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NEWPORT PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Monday, 12th April, 2021 by Zoom**

<u>Present:</u>	Cllr H. Bowman	(HB)	(Chairman)
	Cllr D. Alexander	(DA)	
	Cllr S. Amos	(SAm)	
	Cllr S. Ayles	(SAy)	
	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)
3 members of the public	

Cllr Emanuel took the Chair until the Chairman arrived at point 21/443.

21/457 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr S. Burton (private commitment), Cllr A. Sampson (business commitment) and Cllr R. Bengé (unable to connect to Zoom)

21/458 To receive any 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary' interests relating to items on the Agenda

The following non-pecuniary interests were declared:

JE in 467.1, 467.7, 468 and 469; DA in 469 and 470; SAm in 460; SAy in 468; SN in 468; SN in 468.

21/443 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.

- Does any one have any information about the works at the bottom of Bury Water Lane. They are the same people that put the cables down last time

The Chairman advised that Essex Highways should know.

A resident advised that it is understood it is connected with replacing the kerb stones at King Edward Mews.

21/444 To receive a report from our Community Special Constables

The Community Special Constables had sent the following report to Cllr Sandra Amos.

Our first CSC has been doing patrols in the village. He has given several parking tickets for obstruction along the High Street and has been patrolling round the children's playground for anti-social behaviour, but seen nothing so far. He has done 2 speed checks, given out 2 speeding tickets and 7 "words of advice" to drivers just over the 30mph..

Next weekend he is doing High Viz patrols to check Public Houses are abiding by Covid rules.

Our second CSC has reported that on Tuesday 16 March Saffron Walden Police initiated a community engagement programme in the area of Whiteditch Lane and The Pastures. This was in relation to reports of noise in that area. He conducted house to house enquiries at a number of properties. There was only one householder who mentioned noise from one of the properties on Whiteditch Lane, and this was several weeks ago. However, several properties mentioned excessive speed of cars on White ditch Lane, which was deemed dangerous for people walking dogs.

He noticed there was a 5mph speed limit sign coming into White Ditch Lane, but did not see any repeaters as he walked further into the lane although he didn't walk the whole length of the lane. The speed issue has been noted and any future patrols in that area will be made aware. The council may wish to check that there are speed limit signs at regular intervals along the lane.

SAy advised there are other signs in Whiteditch Lane but they are not statutory. A resident who was present at the meeting advised that Whiteditch Lane is 30mph, and a request was made to the Local Highways Panel to consider reducing this to 20mph from the ford at the bottom of Bury Water Lane. The Clerk will raise again with ECC as this does not appear to have been included on the schedule for the Highways Committee and, if necessary, issue another request.

21/445 To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Cty Cllr Ray Gooding had sent the following report:

Covid-19 rates across the county have continued to fall in recent weeks and at the 1st April rates in Uttlesford stood at 9.9/100,000. This is the lowest level in the Eastern Region. However, rates in Colchester and Tendring stood at 25.7 and 26.6/100,000 respectively.

Public Health has now advised that testing and isolation have become ever more critical as we emerge from lockdown. In line with government announcements we are enhancing the availability of self-testing by extending the number of libraries from which tests can be collected to 36 across Essex – this will include Saffron Walden. All those collecting tests will be given information on how they can access assistance if required. Anyone requiring support can call 03337 726 144.

The most significant development in the last week has been the agreement of a standard Essex wide isolation payment scheme which will be launched on 15 April. The scheme has been enlarged to include those earning up to £500 per week who have savings of less than £16,000. In these circumstances they will be eligible for a £500 payment. ECC are grateful to all partner councils for participating in this.

On a different note I can confirm that during the Easter School Holidays 22,465 children have attended Essex County Council Holiday programmes. 960 of those children are from Uttlesford and whilst that seems a small proportion it should be remembered that Uttlesford has approximately 7% of Essex Children and a fewer proportion who are registered for Free School Meals. The offer to these children is that they receive a day of sporting activity, socialisation, and a substantial meal. In addition, they receive a food pack and an online lesson from a qualified chef on how to prepare the ingredients. This is a successful programme and it will be extended to the summer period where it will be expanded to meet the needs of a broader range of children that have been disadvantaged because of the pandemic.

There has been suggestion that Essex County Council have reduced the budget for education across the County. This is not true, in part because ECC do not fund schools, the Delegated Schools Grant comes directly from Government to schools and the funding is administered by the "Schools Forum" which is a body made up from Headteachers, Teaching Unions and School Governors. In addition to this I can confirm that that the funding from Government has risen over the last four years on the following basis: -

DSG Allocation DSG Allocation

	£m	£m increase	% increase
2017/18	1,025.12		
2018/19	1,068.46.	43.34	4.23%
2019/20	1,090.85.	22.39	2.10%
2020/21	1,165.64	74.79	6.86%
2021/22	1,266.88.	101.24	8.69%

- Since 2017/18 DSG has increased by £241.76 million (23.58%).

