work under way regarding preparation of the Local Plan and there is no suggestion that any intervention from the Ministry in our local plan making is warranted.

4. "Call for Sites"

This exercise has just started, being the customary starting point in all local plan making, to identify land areas said to be suitable and available for potential development for all purposes – not only housing but also for example employment use. Additionally, it is important to note that it calls for the identification of areas suitable for other use.

We encourage - for the first time - people to submit sites for all types of use - including, for example, land that could have value as **green space**, including that with potential for biodiversity gains, including carbon capture and/or wildlife habitats. We would encourage all communities, whether through Councils or by individuals, to seek to identify any such potential sites as part of this early process.

The identification of any sites put forward through this exercise does not diminish in any way the effect of existing planning policies, including of course those contained in already made Neighbourhood Development Plans.

5. Neighbourhood Planning

The Ministry via their most recently published Statement has confirmed that it wants to see Neighbourhood Plans continue to progress, with the support of local planning

authorities, so as to give more communities a greater role in shaping the development and growth of their local areas. UDC continues to promote Neighbourhood Planning with financial, officers' and independent consultants' support. Further financial as well as technical assistance is available from *Locality*, a MHLCG agency, with additional excellent local support on hand too from RCCE. UDC Officers and we also are willing to promote Neighbourhood Planning further, as requested, by speaking to any interested Parish Councils so as to introduce the procedure and support for making such plans.

6. White Paper – Planning Reform

In our Newsletter No 1, we referred to the second August 2020 White Paper which contemplated major reform of the planning system. Consultation responses to the White Paper were very extensive and are still being considered by the Government. Many of you will however, have read of the comment made by the Chief Planner on 14 January 2021 at a CPRE Conference that the Government intends to bring forward a Planning Bill before the end of 2021 to deliver its reforms, but that it would be a "couple of years" before the new system would be in place. UDC continues with its Local Plan preparatory work under the present system/rules but will have a weather eye open for any possible reforms and ensure, if they come about, that the new Local Plan will be compliant with current and prospective future requirements.

We would be pleased to hear from you and any Residents as to the matters reported here and with any questions or suggestions arising. With our best regards.

At the meeting Dist Cllr Hargreaves reported that:

- As stated in the newsletter the call for sites has now started which will have implications for Newport. The Local Plan can entirely override the Neighbourhood Plan but the Neighbourhood plan will carry weight. In my view submissions from large developers should be resisted.
- This month the Budget for 2021/22, financial strategy and five year plan will be set. Given the present circumstances we are proposing a balanced budget. The UDC Council tax increase will be £5.00 per year for a Band D property.
- With regard to the Neighbourhood plan the consultation on the removal of the three words has finished. Objections were received from Gladmans and Sworders. Officers at UDC are recommending it goes to another examination although they do not make the final decision and it is possible it can be made compliant. If it is not signed off it will obviously not carry the same weight.
- If the elections go ahead as planned on 6th May there should be a Neighbourhood plan referendum on that date. It is important we do not miss that date.

21/429 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 11th January, 2021 (by Zoom)

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

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: DA

All agreed

21/430 Chairman's comments

The Chairman reported that:

- He would like to formally thank Cty Cllr Ray Gooding for paying for the Defibrillator for the High Street.
- We were hoping to welcome a new member to the PC. This is not possible at present, but he will be welcomed if this is possible in the future.
- I have spoken to Cllr Gerard regarding his attendance at Council meetings and will also contact Cllr Bengé.
- I am aware of six people who have had the Covid virus so please be careful and disciplined. You must ensure you follow the rules as the virus is really serious.

21/431 To receive the Clerk's Report, circulated prior to the meeting

Duly received. **(Updates at the meeting in bold)**

Street Lights - All the parish street lights should now be working. There was a problem with P2 in Frambury Lane, as after replacing the bulb the control gear inside the fitting blew a hole in the light bulb. It is not possible to get the parts to repair these old fittings so our contractor installed a new LED light.

Since the last meeting I have left two further messages for Castle Oak regarding the lights near the entrance to the Care Home which are disturbing one of our residents. The last time I said that if the situation is not dealt with within the next two weeks we will take the matter up with UDC Enforcement

Gaces Trust - Following the last meeting I contacted SWTC and asked for details of the company that laid the path at the Common. The works were carried out by Southern Landscapes who also did work for them at Bridge End Gardens. They said they were excellent and would highly recommend them. The path is made from Bredon Gravel which if properly laid goes down hard and also lets water through it.

I have spoken to them and explained what the Council is proposing to do. They would be happy to arrange a meeting as soon as possible. I have passed details to Sandra and Don. **A meeting has now been arranged.**

Defibrillator in the High Street - ECC have now reimbursed the PC with £1,100 for the Defibrillator. I have thanked Ray for arranging this for us.

Additional Defibrillator for Station Road - The Village Hall have now agreed that a Defibrillator can be placed on the outside wall at the front of the Village Hall. I have been in touch with the Chairman of the Village Hall and will now place the order.