At the meeting RG advised that it was very pleasing to note that the Covid infections are now less than 10 per 100,000 which is really good news.

SN enquired about the £500 assistance to help people who have to isolate. RG advised this is a very helpful package which will commence later this week, however he emphasised that people will have to prove they are genuinely isolating.

Dist Cllr Neil Hargreaves reported that:

- Post lockdown UDC will not be fully occupying the buildings in Saffron Walden. The Council Chamber and Committee Room will be retained but other accommodation will be let. Arrangements for staff will be more flexible and they will be partly working from home, Part of the premises at Canfield will be converted to offices and conference rooms. There is also a building on the Walpole Farm estate at Stansted. Part of this will be occupied by UDC and part will be let. This distributed arrangement will be a more secure arrangement.
- We are also looking at the operation of Day Centres and how best to use them for the community.
- Refuse bin lorries will operate from Canfield. We will be going for a different scheme which will be more expensive.

SAm enquired about the cost of the new buildings. NH advised that it will not be new buildings, but existing buildings will be converted. It will give us presence in Canfield and Stansted rather than everything being in Saffron Walden.

- The Neighbourhood Plan will go to referendum on Thursday 6th May.
- JE and NH reported that unfortunately the Appeals Inspector, who dealt with the Coach & Horses Appeal, completely ignored the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman thanked NH on behalf of the Council, for all the work he did on the Neighbourhood Plan

21/462 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1st March, 2021 (by Zoom)

An alteration was made to item 21/445, March report, to read “The Neighbourhood Plan is the only up-to-date plan that relates to Newport”.

With this alteration it was resolved that the Chairman should sign the minutes as approved.

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: SAm

All agreed

21/463 Chairman's comments

The Chairman reported that:

- A wall belonging to one of the houses in London Road, has collapsed onto the Common. It is the property of the land owner but we must ensure it is properly cleared by the owner.
- Mike Hannant has approached us regarding holding a Fete on the Common on 14th August. The PC confirmed their support for this. To be formally approved at the next meeting.
- There is a triangle of land between the river and the end of the car park on the Common where additional trees could be planted and a resident has offered to plant trees on this area. The Clerk advised that she had received

an email from the UDC Landscape Officer concerning woodland planting and she has asked if the PC could be allocated 10/12 trees

- The zoom meetings may may not be able to continue, but we will wait for the decision by the High Court. NH suggested writing to the M.P.
- As the village has increased in size we will consider advertising for an additional Village Caretaker/Handyman to assist.

21/448 To receive the Clerk's Report, circulated prior to the meeting

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

Oil seepage into the River Cam

At the last meeting it was reported there was an oil seepage into the River Cam. Throughout the month I have kept in regular contact with Simon Short and Miriam Joy at the Environment Agency who have made frequent visits to the Common to inspect and replace the boom and pads which they placed in the river to mitigate the pollution.

Initially they noticed the manhole in the corner of the Common and on inspection there was evidence of oil. They asked for information on pipes that fed into this manhole so I got in touch with Philip Rogers, Drainage Consultant, who carried out a survey of the Common several years ago for the Ellis Trust. He sent details of his findings to the Environment Agency.

A trench was subsequently dug behind Central Garage and following inspection by the Environment Agency and a representative from their insurance company they declared there was no evidence of oil.

The Environment Agency then asked the Parish Council to arrange for the oil to be removed from the manhole and the pipe jetted. After contacting several companies I obtained a quote from Ambipar in Harlow who specialise in this type of work. After contacting our insurance company and obtaining their approval to proceed, arrangements were made for the work on the manhole and pipe to go ahead on 1st April. Unfortunately, as the company washed out the manhole more oil was coming in so it was soon discovered there was more oil than was first thought. As the pipe was obstructed with tree roots they said they would need to come back with cutting and cctv equipment to establish the source. Ambipar were of the opinion that the oil could be coming from an interceptor or old storage tank.

The Environment Agency then got back in touch with the garage who identified an old drain in one of their outbuildings and on lifting the cover discovered oily material. The drain flows in a direction which would link it with the assumed direction of the drain that flows into the manhole near the village hall car park and then to the river. The garage have arranged for further investigations to be carried out later this week and will get back in touch when this has been done.

Ambipar were expecting to come back this week with the additional equipment but I have asked them to wait until they hear further from me. At some stage the Environment Agency will require the full length of the pipe to be jetted through. I hope to have a further update on Monday.

Further update given under 21/467.

Village Fete - Mike Hannant has advised that the Fete Committee are hoping, if all restrictions are lifted, to organise a Fete in August. He would like confirmation that the Common is available on 14th August and the PC would be willing to be named as the organisers for insurance purposes.

Request to the Local Highways Panel - Following conversations with Essex Highways and Cty Cllr Gooding regarding the raising of the pedestrian crossing in Bury Water Lane and the installation of two VAS signs, it was suggested that a request should be made for a highway safety audit. This has been submitted and will now go through the formal validation process to assess the viability. If a suitable recommendation comes from this it will be raised at the LHP meeting in June.

The VAS sign in London Road has now been repaired.

Whiteditch Lane - As requested at the last meeting I contacted Cty Cllr Gooding regarding a definition of development that would be allowed along Whiteditch Lane. He advised that

Essex County Council are not the Planning Authority, that responsibility lies with Uttlesford District Council and on those grounds ECC would have no say in the suitability of any development in any location. Essex Highways are however, statutory consultees and it is their responsibility to assess the impact of any development on the strategic highway infrastructure. As a result of that Essex Highways can either accept the proposals with any caveats that are required from the developer to mitigate the impact of the development. Conversely, Essex Highways can recommend rejection of the scheme. Regardless of that, Essex Highways are not the Planning Authority and cannot determine the outcome of the application.

With regards to Whiteditch Lane, this is registered as a Byway. The maintenance responsibilities for this are that it is maintained as a Byway. It is important that this is advised to prospective developers so that they and the prospective purchasers of the properties are aware of these constraints.

New Dog Bin for the bottom of Bury Water Lane - This has now been placed at the bottom of Bury Water Lane near the bridge.

Whiteditch Lane sign - This has now been replaced by UDC.

Bullfields - I contacted UDC after the last meeting regarding the difficulties experienced by the drivers of the refuse vehicles when collecting from Bullfields. I asked if they could let me know the required location of additional lines as the PC would like to make a request for double yellow lines to the North Essex Parking Partnership, providing it receives sufficient support. I have followed this up, but the person responsible is on annual leave until next week. **Confirmation has now been received that the refuse team will be consulted. When this has been done a consultation will be held with the residents,**

Dog Spray - I have received requests from several residents for a can of spray and these have been delivered to them.

Flower Containers - The quotation arrived too late for the March meeting but is included on the agenda for April. SB went back to the contractor regarding a query and a revised quote was submitted. Following discussion at the informal meeting I have approached two other people in the village to see if they would like to quote, but they have both declined.

Central Refuges - The resident who attended the March meeting sent me photographs of the refuges that require cleaning and attention owing to broken lights. Details were forwarded to ECC. I have also asked the Rangers if they would be able to clean the road signs. These will be done as soon as possible but there will be a delay as one member has been away owing to illness.

Allotments - The work on the trees has been completed. The garden waste container has attended the Allotments, fortnightly, from 13th March from 13.00 – 14.00. A request has been received from one of the tenants to replace an existing shed with a greenhouse.

Public Rights of Way - One of the Essex PROW Officers received an inappropriate call from a resident regarding the state of Footpath 12. at the back of the houses in Frambury Lane. The footpath has been cut and, with the exception of an area in the middle, is passable and well used.

Tree at Elephant Green - The work has been completed on the tree on the triangle in Elephant Green. One of the residents asked me to pass on his thanks to the Council.

Gaces Trust - Southern Landscapes have now been asked to proceed with the work on the new accesses at Gaces Meadow. In view of their workload they are unable to do this until approximately mid June and will inform me of a definite starting date in due course

Asbestos Sheeting in Whiteditch Lane - The UDC Enforcement Department have visited twice and on the second visit they discovered the asbestos, which was discovered by the developer of the nearby land, has been placed there awaiting specialist wrapping and collection. This should be done by the end of this week. **This has now been collected.**

Tennis Club - I advised the Chairman of the name of the contractor we used for the work on the trees at the allotments and he informed me that the quote obtained was significantly cheaper. He also asked for contact details of the Chairman of the Trust. When the Chairman first contacted me in February he advised that the Club were just making a plan in view of the significant cost but would need the approval of the Gaces Charity and the PC.

Additional Defibrillator for Station Road - The new Defibrillator and cabinet arrived but I understand some difficulties have been encountered with fitting this on the Village Hall.

CCTV - The installation has now been completed at the Playground and at the Common/Village Hall.