CCTV at the Common/Village Hall - Further to recent discussions I understand a total of six cameras will be installed, three at the back of the Village Hall (two will overlook the Common and one will be directed towards an area at the back of the Village Hall) and three at the front (two overlooking Station Road and one, which the VH have requested, focussing on the gap to the right of the hall).

Trees at the Allotments - We are still awaiting the second quotation.

Scouts Fire Pit - As I did not get a response to previous communications I contacted Andy Cook who was extremely helpful. He will clear the rubbish away from the fire pit but he has pointed out that it was not left by the Scouts but other people using the recreation ground.. The Scouts will be asked to remove the seats that have been put round the fire pit as they have not been approved by the PC and will only encourage youngsters to gather there and either fill in or cover the Fire Pit.

This will be raised at the next Sports Committee meeting and the Scouts will be asked if they would prefer to fill the pit in or, alternatively, have a cover completely over it. Whatever is decided, the Scouts will be responsible for ensuring that rubbish is not left in the area which, to date, our Caretaker has been dealing with.

CURAT (Cam Upper Reaches Action Team) - I have circulated information received from the above.

Sign/light on the Railway Bridge - ECC have advised that the sign on the bridge will not be replaced. From a legal perspective all of the signage to make the manoeuvre of large vehicles under the bridge prohibited is in place and there is also a significant number of advanced signs which the LHP had funded in the last few years which identify the presence of the low bridge. ECC consider that for an HGV to have arrived at this point they have ignored all the previous signs so the final provision of the sign on the bridge itself would then have little impact. In order for signage to be installed on the bridge there is a significantly lengthy process that would need to be followed which entails obtaining licences and shutting down the train line for the duration of installation works. It was felt that it would not be a productive use of resource to replace the sign especially as the bridge strikes have been a far less frequent occurrence since the LHP funded signage has been installed.

Post Office - Wendy Hamilton at the Post Office has now put me in touch with the postmaster dealing with this and he has now advised that the The Lodge at Debden Grange is the alternative premises. He has advised that all parties are keen for the service to start as soon as possible but there are currently staffing issues due to the Covid pandemic.

Christmas Lights - I contacted Lite Ltd., the company who deal with the lights in Saffron Walden for SWTC. They are based in Chelmsford. He looked at the centre of the village and felt that it would not be possible to put lights above the road as there would not be enough clearance. He suggested either icicle lights on some of the premises along the middle of the village, near Nisa Stores or lights in the trees on the High Street or on one large tree (perhaps the horse chestnut by the Men's Club).

Normally displays are powered from the nearest lamp column. We would obviously need to get permission from ECC and this would cost in the region of £325 per column for the connection. I would also need to contact the ECC Arboriculturist to ask for permission to put lights in their trees. **The Arboriculturist suggested the horse chestnut tree near the Newport Club or the Ash tree at the top of Belmont Hill. She would need to check the trees beforehand if the PCV is considering putting lights in the trees.**

He said he would send me some further information and would be willing to come and meet with the PC. If you would like to pursue this, I will arrange a meeting and if members of the PC would like to be involved please let me know. **A meeting will now be arranged to find out the possibilities and all members advised of the date.**

Flooding issues - After establishing that the owners of the land west of Shortgrove were not local and making further enquiries, I received a call from the person who farms the land. He has looked at the area and commented on the water bubbling out of the ground. His contact details have now been passed to ECC and they have confirmed they will get in touch with him. ECC carried out further jetting of the drains on 20th January.

North Essex Parking Partnership - The Operations Manager at the Parking Partnership has been in touch and there are now surgeries available, by appointment only. He has made it clear that these surgeries are only available to PC members and Clerks. He has suggested that I email him first with any questions on parking issues and he will then reply with an appointment. The surgeries are held on Tuesday afternoons between 1.00 and 4.00pm by Zoom.

Solar Farms in Uttlesford - I circulated the email from CPRE Essex regarding a major solar farm in Thaxted which was granted planning permission over a year ago. The same developer is now planning two further developments, one at Cutlers Green, to the west of Thaxted, and another in Wimbish which would cover at least 150 acres of farmland. Thaxted Parish Council have organised a petition and I have been asked to spread the word and make local people aware of the petition.

Mobile Air Pollution Monitors - As requested I asked UDC if they had any mobile monitors. They do not have any we could borrow, but they do have ones that are fixed. It may be possible to relocate these if we are interested but this would not be until late summer or end of the year. **This is required for the junction of Church Street/Wicken Road. SAy has now received details of the diffusion tube readings which he will circulate.**

2021 Census - I have not yet received the Census publicity.

SB has been in touch with GWB Horticulture regarding a quote for replanting and regular maintenance of the flower boxes. This should be available for the March meeting. The flower box opposite Premier Garage needs replacing.

433.5 To receive an update following the flooding in December 2020

It was reported that more debris has been removed from the river at the bottom of School Lane/Bury Water Lane and left on the side of the bank. The Clerk will contact the Rangers and ask them to remove it.

Following the flooding in Cambridge Road, a resident advised that the farmer, even though he is not the owner, has a duty not to compromise safety and could be liable if water is going on to the highway.