The Common - Following a request, the Rainbows were given permission to use the Common after Easter.

Christmas Lights - A meeting was held with Gary Davie of Lite Ltd on 18th February and the details and prices arrived too late for the March meeting. I have included this on the April agenda for a decision and will re-circulate the information.

Newport News - The editors of Newport News were advised that the PC's advert should remain the same as last time and a correction was requested to the Councillor information at the back.

Hercules Bridge - Further investigations were carried out on the bridge in March and I understand further surveys will be done later in the year. I have asked Essex Highways Structures Team for an update as I have received several enquiries.

Election Notices - The Notices for the District, County, Police & Crime Commissioner, plus the Neighbourhood Plan referendum have all been displayed on the notice boards.

Local Councils Liaison Forum - UDC have advised that the next Forum will be on 14th September, at 7.00pm. Further details to be advised nearer the date.

21/466 To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Report and approve accounts for payment, schedules circulated prior to the meeting

The payment schedules totalling £9,757.29 for 18 items were approved.

Proposed: SAM

Seconded: SAY

All agreed

The invoice from Ambipar will be paid within 30 days of the invoice.

21/466 To agree venue and arrangements for future meetings

The PC has been informed that Council meetings should not be held by Zoom after 6th May. The Chairman advised that NALC is taking the matter to the High Court on 21st April and we will wait until we receive the judgement of the Court before making any definite plans. If we are not compelled to have a formal meeting every month we could have an informal meeting by Zoom until it is safe to have face to face meetings and then review. All members said that at the moment they would not be happy to have meetings in a confined space but agreed to wait for the High Court decision later in the month before making any plans.

NH advised that the District Council is not happy with this decision and would encourage the PC to write to the MP. The Chairman and the Clerk will discuss sending a letter to the MP.

21/467 To receive reports/updates on Infrastructure/Maintenance

467.1 To receive an update on the oil seepage into the River Cam

This had been reported in the Clerk's Report but a further update was given.

We arranged for the oil to be removed from the manhole and the pipe jetted on 1st April, however it was discovered that there was more oil than was first thought. As the pipe is obstructed with tree roots the company will need to come back with cutting and CCTV equipment in order to establish the source.

The Environment Agency visited the garage again and they have carried out further investigations and discovered there is oil in the ground and they have put down absorbent pads. They are obtaining advice from an Environmental Consultant. The Environment Agency have mentioned the issue of the remaining oil in the pipe to them which needs to be cleared.

The Chairman said that when the garage dug a trench on the Common the actual pipe was not leaking. It is a drainage pipe. Approximately 4ft under the ground but oil is getting into it. The pipe under the Common is blocked with tree roots and it is our responsibility to clear them.

It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain a quotation from Ambipar for a second visit with CCTV and cutting equipment in order to establish the source. If it does turn out to be the garages fault and is coming from a tank on their land then they will have to contribute.

467.2 To receive an update on the river clearance at the bottom of Bury Water Lane

JE reported that she is awaiting a date for the work to be carried out and it is hoped a date will be given within the next two weeks.

The Clerk will thank the Rangers for removing further debris from the bank at the bottom of Bury Water Lane.

467.3 To discuss the email received from the Tennis Court Committee

The Clerk advised that when the Chairman of the Tennis Court Committee first contacted her he advised that the Club were just making a plan in view of the significant cost involved but they would need the approval of the Gaces Charity and the PC. The Chairman was in touch again last month and asked for the contact details of the Chairman of the Gaces Charity which has been sent.

467.4 To receive an update on the Allotments and approve a request to replace a shed with a greenhouse

DA advised that nearly all the allotment plots are now occupied. A request to replace a shed with a greenhouse was approved. A poly tunnel has also been completed.

467.5 To discuss the quotation for replanting and maintaining the flower boxes

It was agreed that this item should be deferred until after a decision has been made on an assistant for the Village Caretaker/Handyman.

467.6 To approve the purchase of aggregate for the Recreation Ground car park

The Clerk will contact the Chairman of the Sports Committee for advice on quantity. DA advised that some material (2 ton) is required for the Allotment entrance and recommended buying some crushed granite, cost approximately £60 per ton. The Clerk will obtain more information from Mike Hannant and liaise with DA.

21/468 To receive reports/updates on Planning468.1 To receive a report on the UDC Local Plan Consultation

SN reported that the presentations have been completed and she is preparing a draft which will be circulated in the next few days.

468.2 To discuss a response from the Council to the Local Plan Consultation

The draft will be discussed by the Council and needs to be sent by 21st April.

468.3 To discuss the response to the Local Plan received from David Mayle

SN suggested that David Mayle's response should be used as an introduction to the response.

468.4 To receive a report from the Planning Working Group.

JE reported that:

- With regard to the Coach & Horses, the response from Geoff Gardner was not listed as being from the Parish Council on the UDC planning portal. NH will raise the PC's concerns.
JE has advised Geoff Gardner that the Coach & Horse Appeal has been dismissed and requested some guidance on the second application. An email will be sent to the UDC Planning Officer dealing with the second application (UTT/20/3370/FUL) for the Coach & Horses pointing out that the Appeal has

been determined and we are waiting to hear from Geoff Gardiner. Also, the Appeal Inspector's decision was mainly based on the harm to the Grade 11 listed building. There was no reference to the Neighbourhood Plan which is going to referendum on 6th May or the huge number of objections received. Also, there is still the issue of the land.

The following applications will be dealt with by the Planning Working Group.

UTT/21/0613/HHF Regency House, High Street (Comments by 26th March)

Section 73A Retrospective application for external alterations to main house and annexe.

UTT/21/0950/FUL Bury Grove, Whiteditch Lane (Comments by 20th April)

Variation of condition 2 (approved plan) of UTT/20/0805/FUL re vary plans for plot 1.

UTT/21/0911/FUL The Bungalow, Shortgrove (Comments by 21st April)

Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling.

UTT/21/1090.HHF Oak Tree House, Whiteditch Lane (Comments by 4th May)

Extension to the front entrance and three dormer windows on the front elevation, Two storey rear extension. Lowering of the ground floor. Creation of link to existing swimming pool and rear landscaping including a new gymnasium and hydro pools

Planning Appeal APP/C1570/W/21/3266548 Five Acres, Whiteditch Lane (Comments by 28th April).

Planning Appeal APP/C1570/W/21/3267668 Glyncolan, High Street (Comments by 28th April).

The PC can use some of the text which Geoff prepared for previous Appeals in their response.

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

21/469 To receive report/updates on Green Spaces and Sports

To receive an update on the new Public Right of Way from Whiteditch Lane to Bury Water Lane.

As no response has been received from UDC, the Chairman will send a formal letter of complaint to UDC.

21/470 To receive reports/updates on Liaison matters

To discuss the quotation received from Lite Ltd for Christmas light in the village.

It was agreed that to have a worthwhile display would be too expensive. The Clerk will advise Lite Ltd., and the information will be retained on file

21/471 Items for next agenda

To consider having a public toilet at Gaces Meadow.

News from the residents of Wicken Lea.

Update on bollards and road signs.

To approve a request to hold a Fete on the Common in August.

21/472 To discuss any Urgent matters of interest to the Parish

472.1 The Chairman will obtain information on Village signs and report back.

472.2 SAy reported that he has been advised that the trains are still sounding their horn at the Dixies crossing even though the crossing is closed. The Clerk will contact Network Rail.

472.3 SAm reported that one resident had made 23 birdboxes and another resident had made 4 which have all been positioned in the village. The residents have been reimbursed for the materials used. I have made a plan and numbered them. There are still 20 birdboxes on order from the Men's Sheds, cost £200, who have been closed owing to the Covid restrictions. It was agreed this order should remain in place.

472.4 SN encouraged members to respond to the survey on remote meetings. The Clerk will send a response from the PC after speaking to the RFO about the savings which have been made,

472.5 The Chairman has arranged to visit the Village Hall tomorrow, 13th April, re the fixing of the Defibrillator.

472.6 The hogweed has re-appeared on the Common. This will be sprayed as quickly as possible. The Clerk will notify other land owners.

472.7 JE raised the issue of training on the CCTV equipment at the playground and village hall/common. The Chairman advised that the equipment for the village Hall/Common is inside the village hall in a cabinet in the cleaning cupboard and the keys are held by the Village Hall and the Clerk. The equipment records for one month and rolls on for a second month. Signs have been put up to make people aware. The Chairman at Quendon & Rickling would be interest to hear our views on the new CCTV equipment and it was agreed that the PC would report back to them. The Chairman will give instructions on using it.

A resident advised that CCTV equipment comes under GDPR regulations and the PC need to have a formal process in place. SN said she circulated a Code of Conduct for CCTV equipment where the requirements are listed. JE said she contacted UDC but she did not receive a reply and will chase her. It was agreed that the PC need to study the guidance and draw up a formal document.

472.8 The Clerk thanked the resident for sending the photos of the central refuges that require attention and will chase ECC. The Rangers have been asked to clean the road signs.

21/456 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 10th May, 2021. An extraordinary meeting will be held before that, if necessary.

The meeting closed at 9.14 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 10.05.21