A resident had sent some photos taken in fields west of the railway embankment, looking north to Cambridge. There is a 600mm concrete pipe coming through the headwall from the field and two pipes either side of the pipe. From this point the water flows through a culvert under the railway and then down a ditch adjacent to the fence belonging to the houses in Salmon Field.

JE and NH will investigate.

21/434 To receive reports/updates on Planning

434.1 To receive a report on the UDC Community Stakeholder Forum on 13th January 2021

SN reported that at the meeting on the 27th there was a Leisure, Culture and Health, presentation which focussed on healthy lifestyles. Newport PC should submit a response to this. I am planning to prepare a report on the Coach & Horses application which will include the possible loss of amenity space.

There are further meetings on 10th and 24th February, 10th and 24th March. The PC will submit a response on all twelve themes.

Residents can also view the presentations and submit comments.

434.2. To receive a report from the Planning Working Group.

JE reported that the group have been focussing mainly on the Coach & Horses. We are working through all the documents including the comments from residents and Heritage statement where we found some errors. SAm questioned whether there was enough emphasis on noise.

JE will raise this and environmental health issues with Geoff Gardner. In view of the extra work undertaken by Geoff Gardner, his quote has been revised and this will be added to the agenda and approved at the next meeting.

The Planning working group will arrange to meet and agree responses to the following:

UTT/20/2653/FUL Joyce Frankland Academy, Cambridge Road. (Comments by 3rd February)

Re-consultation. Application to vary conditions attached to planning application UTT/18/0739/FUL. Amendments to footpath link, revisions to plots 5-8, and the re-location of visitor parking spaces.

UTT/21/0012/HHF 1 New Cottages Shortgrove (Comments by 3rd February)

Proposed new drive and parking

UTT/21/0013/HHF 2 New Cottages Shortgrove (Comments by 3rd February)

Proposed new drive and parking

UTT/21/0026/LB Crown House Bridge End (Comments by 5th February)

Alterations to the outhouse together with external landscaping

UTT/21/0127/FUL Sparrows End Sparrowsend Hill (Comments by 17th February)

Part conversion of an existing outbuilding to provide a new dwelling with associated amenity land (revised under approved UTT/19/2607/FUL)

UTT/20/3370/FUL Coach And Horses Inn Cambridge Road (Comments by 5th February)

Erection of 5 dwellings on land to the rear of the existing public house utilising existing access off Cambridge Road, reconfiguration of public house car park with associated hard and soft landscaping.

UTT/21/0145/HHF Sparrows Hill House Sparrows End (Comments by 19th February)

Alterations to annexe approved under UTT/17/1927/HHF

Planning Appeal APP/C1570/W/20/3262290 Coach and Horses Inn Cambridge Road Newport (Comments by 9th February)

Planning Appeal APP/C1570/W/20/3260718 Land North of Sparrowsend Cottages London Road Newport (Comments by 23rd February)

The Chairman thanked the Planning Working Group for all their hard work.

21/435 To receive report/updates on Green Spaces and Sports

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

UDC advised some time ago that they would contact Amherst regarding the funding but Nigel Brown has still not replied. NH will endeavour to contact him and give a deadline. HB and JE have a meeting with the Academy on the 12th February and it would be helpful if they had an update before the meeting.

21/436 To receive reports/updates on Liaison matters

To discuss the abandonment of school children by a School bus on Friday, 4th December when the roads were flooded.

The Chairman said that whilst the Parish Council would be happy to assist with this matter this is really an issue for the Academy to take up with ECC. ECC organise the contracts with the bus companies therefore the Academy should raise with ECC. The matter will be raised at the meeting with the Academy.

21/437 To discuss a request to contact Open Reach to investigate improvements to Broadband in the village.

A resident reported that the new Wicken Lea development has the highest broadband speed. Other parts of the village do not have fibre to the premises and major costs would be involved to upgrade. It would be helpful if a survey could be carried out to ascertain which parts of the village need to be improved. In the meantime the Clerk will approach Open Reach regarding the possibility of improvements particularly as the village has grown significantly over recent years.

21/438 Items for next agenda

No items were requested.

21/439 To discuss any Urgent matters of interest to the Parish

439.1. SAy reported that he has been contacted by two residents of London Road who have asked if he PC can help with an issue regarding a 5M tall hedge. A resident who was present at the meeting advised that this has been going on for several years. UDC had been out and measured the hedge but there is a difference in levels and because of Covid they had said they were unable to come into her garden. NH said he was surprised that UDC is involved in this, but would look into it if all the emails/correspondence could be forwarded to him.

439.2 SAm reported that the company at the bottom of Bury Water Lane is erecting another steel framework for an additional storage facility. Planning applications have been submitted in the past and permission given, but the PC will check that this complies with the permission granted.

439.3 The Chairman reported that the Sports Committee meeting scheduled for this week has been cancelled. One matter that would have been raised is the benches that have been permanently fixed around the Fire Pit at the Recreation Ground. This will now be raised with the Chairman of the Sports Committee.

21/430 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held by Zoom on Monday, 1st March, 2021
The meeting closed at 9.32 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 01.03.21